PHNOM PENH, Cambodia – Kloeung Aun says when he returned to Cambodia after a 27-year absence in June 2002 he arrived “with nothing – one set of clothes, whatever money I had in my account, no luggage, nothing.” Having left at age seven as a refugee, Aun has no family in Cambodia. The 34-year-old from Texas was forced to leave them behind in the United States as one of the first Cambodian-American deportees. “I thought I was a citizen, period.”

Aun feels it has been easier for him to adjust than other returnees because he retains memories of Cambodia, even if they are of working in rice fields as a child under the Khmer Rouge.

Bill Herod, founder of the Returnee Assistance Project (RAP) in Phnom Penh, says the deportees are often unable to navigate their new homeland. “The INS does not prepare detainees for the country of destination. Basic information, like not drinking tap water, the exchange rate or current political climate, is a mystery to most returnees.”

Aun eventually received help from RAP, which helped him find a job at a restaurant where his English was an asset. RAP offered Aun and the others orientation to the new culture, housing and employment assistance, lessons in Khmer literacy, psychological and substance abuse counseling, medical assistance, communication to families left behind, and most important, a safe place for returnees to ease the stress of being severed from family and familiarity.

The 1996 immigration law mandating deportation was never enforced on Cambodian-Americans because the two countries lacked an extradition agreement. The Bush administration reportedly threatened to deny visas to Cambodians entering the United States and impede World Bank and IMF assistance unless a deal was reached. An agreement was finalized in March 2002. The trickle of 67 deportees who have been sent back since then will become a flood over the next decade as 1,400 other Cambodian-Americans are expected to be deported. The 1996 law works retroactively, so even those who completed prison terms decades ago are still subject to deportation.

Aun says, “I feel dumped by the U.S. government but I cannot blame them because I put myself in the situation. But I wish they had given our community a chance. As refugees they could have told us of our rights or lack of rights. One conviction of a felony and boom – you’re out.”

Herod is frustrated with the law as well: “I really react to the suggestion that these returnees are criminals. These are individuals who have had some incident of criminal activity somewhere in their background. Some got into trouble in their late teens and now they are being penalized for life for a single mistake they made at 17 or 18.”

For many Americans, returning immigrants to their home countries may seem like a reasonable response to crimes committed by those who do not have full citizenship status. But Nil Samorn, Director of Social Services at RAP, says Cambodian deportees have exceptional circumstances.

Samorn explains that many immigrants from other countries entered the United States illegally as adults to work, and have families in their countries of origin and familiarity with the culture they rejoin when deported. Cambodians, on the other hand, “were political refugees who became legal residents, invited to the U.S. when very young. They have their families, wives, children, childhood friends, not to mention childhood backgrounds, in the States.”

Hawaii, a returnee nicknamed after his home state, embodies this situation: “Having an American wife and three kids, growing up in the States and knowing nothing else… I thought I was a citizen, period. My grandmother told me that after living in the country for seven years and marrying an American one automatically has citizenship. I never knew I had to fill out papers and all that. I had to tell my wife to go on with her life because she would never see me again.”

In addition to the shock of being torn from their families and the culture they know, returnees have had to contend with discrimination in Cambodia. Some employers are skeptical of giving returnees work, and there are families who are afraid to allow them to court their daughters. RAP tries to intercede with potential employers by explaining that the returnees have completed their sentence in the States and were functioning in society before being deported.

RAP has also taken on the role of advocate for returnees who suffer from mental health problems such as manic depression. Herod recounts a story of one such returnee whose family had chained him to a chair because he was out of control. No one was
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 Media Center is funded by 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, and submit 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.

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COPS ARE OUT OF CONTROL

I MOCKED THE LAW AND THE LAW WON: Police lock on impassively as street demonstrator sarcastically reminds populace of the truth.

OCTOBER 15-24, 2003
THE INDYPENDENT

BY A.K. GUPTA

P olice abuse remains one of the most serious and divisive human rights violations in the United States.” wrote Human Rights Watch in a 1998 report entitled “Shocked from Justice: Police Brutality and Accountability in the United States.”

“A few bad apples” is the official refrain every time police misconduct emerges. Yet every few years a big-city scandal seems to erupt involving dozens of cops, a whole division or an elite unit. In New York City it was the killing of Amadou Diallo that exposed the diabolical tactics of the Street Crimes Unit. The New Orleans police department became known as the most corrupt department in the nation in the 1990s. The Chicago department has been accused of engaging in systematic torture of suspects for decades.

Even the FBI was caught in a 1997 scandal wherein its agents were observed to have doctored evidence in hundreds if not thousands of cases. And most, recently, the Houston department has been embroiled in a similar flap over its crime lab involving contaminated evidence and sloppy science, prompting the local district attorney to review DNA evidence in more than 1,300 cases dating back to 1988.

Human Rights Watch examined 14 of the biggest cities around the nation. It concluded “police brutality is persistent in all of these cities; that systems to deal with abuse have had similar failings in all the cities; and that, in each city examined, complainants face enormous barriers in seeking administrative prosecution or criminal prosecution of officers who have committed human rights violations.” As for efforts to clean house, the report said: “meaningful reforms have fallen short.”

Police abuse experts also emphasize that the public scandals are just that: public. Given official complicity, the “Blue Wall” of silence, laws shielding cops from prosecution and even investigation, no one knows how deep the problem goes. One thing is known, that cops killed more than 2,000 people during the 1990s (the evidence has been compiled by the Stolen Lives Project at stolenlives.org.), and they are commemorated every Oct. 22 on a day of remembrance and action against police brutality.

Atlanta: This department’s poor handling of civilian complaints came to light after a shootout during a reported robbery in a motorcycle shop in December 1995 that left a customer dead. It eventually was revealed that police deliberately ignored numerous witnesses who saw Officer Wayne Pinckney shooting customer Jerry Jackson “as he lay prone and unarmored on the sidewalk outside the store.”

Human Rights Watch observes that among many in Atlanta “there is a perception that the internal affairs unit is not interested in pursuing complaints against police officers,” and as a result many victims of police abuse “do not file formal complaints.”

