

DANGER ON THE TRANSGENDER LINE
'WE DON'T WANT TO HIDE'

Rash of Violent Attacks Leave
Two Dead in Nation's Capitol

P 4

DANCING FOR
REGIME CHANGE



P 3

Americans Write
Home From
Occupied Palestine

P 8

THE INDYPENDENT

THE NEW YORK CITY INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER

ISSUE #37 SEPT 9-25, 2003

WWW.NYC.INDYMEDIA.ORG



THE BUSH PUSH FOR COVER IN IRAQ

Donald Paneth

REPORTS FROM THE UNITED NATIONS

The Bush administration has incited violence in the Middle East and West Asia with bitter results – the high costs of the Iraq occupation in men and money, unending conflict in Palestine-Israel with no prospect of a negotiated settlement, and spreading Taliban attacks on various security forces in Afghanistan.

The administration's policy of intervention is a humiliating failure, which has put the White House on the defensive.

Events are moving swiftly, however, and President George W. Bush is acting to retrieve the initiative. In the meantime, the world seems to have been united, not by the principles and provisions of the United Nations charter, but by a commitment to violence, death by car or truck bomb, missile attack, grenade launcher and sniper fire.

Bush is scheduled to address the opening of the annual session of the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday morning, Sept. 23. It will be an important speech, a follow-up to last year's challenge to the United Nations to shape up or be declared "irrelevant."

Has the United Nations become irrelevant? Does the United Nations matter? Those are difficult questions to answer in the current state of affairs.

On Aug. 21, two days after the headquarters of the U.N. mission in Baghdad was destroyed, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan told press correspondents:

"The United Nations has to work with all the member states, including the U.S., and I think one has to be careful not to confuse the U.N. with the U.S. I think this was demonstrated very clearly in the spring. Most people forget that the Security Council

did not vote to support the war in Iraq."

Other questions arose. Is Annan's statement correct? Reliable? Honest? Or, is he acting as an advance man for U.S. policy?

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell opportunistically turned up at the United Nations in New York that same day to propose that the Council support the establishment of a multinational U.N. force in Iraq. A draft U.S. resolution is being prepared.

ARTICLE 6 OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER:

"A member of the United Nations which has persistently violated the Principles contained in the present charter may be expelled from the Organization by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council."

Should the resolution be adopted it would be a significant comeback for the administration. Bush would be able to address the Assembly triumphantly.

It would also be a hazardous moment. Critics would attack the United Nations for succumbing to U.S. power. Those opposed to U.S. aggression would find themselves boxed in by the administration.

The extreme right-wing fanatics who are running the country now have previously pronounced the United Nations dead. It is not dead yet. It is suffering, but still viable.

U.N. supporters here contend that the organization has never been more needed in

the tasks it carries out – for example, peacekeeping missions in Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote D'Ivoire, Western Sahara, limited though they may be; assistance to vast numbers of refugees worldwide; the provision of food to tens of millions of hungry and malnourished populations; the programs of the World Health Organization to treat and eradicate disease.

Most particularly, the United Nations represents the furthest point, historically and institutionally, that humankind has reached in its search for peace, cooperation and solidarity, for a solution to man's cutthroat instinct.

To dispense with it would be an error, despite its domination over the years by the United States, its failures and inadequacies and pretensions. Annan, again speaking to correspondents on July 30, warned of a "global crisis."

He said: "Many of us sense that we are living through a crisis of the international system; or – as some put it – of the 'architecture' of international peace and security.

"The war in Iraq," he continued, "as well

as crises in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, force us to ask whether the institutions and methods we are accustomed to are really adequate to deal with all the stresses, or whether they are in need of radical reform."

Annan didn't say what he had in mind. The shortcomings of the U.N. could be remedied, in any case. Numerous proposals have been made to strengthen the United Nations, to reconsider the veto power of the permanent members in the Security Council – the U.S., United Kingdom, China, France, and Russia. The original provisions of the U.N. charter in relation to international security – articles 43, 45, 46 and 47 – might be put into effect rather than the improvisational approach to peacekeeping.

The charter might be amended. The annual U.N. regular budget could be increased; the allotment of \$1.2 billion has been maintained for the past 30 years.

Finally, rather than permitting the collapse of the United Nations, article 6 of the charter might be invoked in regard to the United States.

Article 6 states:
"A member of the United Nations which has persistently violated the Principles contained in the present charter may be expelled from the Organization by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council."

It may be that eventually the nations of the world will have to draw the line and stop the United States.

Donald Paneth has covered the U.N. since 1945.

SAFIYA BUKHARI PASSES ON, P.5 • AMERICA'S UNWINNABLE WAR, P.6



NEW YORK CITY INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER

Phone:
212.684.8112

Email:
imc-nyc-print@indymedia.org

Web:
NYC: www.nyc.indymedia.org
GLOBAL: www.indymedia.org

Office and Mail:
NYC Independent Media Center
34 E. 29th St. 2nd Floor
NY, NY 10016

WHAT IS INDYMEDIA?

With autonomous chapters in more than 100 cities throughout the world, the Independent Media Center is an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to illuminate and analyze issues impacting individuals, communities and ecosystems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate. We espouse open dialogue and placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

The Independent is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions.

WHAT CAN I DO TO GET INVOLVED?

The IMC has an open door. You can write for The Independent, film events and rallies, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying entirely on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

VOLUNTEER STAFF:

Chris Anderson, Silvia Arana, Fritz Askew, Jed Brandt, Kazembe Bulagooon, Mike Burke, Katherine A. Carlson, Sina Choi, Andrew Coslow, Ellen Davidson, Lourdes Delgado, Ryan Dunsmuir, Miguel Erb, Megan Farrington, Chris Fleisher, A.K. Gupta, Pandi Hopkins, Vanessa Hradsky, Alicia Kubista, Greg Jocz, Ashley Kidd, Janelle Lewis, F. Timothy Martin, Lydia Neri, Sasha Nevskaya, Ana Nogueira, Lina Pallotta, Donald Paneth, Tony Pecinovsky, Mark Pickens, Emily Reinhardt, Tatiana Reis, Nandor Sala, Jessica Stein, Jeanne Strole, Catriona Stuart, Suzy Subways, Daniel Tasripin, John Tarleton, Mike Wu



THE OTHER SEPTEMBER ELEVENTH: Remembering the coup in Chile.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

A three-day conference with Vandana Shiva, Greg Palast, Amy Goodman and more...
Riverside Church, 590 Riverside Drive (between 120-122nd Street)
Contact WBAI 212-209-2800

SAT SEPT 13

9:30 am
Conference - Labor and the Struggle for Global Justice
Cornell ILR Extension Center 16
East 34th St. and 6th Ave
2 day conference co-sponsored by Cornell Labor Studies and NY Jobs with Justice
Contact Rachel, Rachel@jwj.org, or (646) 452-5640

12 am
Labor Rights Feeder March
Park Avenue Country Club, 27th & Park
Protest restaurant withholding \$45,000 in back wages from 6 immigrant workers.

8 pm • FREE
Slide Show & Discussion : Direct Democracy on the Lower East Side, 1974-1986
Bluestockings Bookstore

MON SEPT 15

8 am
Mexican Day Parade
Third Avenue between 86th - 122nd Street
10 am - 7 pm
Mexican Historic Festival
116th Street between Lexington

7 pm
\$15/\$10 students
Bowery Poetry Club's First Anniversary Party
308 Bowery (between Bleecker & Houston)

TUES SEPT 16

6:30 pm
Immigrant-led Town Hall Meeting
Immigrant community members and all residents are invited to express their concerns about city policies and services.
Elmhurst-Jackson Heights Senior Center, 75-01 Broadway (at 75th Street), 3rd Floor
www.rnynice.org

WED SEPT 17

7 - 9:15 pm
Queer Anti-War Group meeting
Organizing meeting for demonstrations coming up in September and October
39 West 14th Street (bet 5th & 6th Aves.) Room 206

THURS SEPT 18

7:30 • \$6/\$8/\$10 suggested
Film & Discussion - The Trials of Henry Kissinger
Discussion with La Lutta
The Brecht Forum, 122 West 27th Street, 10th Floor
www.brechtforum.org

FRI SEPT 19

9 pm • \$6
Polyflick
Short films, animated film, a night of some of the best that shorts have to offer.
Rooftop Films
57 Thames Street, Bushwick
www.rooftopfilms.com

SAT SEPT 20

1 pm
Union Square South
Protest against the Patriot Act
http://theloyalnine.shacknet.nu

1 - 3 pm • \$5 per child with adult
Peace Quilt Family Workshop
Focused on the Middle East Peace Quilt exhibition, exploration of art as a mode of communication. Children make their own squares to take home.
Cathedral St. John the Divine

SUN SEPT 21

9 am • FREE
Downtown Bronx Peoples Environmental Bike Tour
Brook Park Nature Preserve
East 141st & Brook Ave.
http://www.times-up.org/peoplestour.php

1 - 5 pm • FREE
Day of Music sponsored by the Duke Ellington Boulevard Neighborhood Association
Performances by professional & amateur neighborhood musicians.
West 106th street, between CPW & Manhattan Avenue.

THE INDEPENDENT

has open meetings every Tuesday, 7pm at 34 E. 29 St., 2nd floor.

TUES SEPT 9

8 pm • FREE
Film - Speakeasy 16mm Screening Series
This month's installation will be an examination of the United States' history as a world power.
Bluestockings Bookstore
172 Allen Street

7:30 pm

FREE
Theaters Against War Present Freedom Follies
Chashama Theater
125 West 42nd Street
www.thwaaction.org

WED SEPT 10

6:45 pm
Circle of Light Candlelight Vigil
Gather at Union Square to form a silent candlelight procession down Broadway to encircle the WTC.
www.peacefuttomorrows.org

7 pm

DiverCity Media and Communication Workshops
Learn and help developing local media in Queens - 5 week session
Sunnyside Community Services
43-31 39th Street 2nd Floor
sunnyside.centerofcultures.info

7:30 - 9:30 pm • FREE

Film - Urban Warrior
Documentary tracing the history of police militarization and its impact on civil liberties.
Judson Memorial Church
55 Washington Square South
Contact: mattehling@yahoo.com

THURS SEPT 11

8:30 - 10:30 am
New Yorkers Say No to War, 2nd Annual Mourning
Union Square South
www.nysaynotowar.org

5:30 pm • \$6/\$8/\$10

Exhibit Opening & Book Forum
The other September 11th - Posters from Chile's Popular Unity Government & the Pinochet File.
The Brecht Forum
122 West 27th Street
www.brechtforum.org

6 - 10:30 pm

Film and panel discussion
An Evening of Short Documentary Films Surrounding the Unanswered Questions of 9/11.
Riverside Church, South Hall
590 Riverside Drive
(between 120-122nd Street)
www.911citizenswatch.org

6 - 8pm

Prison Families Community Forum - New Members Meeting
Center for Constitutional Rights
666 Broadway, 6th Floor

FRI SEPT 12

1 pm
Food Not Bombs
Prepare and serves vegan food to the homeless of Tompkins Square Park. Meets every Friday and Sunday. ABC no Rio, 156 Rivington (between Suffolk & Clinton)

9 pm • \$6

Rooftop Shots
Screening of short films shot from a roof, live performances to boot.
Rooftop Films
57 Thames Street, Bushwick
www.rooftopfilms.com

6:30 pm

Celebrate Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos' birthday. Sponsored by the Puerto Rico Nationalist Party New York Committee
700 Elton Avenue, 2nd floor
Bronx, New York

6 - 10 pm • \$25/\$15 students (pre registration required)

Reframing 911 : Alternatives to Endless War, We must Connect the Dots

1pm

No WTO: Parade and Festival of Resistance to War & Corporate Rule
Tour of shame parade to highlight the links between globalization, war, and immigrant rights in solidarity with protests against the WTO protests in Cancun, Mexico.
Meet at Union Square South
Organized by United for Peace and Justice
www.utpj.org

1:30 pm

No WTO Bike Bloc
Ride for cyclists and skaters in support of the UFPJ Parade
Middle of Tompkins Square Park, near big tree.

