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THE INDYPENDENT

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A TRUCKER'S TALE



ILLUSTRATION: FRANK REYNOSO

FIRST PERSON

I am a 50-year-old truck driver. I have been in the freight industry for 15 years. I'm a member of the Teamsters union, and I can tell you what a difference it makes to have a union at work. Or rather, to be union, to be united and to have a voice. Because a real union is not something you have, but something we are. At its best, it's living by the old Knights of Labor belief, "An injury to one is an injury to all."

By BERT P.

Even with a union, the war on workers continues.

Howard's Express, a regional trucking company that operates in New York and New Jersey, forced workers to go on strike this spring, and has been running with scabs and security guards ever since. Star Container, a 75-year-old corrugated cardboard box company down the street from my job, has told unionized drivers they will all be replaced by a non-union subcontractor.

I work for a huge, transnational trucking company that was recently bought out by an even larger rival. Most of the drivers have already lost jobs three or four times when trucking companies we worked at closed. Will this merger cost us our jobs? We know one thing - we, the workers who built these companies, will be the last to know. To talk of democracy is a joke. This is a tyranny of the bosses.

And the unions have forgotten how to fight. In all this the unions obey the law - at Star Container, the union "is negotiating." How can you negotiate when a man says, "Tomorrow I will kill you"? The only answer is to shut the place

down, not 'negotiate' the terms of your killing. The companies break the laws. They don't care. And they win.

Everywhere it is the same - workers are in fear of losing their jobs. They are not cowards, though one wishes they would unite and demand their rights. Judging by my experience at the workers center in Bushwick where I am active, they can be fired just for demanding that their boss obey the law.

A typical case at the workers center is the struggle of six Minimax employees who were fired unjustly. They were all forced to work long hours in a sweatshop, sometimes as much as 80 hours a week, without overtime pay or even the minimum wage. This is not unusual.

What is different is that these immigrant workers came to the center, learned their rights, overcame their fear and are suing the boss for the stolen wages, about \$90,000 over three years. We have had protests in front of the store, and are asking people not to shop there until the boss pays what he owes. The workers hope to make an example of this store and spread the struggle to other stores in Bushwick.

Every week in the workers center we see many cases of non-payment of wages, whether not paying the minimum wage,

not paying time and a half for overtime - which is almost standard now on jobs exploiting immigrant labor - or simply not paying wages at all. This happens most in construction and small sweatshops, which string along the workers for weeks, telling them, "I'll pay you next week when the contractor pays me."

Nonpayment of wages, including minimum and overtime, is not only a civil offense against labor law, but in New York State is also a criminal offense. Yet, the law sits on the books unenforced. Like we say at worker meetings, laws for the rich and poor are applied differently. If a poor worker relaxes with a can of beer on the stoop, that law will be enforced against him. But if his boss owes him a month's wages, he can't get anyone to help him.

When I started raising my family in the 1970s, a good apartment in New York was \$150 a month, subways were 50 cents, and minimum wage was \$2.90 an hour. That doesn't sound like much, but you could live on it. Now the same apartment is \$1,000 or more, and the minimum wage is \$5.15. It's day and night; you can do the math.

Even high-paid workers, like truckers, have seen a steady loss in living standards these last 30 years. On my job, guys use their seniority to get as much overtime as possible. We should be able to use our seniority to go home and enjoy our families after 40 hours. But the bills keep coming.

Whether we are paid \$4 or \$20 per hour, everybody is working too much now. Sweatshop employees work 60 or 70 hours a week. Don't miss a day or you lose your job (that's what would happen to the Minimax workers - many were fired for missing one day to care for a sick child or attend to another family emergency). I worked in garment factories in the 1970s, and it was 37.5 hours per week. That's long gone. The non-union trucking companies don't even pay overtime till 60 hours, and that's by law - interstate commerce is exempt from the 40-hour rule.

The conditions American workers face may force us to see our common interests. The union bureaucracy now

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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 selfrepresentation. 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?

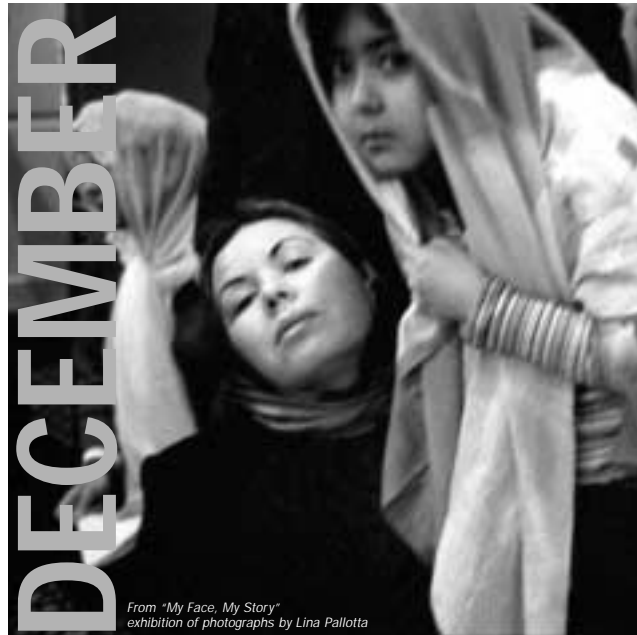
The IMC has an open door. You can write for The Independent, film events and rallies, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying entirely on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

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

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR



From "My Face, My Story" exhibition of photographs by Lina Pallotta

THE INDEPENDENT

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

To submit events for the calendar, call (212) 684-8112.

Ongoing events

Until December 28 • *Women for Afghan Women Present, "My Face, My Story,"* exhibition of photographs from Lina Pallotta Pink Pony Cafe, 176 Ludlow St. 212-253-1922

MONDAYS

6-10pm • *Public Speakout w/ No Police State*; Union Sq.

7:30 & 10pm • *Short Films*; 410 W.16th St. • 212-242-6555

9:30pm • *Evening Burlesque*; 70 N.6th St., Bkln (21+)

11pm • *Open DJ*: BYO CDs & vinyl; 97 Atlantic Ave., Bkln.

TUESDAYS

Garden w/More Gardens; E.158th St.,Bronx • 212-533-8019

4:30pm • *Poetry Writing Workshop*; Library, 425 6th Ave.

6:30pm • *Housing & Loan Help*; 88 3rd Ave., 3rd fl., Bkln.

7pm • *Jam Session w/ drummer Wally Gator Watson* (Wilson Pickett & Cab Calloway) all levels; 85 South St.