Chicago: Amnesty International released a report in 1993 on the city’s torture. Chicago’s police department. One case involved Andrew Wilson, who was accused, and later found guilty, of shooting and killing two officers on Feb. 9, 1982. Wilson was questioned on Feb. 14 at the South Side Area 2 station. According to Human Rights Watch, “he claimed that officers supervised by Commander Jon Burge tortured and brutalized him during an interrogation that lasted for seventeen hours. He claimed electric shocks were administered to his head and genitals and that police cranked a ‘black box’ to produce electric currents after clips were attached to parts of his body.”

A subsequent investigation by The People’s Law Office “identified sixty-five suspects who were tortured by Burge or other officers and detainees between 1972 and 1991 in Areas 2 and 3.”

An internal police investigation concluded that physical abuse was “systematic” and “included planned torture.” As for higher-ups: “Particular command members were aware of the systematic abuse and perpetuated it either by actively participating in same or failing to take any action to bring it to an end.”

New Orleans: From 1993 to 1996 at least 50 cops in the Big Easy were accused for felonies ranging from murder to rape and robbery. In 1997 the department instituted controversial “quality of life” tactics popularized by the Giuliani administration. The New Orleans department’s own statistics found a 27 percent rise in civilian complaints of aggressive policing from the previous year.

New York City: Formed in 1992 after a series of scandals, the Mollen Commission hearings featured former officer Bernard “The Mechanic” Cawley. He told the Commission: “We’d just beat people in general... to show who was in charge.” and admitted to some 400 beatings himself involving the use of lead-lined gloves, a flashlight and nightstick. The Mollen Commission was preceded by two other inquiries that uncovered systematic abuse and corruption in the NYPD, the Knapp Commission in 1972 and the Curran Commission in 1987. Mollen revealed widespread police perjury, resulting in more than 100 overturned convictions. In the past year, the NYPD has once again come under scrutiny for a series of botched “no-knock” raids where cops have stormed into the wrong apartments, leading to the deaths of at least two innocent New Yorkers.

Los Angeles: The Ramparts scandal exploded into the open in March 1998 when LAPD Officer Rafael Perez fell under suspicion for stealing six pounds of cocaine from the division’s evidence room. After a failed prosecution, Perez cut a deal with prosecutors and began to sing. He declared, according to PBS’ Frontline, “that bogus arrests, perjured testimony and the planting of ‘drop guns’ on unarmed civilians were commonplace,” and eventually implicated about 70 officers in misconduct, including unlawful shootings. As a result, nearly 100 convictions were overturned and 140 civil suits filed that the city estimated would cost $125 million to settle. In addition, Los Angeles signed a consent decree in November 2000 that calls for a federal judge to monitor and oversee reforms in the department for five years.

The irony is that while officials were opening the depot in a community of many low-income residents, a similar one on the West Side of Manhattan was being closed to build a park.

A lawsuit recently filed by West Harlem Environmental Alliance (WHEA) charges the city practices discriminatory politics in constructing their bus depots and stations north of 96th Street, in neighborhoods where mostly African-Americans and Hispanics live.

The numbers are starting: of the eight depots in Manhattan, seven are located north of 96th Street.

Here are some other recent examples of environmental racism in El Barrio and the South Bronx:

*The Department of Sanitation plans to divide Manhattan in two halves and rearrange the garbage disposal system. All of the garbage from the East Side, from 14th Street to 145th Street, will be taken to a transfer and compacting station on 91st Street, where it will be loaded onto barges and transported to other destinations. “Why don’t they divide Manhattan into four zones, and each area be responsible for a part of the garbage? Why do they have to bring all of the garbage from the East Side all the way uptown?” Asks Jimmy Vázquez, a legislative aide to Senator Olga Méndez.

*In the South Bronx, Waste Management Inc. has been ordered to pay New York City $70 million to improve water quality. The company hasn’t even paid the $60 million due the city to date. The site includes a 3,000 ton of garbage to the load sent to the Harlem River Rail Yards on 132nd Street and St. Ann Avenue. It is safe to say that more garbage than will fit into the city’s buses will be added to this already high vehicle traffic and a deterioration of air quality.

*The New York Power Authority constructed 11 power plants, all of them in communities of color, in 2000. Four of the plants are in the Harlem River Rail Yards and Hell’s Gate in the South Bronx, adding another source of pollution in poor communities. These plants were to be temporarily operational during summer months in the period of high energy demand. The Authority is seeking a permit for five additional years that would permit them to exceed the current limitations on pollution.

Meanwhile, one department’s effort to reduce pollution levels was cancelled out by the practices of other departments. For example, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection has a program to combat restaurants throwing fat into the sewage system. Sewage treatment plants aren’t prepared to treat such fat, and restaurants must install grease “traps.”

However, on 99th Street in El Barrio, garbage trucks are washed and all the fat goes into the sewer. Eventually the water in the Harlem River, a river in which the Department of Environmental Protection has invested around $70 million to improve water quality.

A version of this story originally appeared in Siempre.
**WHAT’S HOLDING UP A MALARIA VACCINE?**

**BY ALEC HIGGINS**

Two million people die each year from malaria. Scientists report they are close to beating the disease, but ignorance, lack of international attention and poor funding are holding them up.

On July 1, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced a figure that made headlines around the world: in nine months, the SARS virus had killed over 800 people. But malaria kills that number each day, and these deaths rarely make the news. Malaria is such a permanent fixture of life in many parts of the world that it receives almost no media attention. And, unlike SARS, it presents no direct threat to the West.

Thanks to long-term environmental management and management, insects, malaria has not troubled North America or Western Europe in recent history. But in sub-Saharan Africa, malaria is impossible to ignore. It kills three children every minute. Five hundred million people are infected, and two billion are at risk. It’s Africa’s greatest single cause of child mortality, and survivors suffer lifelong anaemia, cognitive impairment and fatigue. It costs the already impoverished continent $12 billion each year.

The problem is huge, but so distant and contained that the media has no trouble ignoring it. Nor does our government, though this was not always the case. When 100,000 American troops caught the disease in Vietnam, the United States spent freely on malaria research. When the forces were withdrawn, so was the funding.