2 pm - 5 pm

Mobilization meeting for the 8th National Day of Protest to Stop Police Repression
Oct. 22nd Coalition, meeting at Project Reach
1 Orchard Street
(between Canal & Division)

2:30 pm • \$20

Yoga for Peace
Battery Park - South end of central lawn. For approx 3 hours, 2,000 participants will join to complete a Mala, practiced in India to mark transition and positive change.
Contact Jennifer Skoda 212 289-3086, Jennifer.skoda@juno.com

6pm • FREE

Clamor Magazine Release Party
Bluestockings Bookstore
172 Allen Street (between Stanton & Rivington)
212 777-6028

6:30 pm

Tribute to Salvador Allende
Special Commemoration on the 30th Anniversary of the September 11, 1973 coup in Chile.
International Action Center
39 e. 14th St. Second floor
212-633-6646



RECLAIM THE STREETS

POLITICIZED PARTYGOERS PROTEST PATRIOT ACT

Sept. 5 – The party got started at 8 p.m. in Union Square, with break dancing, beat-boxing, speech-making and music. The event was a party, a protest against the Patriot Act, and a warning to the Republican National Convention, scheduled for August 2004, that it is “not welcome” in New York City.

Wearing party masks and carrying flags with the Reclaim the Streets dance party logo, over 300 New Yorkers boarded the L-train, dancing, clapping and singing their way to Williamsburg. Once there, Fire dancing, flag dancing, and just regular dancing were the order of the day, and the intersection was decorated with streamers.

PHOTOS: *Fritz@fredaskew.com*



CITY/STATE

HOW THE RENT BATTLE WAS LOST

BY A.K. GUPTA

The housing-rights group Tenants and Neighbors called it a “sneak attack,” referring to the bill renewing rent regulation that was passed by the New York State Legislature on June 20.

In 1997 rent laws were renewed for six years for 2 million rent-regulated apartments throughout the state. That bill extended “vacancy decontrol,” whereby apartments that rent for more than \$2,000 are deregulated, thus enabling landlords to charge whatever they wish. Since then, tenants and landlords have been organizing in preparation for when the laws would expire this past June 19.

The goal of tenants-rights activists was to end vacancy decontrol. Instead, with a public distracted by war and the state budget battle, activists struggled to publicize their message. During the past four years, meanwhile, wealthy landlords dumped \$2.7 million on politicians in Albany to gut regulation.

The new bill jumps rent for thousands of tenants, strengthens the Urstadt Law, which prevents the city from enacting pro-tenant legislation, and most damaging, continues vacancy decontrol. The result, explains Tenants and Neighbors, will be “the deregulation of hundreds of thousands of apartments and the drastic shrinking of the tenant political base.” The group explains if nothing changes before the rent laws expire in 2011, it’s likely “everyone will be deregulated.”

The question on the minds of millions of New Yorkers who depend on rent regulation for affordable housing is: how did such a flawed bill pass into law when it was known for six years that there would be a showdown in the legislature?

To get answers, I talked to a long-time observer of the tenants-rights movement. David, not his real name, says “First, it’s important to understand that rent stabilization is not just about money. It means the

right to renew your lease automatically and that you can only be evicted for cause.”

I asked him what happened in the legislature. He explained that the Democratic-controlled Assembly passed a bill that would have eliminated the \$2,000 decontrol and lowered vacancy increases passed in 1997 from 20 percent to 10 percent. “But this bill was never voted on in the Republican-majority Senate. They blocked efforts to bring it to the floor. At 3 a.m. on literally the last night of the session Senate Majority leader Joe Bruno pushed through the pro-landlord legislation.”

He says, “New York State has one of the most dysfunctional lawmaking processes in the country. Nothing gets done until the last minute when Bruno, Gov. Pataki and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver sit in a back room to work things out.” Consequently, David continues, “whether or not people in the city can afford to have homes is in the hands of upstate Republicans whose only connection to the city is the money they take from landlords.”

Once the Senate passed the bill and adjourned for the summer, “The Assembly could have rejected the Senate’s bill, but that would have meant the laws would have expired. Letting the laws expire would have crystallized the issue but many people would have gotten hurt.”

Tenants and Neighbors contends “the Assembly could have called the Senate’s bluff and worked with tenants to bring the Senate back into negotiations, and no tenant could have been harmed for several weeks.”

But David says “It’s ironic that Tenants and Neighbors is saying the Assembly should have rejected the bill because they have gotten a lot of criticism for compromising.” He explained that the group tends to favor pressuring lawmakers over movement building.

Many people put their trust in Sheldon Silver, but the only way to strengthen rent laws “was to use the budget as leverage and Silver didn’t do that.” He suggests, “The Assembly should have said that Bruno’s dis-

trict wouldn’t get a penny for anything, schools, firemen or cops, until rent laws were passed.”

The media, too, shares blame. “The mainstream media is largely ignoring that there is a housing crisis in the city and dismisses rent regulation as an outdated socialist relic.”

David adds that unions abandoned their members. “How many teachers live in rent-stabilized apartments? The teachers’ union has no business endorsing Pataki, which they did in 2002. Or 1199, one of the most progressive unions in the state, they also endorsed Pataki. The unions should stick up for their members’ rights to housing rather than selling out to right-wing politicians for token raises.”

He says that “Another tenants-rights group, Metropolitan Council on Housing, is going to campaign for repealing Urstadt because if the city had control over rent regulation it would be much stronger.” However, “To overturn Urstadt would require the approval of the Republican Senate. It’s not impossible, but the amount of real-estate money that comes into the Republican Party and the control Bruno has over the Senate means that’s unlikely to happen.” (Since 1999, Bruno and his committees have received at least \$836,000 from landlords.)

What’s needed is “strong grassroots organizing. But the tenant rights movement does not have 5,000 people to go door-to-door getting people involved. And in 1997, you had this demonstration five days before the laws expire, it was at five o’clock in midtown so people coming out of work could come, and you only had 1,200 people.”

He criticizes the focus on electing pro-tenant legislators, who he estimates at 20 percent of the legislature, because the “system is rigged” so Republicans control the Senate. David opines “tenants may have to start doing extra-legal and militant tactics, like large-scale rent strikes simply for cheaper rent. Obviously that’s very risky because you don’t want all your possessions thrown into a dumpster.”

THE PEOPLES’ LAWYER

BY ANN M. SCHNEIDER
NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD, NYC

WHY DOES ALBANY DECIDE YOUR RENT?

In recent hearings for the extension of the rent control and rent stabilization laws, tenants demanded the repeal of a notoriously anti-democratic 1971 state statute, known as the Urstadt Law, which removed rent laws from home rule and required any change in rent statutes to be voted upon in Albany. Ironically, in the final hours of this summer’s legislative session, the Urstadt Law was actually strengthened to the detriment of New York City tenants.

Named after Gov. Nelson Rockefeller’s housing commissioner Charles J. Urstadt, the Urstadt Law prohibits the New York City Council from enacting “more stringent or restrictive provisions of regulation and control than those presently in effect” without state approval. Given the relative scarcity of tenants in upstate counties, lawmakers in Albany hear far fewer tenant demands than council members do in the city. Passage of the Urstadt Law has thus put city tenants at a permanent disadvantage in the fight to maintain affordable housing.

The effect of strengthening the Urstadt Law is that none of the pro-tenant legislation being considered by the New York City Council can now become law.

Recently, two significant pieces of local legislation were pending. The first, with 24 co-sponsors, would have reformed the Rent Guidelines Board (RGB) to make appointment of its members subject to the approval of the City Council. They are presently appointed solely by the Mayor. The RGB is the body that hears testimony and deliberates each year how much to raise (or theoretically lower) rents charged to rent-stabilized tenants.

The second piece of local legislation would have changed the rent increase formula for rent-controlled tenants in an effort to give them relief from the 7.5 percent increases and fuel pass-alongs each year.

As redrafted, Urstadt now restricts any municipality from changing the way rent laws are administered by the state, apparently in response to a December 2001 decision by the state’s highest court that a local law passed by the New York City Council did not violate Urstadt. The landlord’s bar was seeking a 32.4 percent increase for rent-controlled apartments.

In that case, the landlord’s bar argued to the Court of Appeals that the 1997 local law changing one element of the complex formula for setting rents in rent-controlled apartments violated Urstadt.

Chief Justice Judith Kaye wrote for the majority, “We cannot accept the landlord’s argument that the Urstadt Law was intended to give them a vested interest in overvaluation... nor that the State Legislature intended to prohibit the City Council from later adopting another, more accurate, equalization scheme. ...Local Law 73 preserves the regulatory scheme while restoring congruence between the statutory measure of capital value and the actual value of rent controlled buildings that the State Legislature took for granted when it passed the Urstadt Law.”

Rather than take their chances with an independent judiciary, the landlord’s lobby again sought to preempt the courts, tenant advocates and their local elected representatives by stealthy, late-night dealings behind closed doors in Albany.

The National Lawyers Guild, NYC chapter, may be reached at 212.679.6018. The opinions expressed in this column are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the position of the organization as a whole.

RASH OF VIOLENCE CLAIMS LIVES OF TWO TRANSGENDER WOMEN IN D.C.

ELF: "IF YOU BUILD IT, WE WILL BURN IT"

Adherents of the Earth Liberation Front have claimed credit for a night of vandalism and arson at Los Angeles-area SUV dealerships that damaged 40 vehicles and, in a separate incident, for the \$50 million blaze that gutted a new San Diego apartment complex.

The ELF claims responsibility for \$100 million in damages since 1997 in their campaign to use "direct action in the form of economic sabotage to stop the destruction of the natural environment."

According to San Diego Indymedia, the FBI has kicked up their investigation with a raid targeting local environmentalists and anarchists, allegedly seeking videotape of a speech by Rod Coronado, a "monkey-wrenching" advocate who recently spoke in the city.

A recent study by the Surface Transportation Policy Project concluded that 57 percent of air pollutants in Los Angeles are from tail-pipe emissions. Another recent survey found that the region faces a "public health crisis" from respiratory illnesses.

RECYCLING BACK ON TRACK WITH 20-YEAR CONTRACT

When Mayor Michael Bloomberg opted to suspend recycling last summer, city environmentalists were distraught. After years of using public education to combat apathy, they were sent back to square one.

But those activists were celebrating last week, as the city revealed plans for an unprecedented 20-year contract for glass, plastic and metal recycling.

"This is a dramatic and very exciting change," said James Tripp, general counsel for Environmental Defense, a national nonprofit group. "The city is now looking at container recycling more from a business investment point of view than a waste-handling perspective."

The Department of Sanitation's request for recycling proposals, announced Aug. 19, comes on the heels of a scathing May report by City Comptroller Bill Thompson, questioning the department's assessment of recycling as a money pit. Earlier, Bloomberg had suspended recycling of glass and plastic on the premise that it would cut millions of dollars out of that agency's budget.

SERBIAN PARLIAMENT CLAIMS KOSOVO IN DEFIANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The Serbian Parliament on Aug. 27 unanimously adopted the controversial Kosovo Declaration, which proclaims the United Nations-administered province to be under Serbian sovereignty. The document also suggests that any dialogue about the province's autonomy should begin only after the democratic conditions set down in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 are met.

Speaking to parliamentarians ahead of the declaration's acceptance, Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Nebojsa Covic, Belgrade's envoy for Kosovo, said the declaration would demonstrate to the world that Serbia is united on the Kosovo issue.

Ethnic Albanian officials in Kosovo have remained firm in their calls for independence for the province. Local media quoted Kosovo Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi as saying, "[the declaration] might mean something to Serbia and Montenegro, but not to Kosovo."



Transgender women gather on K Street NW between Third and Fifth, a nightly occurrence. PHOTO: Marvin Joseph (Washington Post)

BY SUZY SUBWAYS

Tuesday, Aug. 19 was not a good day for Ruby Bracamonte. Her close friend of ten years, Bella Evangelista, a 25-year-old transgender woman, had been shot dead on a Northwest Washington, D.C., street early the previous Saturday morning. In local news reports, Evangelista, a popular performer in D.C. drag shows, was inaccurately described as "a man who dressed as a woman." National media had ignored the killing. But the week was to get much worse.

Bracamonte organized a vigil for her dead friend. One hundred people marched to the site of her murder, where candles, flowers, stuffed animals and signs — one saying "Transgenders Unite!" and others calling for an end to violence — were assembled as a memorial to the Latina performer. On Wednesday, Aug. 20, the memorial was found destroyed.