WEDNESDAYS

12:30-1:30pm • *Ground Zero Witness for Peace & Justice vigil*; Church St. between Fulton & Vesey

6pm • *Hats Not Bombs knitting circle*; Jane Doe, 93 Montrose, Bkln.

7-11pm • *Films (& Skee)*; 1 N. 12th St. #7A, Bkln

8pm • *Happy Ending Reading Series w/ music*; 302 Broome St. • 212-334-9676 amandastern.com

9:30pm • *The Gong Show. open mic night w/ audience participation*; Galapagos, 70 N. 6th St., Bkln

11pm • *Hump Night: standup/alternative comedy*; UCB Theatre, 307 W 26th St. 212-366-9176

THURSDAYS

12:30pm • *Gotham Jazzmen live*; 20 W 53rd St. (ends 18th)

5:30-6:30 • *Women in Black for Palestine*; 14th St & Broadway

6-10pm • *Public Speakout w/ No Police State*; Union Sq.

8pm-12am • *Poets Open Mic & Jazz*; 48 E 7th St.

FRIDAYS

1pm • *Food Not Bombs cooks at ABC No Rio*. Serves vegetarian food in Tompkins Square Park SW

4-7:45pm • *MoMA*; 33 St. & Queens Blvd., L.I.C.

6pm • *Art Performance & Film*; garden, 346 E Houston

6-8pm • *Guggenheim Museum*; 1071 5th Ave. & 89th St.

6-9pm • *Whitney Museum of American Art*; 945 Madison Ave. & 75th St.

6:30pm • *FNB & a movie*; Jane Doe, 93 Montrose, Bkln.

SATURDAYS

Urban Outdoor walking tours of NYC's shores & parks; 212-352-9330 dave.lutz@treebranch.com

12:2pm • *Peace Vigil w/Catholic Worker*; 14th & Broadway

1-2:30pm • *Wellness Saturday: holistic healing workshop*; Whole Foods Market, 250 7th Ave. @ 24th St.

3:5pm • *Solidarity w/ Palestine Rally* 14th St. & Broadway

3:30-4:30pm • *Brooklyn Food Not bombs serves NW corner*

of Fort Greene Park
autonomiab8@riseup.net
6pm • *Art Performance & Film*; garden, 346 E Houston

SUNDAYS

1pm • *Food Not Bombs cooks at ABC No Rio*. Serves vegetarian food in Tompkins Square Park SW 3:30ish

3-5pm • *Solidarity w/ Palestine Rally* 14th St. & Broadway

3 & 5pm • *Foreign & B Movies*; Pianos, 158 Ludlow St
5pm-1am • *Films*: 37 Broadway, Bkln., 917-667-2332

6pm • *Books Through Bars: answer letters & mail books to prisoners*. ABC No Rio, 156 Rivington St., 2nd fl.

6pm • *Degrassi Jr High: 4 episodes during Happy Hour*; Enid's, 560 Manhattan Ave., Bkln.

6-8:30pm • *Open Mic*; Pete's Candy, 709 Lorimer St., Bkln.

9:30pm • *Asscat 3000: Upright Citizen Brigade's improv comedy* (8-15 tickets); 307 W 26th St. 212-366-9176

SUN DEC 14

1 pm • \$5 suggested donation *Economics of Empire (part III): Fixing America's Role in the World, a better balance of military, diplomatic and development strategies with Dr. Jeffrey D. Sachs*. Unitarian Forum 312 Filmore St., Staten Island www.uforum.org

4 pm • *Free Resistance in Brooklyn's annual card-writing party* 668 Washington St., Apt 2B 212-989-8222

8 pm • \$10 *Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping Annual Come Happy Leave Hungry Christmas Revival*. Bring a homemade present for NYC's largest gift exchange. St. Mark's Church 2nd Avenue @ East 10th St. Reservations suggested. Contact: Michael O'Neil, 917.825.3562

SUN DEC 21

7pm
A Night with Joan Nestle: working class, long-time lesbian activist Bluestockings Bookstore 172 Allen St. (between Stanton & Rivington) 212.777.6028 www.bluestockings.org

12:4 pm • *free Doves of Peace: natural history & cultural significance of doves, including the pigeon* Prospect Park Audubon Center Lincoln Rd & Ocean Ave, Bkln

7pm
Critical Mass: a fun, easy, car-free ride for bikes & skaters Meet at Union Sq. North www.times-up.org

SAT DEC 27

4-7 pm
Kwanzaa celebration with African Folk Heritage Circle: potluck Fred Samuels Recreational Center 669 Malcolm X Blvd. & 144th St. 10 pm

Riverside Ride: fun & relaxing, for bikes & skaters Meet at Columbus Circle www.times-up.org

SUN DEC 28

2 pm
Harlem Surveillance Camera Tour & intro to surveillance Meet at SE 125th St. & Adam Clayton Powell Blvd.

MON DEC 29

7pm
Youth activist Alex Asch speaks of his 16 months in a private reformatory for "Oppositional Defiance Disorder." Bluestockings Bookstore 172 Allen St. (between Stanton & Rivington)

WED DEC 31

10:45 pm
New Year's Eve Ride, for bikes & skaters, to Belvedere Castle Meet at Columbus Circle www.times-up.org

WHERE DO I GET MY COPY OF THE INDEPENDENT?

LOWER EAST SIDE

ABC No Rio 156 Rivington

Bluestockings Books & Cafe 172 Allen

Lotus Cafe Clinton & Stanton

EAST VILLAGE

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

Chelsea 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

HARLEM

Riverside Church 490 Riverside Dr. at 120th

Strictly Roots Restaurant 123rd & Adam Clayton Powell Blvd.

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.

SPRINGFIELD

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 B'KLYN

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

JERSEY CITY

Five Corners Branch Library off Journal Square

THIN AIR

BY LENINA NADAL

When the rebuilt PATH station at the World Trade Center site opened triumphantly last month, residents and city workers packed the train, delighted to be in a good, old-fashioned downtown rush-hour.

Forgotten once again were the workers who toiled to rebuild that station under conditions as noxious as those faced by the WTC cleanup crews.

The crews along with the residents around the WTC, were the center of renewed public concern about their exposure to deadly pollutants. In the summer of 2003, the Office of the Inspector General of the Environmental Protection Agency issued a report criticizing the White House for pressuring the EPA to downplay the possible health hazards at ground zero. Outraged, Sen. (D-NY) Hillary Clinton and Rep. Jerrold Nadler, called for an investigation, the proper cleanup of nearby houses and apartments, and full disclosure to workers regarding the health risks.