Malaria could be eradicated once and for all within five years, according to Professor Adrian Hill of Oxford University. The key is the development of a vaccine, and GlaxoSmithKline has already tested a prototype on people in Gambia and Mozambique.

The science is tricky, but the greatest difficulties facing vaccine developers are logistic and economic. One problem, according to the Malaria Vaccine Initiative, is that a vaccine will require a multitude of antigens — the basic ingredient of any vaccine — many of which are being independently developed and patented. The Vaccine Initiative is working to create partnerships that link important scientific and industrial players with a common goal.

Although an effective vaccine is tantalizingly close, says Dr. N. Regina Rubinovich of the initiative, financial difficulties are delaying — possibly preventing — its arrival.

Because a malaria vaccine would be used largely by poor people in developing countries, market forces alone cannot drive research to completion. The MVI was set up with a $50 million grant from Bill Gates’ Foundation. However, global funding for a malaria vaccine is a fraction of what is required, and federal contributions add up to under $60 million: the average price of developing a vaccine is around $400 million. Spending must be increased to complete development of the vaccine.

A coalition of advocates working on prevention of malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS have proposed several shared legislative priorities. The measures suggested include giving the vaccine a guaranteed market by arranging pre-commitments to purchase in the international community, and expanding tax breaks for companies involved in its research and production.

But the biggest challenge to increased public awareness. Legislation and funding to aid malaria research will never be forthcoming if the public does not take up the issue and put pressure on the government to do the same.

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**Examples of how diverse environmental changes affect the occurrence of various infectious diseases in humans**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES</th>
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**THE LAW TAKES ON WARMING**

**BY MIKE WU**

In July 2003 the World Meteorological Organization stated that increased incidences of extreme weather events are consistent with the onset of global warming — and such events will increase in the future.

This statement is significant in that it ties recent extreme weather patterns with global warming, and that it comes from a neutral and highly respected United Nations body normally associated with dry statistical reports.

Citing such events as Switzerland’s hottest June in at least 250 years, the United States’ record drought in 2000, which caused 41 deaths, and Sri Lanka’s Tropical Cyclone 01B which killed at least 300 people, the WMO said:

> Extreme climate events occur every year somewhere in the globe, but in recent years the number of such extremes has been increasing.

Since the report, France has endured record-breaking heat that has killed thousands, and scientists addressing a climate change conference in Moscow said that global warming kills about 160,000 people a year, with children in developing countries being the most vulnerable.

Still the United States, the largest emitter of greenhouse gases, continues to do nothing to stem its emissions. In late August, when most of the media wasn’t looking, President Bush made dramatic rule changes through administrative rulings that kept the laws in place, but undermined the regulations and agencies relating to them.

The decisions included the dramatic easing of rules requiring coal-fired power plants to install new pollution controls when they make substantial changes, so was the finding that federal administration legal opinion that carbon dioxide is a pollutant and therefore can be regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency.

In this was not always the case. When 100,000 American troops caught the disease in Vietnam, the World Health Organization and the National Resources Defense Council, are expected to sue the EPA. This case may resolve whether greenhouse gases will be classified as air pollutants, and it may also help to show off challenges to California’s plan to regulate automotive emissions of greenhouse gases. Several states have already filed suits challenging the loosening of regulations over power plants.

Using the courts to combat global warming is a growing trend. One avenue is being pursued by the newly formed Climate Focus which does not take up the issue and put pressure on the government to do the same.

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**INTERNATIONAL**

**MILITARY BRASS PLANTS BOGUS “LETTERS HOME”**

**BY MIKE WU**

As if things couldn’t get worse for the military hierarchy, a report found that letters from soldiers describing their successes rebuilding Iraq appearing in small-town newspapers across the country were identical, despite the signatures of different GIs. It turns out that their commanding officer had written the letters, “suggesting” they send them home to boost morale.

The five-paragraph letter talks about the soldiers’ efforts to re-establish police and fire departments, and build water and sewer plants in the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, where the unit is based.

“The quality of life and security for the citizens has been largely restored, and we are a large part of why that has happened,” the letter reads. It describes people waving at passing troops and children running up to shake their hands and say thank you.

Despite the fact that the form letters were discovered, the military has not disciplined the officers involved or taken responsible actions.

A USA Today-CNN-Gallup Poll released Sept. 23 found 50 percent believe that the situation in Iraq was worth going to war over, down from 73 percent in April.

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**NY WORKERS WIN FIRST AMENDMENT SUIT IN ALBANY**

Nearly one year after workers and September 11 victims led a march to the Governor’s Mansion in Albany and were brutalized and arrested by the police, workers’ rights groups have won a settlement of a First Amendment lawsuit against the City and Police of Albany. The lawsuit challenged the constitutionality of Albany’s Parade and Assembly Ordinances, and the discriminatory way in which the ordinance was administered by City Hall in issuing permits to conduct events such as marches.

Gov. Pataki denied injured workers and families no direct threat to the West.

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**NUKE FOGGY BOTTOM FOR JESUS**

Conservative televangelist and former Republican presidential hopeful Pat Robertson wants to do away with the State Department, literally. During a recent broadcast of The 700 Club, Robertson said that after finishing reading a book by State Department critic Joel Hovnavi, he had thought to himself: “If I could just get a nuclear device inside Foggy Bottom, I think that’s the answer.” Foggy Bottom is a nickname for the State Department.

“I mean, you get through this, and you say, ‘We’ve got to blow that thing up,’” Robertson said. Robertson caused a similar stir this summer when he asked supporters to pray for the deaths of three Supreme Court justices.

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**FORMER MISS AMERICA GETS KICKOUT CYCLIST LAW**

**BY MIKE WU**

Former Miss America Heather French Henry fatally struck a bicyclist October 11 in Louisville, KY. Henry, wife of Kentucky Lt. Gov. Steve Henry, was making a left turn without a signal when then-Lt. Governor Lincoln Navigator when she hit Karola Steede, 44, of Germany. Steede was not wearing a helmet at the time of the accident and died of multiple injuries hours later. Henry will not face criminal charges, police say.
THERE is an old saying that you should never let a fox guard the henhouse. The same could be said of the investigation into the latest White House scandal. Attorney General John Ashcroft is refusing to appoint an independent prosecutor to investigate who in the administration leaked the name of a Central Intelligence Agency operative to journalists. This despite the fact that Ashcroft has long-standing ties to one of the main suspects: President George W. Bush’s top political advisor Karl Rove.