That night, an African-American transgender woman, Punani Walker, 25, was shot and critically wounded in Northwest D.C. And by Thursday morning, police had found the body of another Black transgender woman, Emonie Spaulding, also 25, in Southeast D.C. She had been beaten and shot to death.

Ruby Bracamonte and other transgender activists held an emergency press conference that day at La Clinica del Pueblo, a local Latino community health clinic with which Bracamonte is affiliated.

"We are being killed," Bracamonte told those assembled. "Our lives are being taken away, for the simple fact of who we are."

Although transgender activists and police agree that the incidents are probably not related to each other, the murders have struck fear in the heart of transgenders living in D.C.

"Before, even if you dealt with ridicule, it was a worthwhile price to pay to be visible," Bracamonte says. "We were trying to be open, outspoken, present in the community. Now people feel like that is compromised."

Antoine Jacobs, 22, was arrested immediately after Evangelista's death and charged with first degree murder while armed. Police have said that Jacobs paid Evangelista for oral sex and then felt he had been deceived after learning that she was a transsexual. Responding to this charge of deception — a common narrative following such murders — Bracamonte points out, "It is easy to say, 'They should have told.' In reality, we do. Most transgenders are very open and honest about who they are. In most [murder] cases, we find out that everybody knew. Bella lived in the neighborhood where she was killed. She was not in the closet."

Still, Earline Budd, founder of Transgender Health Empowerment, a group affiliated with a local AIDS organization serving the Black community, says that she has talked to several teenagers who have been shot at, run down by cars or assaulted after not telling dates they were transgender.

"I'm 45 now, but when I was younger, I was shot at," she says. "I've been through it myself." Budd explains that when she was doing sex work in her early 20s she started regularly clarifying her gender identity for clients. "They'd ask, 'You're a guy?' and I'd

say, 'No, I'm a woman, but I'm a transgender woman.'"

Budd sees her advice not as a justification for blaming the victim but as a safety measure, an attempt to do "what can we do, in today's world, to be safe," she says. "I don't want the young people to experience that." Implied in her words, however, is an understanding that transgender women should not have to explain themselves at every turn, and that so many should not have to be on the streets to begin with.

"Because of the stigma, and getting beaten up, many don't finish high school," Budd says. "We need some type of institution where lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students can feel comfortable and get an education." She explains that transgenders are also discriminated against in housing, employment and healthcare.

Hate Crime Laws & Community Response

On August 26, Antwan D. Lewis, 22, was arrested for the murder of Emonie Spaulding after turning himself in. Punani Walker, who was shot in the chest and leg during a robbery, is now expected to fully recover. "We thought she wasn't going to make it," Earline Budd says. Walker gave a full description of her attackers, who are now suspects in several recent robberies of transgender women.

Budd and other activists spoke with the mother of Antoine Jacobs, Evangelista's alleged killer, after his arraignment August 18. "She's suffering because of what he did," Budd says. Since the murder has been classified as a hate crime, if Jacobs is convicted, he would be subject to a sentence one-and-a-half times greater than for a non-bias related crime.

Some activists have mixed feelings about hate crimes legislation, however.

Lizbeth Melendez of LLEGO, the national Latino/a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender organization, told Metro Watch, a local news radio show on DC's Pacifica station WPFW, "Education will go so much further. [People of color] are the largest segment of the prison population. Why do we continue to put people in prison instead of being preventive?"

"Fifteen separate incidents — beatings, robberies, vandalism — have been reported to the Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit of the police in the past two weeks," Bracamonte says.

She herself has continued to face harassment — even on the way to her murdered friend's vigil.

"There were a hundred people walking to the site of her murder," she says. "A lot of people were out, and they were yelling at us: 'Faggots, queers!' We are always fighting to show people that we're happy to be who we are and that we don't want to hide."

CITY

QUEER HIGH SCHOOL OPENS TO CHEERS AND JEERS

BY DANIEL TASRIPIN

Welcomed with the firing of soap bubble guns into the sky and glitter confetti spread at their feet, students at the Harvey Milk High School began their first day of classes on Sept. 8. Hundreds of supporters packed onto the barricaded sidewalks of Astor Place, drowning out the promised heckles of a few Christian fundamentalists.

Across the street stood a group of moral crusaders from the Topeka, Kansas-based Westboro Baptist Church, famous for disrupting Matthew Shepard's funeral and their website *GodHatesFags.com*.

Meanwhile, State Sen. Ruben Diaz has launched a suit to block Harvey Milk High's funding, accusing it of segregation, discriminat-

ing against straights, and draining public education funds from his constituency.

Diaz has apparently not met the students of Harvey Milk. If he did, he would find persons such as Vivika Quinones, a Harvey Milk High student who graduated in 2002. She considers herself the typical student there: Latino, from the outer boroughs, and frustrated by the hostile environment of the two schools she went to before Harvey Milk High.

Vivika remembers Milk High fondly, calling it "a refuge." "You cannot put a band-aid on such an open wound," she notes, speaking of the conditions queer and trans youth face in the New York City public school system, "but Harvey Milk is a start."

The support rally was organized by FIERCE, a queer youth group.

SAFIYA BUKHARI PRESENTE

FROM STUDENT TO BLACK PANTHER, FROM WRITER AND TEACHER TO JAILBREAKER, SAFIYA BUKHARI LIVED LIFE TO THE END.



BY KAZEMBE BULAGOON

Safiya Bukhari, political-prisoner-rights activist and radio journalist, passed away due to illness on Aug. 24. She was 53 years old. Bukhari, a former member of the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army, was a major force in the emergence of the movement to free American political prisoners. She served as co-chair of the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition in New York City, and was a founding member of the Jericho Movement, an organization that does support work for political prisoners and prisoners of war.

"The loss of Safiya is irreparable," read a statement released by the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition "A deep-thinking and brilliant sister, a grassroots organizer, a political strategist and a unifier around principled positions, Safiya was and is irreplaceable, particularly in the movement to free our political prisoners."

Activism & Repression in the 1960s

Bukhari's activism began when she pledged the sorority Eta Alpha Mu at New York City Community College (now New York Technical College.) As part of her community service the sorority investigated hungry children in New York City. This investigation introduced her to members of the Black Panther Party in Harlem, and she began working with the Panthers' breakfast program as well as their liberation school.

"It was nothing the Black Panther Party did or said that made me become a Panther. It was the actions of the police department in New York City that made me join the Black Panther Party," Bukhari said in a 1996 interview with *The Shield* magazine. In addition to working with children,

Bukhari also edited Panther literature.

In 1969, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover declared the Black Panther Party to be "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country."

Under the auspices of local police departments, the federal government launched the Counter-intelligence program or COINTELPRO aimed at destabilizing radical groups, most notably the Panthers. In this period, more than two dozen Panthers were killed by the police, including 21-year-old Fred Hampton, who was shot in his bed by Chicago police.

The Black Liberation Army

In New York, the entire Panther leadership was arrested on charges of conspiracy. The "Panther 21," as they were known, were held on \$100,000 bail each. The conspiracy trial and subsequent effort to raise bail strained the party in New York. Money designated for breakfast programs now had to go to bail and lawyers' fees.

COINTELPRO also had an effect on the political life of the Panthers. In 1971, a split occurred between Panther Minister of Defense Huey Newton and Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver, with the majority of the East Coast Panthers supporting Cleaver. As a result, the Panther 21 were expelled from the Panthers' national organization headquartered in Oakland.

Facing internal strife and continued harassment by law enforcement, many Panthers went underground and formed an armed wing called the Black Liberation Army.

Bukhari, still in New York at the time, became secretary of the East Coast Communications Branch of the Panthers and edited the BLA newspaper *Right On*. She was involved in several attempts to free

BLA prisoners, which led to her going underground.

Bukhari was captured in 1973 along with Masai Ehehosi. Both Bukhari and Ehehosi declared themselves Prisoners of war, and proclaimed that the government had no jurisdiction over them because they were not citizens of the United States.

Bukhari at one point escaped from prison, but was recaptured in 1975 and sentenced to nine years.

Political Prisoner Support

When released from prison in 1983, Bukhari threw herself into the work of supporting political prisoners. Tirelessly she followed appeals and the health status of prisoners.

In 1998 she co-chaired the historic Jericho march for Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War in Washington, D.C. Ten thousand demonstrators attended, making it the largest support rally for political prisoners in this era. The event attracted great attention to many political prisoners.

In recent years, many political prisoners have been released including Geronimo Pratt, Laura Whitehorn, Kathy Boudin and members of the Armed Forces for National Liberation (a pro-independence Puerto Rican group, known by their Spanish initials FALN) received presidential pardons.

Bukhari also worked as a radio journalist, co-hosting the program "Where We Live" on WBAI. With co-host Sally O'Brien, she sang as a member of the group Love and Struggle, performing benefits for prisoners and their families. In recent years she embraced Islam.

Bukhari is survived by children, grandchildren, and a host of political prisoners and comrades who cherished her work.

ANARCHIST WEBMASTER BEGINS YEAR IN JAIL FOR INFLAMMATORY WEBSITE

BY AMY GOODMAN
& THE STAFF OF DEMOCRACY NOW

On Sept. 3 Sherman Austin, the 20-year-old webmaster of *RaiseTheFist.com*, began a one-year-long prison term. He was arrested 20 months ago by federal officials for illegally distributing information on his website on how to build Molotov cocktails and "Drano bombs." When he gets out of prison next year, he will be banned for three years from associating with anyone who wants to "change the government in any way."

"I think this is more about just shutting down an effective website," Austin said just hours before beginning his sentence. "[The government] is going after someone who is basically standing up and effectively making a voice for himself and other people over the internet and using the internet as a resource and a tool to get a message out."

The material in question was part of a tract called the "Reclaim Guide" that Austin didn't even author — but for which he had offered free hosting on his site. The guide included information on how to build primitive bombs.

In late 2002, federal prosecutors charged Austin under a 1997 law with distributing information on explosives with the intent that readers commit "a federal crime of violence."

According to the tech news site CNet, Austin is the first person charged under this law. Supporters of Austin say that similar information has long appeared on other websites and in libraries. There is even a mirror of *RaiseTheFist.com* run by a computer science professor at the Carnegie Mellon University.

"[Sherman] did not author the material in question," said Merlin Chowkwanyun, an investigative journalist who has closely monitored Austin's case. "He had a website and he offered free space to basically anyone who asked for it. That's what the person who authored this material did, got some free space on Sherman's server, uploaded the material in question."

But despite this, Chowkwanyun says the government has portrayed Sherman as the author of the material. "At a detention hearing in New York after [Sherman] was arrested, the prosecutor insinuates that he authored the material," Chowkwanyun said. "Prior to saying that, he quotes from the bomb-making instruc-



SHERMAN AUSTIN: The judge "wanted to set an example out of me."

tions. But the FBI knew that someone else had authored this material... they actually interviewed the person who authored the material."

Earlier this year Austin pleaded guilty and was sentenced to a year in jail and three years probation, despite recommendations from the Justice Department that Austin receive four months in jail. If he had not pleaded guilty he could have faced 20 years in prison under anti-terrorism provisions of the USA Patriot Act.

"We went back to court," said Austin. "And the judge said, you know, 'what kind of a message would four months in jail send to other revolutionaries?' And he pretty much made it clear that he wanted to set an example out of me and again stated that he wanted to give me at least a year in prison."

For more info, check Democracynow.org

NEPAL ON EDGE

CEASEFIRE OFF, REDS RETURN TO 'PEOPLE'S WAR' VS. 'KING'

BY JED BRANDT

Sporadic clashes throughout Nepal have left dozens dead in past weeks. Several months of ceasefire and fruitless talks between Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) negotiators and King Gyanendra's isolated monarchy crashed after government troops ambushed rebels, killing 17. Rebels formally called off the ceasefire and their members returned underground.

Government negotiators had agreed to some Communist demands such as not labeling the rebels "terrorists" and had, in principle, agreed to discuss any policy. But the government refused to discuss the monarchy itself and attendant social system.