But with ground zero cleared, little notice is being paid to the men in fluorescent yellow and green vests, who descend six levels underground every morning at 7 a.m., putting in new tracks for the PATH train for \$6.50 an hour on 12-hour shifts.

Many workers were reluctant to talk, saying they feared they could be fired. But one who declined to give his name commented how their employers were touchy precisely because conditions were unsafe.

"The environment is not conducive to human beings. Sitting is not allowed; you stand up all day... The places are dirty. Health safety is not conducive for human beings, some of the workers get sick, and there is no health insurance. Management does not care for what happens to the workers," said the worker.

Oscar, a Local 3 union electrician working on the PATH train, described a witch's brew of toxins permeating the work site. "[There's] asbestos, lead, mercury, dust spores, mold, standing water that's contaminated," he said. "Everywhere you go you are susceptible to breathing contaminants."

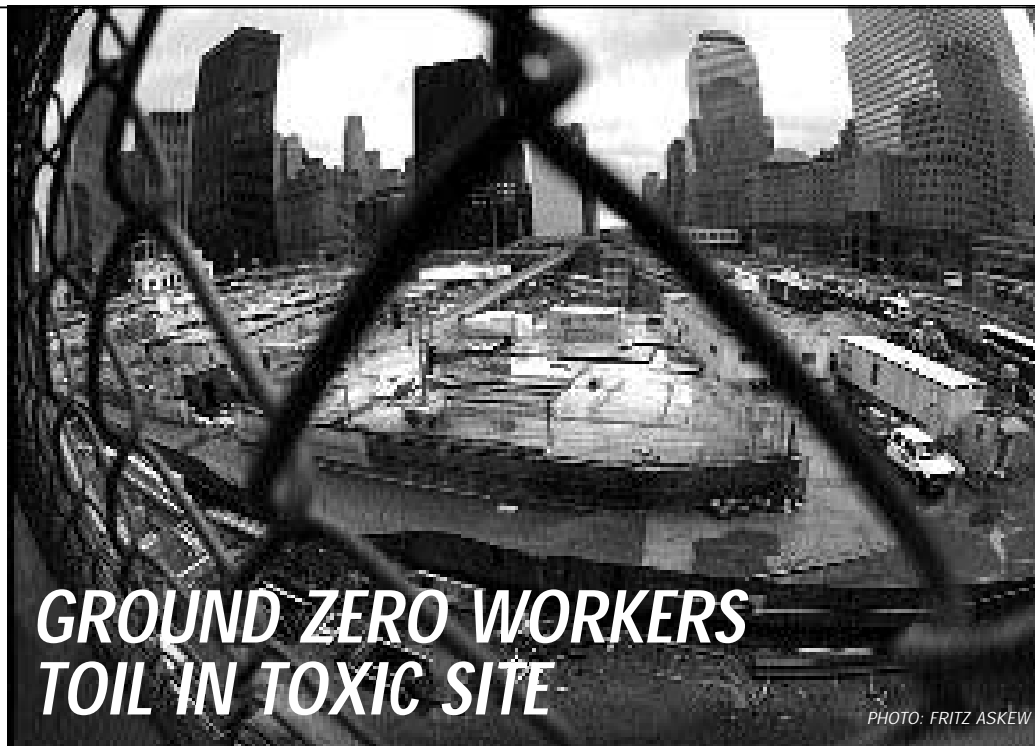
"The further down you go, the worse it's supposed to be," said Julio, a union electrician.

But, he concluded gamely, "the doctor said it's okay to work here."

Julio's friend Oscar seemed less sure he had been well protected.

"My union [Local 3] is not really doing anything for that particular job," he said. "We have been told that it's safe and until I get an illness - that's when I'll know it's time for me to move."

Walter Hang, president of Toxic Targeting, an environmental database company that tracks more than 5,000 New York toxic sites, said the workers, exposure to toxic substances at the PATH station didn't seem to be taken seriously enough.



GROUND ZERO WORKERS TOIL IN TOXIC SITE

PHOTO: FRITZ ASKEW

"What's important to know is have these workers come across oil in the water?" he said. "Is that foul smell chemicals? That's where the dielectric fuel is, it works its way into the solid bedrock. Once you get PCB's into fractured bedrock, you can't get it out. If you go to the Lexington Avenue V train platform, you can see what I mean. There is a huge oil leak that has not been dealt with. This is not uncommon in trains but very serious if workers are openly exposed."

And it's not as if Oscar and his co-workers were feeling great.

Oscar said he had developed shingles, a stress-related disease, adding that several of his fellow workers had been complaining of breathing ailments.

Felix, a security worker with an Eddington Associates badge, stood on the opposite corner of Ground Zero, checking the IDs of vehicles entering the site. Eddington Associates is a security contractor involved in the World Trade Center Recovery Project.

Felix said that besides the low pay and long hours, the workers get no overtime or health benefits. When a friend of his fell and hurt his leg he was told that nothing could be done for him.

"The smell, the water, the garbage, there's no place to sit down, this is what we deal with every day. They say you are supposed to get a raise in three months. I have been here nine months and no raise. No protection at all is given. The company doesn't give you anything. I have been here nine months and have not seen the air quality people," said Felix.

However, the supervisor of security from Eddington Associates, Ivan Rivera, claimed there was no reason for worry. "They are conducting tests everyday and say the air is fine," he said.

A man standing with Rivera chimed in, "I don't know anyone who has gotten sick. The guy [air tester] works here [several] hours a day."

"The guy" who was responsible for air checks was nowhere to be found. But Rivera, tried to provide assurance that the air quality was being taken care of. "Call the Port Authority," he said. "They'll tell you who does the air checks."

The Port Authority however, was not helpful. When asked why it was difficult to find anyone conducting air quality tests a Port Authority spokesperson responded, "You don't need to talk to anyone for comment, just go to our website." She added, "There are

many security concerns. We can't reveal information about that to just anyone."

Local 3, the electricians' union representing workers like Oscar and Julio, did not respond to several phone calls.

David Newman, an activist with the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health laughed when told about the Port Authority's response. "Now air quality is a

security concern?"

Newman continued, "There has been no collection of data by government about the potential contamination of that workplace. There has been no guidance by employers or landlords in terms of cleanup and no guidance about the legal requirements of providing information to workers about occupational safety and health."