“I think it’s very difficult on its surface for John Ashcroft to be taken seriously as an investigator,” said James Moore, author of Bush’s Brain: How Karl Rove Made George W. Bush Presidential. “I had an interview with Democracy Now. “In this case, there is a close relationship between someone who is a high-profile suspect and the individual who is leading the investigation of him. And it immediately goes to the question of credibility and validity of that particular investigation.”

Rove has been accused of leaking the identity of CIA operative Valerie Plame, in retaliation for her husband, veteran diplomat Joseph Wilson, blowing the whistle on the Bush administration’s charge that Saddam Hussein attempted to import uranium for nuclear weapons from Niger.

Rove is known as the driving force behind Bush’s taking of the presidency, but he also worked for Ashcroft over the course of two decades.

“It goes all the way back to the mid-1980s when John Ashcroft first ran for governor and then when he ran for the U.S. Senate against Mel Carnahan,” says Moore. “Karl was intimately involved.”

Intertwined, one might say.

Not only did Rove work as a consultant for his former employer’s nomination after Ashcroft lost his senate seat in the 2000 election to a dead man, the late Mel Carnahan.

While Ashcroft was not Bush’s first choice for attorney general, Rove reported to Bush that a former National Security Council aide spied on Valerie Plame in 2003.

When Bush came to office in 2001, there was no attorney general. Rove personally set up a special counsel to look into the leak of Plame’s identity.

Rove has shielded himself from the investigation by not showing directly the email messages to which White House aides have been privy. By stubbornly refusing to appoint a special prosecutor, Ashcroft has left the door open for this. He has also declined to name the individual who is leading the investigation.

“Karl was intimately involved.”

For weeks, the White House has been beset with questions on the “burning” of CIA operative Valerie Plame. Scott McClellan, the press secretary and other spokespersons have offered only carefully worded and non-specific responses to reporters’ questions as to who leaked the identity of Wilson’s wife.

“It is impossible for any of us to believe that this happened without Karl knowing about it,” says author Moore. “When you cross this man in the political arena, he gets even and he gets even in a way that he doesn’t just defeat you, he is compelled to destroy you.”

According to a recent Washington Post-ABC poll, 69 percent of Americans believe there should be a special counsel independent of the administration investigating the White House leak. Yet, in his only news conference to date on the issue, Ashcroft stood firm that his office will oversee the investigation. “The prosecutors and agents who are and will be handling this investigation are career professionals with extensive experience in handling matters involving sensitive national security information.”

At a Justice Department news conference, a reporter attempted to question Ashcroft further. “Can you at least say what assurances you can give people that the matter will be handled independently without...”

Ashcroft interrupted. “Are there other questions today?”

But an independent counsel should be asking them.

Research assistance provided by producers Mike Burke and Sharif Abdel Kouddous.

Daily news at www.democracynow.org

ATTORNEY GENERAL SHIELDS KARL ROVE, CIA-LEAK INVESTIGATION GOING NOWHERE FAST

THE TIES THAT BLIND

BY AMY GOODMAN AND JEREMY SCAHILL

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

There has been much discussion among journalists about what to do when the Bush administration tries to suppress bad news about the war. What is the role of a news medium that “flips off the Bush administration every day of the year” as it did in its coverage of the Ashcroft Plame leak?

Nahum Klein says The Indypendent “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!

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As I walked in the crosswalk, a woman in a white convertible suddenly broke her brakes and hollered obscenities at me. As the car halts with a defiant fist and a mouth full of obscenities emerging from the driver, I was very much alone on that dark Friday night when a van plowed into me. I was thinking about cars on the morning of Jan. 8. Descending from the Hudson and East Rivers. Just keep an eye on the one-way with minimal traffic peeling off to the side. This is where many pedestrians and potholes. Avoid dark clothing, because most of them aren’t aware of you unless you’re passing through. Wear gloves, good grip is important. Always look ahead, keeping a clear line of sight and anticipation of what drivers are going to do. Also, use the sidewalk. If you are caught in a rain storm or in times of traffic, use the sidewalk to extricate myself. If you do, slow and give pedestrians a wide berth because most of them don’t have a good eye for traffic, and they are often in the middle of a rain storm or a rain storm. The next ride will be HALLOWEEN NIGHT! MEET UP AT UNION SQUARE Issue 75H 7

The next ride will be HALLOWEEN NIGHT! MEET UP AT UNION SQUARE Issue 75

CRITICAL MASS
Bicycling to the Other World

BY HEATHER HADDON

You have to be careful to live in New York City! a tourist exclaimed as a snaking line of cyclists twisted its way through a jam-packed, Sunday afternoon traffic that was so thick. He didn’t realize that many of the groups forming a Wednesday bike ride called the New York City’s no-fault law, the insurance company doesn’t even have to do anything to you, go out on a ride some dumb-ass in a car always look for a house in a car. I will develop premonitions of what’s going to happen. The insurance companies certainly don’t care about your pain and suffering. After a five months of critical mass, it’s time for your “independent examination.” Under state no-fault law, the insurance company of whichever hit you pay for any doctor bills only but really its medically necessary. My medical examiner did nothing more than ask me to curl my toes and made me sit there. “Car closed.” I stated. I was wrong. $1,505,813 is allocated in annual safety dollars. Per pedestrian: $1,505,813 is allocated in annual safety dollars. Per pedestrian:

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You have to be careful to live in New York City! a tourist exclaimed as a snaking line of cyclists twisted its way through a jam-packed, Sunday afternoon traffic that was so thick. He didn’t realize that many of the groups forming a Wednesday bike ride called the New York City’s no-fault law, the insurance company doesn’t even have to do anything to you, go out on a ride some dumb-ass in a car always look for a house in a car. I will develop premonitions of what’s going to happen. The insurance companies certainly don’t care about your pain and suffering. After a five months of critical mass, it’s time for your “independent examination.” Under state no-fault law, the insurance company of whichever hit you pay for any doctor bills only but really its medically necessary. My medical examiner did nothing more than ask me to curl my toes and made me sit there. “Car closed.” I stated. I was wrong. $1,505,813 is allocated in annual safety dollars. Per pedestrian:
States to block access to the websites, if unclear how this would work in practice. The State Department said it was could be denied visas and banks must block designated websites, the people who run them money or other material support to the desig-
a State Department official said Oct. 10.