"This is not change. This is a disgrace," said CPN spokesperson Dr. Babu Ram Bhattari denouncing the government's proposed reform package. "We are demanding a new constitution be formed."

The rebels had insisted on a constituent assembly to debate and rebuild the basic structure of Nepalese society, including a referendum on abolishing the monarchy. The rebels say they are not a grievance movement, but seek a social and political revolution based on the lower classes taking political power through a "People's War."

The worst violence in the 7-year-old insurgency came after the collapse of the last ceasefire in 2001. A 10-month state of emergency was called and the army was used for the first time against the Communists. Estimates vary, but rebels control between 40 percent and "all the countryside," depending on who's talking. Over 7,000 have died since the conflict began in 1996.

Nepal is a nominally constitutional Hindu monarchy, with a large Buddhist minority. With a population of 25 million, Nepal is landlocked in the Himalaya mountains and bordered by China and India. Despite the Communists' Maoist inspiration, they view the current government of China as state-capitalist and repressive. India has pushed for influence in the Hindu kingdom since de-colonization. Annual per capita income is \$250.

Gyanendra dissolved the parliament within a year of his ascension to the throne in the aftermath of a palace massacre where the entire royal household was killed. Nepalese press reports blamed the episode on a hash-crazed massacre by then-King Birendra's heir, who was then alleged to have turned the gun on himself. The Nepalese public was largely skeptical of this account and Gyanendra has been extremely unpopular.

On Sept. 4, non-Maoist opposition parties held a pro-democracy rally demanding Gyanendra re-instate the dissolved parliament and form an all-party government including them. Gyanendra suppressed the event with hundreds of arrests over two days.

The opposition parties are pushing for a return to Nepal's constitutional monarchy. Lacking any popular mandate, participation in the King's government or armed forces, they have been effectively sidelined.

Colin Powell's visit last year was the first ever by a ranking American. The U.S. Congress has allotted \$12 million to train officers and supply 5,000 assault rifles to the monarchy.

It's official. It's war again. Following the April 9 toppling of Saddam's statue, *The New York Times* labeled its special Iraq coverage "After the War." Now, after the wake-up car bombing in Najaf, the Times has changed the header to "The Struggle for Iraq."

The brass and suits are muttering nervously that the war is being lost despite Bush and Bremer's Pollyannish pronouncements to the contrary. "There's no way to pretend that the cost of this isn't rising, in human terms, in military terms, and in economic terms," one senior White House official told the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. In Iraq, attacks are becoming more sophisticated: the number of wounded GIs rose 35 percent in August over the previous month. The infrastructure has been

looted clean, unemployment is at 60 percent and the crime rate has exploded phenomenally—the Baghdad morgue recorded a 4,700 percent increase in gunshot deaths this July compared to July 2002.

Yet, the United States is not about to withdraw anytime soon. Gideon Rose of Foreign Affairs explained the logic of power in an online Times forum: "If we can't, or won't [win in Iraq], then for all our vaunted military power and material dominance we'll be revealed to be a paper tiger, and few people will take our word seriously any more when it comes to international commitments. That would be very, very bad."

The British empire was forced from Iraq twice in the last century. Clearly, America isn't doing much better. Understanding why and what's likely to happen is a different matter.



By A. K. GUPTA

AMERICA IS LOSING THIS WAR

COLLABORATORS

The Iraqi resistance is targeting Iraqis working for the Americans, prompting many to quit. At least a dozen translators have been killed. One Iraqi who quit his job as a translator told *Time* magazine he was shot in the leg near his home and lay in an alley bleeding for an hour because his neighbors were afraid to help him. In many towns clandestine lists circulate marking alleged informants for death. In numerous cases they have been killed in drive-by attacks or in broad daylight. In one incident, family members were forced to execute a male relative accused of being an informant. Police are also in the gunights. Seven were killed in a bombing near Ramadi. One of the most recent car bombs targeted the Baghdad chief of police, blowing up outside his office. And police stations have been attacked and burned down in various towns.

Civilian officials have also been killed, such as the head of the state vegetable oil company and an engineer responsible for electricity distribution. The *Chicago Tribune* reported Aug. 31: "The pro-American mayor in the western town of Haditha and his son were killed in an ambush."

The resistance has also killed at least four American civilians working as military contractors, including two from Halliburton, Dick Cheney's former employer.

INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

Even before the Aug. 19 U.N. bombing, two Red Cross employees and a U.N. worker were killed in ambushes. Since the bombing, most aid agencies, such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Red Cross and Oxfam, have withdrawn. The U.N. staff has been reduced by 90 percent.

As for the goal of the U.N. bombing, *Agence France Presse* says it "was not an attack against the United Nations as an organization. Rather, it was designed, along with recent attacks against foreign civilian targets, to paralyze the non-military organizations. The longer civil operations are stopped, the more anti-American discontent will grow because America, as occupying authority, is responsible for these, and all, operations in Iraq."

THE RESISTANCE

A report in the *Los Angeles Times* says "most of the resistance is home grown." It describes the fighters as being "intelligence officers and farmers, militiamen and merchants." A "group commander" named Ahmed detailed one ambush north of Baghdad to Australia's *Sydney Morning Herald*: "We struck at sunset, in an area surrounded by farms... There were 19 soldiers. I could see their faces. I fired three grenades — two at a truck and one at a Humvee. Then we escaped across the fields to a car that was waiting for us. It took just a few seconds because God makes it easy for us." Like many insurgents, Ahmed denies any loyalty to Hussein or the involvement of former Baathists. He claims the resistance is Sunni based and that authority lies "with the sheiks in the mosques," adding "We now have a single, jihadist leadership group that operates nationally."

One analyst estimates there are at least 70 outfits fighting the Occupiers with names like Mohammed's Army, the Iraqi National Islamic Resistance Movement, Army of Right and the White Flags.

A Sept. 1 report from *Asia Times* said the resistance's

"hard core is estimated at 744,000, all responding to local command and self-sufficient in terms of funds, weapons and military know-how." Given how few insurgents are captured in firefights, it's certain that they have at least the tacit support of the population. A survey by the Iraq Center for Research and Strategic Studies found that "nearly half the Iraqis polled attributed the violence to provocation by American forces or resistance to the occupation."

While the Shia have yet to pick up arms against the Americans, the popular young cleric, Muqtada al-Sadr, has formed an "army of al Mahdi" with thousands of recruits, warning they may engage in "martyrdom operations." The killing of a prominent cleric in Najaf has also resulted in the deployment of a 10,000-strong Shia militia called the Badr Brigade in defiance of the Americans.

OTHER COUNTRIES

Spain, one of Bush's few allies in West Europe, is under domestic pressure to bring its 744 soldiers home after a Navy captain was killed in the U.N. bombing. Poland has pledged to lead an unwieldy 21-nation force of 9,000 troops. But the Poles have already begged off assuming control of a volatile area near Baghdad and the U.S. has also decided to retain control of Najaf, which was set to be turned over.

Bush wants to bring the United Nations on board, but powers like France and Germany say no dice as long as the Pentagon is in charge. Few governments are pledging any funding at a planned aid conference for the fall. Diplomats in Brussels were said to be "stunned" by an American estimate that Iraq would need \$20 billion next year for government operations and to make up for lost oil revenues. One official said, "You'd be putting more than a third of the world's development assistance in 2004 into a country with the second largest oil reserves in the world. Imagine what that does to the rest of the poor countries in the world. All of Africa doesn't get that much money." (*New York Times*, Sept. 5, 2003).

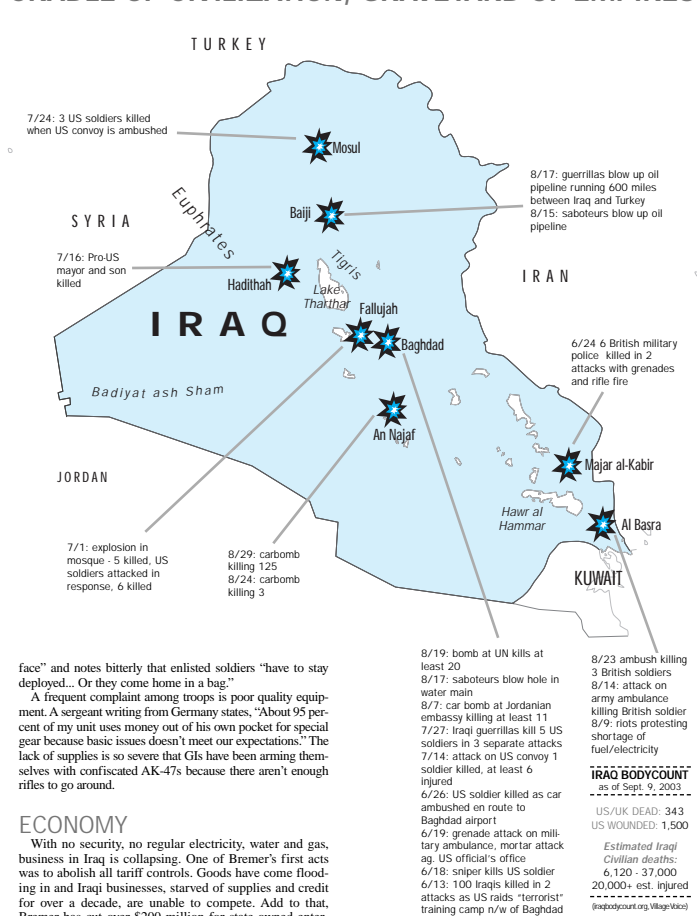
MORALE

The lack of security has led private military contractors to go AWOL. According to the *Newhouse News Service*, "some civilian contractors hired by the Army for logistics support failed to show up." For months, troops have been "camped out in primitive dust-blown shelters without windows" using ramshackle plywood latrines and living without fresh food or regular access to showers and telephones.

The grunts are also stewing from the luxuries enjoyed by occupation officials. The *Australian Broadcasting Corporation* reported an email it received from one soldier who complained that while soldiers "look like hobos" and live like pigs, those running Iraq are more concerned with "hooking up with nice-looking gals from the U.S. and Iraq." He says for staff at the headquarters, their biggest problem is running out of Coke and Diet Coke to eat with their steak and crab leg dinner.

The *Army Times* newspaper has become the forum for discontented troops. First Lt. Eric Rahman, writing from Camp Doha, Kuwait, states that "quality of life is at an all time low." One wife of a national guardsman deployed in Baghdad pleaded in a letter to the *Army Times*: "Please send our troops home." A number of letter writers have criticized officers who are rotating home while their troops remain in Iraq. One parent of a GI writes the policy is "a slap in the

CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION, GRAVEYARD OF EMPIRES



prises that employ 100,000 Iraqis. Additionally, there's been a haphazard purge of former Baathists. At Baghdad University, for example, 436 professors who were Baath party members were sacked, many of whom complain they were members in name only. And 400,000 men have been sacked from the vanquished army.

CRIME

Baghdad's central morgue recorded an increase in shooting deaths from 10 in July 2002 to 470 this July. Most are a result of robberies, break-ins, carjackings and vendettas. But according to morgue employees who have talked to the families, perhaps one-third of those shot were killed by American troops.

A Sept. 3 *Boston Globe* dispatch tallied some of the claimants on one day at the Baghdad morgue: "a mother who alleged that her 21-year-old son had been killed at a checkpoint by U.S. soldiers who mistook the YCR he was carrying for a weapon; a man whose 28-year-old brother allegedly was shot by American troops when he went into a yard at 4 a.m. to start a generator; a man whose brother, a retired policeman, was shot to death in a carjacking; and a man whose brother and brother-in-law were killed in a home robbery."

Looting of Iraq's archaeological treasures has accelerated with no one protecting ancient sites. Rapes have become endemic, but shame keeps most victims shrouded in secrecy.

Kidnapping for ransom is one of the few growth industries. According to the Aug. 26 *New York Times*, "the vast majority of kidnappings are not being reported 'because the families are either too frightened or simply lack any faith in the new police force.'" Further down, the *Times* explains why there might be a lack of faith. "There were indications that the police might be working with the kidnapers in some cases."

U.S. MILITARY CASUALTIES

If the Pentagon could hide deaths, a.k.a. bodywashing, it would. Instead, it has pressured the media to only report combat deaths, which are running about 150. What qualifies as a combat death is malleable; numerous deaths have occurred from vehicle accidents that are apparently a result of troops panicking under fire. To date almost 300 GIs have died, not including civilians working for the Pentagon or international agencies. Officially, another 1,500 have been injured.