THE PEOPLE'S LAWYER

"BANKRUPTCY LAWS CAN PROTECT YOU... FOR NOW"

By ANN SCHNEIDER

Jane P. took out student loans to pay for her college education. While she was in college, MasterCard offered her a credit card with a modest limit. Throughout college and beyond, she made her credit card payments on time and was gradually extended a large credit limit. The rent on her apartment in Williamsburg eats up half of her monthly net earnings as an administrative assistant. Now she is over \$15,000 in debt on five different credit cards, paying more than \$300 a month to service the debt, and her school is threatening to default her if she misses a student loan payment. What should Jane do?

Jane has a constitutional right to file bankruptcy and eliminate her credit card debts, but her student loans are virtually non-dischargeable following a 1996 amendment to the bankruptcy act. Filing for Chapter 7 bankruptcy would free up money from her credit card payments so she can try to keep current on her student loans.

But Jane should act soon. The credit card industry has spent \$4 million lobbying Congress to overhaul the bankruptcy laws and make it nearly impossible for anyone earning a reasonable wage to obtain relief from their creditors. The industry calculates that if their bill, HR 975, is enacted, the companies will reap \$4 billion in extra profits the first year alone.

A recent study showed that between 1989 and 2001, the credit card debt of the average family increased by 53 percent. Late fees have become the fastest-growing source of revenue for the industry, jumping from \$1.7 billion in 1996 to \$7.3 billion in 2002. In addition, many people are forced into bankruptcy by medical bills.

Filing bankruptcy can be a step toward financial responsibility if your debts exceed your assets and you have no realistic ability to repay them. If your credit rating is already bad, and especially if you have judgments against you, then you have nothing to lose by filing. Secured debts such as a mortgage or car loan can be modified but not discharged. New York State law permits you to keep up to \$2,500 in household furnishings, clothing, jewelry and cash if you do not own a home, plus a car worth no more than \$2,400.

Filing bankruptcy requires you to spend money you don't have. The filing fee for Chapter 7 is \$209 and legal fees for simple cases begin at about \$500. Because one can lose their rights or their property, it is inadvisable to file without a lawyer. One may file for a Chapter 7 straight discharge only once every seven years. A Chapter Seven filing stays on one's credit report for ten years. Filing Chapter 13 is an option for wage-earners who have too much equity in their assets to qualify for a Chapter 7 "straight discharge" plan.

Co-signers beware: If one party files bankruptcy, the other party becomes solely responsible for that debt. It is illegal to discriminate against someone who has filed bankruptcy. After discharging debt, you may open and keep a bank account with your earnings.

This column provides general information, not specific legal advice. Each case is different. For more information, see LawHelp.org, a project of New York pro bono and poverty lawyers.

A TRUCKER'S TALE

continued from page 1

supports legalization for all immigrants whereas ten years ago it was anti-immigrant. Unions were disappearing, and the more intelligent ones saw that Latino workers in low-paying jobs were trying to organize. Still, racism has always been a tool to divide the working class. The (relatively) well-paid American worker may seem to be in another world than the worker immigrant and the many jailed

Black and Latino youth. A pessimist will say the only thing Americans understand is when they are being killed and when they lose their jobs. Racism has ever blinded workers to what the government does in other countries, and they too share in the stolen riches of other lands. Finally a pessimistic asks, how can a country so stupefied by TV and shopping malls ever regain a class consciousness?

I believe the only thing to do is to keep pushing at these contradictions, keep organ-

izing, keep questioning authority, trying to create independent media, trying to stay human, and as an American worker, reaching out a hand of solidarity to any worker who is trying to raise their head. Our fate is tied together. In these times of fear and autocratic rule, only a fool would believe there is a world of difference between a \$20-an-hour worker and a \$4-an-hour worker - we can both be homeless tomorrow if we don't fight.

The author can be reached at: bertpic@juno.com

"WE HAVE TO SEND A STRONG MESSAGE"

QUEENS COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO HATE CRIMES

By F. TIMOTHY MARTIN

Evening prayers end around 9 p.m. at the Al Falah Masjid, an Islamic Center located in the Corona neighborhood of Queens. On November 16, much like any other night there, Jalad and Junaid, two brothers aged 17 and 16, finished their prayers and headed for home. As they left the mosque, two Hispanic boys approached in a confrontational manner, shouting "You're Taliban." Soon five more boys joined in and began beating the two Arab teens. The brothers tried to fight back, but the attack left Javad with a black eye, cuts on his face and a swollen lump on his head. His brother also sustained minor injuries. Both ended their night at nearby Elmhurst hospital.

Local activists decided to respond swiftly. Just days after the attack they convened a meeting to address the situation in their neighborhood. Sponsored by New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE), a Queens-based non-profit organization that advocates for the rights of new immigrants, participants agreed to hold a peace vigil on Dec. 14 at Linden Park in Corona in response to the incident.

"We have to send a strong message to people that commit these hate crimes," says NY State Assemblyman José Peralta, who repre-

sents a district in Queens. "No one is going to take the American dream away from us."

The Queens attack has been labeled a hate crime, one of thousands reported each year across the nation. While the majority of victims are likely to be black, Jewish or homosexual, a large number of Muslims are also targeted.

In a country still healing from the wounds of September 11, where Arabs are currently perceived as the enemy in two separate wars, and where hundreds of Muslim immigrants have been rounded up and deported by federal authorities, immigrant rights' activists are concerned that anti-Arab sentiment will continue to increase.

Many stress that government policies are to blame.

Earlier this year, tens of thousands of residents originating mostly from Muslim countries were forced to comply with a government-mandated special registration program known as the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System. The program was suspended in November, but not before nearly 3,000 "voluntary" participants were detained, according to a Department of Homeland Security.

"The government's plan to terminate special registration for Arab and Muslim immigrants is an implicit acknowledgement that this was a failed, discriminatory program,"


says Lucas Guttentag, Director of the ACLU's Immigrants' Rights Project.

"Any new screening procedures should not be based on religion, ethnicity or national origin, but instead reflect the American values of equal justice and religious freedom," says Nihad Awad, Executive Director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

Other initiatives proposed in the wake of the special registration program, however, seem to offer immigrants little additional comfort.

One such Republican plan recently introduced in Congress with 112 cosponsors would require local police to take on the role of immigration agents and enforce complex federal immigration laws. But critics say that the Clear Law Enforcement for Criminal Alien Removal Act - or CLEAR Act - will lead to racial profiling and further erode relations between local police and immigrant communities.