The protests mirror the 2000 “Water War” that erupted when the San Francisco-based Bechtel Corporation tried to take control of Cochabamba, Bolivia’s municipal water sys-
tem and increase water rates by 300%.

Sanchez de Lozada has charged the protests are part of an attempt to topple his government by indigenous congressmen Felipe Quispe and Evo Morales. A fiery left-
ister who also leads Bolivia’s coca growers, Morales has said the president should be replaced with an “indigenous government.”

Herod recently rented a new residential facility on the outskirts of Phnom Penh. “It’s a nice family home with three bed-
rooms for $300 a month. It will give us the option of putting 15 or more in a dormito-
ry style facility. We see it as a mental health facility. There is space for recre-
ation, a garden and raising chickens, and we will probably have some occupational classes in carpentry, etc. It’s a safe place they can go if sponsorship breaks down, if they lose their job, or if they come in from the provinces for a while.”

Such a haven is a welcome source of sup-
port for those who are having trouble mak-
ing it in the city. “I returned to the RAP cen-
ter after a failed attempt to live with his father – a man he
met for the first time after being deported.”

We just don’t get along,” he explains. “I
have tattoos from my gang days and I don’t
want to embarrass him – or rather, he did
not want me to embarrass him – so he tried
to keep me locked up in the house. But I am
done doing prison time, I can’t be locked up
anymore, so I left.”

“I miss where I grew up but prefer living here now,”

RACP’s mission must really become global to succeed.

—Rally Poorly Planned—

By anon

I thought the event was a fantastic display
of solidarity. It allowed groups from different
backgrounds who may have never worked together to come together and connect.

The organizers allowed these food vendors to gouge hungry people who are showing the world and to unleash the power of immigrant workers, not channel it into the morass of bureaucracy called “business unionism”

UNION LOCALS DO GOOD WORK
by Jay

As far as organizing the unorganized I can tell you that SEIU the national health care union commits some 50% of its entire budg-
et to new organizing and is already commit-
ting some $60 million to organize in the 15 swing states next year leading up to the Presidental elections. So go ahead and criticize the AFL all you want but be aware that many of the locals it’s comprised of are doing some really good things.

COLUMBUS DAY THE ROCKS AS VENEZUELA REJECTS HOLIDAY

Speaking at a meeting of indigenous repre-
sentatives from throughout South America, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez called for a boycott of Columbus Day, which is celebrated
several Latin American countries. “Christopher Columbus was the spearhead of
the biggest invasion and genocide ever seen in the history of humanity,” Chavez said.

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Columbus Day protests were also held in Arizona and Hawaii.

Mass protests over natur-
AL GAS THREATEN UNPOPULAR
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The Bolivian government cancelled a pro-
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O n Sep. 20, 18 buses carrying immi-
grants and supporters set out from
across the United States to bring
demands for immigrant civil liberties
to New York and Washington. The Immigrant
Workers Freedom Ride was organized by a
national sponsoring committee that
includes the AFL-CIO and other unions,
politicians, religious leaders and commu-
nity organizations in one of the first major
collaborations of labor and immigrant
rights movements in the country.

Colombian Walther Rodriguez, a day
laborer and Freedom Rider from Northern
Virginia, embodied the intensity and pas-
sion felt among the riders.

“We are here to start a movement for
democracy and citizenship. These
people are not human beings, they are
labor force in this country, and we
are the ones they give the
highest, dirtiest, worst paid work,” he
stated, pounding his fist into his hand.

Walther came to this country alone three
years ago with a plan. He had completed
his first few years at university in Colombia
and wanted to earn money to pursue a law
degree. He left his wife and two children
and headed for Herndon, a small town in
Northern Virginia not far from Washington,
D.C., where he had heard he could find
work as a day laborer.

The idea was to work hard, save some
money and return to Colombia within the
year, but three years later he has given up
that dream. He sends money home but has
not visited since he left — afraid that in a
post-September 11 climate he wouldn’t be
able to return — and says he doesn’t know
when or if he’ll return.

Walther wakes up before the sun every
morning to join a growing force of Mexican
and Central American day laborers on a
street corner in downtown Herndon where
they compete for any jobs offered — from
construction and renovation to gardening —
for an unofficial wage of ten dollars an hour.

Of the 30 to 50 men who gather daily in
search of work in Herndon, only about 10
to 15 percent are actually picked up. That
keeps wages non-negotiable, says Jose Vanegas,
an organizer affiliated with Jobs for Justice
who is currently working with day laborers
in Herndon and championing for immigrant
rights in Northern Virginia.

Jose Vanegas is himself an immigrant from
Colombia. He arrived in the United States 30
years ago with both of his parents. He has since
become a citizen and speaks proudly of the
successful catering business his family has
established in Fairfax County, Virginia.

Vanegas speaks to the broader issues of
the immigrant-rights movement, naturaliza-
tion, the right of reunification (the right to
bring family members to the United States),
and protecting immigrants in the workplace.

But first and foremost he says Herndon
day laborers need a permanent location to
work out of, a kind of community center that
could serve as a base for workers, a place
to hold morning English classes while workers
wait for work, a place to organize and pro-
vide resources, a way for this growing com-
munity to become legitimized in Herndon.

Two years ago this goal seemed within
reach. A local businessman had donated a
space and things seemed to be moving for-
ward, but then September 11 and its anti-
immigrant fallout came to Herndon.

Suddenly the idea of a resource center for
illegal immigrants became a contentious
issue, the businessman pulled out, and
Vanegas went back to the drawing board.

While he feels that politics have allowed
anti-immigrant feelings to grow in Herndon,
he says the potential for support is also there
and the mayor and town council have
already agreed to investigate a new site.