But according to officials at Walter Reed Hospital, 6,000 troops have passed through there for treatment since the start of the war. To downplay the numbers, the wounded totals exclude those afflicted by disease (there is a severe strain of pneumonia afflicting some troops), heat stroke, which has felled hundreds and killed five U.S. soldiers, and those suffering from shell shock. (*Washington Post*, Aug. 14, 2003).

HEARTS AND MINDS

U.S. forces are becoming locked in a deadly spiral of increasing alienation which spurs the use of greater force that further alienates Iraqis. Checkpoint killings, detentions and raids have outraged huge swaths of Iraqi society. One 17-year-old seized in a July 13 raid 40 miles north of Baghdad told *Newsweek*, "the Americans slipped a hood over his head and cuffed his hands. — If you told them that the cuffs were hurting you, they would tighten them." he says, holding out wrists that still bear the marks of captivi-

ty. "They kicked us and hit us." He was released after nine days, but 19 of his fellow villagers remained in captivity more than 40 days later. And families "have no idea where they're being held, why they've been detained or how to get in touch with them."

The U.S. has established a giant prison camp near the Baghdad airport that holds some 5,000 Iraqis. Many former detainees say they were physically abused and given insufficient food and water. Others say they were never questioned and released after months in captivity.

Few believe that eliminating Hussein will end the resistance. A relative of former Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan, told the Aug. 11 edition of *Time*: "There are many people who would like to fight against the Americans, but if they fight now they'll be considered Saddam's people. So the resistance will be stronger if Saddam is captured or killed."

GOVERNING COUNCIL

The first act of the Iraqi Governing Council was to declare April 9 a national holiday. Robert Fisk writes in *The Independent* that for Iraqis the new holiday marks "the first day of their country's foreign occupation. 'From its very first decision,' an Iraqi journalist told me with contempt, 'the Interim Council de-legitimized itself.'"

The Council is made up of exiles, unknown Iraqis and Kurds. It is so fragmented that members agreed to a nine-month presidency with each taking a one-month turn. The first president, when asked by a reporter where he lived replied "London."

After the U.N. mission bombing, L. Paul Bremer III, the chief U.S. civil administrator, had a heated confrontation with the Council. Bremer's sage advice was that they should hold "town hall meetings," "come out with a forceful statement" and "undertake an aggressive press outreach strategy."

The result is that no one seems to know who is in charge. The bombing in Najaf, wrote *The New York Times*, was "met by a political vacuum" in Baghdad. "There were no speeches calling for calm and few public appearances by anyone in authority. Bremer was on vacation in Vermont. Nobody knew when he would return. The American military command said nothing."

IRAQIFICATION

Plans are afoot to create a myriad of forces — police, civil guard, militia, army — to assume control of security. That seems unlikely to work, however. In clashes between GIs and protesters, the police are often observed to be the first to flee.

The real purpose of the various forces is to provide the U.S. military with human intelligence because it doesn't even know who it's fighting. "Putting more soldiers on the ground is not going to solve the problem when I don't have the intelligence to act on." Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, commander of U.S. Ground Forces, told the media.

The Pentagon is reviving the notorious Interior Ministry and has established a 5,000-strong "Civil Defense Battalion." The *Washington Post* reported Sept. 4 that the ministry "will also command a domestic intelligence network made up largely of secret police and intelligence agents from the ousted government."

Apparently, the brass has an even crazier idea in the works, one certain to inflame the Sunni Arab resistance. The *World Tribune* website reported Aug. 30: "Kurdish groups have agreed to the U.S. request to help quell a Sunni insurgency. The sources said the Kurds will send 2,000 combatants to such cities as Baqubah, Faluja and Tikrit, the heart of the Sunni uprising."

INFRASTRUCTURE

While some attacks on the infrastructure are politically motivated, most seem to be for monetary gain. Transmission towers are being toppled for their value as scrap metal and for their more precious copper wires. Electricity is spotty at best. Baghdad is getting just 8-12 hours a day of power. The power shortage is so severe that *Middle East Online* reported Aug. 29 that "The U.S.-appointed transitional leadership said Wednesday it was considering buying electricity from neighboring Iran, Syria and Turkey."

Oil pipelines are being tapped by smugglers who haul the crude out of the country, where it's refined and then resold on the Iraqi black market at up to 50 times the official price—a major factor in the Basra unrest in early August. Production has dropped to 750,000 barrels a day, but even that is subjective. According to an AP report on July 14, "The lack of storage and export facilities [is forcing] Iraqis to re-inject much of the oil back into underground reservoirs."

Bechtel officials quoted by the Aug. 27 *Wall Street Journal* say the sabotage is worsening. In the spring, Bechtel teams found dozens of downed transmission towers across Iraq. An assessment in recent weeks, however, found that over 120 towers are now down across the country.

THE SLOW, HOT WAR



Occupation Eyes

Kate

Nablus, West Bank

Yesterday, I had to get into Nablus while it was under curfew. I was with three Palestinians. I had a hard time getting in. Once in the city, I had to walk up to a tank and another armored vehicle and negotiate with them to let us through. They didn't let the one male in our group past, so he walked around. We eventually got through.

Last night Israeli soldiers invaded a hospital and shot it up, injuring two and killing one. Today, I went to the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees, a medical agency that has ambulances, to help. Internationals and Palestinian medical workers split into groups. I was with three Palestinians and one other international, delivering food to the Old City because we are the only ones who can get to the people. We walked by many tanks, jeeps and armed vehicles.

We almost got to our destination when a jeep stopped us and soldiers took me and the other international into custody, arresting us. We were forced to sit with the soldiers at their makeshift base in the Old City with their two tanks (there are many more spread throughout the city) and numerous jeeps and armed vehicles.

The soldiers were all around me. Rocks and glass, sound bombs, tear gas, tanks firing, machine guns, automatic weapons, the whole nine yards. They were shooting at the Palestinians. They shot someone in the head. Every time a child would look out the window the soldiers would point their guns and scream at them and cock their triggers.

For five hours I was trapped next to the firing guns and tanks. I tried distracting the Israelis by talking to them, hoping they wouldn't notice Palestinians breaking curfew. It seemed to work.

I prayed, I prayed and I prayed that God would warm their hearts so that they would stop this madness. I was so scared. They were all around me shooting. I knew that I was supposed to experience this, because now I have seen the war from the soldier's point of view. Now I know what they do, say, feel and how they act.

I made it back up to my apartment. Now I am with the family that includes the three Palestinians who accompanied me here from Kalandia checkpoint near Ramallah and Jerusalem. They are taking good care of me. I love them dearly. I came in here sobbing. I am still shocked.

They kept telling me this is their daily life. I am just not used to it. I wish I could describe the pain I feel and what it was like being in the middle of the soldiers shooting and bombing my friends. I wish I could make you see, but then again, I wouldn't wish today on anyone. I am glad the soldiers released me.

My mom said the Palestinians were bloodthirsty and hungry for revenge. This is not what they want. Most Palestinians

want peace and their land. We all want freedom. Please don't believe the news the way they portray Palestinians.

Do you know the Hamas leader they killed in Gaza was a moderate who was critical of the suicide bombings and was working for peace? Did you know that the IDF assassinates Hamas members who are moderates and leave many of the fanatics?

I bet you didn't know that not all Hamas members support suicide bombings. That's like saying all Democrats supported the bombing of Kosovo because of Clinton's decisions.



Growing Up Put Down

Mike

Rafah, Gaza

I am sitting in an internet cafe in Rafah. Martyr posters of Rachel Corrie hang above my head, a reminder that she used to be a frequent visitor to this cafe in the last part of her life. Her spirit fills Rafah. Everywhere I go I see her posters and hear her stories. I hear how the people love her and how she loved the people. I am told how she always played with the children and how they will never forget her.

Mostly though I feel her spirit in the homes of Palestinians we stayed with along the border. Homes threatened with demolition, homes Rachel stayed in and fought to protect. I feel her in Abu Jameel's house where her picture hangs on the wall above where the children play, in the room least likely to have bullets flying through it. Rachel also played with these children. Jameel three years old, Nancy two years old and Basant still a baby less than a year old, all these children have grown up with the intifada watching the homes be destroyed around them, listening to the nightly gunfire and explosions outside their home. They have known nothing else. Would it seem strange for them to live a life without these things?

Nura, their mother, is a true heroine. I've watched her lay on the floor of the "safe room" protecting her children with her body during exceptionally heavy gunfire. Five minutes later she'll be in the kitchen preparing the evening meal surrounded by the bullet holes caused by indiscriminate firing from the Israeli tower.

Abu Jameel, the father, spends long days in his fields on the outskirts of town. He leaves early in the morning hitching up his donkey to his cart and making a 20-minute commute. By the time he returns at night the gunfire has often already begun.

Abu Jameel is a native of Rafah. He owned many stores and buildings until they were all destroyed by Israeli bulldozers in the name of "security." Now his home and fields are all he has.

As I type I can not help but imagine that Rachel typed on this same computer telling this same story struggling for the words to wake up a sleeping world to the

plight of the Palestinian people. Showing the world that it is possible to fight valiantly with words and nonviolent actions.

Rubber Bullets

Zara

Ramallah, West Bank

Our cab got into Ramallah at 3 p.m., but before we could get to the center of the city, we were met by the sight of retreating Palestinians, ages ranging from seven to twenty-five. There was the sound of gunfire down the block from us. The army had entered downtown Ramallah with two armored jeeps and an armored personnel carrier, about the size of a tank. We jumped out of the cab and dispersed. Some ran up the block, fumbling to take out their camcorders, microphones and cameras.

Three of us rushed to the side of the road where a boy about 16 years old was sitting surrounded by people and a medic, screaming in Arabic. Upon closer look, one could see that he had caught a rubber bullet in the left calf. The medic poured Sprite onto his wound. He screamed. He was bandaged, and two hours later I would see him walking out of the hospital.

We went up the block to find the rest of our delegation. Before reaching the corner, there was a sudden wave of around a hundred Palestinians running back as shots were fired again. From where I was standing, I could only see a few delegation members. We ducked into the entrance area of a closed shop. The five or six Palestinians across from us were crouching behind a parked van, waiting, rocks in hands.

A few minutes later, as the jeeps and APC moved further away, they ran onto the street. Picking up speed with one arm behind them, the stopped abruptly to release the stone into flight. Then they all ran up, but before we could follow, one of our group

ran up and told us that Nasser (a New York native and international volunteer) had been shot in the head by a rubber bullet. That he's in an ambulance on his way to Ramallah Hospital, and that he's okay. His girlfriend's first words were, "You're joking." She didn't ask him, she told him that he was joking. She told him that he's joking about her loved one being shot in the head by the Israeli soldier for standing on the street. No, it's not a joke, but don't worry, he's okay.

The Morality of Resistance

Emma

Rafah, Gaza

Last night there was rapid machinegun fire, small explosions, and sniper shooting along the border, throughout the night. Many of the shots were aimed at the sky, and some at the sides of buildings. No one was injured.

The other day my father called me to check in. He asked if I had heard about the recent suicide bombings in Israel. I said yes, and asked if he had heard about Israel's continued violations of the ceasefire. He hadn't. I thought about the media in the United States, and how it's hard for people to believe all of the heinous things that the Israeli military is doing to Palestinians, while the media spoonfeeds the world an entirely different story.

It is important to look at Israel's actions during the ceasefire in order to understand the acceleration of violence. We cannot ignore the walls that are still being built entirely around the West Bank and Gaza, and the prisoners Israel refuses to release, many of whom have never been tried even after years in jail.

We must not ignore the assassinations and incursions that Israel is carrying out in the West Bank before Palestinians took any action outside of the agreements of the ceasefire. Two days ago, at our regular

QALQILYA: TURNING CITIES INTO GHETTOS

BY ERIC MONSE

For the people of Qalqilya, the world is flat. Go to the center of the city and pick any direction, north, south, east or west and begin walking. Eventually you will come to a wall, eight meters high.