"We're troubled by the misguided policies of the Bush Administration. They send mixed signals about who is dangerous. We need to tell government officials that we're going to hold [them] accountable," explains Bryan Pu-Folkes, Director of NICE. "We need to make sure we're politically engaged. Elections are coming up and we will not forget about these things."



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!

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REVIEW

"THE BUSINESS WAS ALL ABOUT CONTROL"

UNION BUSTER REPENTS

CONFESSIONS OF A UNION BUSTER

BY MARTIN JAY LEVITT,
CROWN PUBLISHERS INC.,
302 PP., HARDCOVER, \$25.

BY TONY PECINOVSKY

Martin Jay Levitt joined the union-busting business in 1969. He was 25 years old, divorced, living with his parents, and in need of fast cash. The seduction was too much. Besides, like his first union-busting boss told him, "We do the Lord's work."

Even though Levitt wasn't sure what was meant by the "Lord's work," he learned quickly that the Lord's servants were paid handsomely. After all, union busters weren't "anti-union." They were "pro-company and pro-employee." Levitt immediately began making \$500 a day and billed the client company for every single expenditure for the duration of a union-busting campaign.

Levitt's first campaigns introduced him to the most common strategies used by management lawyers. First, Levitt tells us, "Challenge everything... then take every challenge to a full hearing... then prolong each hearing" as long as possible, then "appeal every unfavorable decision."

According to Levitt there was a method to the madness. "If you [can] make the union fight drag on long enough, workers lose faith, lose interest, lose hope."

While Levitt understood the strategies of union busting, his understanding of why union busting is such a lucrative profession jelled later on. As Levitt chatted one night with a dinner guest, John Rogers, head of industrial relations at Cleveland Trust Bank, he found out what the union-busting business was all about. "Control," Rogers told him.

"After that night," Levitt writes, "I began to see that the business was all about control. I realized that control was both the objective and the method in union busting."

Confessions is brutal in its honesty and its portrayal of the union buster and his awareness

of the would-be union members he was paid to manipulate, confuse and eventually defeat.

In the mid-eighties Levitt decided to seek treatment for alcoholism and change his profession. He called the AFL-CIO and told the leadership of his decision. While skeptical at first, union leaders realized that insider knowledge of the union-busting business was valuable and that Martin Jay Levitt wanted to try to make amends.

At the beginning of *Confessions*, Levitt tells of a speech he gave at the 1988 Western Conference of the Brotherhood of Carpenters. At the end of the speech many in the audience had tears in their eyes, Levitt writes. He then adds, "It was not joy, but an overwhelming feeling of relief that filled the men who heard me that day: relief to know that the war they had suspected was being waged on them had been a real one all along and not just a creation of a union's paranoid imagination, as so many corporate bosses had told them."

The war Levitt speaks of has only intensified since George Bush Jr. took office. *Confessions* should be read widely.

IN BRIEF

COURT SPRINGS THESSALONIKI 7

Seven activists from across Europe who were among the 29 protesters arrested during protests against the European Union summit in Thessaloniki, Greece recently won a five-month struggle against Greek authorities.

On Nov. 26, the "Thessaloniki 7" as they are known, were released, ending their hunger strikes that lasted from 49 to 66 days. The seven were held on charges of rioting, possession of explosives and resisting authorities. All seven say the charges are false. In Simon Chapman's case, video and photographic evidence confirms that he was framed, analysts say. But the courts repeatedly refused to look at this evidence, and several appeals for release on bail were refused.

The case also galvanized solidarity groups all over the world: 28 European parliament members called for the prisoners' release; Amnesty International called for an independent inquiry.

The Seven are not allowed to leave Greece until their trial takes place. For updates, see www.indymedia.org.uk

CAFTA ACTIVISTS EXPELLED FROM TRADE TALKS

On Dec. 11 five activists with the Washington, D.C. Mobilization for Global Justice were forcibly expelled from a press conference during negotiations to finalize the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA).

"CAFTA would extend to Central America the same gross violations of human and labor rights resulting from NAFTA, as FTAA would to all of South America," said Rachael Moshman, one of those expelled. "These so-called 'free trade' treaties constitute a hemispheric race to the bottom, with corporate lobbyists writing the rules and civil society completely cut out."

CAFTA is a trade agreement being negotiated by government representatives from the United States, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. Labor, environmental, human rights, AIDS-activist and religious groups have all vowed to block CAFTA's passage by Congress in 2004.

GOP BIGSHOT FACES TEN YEARS IN THE SLAMMER

Congressman Bill Janklow (R-S.D.) faces up to 10 years in prison following his Dec. 8 conviction on second-degree manslaughter charges in the death of a motorcyclist killed in August when he ran a stop sign while traveling more than 70 m.p.h. Janklow, a former four-term governor, had 12 previous speeding tickets. Janklow personally lobbied President Bill Clinton in December 2000 to deny a pardon to Native American activist Leonard Peltier who supporters say was framed in the 1975 shooting of two FBI agents. "I'm probably the one responsible for Leonard Peltier not getting out," he said afterwards.

U.N. EYES GORILLA MOVEMENTS

An emergency appeal is being made through the U.N. for \$25 million to rescue the world's great apes - gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos and orangutans, which share more than 96 percent on their DNA with humans - from extinction within the next 50 years.

CITY

PROTESTERS RAP

P. DIDDY: Sean "P. Diddy" Combs says he is "as pro-worker as they get." On Dec. 9 is more than 150 protesters from the National Labor Committee gathered outside the rap impresario's midtown store to urge him to reform a Honduran sweatshop that produces this popular "Sean John" line of clothing. The rally followed revelations that workers at the factory were forced to work overtime without pay, have to get passes before they can go to the toilet, are subjected to daily body searches, and female workers are fired if they become pregnant. For more info, see www.nlc.org

PHOTO: FRITZ ASKEW



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IN BRIEF

MEDICARE CHIEF PUTS HIMSELF UP FOR AUCTION

Thomas A. Scully, the federal official who runs Medicare and was intimately involved in drafting legislation to overhaul the program, will step down Dec. 16. He is the object of a bidding war among five firms hoping to hire him to advise clients affected by the measure, according to the *New York Times*. Earlier this year, Scully was granted a waiver by the Department of Health and Human Services to pursue his job search while still working closely with Congress on Medicare legislation. Scully worked as the president of the Federation of American Hospitals, a trade group for investor-owned hospitals, before taking his current position in May 2001.