Immigrant rights in the wake of
September 11 were a theme throughout the
day as speakers expressed a sense of
urgency, a need to bring immigrant rights
to the forefront at a time when they are not
only being neglected but potentially
destroyed. Many placards held by protest-
ers, whether Latino, Arab, Asian, or
Caribbean, proclaimed, "We are workers,
not terrorists."  

As Haim Ahmed, a Bangladeshi immi-
grant and union organizer for Hotel
Workers Local Union 6 out of Astoria,
Queens stated, "We have known for a long
long time America is the only land of
opportunity, but now we feel that people
don’t want us here and that feeling is get-
ing worse day by day. We love America, we
sing America, our children’s future is
America, our children are America, they
feel American and wave the American flag
but we must get together for our rights."

While the Immigrant Workers Freedom
Ride has been lauded by organizers as a
success it was met with some opposition.
In Texas three buses of Freedom Riders
traveling from Los Angeles were stopped by
immigration officials who threatened riders
with arrest and deportation.

But as Emily Andrews, union organizer,
explains, "The strategy was that no one car-
dered any identification, so illegal immigrants
and their allies had no chance of giving
away any kind, hindering officials’ ability to
process anyone or determine their status."

After a three-hour-long delay, during which
time union presidents and members of con-
gress appealed to the Bush administration
and supporters flooded phone lines, the rid-
ers were allowed to continue.

Throughout the day participants spoke of
holding the momentum gathered by these
heady last few weeks. As Grifford Miller,
member of the New York City Council,
declared, "You are New York, you are
America, you look beautiful from here, this
is a beautiful moment... this is the begin-
ing of my friends, this is only the beginning.
We are here to start a movement..."

In the meantime day laborers like Walther
continue to work supum to sundown, some-
times 10 and 12 hours for a barely liv-
ing wage, no benefits, no job security and
no recognition. When asked why he stays
and if he likes it here, his frowned brow
mirrors the complexity of the question:"No, I
don’t like it here," he states bluntly, "but here
is where the opportunity is... We are
at this march today because we are con-
vinced that one day we’ll get a chance and
that one day we’ll be triumphant."
By M. MAYURAN TRICEHELUVAM

D escending on Detroit from all parts of the nation and the globe, 150 people attended the Anarchist People of Color Conference from Oct. 3 to 5. Anarchists and anti-authoritarians drove everywhere from Tokyo to Seattle and rode the rails from the Northeast. Over a dozen activists from Canada made their way across the border, organizers hailed from Brazil, Colombia, Bhuban, Jamaica and Korea.

Puck who hails from Tucson expressed satisfaction at gathering with so many kindred spirits. “I’ve been an anarchist for a few years now and never had the experience of having more than one or two people of color in the same room as me at the same time.”

It was repeatedly noted that this was the first conference bringing together anarchist people of color and that one thread of anarchism, the image of a predominantly white movement.

One, who arrived from Montreal, explained the importance of the event. “You go to places in Canada, any major city... you don’t see conferences with people of color like this.” Another, who arrived from Yugoslavia, said that the conference “has already been influencing a few people all over the world.”

Beyond the geographic representation of the conference attendees, there was a variety in the movements and struggles they came from. Anarchist people of color also brought together experiences of multiple generations—former Black Panther Party members alongside queer youth - gender identities, sexualities, class backgrounds and ethnicities.

The conference was prioritised as a people of color only event. While white activists provided off-site support, conference attendees worked to create a community of support and trust. Attendees also volunteered to provide security in the face of violent, but ultimately empty threats, by white supremacists.

Representing movements in popular education, Palestine solidarity, punk rock, queer youth activism, transgender housing rights and mental-health advocacy, among dozens of other causes, conference-goers expressed a desire to connect and build a new vision of people of color activism and understanding. Many people spoke of uneasily experiences in white anarchist spaces or in authoritarian people of color organizations, feeling camaraderie among attendees.

Any other time that it’s been initiated that we should have a people of color only space... it’s gotten really unhealthy reactions from other activists... that’s divisive, it’s separatist,” said Darcy of Portland Oregon. “People of color are very much interested in having their own space where we can space about issues and racism in organizing, on our own terms without interruptions or presumptions. This is really healthy, and we’ll be having it again.”

Workshops were delivered on women of color and feminism in the movement, spoken word, organizing against the criminal justice system, the police and cruising, white nationalist movements, sexism, cop-watch groups, community alternatives to police and karate.

Several presenters allowed attendees to explore the significance of what it means to be an anarchist person of color and how to move forward as a movement or support network. In Detroit, people of color explored anarchism as a movement towards self-sustainability and self-determination that is rooted in a knowledge and acknowledgement of relationships and internalized oppression and challenges traditional white modes or organizing. Rafael, from New York City, explained that as anarchist people of color “we have to give up the idea that we are organizing people.”

The Conference was called for by the Black Autonomy Network of Community Organizers, based in Michigan. However, disputes in the final weeks of the planning stages led to BANCO members boycotting the event a day before the conference began. At the same time, BANCO member Lorenzo Komboa Erwin sent a letter addressing disputes with other conference organizers and threw out such terms as “character assassination” and “sectarianism” in reference to the organizers. Though the presence of these sisters and brothers was missed, the conference itself went on as planned.

Yet the dispute, as well as problems of machismo and posturing within anti-authoritarian movements, hung over the conference for some time. While many anarchist people of color are willing to engage in self-criticism and change, others were fueled by the desire to move forward - as though the simple act of gathering in Detroit prepared us to take action against a myriad of issues.

Over three dozen anarchist people of color from the tri-state area were in attendance, and say they returned with energy to work together to create a more just world.

“I went to a workshop discussing alternatives to the police state that we live in. People have really good ideas about how to organize autonomous communities to really work together against violence,” said Alana from Queens. “That’s something I’m really going to think a lot about and try to take home and start working on.”