Qalqilya (pronounced call•keel•ya) is a Palestinian city of approximately 50,000 people and is entirely surrounded by a 'security fence' that Israel is building. The security fence, a giant black cement wall with guard towers every half mile, does not run along the border between Israel and Palestine. It is entirely located within the West Bank and specifically mapped out to accommodate Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

Some settlements remain to the west of the winding wall and some to the east, but Qalqilya is entirely fenced in, a giant prison, with one checkpoint and one farmer's gate. The farmers that use the gate have been cut off from the 1,600 acres of agricultural fields that surround the city.

Osama, a farmer in Qalqilya, is hoping to take action against the wall. "We try to go through the farmers' gate and the soldiers ask where we are going. I say 'to my land.' The soldiers say 'you have no land.'"

"Israel used the same scenario in 1948 to emigrate Palestinians. But now we will not do the same thing. We will die on our land." Osama is referring to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 when 418 villages were ethnically cleansed and more than 750,000 Palestinian people, were expelled. The West Bank and Gaza now comprise 22 percent of what was considered Palestine at the turn of the century.

"Problems in Qalqilya are different," says Mohamad Saleem, a local organizer. "Education, industrial, trade, just getting outside of Qalqilya is a problem for us. A one-hour drive to Nablus takes a day. It's a problem for farmers to irrigate their fields."

Increasingly isolated, Qalqilya is becoming a world of its own. As the sun sets and the hours grow late you will not see children running through the streets. As the last gate is closed at whatever hour the soldiers choose, Qalqilya closes its eyes and prays that the gates will open another day.



REPRESENT: ISMers tag the Apartheid Wall.



English lessons with high school students in Rafah, a conversation developed surrounding the word "violence." There was a question asked about Palestinian violence. The students refused the question based on the assumption that actions taken by Palestinians against the Israeli occupation are violence. The students explained to us that a people under occupation legally have the right to oppose this occupation, and that this is resistance, not violence.

Since the conversation I have been thinking a lot about resistance. Considering the inhumane actions taken daily by the Israeli army against Palestinian civilians, and the fact that they have been trapped inside small areas and occupied, do they not have the right to resist? If the choice is to resist in any way possible, or die silenced, what would you do? I reiterate that I believe 100 percent in nonviolent resistance, which is what I am currently doing in Rafah. I also believe we have a lot to learn from the voices of the Palestinians who are living under occupation on a daily basis.

Visiting the Injured

Laura
Gaza

Mohammed's legs are smattered with scars from bullet holes, his foot is covered in bandages and his knees jut out awkwardly. He has been lying in the hospital for six weeks since he was shot by a tank in Beit Hanoun during the invasion while attempting to help others who had been shot, including two who were killed. These were children.

Mohammed is 17 and he will not walk again. His smiling face beckons us from the corner of the hospital room. Smiling. "What can I do," his eyes say. "Cry?"

In another corner a 20-something officer is recovering from being shot in the leg. He patrols the border at the north of the Gaza Strip and one day he was leaving work and an Israeli soldier shot him in the leg. Just like that.

These are not even the recent injuries. Ibrahim's leg is broken from an attack yesterday in Jabaliya camp. Three Apache missiles were fired on a refugee camp holding 90,000 people in a single square kilometer, one of the most densely populated places in the world. The activists they were targeting escaped, so the army's big victory was an old man riding his donkey cart, three donkeys, and twenty-six injured. We heard the F-16 flying lower than usual. I'd just learned that the army uses F-16s to disguise the sound of an Apache. So you won't be able to run.

The man who was leaving his carpentry job to pick up some small gifts for his children on his way home had his leg blown apart by the first missile. He tried to move out of the way and then the second missile came from another direction and so his arm is in a sling as well. Another man who was walking down the stairs to leave work. Another man who was trying to help the injured. F-16s interfere with phone signals for 10 minutes after they leave an area so no one can call the ambulances.

The first bomb three days ago came at night and no one could figure out where it had hit. One person said he was right next door and heard the blast but still didn't know where it was. He started to walk out of the area and tripped on a body part and that's how he know where the Apache had hit.

The man in the bed who was going to buy gifts for his kids says it's not enough for us just to visit, to talk. Well I don't know what is enough or how there can be enough and I suppose when this ends we will know how much is enough.



Checkpoints

Juliana Felman
Nablus, West Bank

They came to the hospital from villages in every direction through some of the most notoriously difficult permanent checkpoints in Palestine: Beit Iba, Beit Farik and the dreaded Huwara. All of them left before sunrise to arrive here. The conversation is dominated with, "How were the roads from Luban?"

"How were the soldiers at Beit Farik?" as if they are farmers discussing the weather. During the course of the day it filters out that all of the checkpoints have been completely closed. This is not too surprising as the previous day the army invaded Askar refugee camp, killing four people and dealing a final blow to the ceasefire after a long series of provocations.

In a cynical gesture, the Israelis sealed off the West Bank in anticipation of the retaliation that they courted. Patients clamored around the ambulances as they drove by, squeezing in beyond what space would allow, knowing that this was their only hope of getting home this day.

Ambulances cannot enter Assyra on the best of days. This is because one of the tallest mountains in Palestine overlooks the village. From its peak, say longtime residents who can remember flying kites up there as children, you can see the Mediterranean Sea and cars driving in the east in Jordan. Now at the top of the mountain one can see a series of towers and wires. It is an army base, almost entirely underground, the second most important in the territories.

This is why people who live in Assyra are told to travel hours out of the way to Beit Iba or Beit Farik where they have little chance of passing and no chance of taking a car through and why they are told by 20-year-olds with guns, "This is our road; for you there is no road here."

COMMENTARY

MASSIVE ISRAELI LAND GRAB UNDER COVER OF 'SECURITY'



LIMITING HORIZONS: Israel begins the construction at Qalqilya of a wall designed to permanently annex land and further isolate Palestinian communities.

THE APARTHEID WALL

By BROOKE ATHERTON

On April 15, 2002, Ariel Sharon announced that he will "isolate" Palestinians from Israelis by erecting "walls and buffer zones" in a plan of "unilateral separation." That June, the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) began confiscating Palestinian farmland and uprooting thousands of olive and other fruit trees to make way for the Apartheid Wall. Along some sections of the Wall, the IOF has built a 25-foot-tall concrete wall lined with sniper towers and buffer zones of 90-300 feet for electric fences, trenches, cameras, sensors and security patrols. In other areas Israel is building a massive, electrified fence with deep trenches and additional barbed wired fencing on either side.

The first phase of the Wall has been completed this summer, stretching 85 miles from the Qalqilya region north past Jenin at the cost of \$250 million. Another 150 miles of the Wall is slated for completion by the end of the year, stretching south from Qalqilya through Jerusalem and Bethlehem and southwest to the Hebron area.

According to plans released by Sharon last March, the Wall will eventually enclose all Palestinian population centers in the West Bank into isolated ghettos by extending the barrier along the Jordan Valley in the eastern West Bank. The cost of the Wall is over \$1 billion with a total length that could exceed 450 miles. As Qalqilya Mayor Mahrouf Zahran explains, "They don't want the Palestinians to have sovereignty over the land. They break us up into isolated pieces. This is political, they do not want a Palestinian state joined."

The Israeli government is not building the Wall along the "green line" which demarcates the border between what is now Israel and the West Bank. Rather, the Wall snakes throughout the West Bank, cutting deeply into occupied Palestinian territory in order to confiscate key land and water resources and to bring illegal Israeli settlements into the Israeli side of the Wall. Israel will confiscate 10 percent of the West Bank with just the construction of the western portion of the Wall from the southwest to the northwest of the West Bank and will confiscate much more Palestinian land with the construction of the eastern portion.

Although gates and checkpoints are being built into some sections of the Wall, ostensibly to allow Palestinians to cross, the Wall stands to entrench the current Israeli Occup-

ation policy of denying Palestinians the freedom of movement. Farmers who try to use the gates in the northern West Bank can never be sure whether the gates will be locked and closed. If the gates are open, the farmers know they may be prevented from crossing, shot at, beaten or harassed by Israeli soldiers or the hired private "security" officers who police the Wall.

"They are doing the same thing they did in 1948. They are making it so hard to farm and sell our produce that we will be forced from the land," said one Qalqilya farmer.

The Israeli government claims the Wall is for security purposes in response to the current Intifada, but plans for the Wall began over three years ago. The path of the wall, which does not recognize existing borders between what is now Israel and the West Bank and extends between Palestinian territory and Jordan, clarifies the motives of the Israeli government. The Wall is a political strategy to confiscate more Palestinian land and water resources, ethnically cleanse the remaining Palestinian territories, and prevent any possibility of a sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank.

In recent weeks, the U.S. administration has criticized the contradiction between the Wall and the promise for a sovereign Palestinian state by 2005 included in their road map for peace.

But as 18-year-old Hiba from Qalqilya cautions, we can't hold our breath for Israel's best political and financial supporter to take any meaningful action against Israel's occupation policies and the Apartheid Wall. "It is very difficult because America gives money to Israel. When America gives money to Israel, they continue to build this wall - Israel does not stop."

As Israel's Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom stated Aug. 10, "The fence will continue to be built. Of course we want to do everything we can in coordination with the Americans, but friends can also disagree."



DIRECT ACTION: Activists take down a fenced section of the wall. Israeli armed forces detained 45 activists, who were later released. PHOTO: jewsagainsttheoccupation.org

THE DEAN SCENE



CONSERVATIVE DEM WINS SOME HEARTS WITH ANTI-WAR RHETORIC, BUT FEW MINDS WITH RECORD

HOWARD DEAN speaks to thousands of Democrats in Bryant Park. PHOTO: Vanessa Hradsky

By VANESSA HRADSKY & JANELLE LEWIS

Bryant Park NYC, Aug 26 – After endorsements from Congressmen Jerrold Nadler and Major Owens, and Assembly members Richard Gottfried and Jonathan Bing, Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean took to the stage, cheered by some 10,000 people.

“Dean is the only candidate making the Democratic party exciting again,” remarked Nadler (D-NY) to a crowd that sounded more concert-going than political-rallying.

Exciting is one word which could begin to describe an evening that opened with graffiti artists bombing a plain white canvas behind a D.J. spinning a variety of music; controversial is another, as the Dean campaign moves to center stage in the debate over the Left’s strategy for the 2004 elections.

Is it more important to pick an “electable” candidate or one who stands for what we believe in?

For many voters, removing Bush from office is what matters most. For others, the Democratic candidates, including Dean, are not progressive enough, especially when it comes to dealing with the situation in Iraq, corporate accountability, and globalization.

Those who attended the rally held a variety of views. David Wilcox, from Los Angeles, said, “Howard Dean’s campaign has struck a nerve in the young people who have been turned off politics since the 2000 elections.” Wilcox stated that besides Dean’s engulfing the pop and counter-culture of the country, “he has dismissed the war as unlawful since the beginning, before it became a political opportunity to do so.”

Rose Lynd, of New York, had a different opinion. “I don’t know what I think of him yet, but I do think that he is somewhat disingenuous,” she remarked. “Dean has some chance of winning, but it is wrong to say that he is a left candidate.”

By his own admission, Dean holds a mixed record. Dean’s speech, the last in his ten-city Sleepless Summer tour, focused on education, jobs, foreign policy, healthcare, stronger communities, and renewable energy.

He spoke of the war in Iraq, which he didn’t support, saying it cost Americans \$1 billion a week, which could have been better allocated to create jobs and improve education at home. But Dean is far from being a pacifist. He supports the war in Afghanistan as well as the first Gulf war, and advocates raising the number of troops in Iraq, all negative strikes for left-leaning voters.

Though a fiscal conservative himself, Dean blasted George Bush’s so-called “compassionate conservatism.” Pointing to the administration’s cuts in programs for the poor and elderly and to Bush’s stand against affirmative action in the University of Michigan case, Dean proclaimed, “I am tired of being divided by race in this country. I am tired of being divided by gender in this country. I am tired of being divided by sexual orientation in this country. I want my country back again!”

Dean also discussed healthcare. He said that in his home state of Vermont, everyone under 18 had access to free medical treatment. After citing dozens of other countries that offer free healthcare to their citizens, Dean clamored, “I am tired of being a second class citizen in the industrialized world.”