DRUG COMPANIES SEEK HIGHER PRICES EVERYWHERE

Having beaten back price controls on prescription drugs in the United States, the U.S. pharmaceutical industry is trying to roll them back overseas, with help from the Bush administration. The first test is Australia, which is currently negotiating a free-trade pact. In return for more access to U.S. agricultural markets, Trade Representative Robert Zoellick is demanding that the Aussies dismantle programs that allow the government to use its purchasing power to obtain lower drug prices. The Doctors Reform Society of Australia estimates that drug prices would triple if the U.S. proposal is adopted.

PHARMACEUTICAL CEO: MANY DRUGS DON'T WORK

A senior executive of GlaxoSmithKline, one of Britain's largest pharmaceutical companies, stated at a recent scientific meeting in London that most prescription drugs do not work on most of the people who take them. He said, "the vast majority of drugs - more than 90 percent - only work in 30 to 50 percent of people." This is the first time a senior drug official has gone public with this type of information. Although prescription drugs may be inefficient healers, they are efficient moneymakers. In 2000, GlaxoSmithKline's sales reached \$31.5 billion, including \$13.5 billion in pharmaceuticals sold in the United States, its largest market.

SCHOOL TELLS SECOND GRADER DON'T SAY "GAY"

A Louisiana second grader was recently sent home from school for telling his classmates that his mother is gay and explaining that gay meant when a "girl likes a girl." According to the *Lafayette Daily Advertiser*, the 7-year-old boy was also sent to a behavior clinic where he reportedly had to write "I will never use gay in school again" as part of his punishment. The ACLU and the mother want an apology from the school, which contends the child was disciplined for disrupting class and talking about inappropriate subject matter.

INDYMEDIA 1 DIEBOLD O

Diebold Election Systems announced Dec. 2 it was withdrawing legal threats against voting activists and internet service providers for publishing thousands of pages of internal staff e-mail that point to flaws with the company's computerized voting systems. Indymedia.org, which received a cease-and-desist order from Diebold earlier this fall, was one of those named in the order.

HEALTH

GENERATION GASP

NEW MEDICARE DRUG BILL IS BAD NEWS FOR YOUNG AS WELL AS OLD

By ERIC LAURSEN

It's the biggest change in Medicare policy since the massive retiree health insurance program was passed in 1965. And in the end, it was all decided by six healthy and affluent white males - four Republicans and two "friendly" Democrats - who shut the door on the rest of Congress and negotiated a sweeping restructuring of Medicare behind closed doors. They emerged late last month with a bill priced at \$395 billion over 10 years. The GOP leadership then hustled just enough Democrats into supporting it with a psych-out campaign that convinced them they would pay at the ballot box for voting against drug benefits for a key constituency: the elderly.

"Better benefits" depends on how you define them, however. Medicare's 40 million beneficiaries have been desperate for the program to add prescription drug-coverage for years, as prices for meds skyrocket. But to get conservative Republican lawmakers to go along, the new benefit had to be a skimpy one. And Democrats had to abandon measures that might have held down drug costs and agree to "cost-containment" provisions geared to erode the traditional Medicare system and open it up to private-sector encroachment in coming years.

The bill that Congress passed on to President Bush "starts the unraveling of the Medicare system," said Sen. Edward Kennedy, who tried a last-minute filibuster against the measure.

Not just the elderly will lose, either. As Medicare's traditional hospital, nursing and doctors' benefits continue to decline and drug prices continue to soar, so will the federal budget deficit. That will trigger increases in current workers' payroll taxes and make the program even less affordable when they are ready to retire. Meanwhile, with no guarantee that private-sector providers will actually cover more than a very narrow range of meds, more retirees will be forced to turn to their families - often overburdened themselves with spiraling health costs.

"We're concerned about it worsening the federal deficit," says Ed Park, senior health policy analyst at the

Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) in Washington, D.C., who co-authored several recent reports on the bill. "If you pass a bill this costly, and it's not offset by any cutbacks, it had better be sound policy. This bill fails that test."

What the bill essentially does is tack a new drug benefit onto the healthcare coverage Medicare already provides - but bars the federal government from using any of the cost-containment tools it normally uses to keep expenses down. The most important of these is its ability to use Medicare's enormous size to negotiate discounts from providers. But drug companies successfully lobbied to prohibit the government from taking part in price negotiations for seniors' meds. Under this "non-interference" provision, the HMOs, insurers and pharmaceutical benefit managers that will actually supply drugs to Medicare participants will do the negotiating instead. And no one expects them to get better prices than the government could.

The drug companies also lobbied successfully to retain loopholes that keep generic versions of their drugs from coming to market. And they killed a proposed addition that would have liberalized the rules for reimporting cheap drugs from Canada.

To get Republicans to sign on, the bill's chief negotiators, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist and House Ways and Means Chair Bill Thomas, packed it with a series of non-drug-related measures that Park says will erode Medicare and could eventually destroy it.

For instance, it raises Medicare premiums for individuals earning more than \$80,000 a year. While that would only affect the top 4 percent of beneficiaries today, the new premium formula is not indexed to inflation. So by the time younger workers start returning decades from now, they may be surprised to find themselves paying higher premiums even though no one would classify them as "affluent."

The bill also creates a new kind of savings vehicle for workers in high-deductible health plans, called Health Savings Accounts. But the only ones who will be able to take advantage of the new structure are higher-income individuals with better medical

histories, who will then have less need for coverage by their employers. HSAs will provide another incentive for employers to scale back or cancel their traditional medical coverage, leaving lower-level workers with worse medical problems out in the cold, says Park.

So if you thought your employer might still be offering retiree health coverage by the time you quit working, the chances just got a lot slimmer.

Another of the bill's provisions is a series of giveaways to HMOs and managed-care providers to persuade them to take on more Medicare recipients. These companies already get a windfall from Medicare each year - an overpayment of about 19 percent over the amount Medicare spends on beneficiaries who remain in the traditional system, because the private-sector providers cherry-pick healthier, more affluent retirees. That leaves the traditional plans with poorer, less healthy people, says Park.

But HMOs and managed-care providers still claim they are underpaid. So the new bill will raise their payments to perhaps 25 percent over the amount traditional Medicare pays, according to the CBPP. Alongside this, the bill sets up a \$12 billion "slush fund" that Medicare's administrators can distribute to private providers at their discretion, as a further inducement. There's no requirement that they do anything in particular with this money, however. Rather than open up cheap coverage to more people who need it, Park points out, providers could decide to provide more lavish services, such as health clubs, to their healthier, more desirable clients.