As for the future of Anarchist People of Color gatherings, plans are in motion to create regional, local, and national meetings, and to bring in potential allies who couldn’t make it to Detroit.
THE CORPORATE VIRUS

BOOKS: CORPORATION AND RESISTANCE

THE CORPORATE VIRUS

By Ted Nace Bennett
Koehler, 328 pages
www.gangsofamerica.com

With so much talk about globalization and empire these days, it's hard to believe that, given its primary role in shaping the global order, the essential history of the American corporation hasn't been written until now. Ted Nace's Gangs Of America is a comprehensive account of exactly how American corporations gained extraordinary power over our lives despite the tiny fact that they're not mentioned in our Constitution.

It was under the specter of the most powerful corporation to have existed, the British East India Company, Nace argues in his easy, clear voice, that the American colonies revolted. Drawing attention to the "founding fathers'" wariness of corporations — Franklin actually met with anti-corporate economists in Europe, including Adam Smith — and to the non-existence of corporations in colonial society, Americans acted to block the Company's plan to "monopolize American enterprises and markets."

"The American Revolution," Nace contends, "was directly and explicitly an anti-corporate revolt... More accurately, it was a rebellion against a corporation and a government that was thoroughly intertwined."

While acknowledging the Constitution's framers' encouragement of rebellion and safeguarding their own long-term economic control, Gangs Of America builds on this anti-corporate interpretation of the Revolution.

The book demonstrates how the Framers' original, stringent controls — i.e., locally-issued charters, limitations on size — were gradually eroded by legislation and the Supreme Court. In less than 50 years, Nace notes, the Court departed from the principle of corporate subordination to the state, before the Civil War prompted the Court to change the legal structure defining the corporation.

The story of how the 14th Amendment was transformed into a constitutional corporate protection racket is particularly eye-opening. Many cite the 1886 Santa Clara decision as establishing corporate personhood. It's not widely known, however, that corporate personhood wasn't written into the decision itself, but was merely stated in the case's headnote, as Nace illustrates. His recounting of historical research and documentation demonstrates how the Framers' original, stringent controls — i.e., locally-issued charters, limitations on size — were gradually eroded by legislation and the Supreme Court. In less than 50 years, Nace notes, the Court departed from the principle of corporate subordination to the state, before the Civil War prompted the Court to change the legal structure defining the corporation.

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In the absence of a formal peacekeeping force, Palestinians remain as vulnerable as ever to the 36-year Israeli occupation. As Israeli crimes and process of slow ethnic cleansing continue unhindered and often unreported, ordinary people from all over the world have taken it upon themselves to go to Palestine to express solidarity and bear a resource for Palestinians. Since the outbreak of the second Intifada thousands of internationals have left their families and jobs to support the Palestinian liberation movement. They have come in large numbers from all over the world, many of them Jewish. Live From Palestine not only tells the incredible stories of resistance in Palestine, but in doing so disrupts an Israeli disinformation campaign seeking to criminalize all Palestinian opposition as terrorist.

Editors Nancy Stohlman and Laurianne Aladin have compiled dozens of essays from both internationals and Palestinians to create the most complete and compelling collection of eyewitness reports and analysis from the Palestine under siege.

Rachel Corrie, the young woman from Olympia, Washington who was killed by an armed Israeli bulldozer while opposing the demolition of a Palestinian home provides some of the most moving words in her emails to friends and families shortly before her death. In a letter to her mother she writes, "They [the Palestinians] are a good example of how to be in it for the long haul. I know that the situation gets to themand may ultimately get them — on all kinds of levels, but I am nevertheless amazed at their courage and determination such a large degree of humanity — their laughter, generosity, family time-against the incredible horror occupying their lives and against the constant presence of death."

Live from Palestine ushers in these voices of nonviolence, providing what at first seems to be alternative information, but after reading it is appreciated as a tool not only for understanding the horrors of the Israeli occupation but how to participate in ending it.

— Rumi Ara

LIVE FROM PALESTINE
Ed. Nancy Stohlman and Laurianne Aladin
South End Press, 223 pages

The Literature of American Doom

By Donald Pinnick

Many Americans are comatose, mesmerized by power and suffering from severe delusions. They don't know what is going on, can't see it. They are accepting the violence and corruption and lies of the Bush administration. They are indifferent to and grossly troubled by the incredible corruption, theft, and deaths of the Bush administration.

For a long time now, writers, poets, artists have considered this situation of affairs, and their conclusions and warnings are to be found in numerous works. Some have gone so far as to state that America is doomed to a tragic fate: ruin and death.

About two years ago I was talking to James Purdy, the American novelist and short story writer (The Color of Darkness, Malcolm, The Nephew, Cabot Wright Begins), and he used that very word, doom. "America is doomed," Purdy said.

In July 1902, I was concluding a six-month series of interviews with William Baziotes (1912-1963), the abstract expressionist painter, and we got on to the subject of politics: "I have a fear about what is going to happen to our society," Baziotes said.

Baziotes was acutely and inclusively perceptive: his paintings — one of them is currently on exhibit at the Whitney Museum of American Art — are subjective, mysterious and highly psychological.

The American psyche — that is the trouble! It is doom-laden. T. S. Eliot, born in St. Louis, graduated from Harvard, taught philosophy there for a year and took off for England. He became a British citizen. He wrote of all this accurately and prophetically in 1922 in The Waste Land.

D. H. Lawrence, the English novelist, poet, and critic, lived for a time in Taos, NM, and came to publish a brilliant book of criticism, Studies in Classic American Literature (1923). Lawrence wrote of the American Indian:

"The Red men are dead. Their blood is dead and unappeased. Do not imagine him happy in his Happy Hunting Ground."

No, the Indian was coming back for revenge. The Indian is back. Lawrence went on to say a great deal more about America and its literature in the book's chapters on Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne. Of Hawthorne, Lawrence wrote:

"That blue-eyed darling Nathaniel knew disagreeable things." He was careful to send them out in disguise.

"The deliberate consciousness of Americans so fair and smooth-spoken and the under-consciousness so devilish, Destroy! destroy! destroy! huns the under-consciousness."

There was Edwin Arlington Robinson, the indispensable poet, as the critic Denis Donoghue described him, reared in Gardiner, Maine, worked on the construction of the New York City subway, lived in one room, sat in his rocker and waited for someone to knock on his door.