While views on Dean the candidate vary, his eclectic political approach has gained much attention. His primary source of funding comes from over 300,000 grassroots supporters, many in the form of small donations, as opposed to “gifts” from large corporations such as Phillip Morris, Merrill Lynch and Bristol-Myers Squibb. He has also capitalized on the Internet as a major political tool, and his grassroots campaigning strategy has gained him support from various groups, including some supporters of the Green Party and moderate independents.

It is much too early in the presidential race to say whether or not Howard Dean will have what it takes to defeat Bush in 2004. As the campaigning intensifies so does the debate among Democrats, Independents, and the Left as a whole.

FROM THE NEWSWIRE

WWW.NYC.INDYMEDIA.ORG • WWW.INDYMEDIA.ORG • WWW.US.INDYMEDIA (COMING SOON)

The Independent Media Centers of the world are built on the principle of open publishing, articles below are taken from Indymedia newswires. A free press belongs to none and all, free speech makes no promises. Indymedia encourage submissions of original reporting and commentary. ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

Taking on the Dean Machine

To the Right of Bush? Get a Grip!

by Check yourself

Like many have noted, Dean is not the most left candidate, and neither is he progressive on all the issues. However, he is fairly liberal and he does have a good shot... For those folks who will let the perfect be the enemy of the good I say let us come together now to defeat Bush and his cohorts and worry about establishing a utopia once we’ve lifted ourselves from the gutter.

Democracy is in the Streets

by Jesse H.

It is amazing how willing some are to give in to the system around the issue of Dean... until there is a change in the electoral system, it’s funding, it’s structure, etc., it will not produce candidates that actually serve the needs of the majority. The “moderate” course would be supporting a coalition of third parties advocating those changes.

Dean Wants to Increase Iraq Troop Strength by 40,000

by cmw

This is shades of 1968 democratic convention. Humphrey waffles and they vote down the anti-war plank, while the young people outside get their skulls cracked by the Chicago police. It’s going to happen again.

Why Are We Debating Democrats?

by the burningman

I guess some people don’t believe another world is possible. They are arguing that we support a candidate who is: pro-capitalism, pro-WTO, pro-nuclear weapons, pro-iraq war and

against the people of the world.

The “lesser evil” argument is totalitarian. If we know democracy is a sham in America, our responsibility is to turn it over, not prop it up.

Leaving Behind the Complacent Lifestyle is the True Victory

by Brando

My version of social change involves an infinite number of little battles being fought on every front. With Dean I see a lot of people I know engaging in the political process for the first time. It started with their first few steps at the anti-war rallies over the last year and now they are beginning to feel more empowered to change things.

If you really want to change our circumstances than I think it is important to not trample upon the space that is being created for those interested in removing Bush.

Think Before you Bash Dean

by madmagyar

Do you throw support behind someone who has a good chance of winning and might effect some positive changes or do you resist and support a third party candidate with little chance of getting elected?

Like Burningman Says

by X

Deal with what Dean is actually for and against. And what his record actually shows.

The argument that he has a chance of beating Bush is cynical and superficial in so far as it doesn’t go about looking at what he will actually replace Bush with or not.

We have to strategize to make

change and be engaged tactically. Not throw our energy, passions into areas we actually have no confidence in.

Dean the Centrist

by Alex

While I originally was fairly enthusiastic about an overtly anti-war Democrat who seemed to actually have a chance to become the next president, my view of Howard Dean has changed substantially since then. Dean is a skilled politician who has managed to portray himself as a left-leaning progressive Democrat because that is what will win him support.

So, support Dean if you will. He is better than Bush. But have no illusions about who you are voting for.

Too Early to Give In

by morgan

I love how all the so called progressive/leftist websites have arguments about Dean vs. Kucinich. Seems odd there are no Kucinich vs. Sharpton or Braun arguments. Both are further to the left of Dean, but seem to be ignored by the Internet crowd. Dean is getting attention because he is the front runner. It might make sense if he wins the primary. Now is too early to give in.

Pragmatic Pragmatism

by TheVidiot

I’m not wholly crazy about Dean, but you’ve got to give him credit; he’s bringing people into the process that had never been a part of it before. Yes, he’s to the right of Bill Clinton on some issues Clinton was already to the right on. Yes, I agree strongly with just about everything Kucinich has to say. But will Kucinich get elected? Not on your life. And frankly, I don’t think he should. He’d govern from the far left. Bush governs from the far right. Neither one aptly represents the people in this country.

WHEN BUSH COMES TO SHOVE... WHERE DO YOU TURN FOR NEWS?

Naomi Klein says *The Independent* “mixes the spirit of direct action with a searing critique of corporate power.” Drawing upon the global network of Indymedia Centers, we let people speak for themselves — from the streets of Baghdad to the jungles of Colombia, the shantytowns of South Africa to the villages of East Timor. We look at those resisting the Pentagon and Wall Street reign of terror, from the fight at home for housing, quality education and civil liberties to the broader struggle against corporate globalization. Don’t miss an issue—subscribe today!

Bill me Check enclosed

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
 E-Mail _____ Phone _____

Subscription rate: \$27/year (23 issues). Angel rate: \$100/year. Make checks payable to the NYC IMC Print Team and send to: 34 East 29th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10016. Or for even faster service email your address to indysubs@yahoo.com and we will begin your subscription right away!

BE THE MEDIA

THE INDYPENDENT NEEDS YOU!
 write, edit, design, illustrate and photograph

weekly meetings:
 7pm Tuesdays
 212.684.8112

34 E. 29th St., 2nd Fl.

submit story ideas to
 imc-nyc-print@indymedia.org

FREE CUNY?

RENEGADE CITY COUNCILMAN STARTS HEARING ON RESTORING FREE TUITION AFTER YEARS OF AUSTERITY

BY PANDI HOPKINS

A free CUNY? Sheer lunacy? Perhaps not, says City Councilman Charles Barron.

Amid the strenuous objections of students, last June, the City University of New York Board of Trustees voted to raise tuition for the first time since 1995.

"If free tuition makes fiscal sense, what is standing in the way?" he asks before providing his own answer, "Institutional racism!"

Councilman Barron is using his position as Education Committee Chair to announce two public hearings: the first, on Sept. 24, will cover the effects of the new tuition hike; the second, on Oct. 21, will consider the reinstatement of a free CUNY.

CUNY was a free educational institution for 129 years, from its founding in 1847 to 1976 when it succumbed to political pressure. Open admissions were instituted at CUNY in 1969 in response to a student demonstration against an alleged racist admissions policy.

In 1975, President Ford threatened to withhold federal funding to New York City unless free tuition and open admissions were eliminated from CUNY, complaining that one of the largest universities in the world was offering free tuition to "any high-school graduate, rich or poor, who wants to attend."

But open admissions lasted until the Board of Trustees voted in 1998 to eliminate remedial instruction from the senior colleges and sharply curtailed it in the community colleges.

That decision was greeted by a chorus of protesters, 24 of whom were arrested, after

public hearings at CUNY's administrative headquarters had drawn outraged faculty, students and alumni to speak out. Two of the most prominent were Arthur Miller and Wendy Wasserstein, who said they would not have been able to graduate from CUNY without remedial instruction.

Most CUNY trustees were and are intimately involved with such right-wing think-tanks as the Empire Foundation, the Scaife Family Funds, the Olin Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute.

As pointed out by H. Bruce Franklin, professor of English at Rutgers University, CUNY served for over a century as "a boulevard for success" until left-wing activists, the Black Power movement and multi-cultural ideals invigorated the campuses and infuriated the power structure.

In March 1998, an Empire Foundation report was released that demanded a return to a CUNY-wide curriculum focused on Western Civilization and the elimination of such "fluff courses" as Sociology of Women, African Literature and the Third World in the Modern Era.

Tom Carroll, an officer of Change-New York (part of the Empire Foundation) explained, "Loony professors shouldn't be able to force grievance courses like those based on racism and feminism on students."

This past March, New York Gov. George Pataki appointed Benno Schmidt as Chair of the CUNY Board of Trustees. Schmidt has spent the last 10 years as CEO of Edison Schools, a corporation devoted to the privatization of the public school system.

The greatest obstacle to college entrance



CITY COUNCILMAN CHARLES BARRON
PHOTO: Fritz@fredaskew.com

and graduation for immigrant, Hispanic, and African-American students are two CUNY-wide English tests, graded for structural correctness only, thus eliminating the need to acquire skills of intellectual inquiry.

Councilman Barron points out that linguists know there is no "bad language," only different ones. He attributes failure of many African-American students to pass standardized English tests to disrespect for their mode of speech.

A teacher should not "correct" an African-American construction, but advise the student to translate it into standard English.

"No one advocates teaching Ebonics, but those who teach black students should be taught the history of black language and culture."

Unfortunately, little has changed since Vice President Spiro Agnew complained three decades ago about too many black college students, and President Richard Nixon's educational adviser, Roger Freeman, warned about "producing an educated proletariat."

Today, President Bush opposes permitting college work to fulfill welfare requirements because it would cost "a bunch more money and some people could spend their entire five years on welfare going to college."

HOMELAND INSECURITY

FEDS DENY HUMANITARIAN PAROLE FOR PAKISTANI FATHER

BY LESLEY WOOD

On May 19, 2003, Pakistani immigrant Mohammed Junaid went to the headquarters of the former Immigration and Naturalization Service at 26 Federal Plaza in lower Manhattan to comply with the Special Registrations program enacted by the Department of Justice in November 2002.

He never returned home.

Junaid is being detained at Sussex County Jail in New Jersey after being moved from 26 Federal Plaza to Buffalo Federal Detention Center and then on to Elizabeth Detention Center. He had lived in the United States for 10 years and was arrested for an outstanding order of deportation that neither he nor his family knew about.

"We were caught in a trap. We did everything we could to make sure that Mohammed was safe to go to the special registration. He wanted to comply so that he could adjust his status and his family could live here safely, but instead they arrested him," said Junaid's wife, Nishap, a native of Bangladesh.

In fact, Junaid went to register after consulting with an attorney and with an application of sponsorship by his employer.

Junaid's family is now bearing the brunt of increasingly harsh immigration policies and is the latest of thousands of families ripped apart by the program. Special Registrations requires non-citizen men over the age of 16 from many Arab and Muslim countries to register with the government, be fingerprinted and photographed.

Between December 2002 and March 2003 thousands of men were targeted from Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

In Southern California, hundreds of Iranian-Americans alone were arrested during special registration in December.

Often, the men were detained or issued notices to reappear in immigration court. Many are currently awaiting their court dates.

While Junaid languishes in jail, his pregnant wife, daughter and father-in-law face total loss of income, impending eviction and the threat of losing their loved one to deportation.

Mrs. Junaid is 8-months pregnant and must take care of her 2-year-old daughter and ailing father. She is experiencing complications in her pregnancy and has been told that her baby will need surgery after birth.

As with most immigrant families, Mrs. Junaid's family has no health insurance.

Mrs. Junaid and her father are leading a campaign sponsored by the community organization DRUM (Desis Rising Up and Moving) to release her husband on humanitarian parole. Junaid was recently denied parole by the INS Detention and Removal Office at Elizabeth Detention Center despite his urgent family circumstances.

The family is now waiting for a decision from the Board of Immigration Appeals.

For more information contact:
Monami Maulik, Desis Rising Up & Moving.
(718) 205-3036, info@drumnation.org

LIBERTY



BRONX CHEERS ON WALL STREET: Over a thousand New Yorkers mass outside the New York Stock Exchange to unwelcome U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft on the local leg of his national tour defending the besieged Patriot Act. PHOTO: S. Fitzstephens



WHERE DO I GET MY COPY OF THE INDEPENDENT?

A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

LOWER EAST SIDE

ABC No Rio
156 Rivington

Bluestockings Books & Café
172 Allen

Lotus Cafe
Clinton & Stanton

6th St. Community Center
638 E. 6th St. (Ave. B)

EAST VILLAGE

Bowery Poet's Cafe
308 Bowery

Whole Earth Vegan Bakery
130 St. Marks Pl.

May Day Books
155 First Ave.
(btwn. 9th & 10th)

Kim's Video
3rd Ave. & St. Marks Pl.

SOHO

Housing Works
126 Crosby St.