For younger workers, says Park, the problem is that these giveaways - not to mention the massive tax breaks represented by the HSAs - shrink Medicare's revenue base. Less money coming in means workers' payroll taxes will have to rise drastically while they're still working, and their benefits will be lower when they retire. Analysts already anticipated some kind of adjustments when baby boomers start leaving the workforce in large numbers. But the new Medicare regime will make matters a lot worse, a lot sooner.

Medicare Reform

WINNERS

DRUG COMPANIES: No price controls, no resales of drugs from Canada into the United States, no help for generic drug makers.

HOSPITALS AND PHYSICIANS: \$25 billion for rural hospitals, \$600 million in extra payments for technology; 1.5 percent increase in physician payments

PRIVATE EMPLOYERS: Subsidies to continue offering retiree health-care programs.

HMOs AND OTHER PRIVATE PROVIDERS: Sets up a demonstration project in 2010 in which selected cities will host "direct competitions" between private providers - who will be heavily subsidized - and traditional Medicare.

SOME SENIORS: Get a discount drug card right away that lawmakers say will provide drug discounts of 10 to 20 percent; after 2006, the new drug program may lower costs for seniors with serious illnesses or chronic conditions - depending on drugs are on the market.

LOSERS

"DUAL COVERAGE" SENIORS: 6.4 million receiving prescription drugs through Medicaid will be shifted into Medicare, and may lose the more generous drug benefits Medicaid provides.

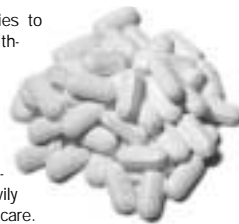
OTHER SENIORS: A provision in the bill called the "doughnut hole" means the new drug benefit only covers expenses up to \$2,250 and over \$3,600 a year.

Seniors whose drug expenses fall in between are on their own. Meanwhile, the \$250 deductible set in the bill is projected to rise to \$445 by 2013.

CURRENTLY WORKING TAXPAYERS: Will see their payroll taxes go up and benefits cut due to a triggering mechanism that requires the president to submit legislation to rebalance Medicare's books if more than 45 percent of the system's spending comes from general revenues.

CURRENT WORKERS WITH SEVERE HEALTH PROBLEMS: May lose expected retiree coverage or see their premiums jump as employers cancel retiree plans and healthier workers join Health Savings Accounts.

- Eric Laursen



NYPD RAID OF BROOKLYN ANARCHIST PARTY COMES ONLY DAYS BEFORE REVELATIONS OF FBI TARGETING OF "ANARCHISTS AND OTHER EXTREMISTS"

APOC MEETS THE MAN

BY JED BRANDT

It was just a house party on Atlantic Avenue. Over a hundred people had gathered for a night of spoken word and dancing organized by a loose network of Anarchist People of Color (APOC) in a Prospect Heights walk-up on Nov. 16. By all accounts, spirits were high and people were having a blast. Then, just after 2 a.m., while the dancing was still going strong, several policemen showed up at the door. Within minutes, eight people would be arrested and numerous others hospitalized with scalp lacerations, a spinal injury and exposure to pepper spray and other chemical agents.

"The police were indiscriminate. They went off," said Tiffine, a spokeswoman for "The Alliance," an ad hoc group of partygoers who are representing the arrestees.

"They particularly targeted people with cameras," said Mayuran Tiruchelvam, an organizer for APOC. "They particularly targeted people who were visibly queer, women of color. Anybody who asked questions, anybody who they said was in the way, they hit."

"It started out as a quality of life matter," Inspector Michael Coan of the NYPD's press office told *Gay City News*. Coan rejected claims that police targeted the group and said the incident stemmed from the fact that an alleged open-container violator refused to produce identification. The police claimed they were merely trying to issue a citation when the crowd spilled out of the party and became unruly.

Partygoers counter his story by noting that police responded with approximately 20 squad cars and numerous plainclothes officers within moments of the initial contact, a fact that has led them to believe that this wasn't about whether someone was or wasn't drinking a beer on the street. They also noted that no complaint had been filed due to noise or loitering, and that all the residents of the building were either at the party or out for the evening. The block itself is sparsely populated.

"The police treat people of color badly in Bed-Stuy," said Tiffine. "The police are a hostile force of occupation. That's what this system is. They are opening the repression playbook." That said, she elaborated that most people at the party had never experienced anything quite like the brutality and surprise of the raid. "We were victimized, but we're not victims."

The arrested were taken to Brooklyn's 77th precinct for booking. Ricky Mananzala, one of the arrestees, said the police dished out "severe verbal harassment" because he is a transsexual.

No one was charged with a felony and the misdemeanors are still pending.

The party was raising funds to cover expenses from the recent APOC conference in Michigan, the first of its kind.

According to several partygoers, police asked for the "sign-in list," further fueling suspicions that the raid had a lot to do with police surveillance on dissident groups in New York.

SO LONG, LIBERTY!

Police break up parties all the time, particularly in Brooklyn. But suspicions that the benefit was targeted for political reasons were strengthened several days after the APOC raid when the *New York Times* ran a front-page story exposing a confidential FBI memorandum sent to over 15,000 law enforcement officials. The memo admitted to, and encouraged, the identification and monitoring of antiwar and other protest groups engaged in legal dissent during the lead up to recent national protests in Washington and San Francisco.

One anonymous FBI official told the *Times* "the intelligence-gathering effort was aimed at identifying anarchists and 'extremist elements' plotting violence, not at monitoring the political speech of law-abiding protesters."

The memo did not include reference to any law that made anarchism itself a crime.

While the list of behavior the FBI finds suspect did not include dancing at house parties, it was chock full of other equally legal activities including "use of the Internet to recruit, raise funds, and coordinate their activities prior to demonstrations." It also warned that protesters may "intimidate" police by videotaping incidents of brutality. The memo went on to blur the difference between legitimate resistance and terrorism by equating nonviolence training and direct-action workshops used by protesters with "training camps," a term normally reserved for the military bases of groups such as al-Qaeda.

Other examples of criminal activity cited include "wearing scarves and sunglasses to minimize the effects of tear gas and pepper spray as well as obscure one's identity" and wearing "layered clothing" as a form of "body protection equipment."

The memo urged local law enforcement to "be alert to possible indicators of protest activity and report any potentially illegal acts to the nearest FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force." Police, both local and federal, have admitted to electronic surveillance of the left.