In his verse, Cassandra (1916), Robinson wrote of America:

"Are you to pay for what you have
With all you are? — No other word
we caught, but with a laughing crowd
Moved on. None heeded, and few heard.

Then there was John Dos Passos in Manhattan Transfer (1925) and James T. Farrell's trilogy Studs Lonigan (1932-1935) and Henry Miller's Black Spring (1936). Miller was explicit, "I see America spreading disaster," he said, "I see America as a black curse upon the world. I see a long night settling in and that mushroom which has poisoned the world withering at the roots."

And then there was Allen Ginsberg's Howl (1956) and Wichte Vortex Subway (1966), and Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison and John A. Williams and Chester Himes and John Dos Passos and James Baldwin. The other side of the doom equation was slavery for which we have no justice. The other side of the doom equation was of levels, but I am nevertheless amazed at their courage and determination such a large degree of humanity — their laughter, generosity, family time-against the incredible horror occupying their lives and against the constant presence of death."

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El 4 de octubre la Caravana de los inmigrantes terminó su recorrido en el parque Flushing Meadows de Queens, Nueva York, con una multitudinaria. La concurrencia varía de diez mil a cien mil personas según la fuente.

Flameaban banderas de decenas de países, banderines de sindicatos y banderas religiosas. La gran diversidad de rostros y de lenguajes estaba en torno con este conglomerado de naciones que es el condado de Queens. Los asistentes reclamaron dignidad y respeto por los derechos de los inmigrantes; reunificación familiar y legalización que conduzca a la ciudadanía.

El conjunto mexicano Bronco y el cantante de reggae Wyclef Jean fueron oclavionados y ayudaron a crear un clima de festival llenado con los olor de las comidas caribeñas y latinas. Entre los oradores estaban Edward Egan, cardenal de Nueva York; John Sweeney, presidente de la central nacional de sindicatos AFL-CIO; John Wilhem, Presidente del sindicato de trabajadores de hoteles y restaurantes; Roger Toussaint, Presidente del sindicato de trabajadores del transporte; los congresistas demócratas John Lewis, Charles Rangel y Nydia Velázquez; los concejales Gifford Miller, Hiram Monserrate y otros miembros de la AFL-CIO, la Iglesia, y organizaciones comunitarias.

María Durazo, la directora nacional de la Caravana, dijo que la marcha significa el despertar del pueblo inmigrante y de la sensibilización de demócratas y republicanos al tema inmigratorio. Alertó que el próximo año habrá elecciones y que el público apoyará al candidato que tome en cuenta los problemas de los inmigrantes. Nydia Velázquez también recalcó que es importante incorporar el tema inmigratorio al debate nacional en visperas de elecciones.

Algunos activistas dudan del compromiso real que estos políticos y sindicalistas tienen con las reivindicaciones de los inmigrantes. Quizás porque en décadas, sus contactos con ellos les mostrarían que una vez que termina la campaña electoral, se olvidan de los inmigrantes. Aunque en la costa este, como en la este, durante los noventa y principios del 2000, se levantaron las banderas de legalización de los inmigrantes indocumentados tanto en la comunidad como en propuestas legislativas. Todos esos proyectos de ley fueron uno a uno a parar al cesto de papeles de algún legislador demócrata por falta de apoyo dentro de su partido.

En Nueva York, dos de los grupos más activos en la organización de los inmigrantes, Tepeyac y Centro de Trabajadores Latinos, no participaron de la convocatoria. Juan Martínez, coordinador de Tepeyac, declaró al diario Hoy que este tipo de movimiento debe alcanzar un nivel más serio. Dijo que desde hace tres meses, se está discutiendo en el Congreso la iniciativa de ley HR 2899; que no otorga amnistía pero que contiene algunos aspectos positivos para los inmigrantes. Contempla dos tipos de visa para trabajadores temporales, que finalmente tendrán acceso a la residencia permanente. Reconoce elegibilidad para los que entraron al país ilegalmente. Agregó que en este momento se está discutiendo el impedimento a la elegibilidad por delitos menores. Pide que los organizadores de la Caravana se sumen a la propuesta que significará un avance en la legalización de los trabajadores migrantes.

En declaraciones a El Independiente, Mónica Santana, Centro de Trabajadores Latinos, manifestó que las leyes inmigratorias actuales tienen consecuencias gravisimas, que exigen un compromiso serio a todos los niveles. Si bien reconoce el esfuerzo de los organizadores de la Caravana para movilizar por esta causa, lamenta que hasta ahora no hayan brindado su apoyo a la propuesta de ley que está en la mesa de debate. Para algunos activistas latinos, el tema inmigratorio está en el centro de su accionar. No es un estandarte para agitar en una movilización, y volver a la vida cotidiana con cierta paz de conciencia; ni es tampooco un eslogan de campaña electoral. Es un tema que va más allá de los partidos democrata o republicano.

En octubre de 1999, la Coalición por la legalización de los inmigrantes, convocó en Washington D.C. a una marcha por la legalización, la reunificación familiar, derechos civiles y laborales para los inmigrantes. Concurrieron más de veinte mil personas y abrió el camino para la articulación de un movimiento nacional. Era una coyuntura ideal para tratar de revertir las leyes inmigratorias: Bajo desempleo y economía estalla. Estos factores ayudarían a contrarrestar los alegatos conservadores de que los inmigrantes le quitaran puestos de trabajo a los ciudadanos. Sin embargo, los demócratas no apoyaron con firmeza a la Coalición en su propuesta de cambiar las leyes. Con el triunfo de Bush y la nueva derecha conservadora, más los atentados del 11 de septiembre del 2001, la situación cambió completamente.

Hoy, las comunidades inmigrantes y los sectores que las apoyan se hallan en una encrucijada: con más de diez millones de trabajadores indocumentados en este país y con la tragedia de la muerte de un inmigrante por día tratando de cruzar ilegamente la frontera con México. Es el momento de construir consenso y fortalecer la lucha en todos los niveles para cambiar las leyes inmigratorias. Esperemos que la legalización de los inmigrantes indocumentados sea un eje permanente y no negociable, que trascienda la coyuntura electoral.