NOHO

Mercer St. Books
206 Mercer

TRIBECA

In The Black
King and Varick

GREENWICH VILLAGE

Film Forum
213 W. Houston

WEST VILLAGE

LGBT Center
213 W. 13th St.

UNION SQUARE

Revolution Books
9 W. 19th St.

CHELSEA

Cheelsea Sq. Diner
23rd & 9th

HELL'S KITCHEN

Second Wave Laundroceter
55th & 9th Ave.

TIMES SQUARE

Chashama Theatre
135 W. 42 & B'Way

UPPER EAST SIDE

Hunter College
68th & Lex, USG Office

UPPER WEST SIDE

Labyrinth Books
112th St. near B'way

KIM'S VIDEO

114th & Broadway

HARLEM

Riverside Church
490 Riverside Dr. at 120th

Strictly Roots Restaurant
123rd & Adam Clayton
Powell Blvd.

Harlem Tenants Council
1 W. 125th, Suite 209

ASTORIA

Broadway Natural Foods

WOODSIDE

Queens Pride House
6703 Woodside Ave.

WASHINGTON HEIGHTS

Monkey Business
187th & Ft. Washington Ave.

BUSHWICK

Make the Road by Walking
301 Grove St.

WILLIAMSBURG

Clovis Books
N. 4th St. & Bedford Ave.

Spoonball & Sugartown Books
218 Bedford Ave.

PARK SLOPE

Community Book Store
7th & Carroll Sts.

Tea Lounge
7th Ave.

Park Slope Food Co-op
782 Union St.

COBBLE HILL

Tripoli Restaurant
Atlantic & Clinton

DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN

Soft Skull Press
7 Bond St. & State

FORT GREENE

Pratt Area Community Council
201 DeKalb Ave

STATEN ISLAND

Muddy Cup Coffee House
388 Van Duzen

Universal Unitarian Church
312 Clinton St.

JERSEY CITY

Five Corners Branch Library
off Journal Square

Miller Branch Library
489 Bergen

CRITICAL MASS CRITICAL
MASS CRITICAL MASS CRITI
CAL MASS CRITICAL MASS
CRITICAL MASS CRITICAL MA
SS CRITICAL MASS CRITICAL
UNIONSQUARE • 7pm • last
FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH



EL INDEPENDIENTE

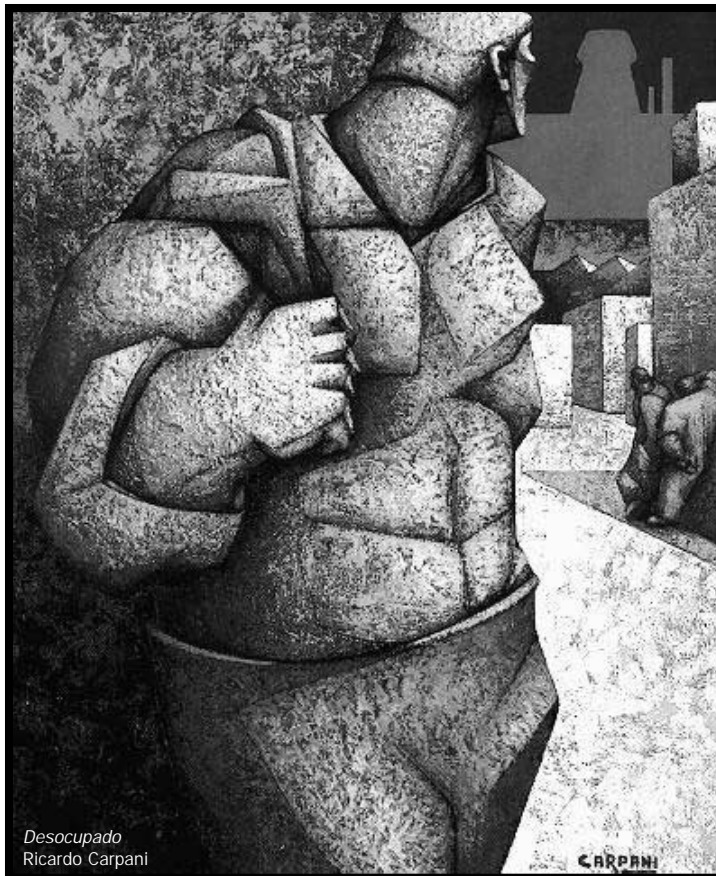
POR PABLO BOIDO

*"Me matan si no trabajo,
y si trabajo me matan..."*

Este estribillo acompaña el último cortometraje del documentalista Raymundo Glayzer, desaparecido en la última dictadura militar. El cortometraje, realizado en 1974 registra la lucha de los trabajadores de la fábrica INSUD. La última escena muestra a los trabajadores marchando al Congreso donde se encuentran con Rodolfo Ortega Peña, diputado peronista y abogado de presos políticos y trabajadores. Peña fue asesinado por la AAA (Alianza Anticomunista Argentina), la misma que ayudó a implantar el modelo económico que él tanto denunciaba desde su lugar en el Congreso Nacional.

La última dictadura militar comienza formalmente en 1976, aunque las Fuerzas Militares en 1975 ya tenían el control de una parte del aparato estatal. Cuando comienza el gobierno militar la deuda externa es de 9.700 millones, y para cuando ésta finaliza la deuda es de 45.000 millones. La mayoría del dinero que fue prestado fue utilizado para que las grandes empresas se deshagan de sus deudas. Es decir que no fue para la inversión pública sino para el sector privado.

Luego de las puebladas en Mosconi y Tartagal en el norte del país, y Cutral Co en el sur del país comienzan a crecer lentamente los cortes de ruta como medida para pedir trabajo, así surge el término de "piqueteros" que se asienta en una de sus principales características, el piquete en la ruta. Las primeras zonas que dan origen a



Desocupado
Ricardo Carpani

ME MATAN SI NO TRABAJO

este nuevo movimiento social sufren la consecuencia y la devastación de la economía de sus comunidades por la privatización de las empresas estatales, de las cuales dependía la vida económica de la comunidad. En la década del noventa se privatiza la empresa YPF (Empresa estatal de petróleo), las multinacionales que la adquieren (principalmente Repsol) comienzan con los despidos masivos. De un día para el otro el 70% de la población que dependía de esta empresa se queda sin empleo.

El Gran Buenos Aires sigue siendo el conglomerado urbano más grande del país, y el que mantiene uno de los más altos índices de desempleo. En el pasado fue una de las grandes zona industriales del país; hoy las fábricas se encuentran vacías. Pero pasarán varios años hasta que las organizaciones de desocupados aparezcan por esa zona del país.

En 1998 comienza a crecer con mucha fuerza una de las organizaciones de trabajadores desocupados en el Gran Buenos Aires. Actualmente es la más numerosa, la FTV (Federación por el Trabajo y la Vivienda). Ésta es liderada por el diputado provincial y candidato a gobernador por la Provincia de Buenos Aires, Luis D'Elia. Ésta ha formado hace más de dos años un frente común con la Corriente Clasista y Combativa. Hoy se encuentran con un diálogo abierto y de apoyo al gobierno.

En el partido de La Matanza (Gran Buenos Aires) una de las organizaciones que ha crecido junto a la crisis y el desempleo es el Polo Obrero, vinculada al Partido Obrero. Participó y organizó la 5a Asamblea Nacional de Trabajadores desocupados y ocupados. A la Asamblea se ha sumado el MIJD (Movimiento Independiente de Jubilados y Desocupados), trabajadores del campo, además de movimientos estudiantiles y GLTB (gays, travestis, transexuales y bisexuales). Esta Asamblea funciona como una plataforma política que organiza diferentes planes de lucha y coordinación entre los movimientos sociales que participan.

Otra de las organizaciones que más ha crecido en estos últimos dos años es Barrios de Pie, que coordina sus planes de lucha con la mayoría de las organizaciones de desocupados.

En el suroeste del conurbano bonaerense se encuentran nucleados la mayoría de MTD (Movimientos de Trabajadores Desocupados) que forman parte del MTD Anibal Verón. Este espacio mantiene diferencias con la ANT, principalmente porque el MTD Anibal Verón es independiente de cualquier Partido Político o Sindicato. Todas estas organizaciones mencionadas anteriormente continúan con sus reivindicaciones, principalmente por el trabajo genuino. Y a pesar del cambio de Presidente la resistencia crece en los nuevos cortes y en

el trabajo territorial. Sus últimos cortes de ruta y marchas los mostró nuevamente en las calles confluendo en nuevas protestas, sumándose a otras luchas de trabajadores de fábricas recuperadas.

El ministro de economía espera con optimismo un acuerdo con el Fondo Monetario que permita la atracción de nuevas inversiones y mayor crédito para consolidar lentamente la producción local. Estas negociaciones incluyen la posibilidad de una quita y renegociación de pagos, aunque el presupuesto del 2003 incluye un monto de 14 millones de dólares para pagos a los organismos de créditos multilaterales. El presidente, Néstor Kirchner, sigue gozando de una imagen positiva del 80%, pero poco esperan los que ven el hambre en sus barrios y la esperanza no alcanza.

La cantidad de personas con problemas relacionados a al empleo llega a los 3 millones. Es claro el porqué de la continuidad de las protestas y el crecimiento de las organizaciones de trabajadores ocupados y desocupados.

Y el mayor problema de la Argentina de hoy sigue siendo el fuerte endeudamiento que impide una inversión en un sistema económico y social más justo, donde los trabajadores no se tengan que debatir entre el desempleo absoluto o la super explotación para quienes mantienen con mucho esfuerzo un puesto de trabajo.

VISIONES

RÍO BRAVO O RÍO GRANDE

POR SILVIA ARANA

En México y en Argentina, he escuchado la misma pregunta: ¿Qué piensan en Estados Unidos de por qué que ocurrió el 11 de septiembre?

Trataba de explicar que si bien alguna gente entiende que los ataques de ese día fueron una consecuencia de la política imperialista de EEUU; otros, muchos, creen que los ataques son producto de la envidia por el alto nivel de vida y el sistema democrático del país: "No nos quieren porque somos mejores".

Asienten ante este punto de vista, pues confirma lo que ya creían o habían escuchado por televisión. Y la conclusión no se hace esperar: La arrogancia de los gringos no tiene límites!

Terriblemente golpeados por las crisis económicas de sus países, los latinoamericanos, sin embargo, tienen capacidad para interesarse por lo que sucede en Estados Unidos, desde los ataques a las Torres Gemelas hasta los problemas cotidianos. Claro que este interés está alimentado por CNN y demás noticieros que controlan el flujo informativo en toda América. La televisión, por ejemplo, los mantuvo informados de cada pequeño detalle del gran apagón de agosto en Estados Unidos y Canadá.

Sin embargo, las teorías, que en Estados Unidos, se llaman conspiracionistas y se evitan incluso mencionar, tanto en México como en Argentina se consideran en un plano de igualdad con la versión oficial al analizar los ataques del 11 de septiembre. La opinión pública latinoamericana, en general, desconfiaba de la versión oficial en sus propios países y en los ajenos.

En la Argentina hay otros factores que acentúan los sentimientos de descreído hacia Estados Unidos. Se lo responsabiliza del colapso político económico que ha sumido al país en el hambre y la desocupación. En el proceso de "desamoramiento" de los últimos años se ha ido diluyendo la admiración por los grandes avances tecnológicos de EE.UU. y por el sistema democrático. Se nota un claro rencor por el papel que Estados Unidos y sus organismos financieros tuvieron en la debacle argentina.

América Latina, como otras regiones del mundo, percibe que Estados Unidos no es invulnerable; que ha sido atacado en su propio territorio y que sus amenazas son temibles pero también son una manera de disimular su recién descubierta debilidad.

Y sin embargo, el sentimiento más notable es la solidaridad latinoamericana con el pueblo de EE.UU. cuyo gobierno lo ha llevado a una guerra cruenta y sin justificativos. Los editoriales de los periódicos principales tanto de Argentina como de México, han reportado sobre la oposición a la guerra contra Irak, y después de la invasión, abundan en referencias al nuevo Vietnam.

A pesar de CNN y Fox en español, la globalización de las ideas es una utopía en la América al sur del Río Bravo. O como dirían los estadounidenses al sur del Río Grande, porque ni siquiera en geografía hay uniformidad.