QUALITY OF LIFE: Undercover cops take APOC partygoer down.

Police and federal authorities had been banned since the late 1970s from engaging in surveillance and infiltration of groups who had not broken the law. But with the passage of the Patriot Act and recent local changes eliminating the Handschu Agreement, both the NYPD and FBI now have a free hand to spy on, disrupt, infiltrate and otherwise attempt to squash the next left.

Or, as John Ashcroft put it, "We're going to do everything we can to identify those who would hurt us to disrupt them, to delay them, to defeat them." He never said exactly who "they" are, but we are beginning to learn.

THE EMERGING PATTERN

The raid on the APOC party was not the only recent incident. Stories are getting around of suspected surveillance, police intrusion and the theft of records not just in New York, but around the country.

"If activists and radical organizations are targeted, they should be aware of what has happened to Muslim charities and even smaller, community-based groups such as the ethnic press," said Monami Maulik of Desis Rising Up and Moving, an advocacy group for South Asians. "Journalists have been detained and people have been deported."

Pam Africa of the Philadelphia-based MOVE organization, most known for their association with death-row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal, reported that their office was robbed and numerous files containing contact lists and other sensitive information were pilfered. On the eve of Secretary of State Colin Powell's visit to City College in Harlem, Secret Service agents called a campus activist and member of the International Socialist Organization at his home inquiring into the nature of the protest despite the fact that he had never had contact with them before and the planned protest was entirely nonviolent.

An undercover operative who had infiltrated Fresno Peace Action, a pacifist organization, was outed when he died and his photo was seen in a newspaper obituary. A series of FBI raids on the West Coast have targeted alleged supporters and/or associates of the Earth Liberation Front, an anarchistic direct-action group responsible for over \$100 million in arson damages against SUV dealerships and urban-sprawl development. Grand juries have also been threatened in Michigan against environmental activists.

When asked why the APOC raid may have happened, Tiffine responded with two questions of her own: "Where does accountability lie? What forms will resistance to repression take? We really need to be asking questions before we just make up answers. It may have happened to us, but the entire community was targeted. Any time we try to create a self-aware community, we are targeted. The party was a metaphor."

REFUSING TO BE DIVIDED

While the police and FBI have been keen to play the "good activist/bad activist" game, the "diversity of tactics" approach within the left appears to be holding. Legal advocacy groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union and the Center for Constitutional Rights have been adamant in their opposition to any expansion of police spying into dissident groups, regardless of their ideological flavor.

ACLU Executive Director Anthony Romero issued a statement saying, "Attorney General Ashcroft has dismissed critics of the Justice Department's tactics as 'hysterical' and has even said that such criticism aids the terrorists. But this [FBI] bulletin confirms that the federal government is targeting innocent Americans engaged in nothing more than lawful protest and dissent." He added, "It is troubling that the FBI is advocating spying on peaceful protesters, but even protesters who engage in civil disobedience or other disruptive acts should not be treated like potential terrorists."

The Alliance is an ongoing effort to defend those charged during the Nov. 16 raid. For more information: (718) 398-2825

IN BRIEF

JUDGE SHINES LIGHT ON JOSE PADILLA CASE

For the past 17 months al Qaeda suspect Jose Padilla has been locked up in solitary confinement in a Navy brig in South Carolina. The government says the Brooklyn-born Padilla is an "enemy combatant" and it can hold him indefinitely without pressing charges, without granting him access to an attorney and without even showing him -- or anyone else including the courts -- evidence that a crime has been committed. He is stuck in a legal black hole. But some light is emerging in his case.

At a court hearing in November, Second Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Barrington Parker put the case in perspective. If the president is granted such sweeping powers, she warned "we would be affecting a sea-change in the Constitutional life of this country and we'd be making that change that would be unprecedented in civilized society."

JAMES YOUSEF YEE'S LONG, STRANGE JOURNEY

It has been a long three months for James Yousef Yee, a Muslim military chaplain who graduated from West Point. He worked with detainees at Guantanamo Bay until he was detained by his own military. Soon word hit the papers: Army arrests Muslim cleric suspected of treason. He was held for 76 days including a stint in a military brig in South Carolina. When charges were finally filed they paled in comparison to treason. The most serious was taking classified material to his home and wrongfully transporting classified material without the proper security containers or covers. The military also charged him with adultery and downloading porn on a governmental computer. And now it turns out the porn/adultery charge may be all that sticks -- Yee's attorney is alleging that the military arrested his client for wrongfully transporting classified material without determining if the material was classified.

Among Yee's most vocal backers has been Cecilia Chang, founder of Justice For New Americans, who says the case is eerily similar to that of Wen Ho Lee, another Chinese-American, who was accused of espionage and later found to be innocent.

IS YOUR NAME MOHAMAD?

When Mohamad Pharoan, a Syrian-born U.S. citizen, answered "yes," the Secret Service ordered him to go home from his waiting job at the Baltimore Hyatt Regency hours before President Bush spoke at a major fundraiser. No reason was given. Pharoan had worked at the hotel for seven years. Bush would go on to raise \$1 million that night and claim "Abroad, we seek to lift whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner of America."

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NEW YORK ORGANIZER REPORTS BACK

By SINA CHOI

I almost didn't go to Miami. Because for a while I thought, "I know I'm against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas and I've been organizing against it for a year now, but what can I do in Miami that I can't do in New York?" Then I was convinced after talking with some friends and organizers that it was important to physically show our protest and solidarity, so I decided to go.

Organizing a bus from New York City turned out to be harder than initially thought, with uncertainty of actually filling the bus due to a lack of interest. We pulled it off, though, with a successful last-minute fundraiser and some unexpected bus riders. Our bus had a diversity of activists (United for Peace and Justice, the IMC video collective, the People's Referendum, New York University students, Wetlands Preserve, to name only a few) working on a range of issues and excited for Miami.

Long before going down to Miami, I had been working with the NYC People's Referendum on the FTAA and Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), informing people about the trade agreements and giving individuals a chance to vote against them. To be honest, it had proved more difficult than I imagined, as many people had never heard of the FTAA, let alone CAFTA, and simply because it is sometimes hard to motivate people when life gets busy. But slowly, interest was building and we were getting more response to the issues, especially with the protests coming up.

After arriving in Miami and participating in the protests, I was slightly confused as to how unconnected I felt to the organizing work I had been involved in up to that point. Most of my time in Miami was spent running from the police, afraid I might be arrested for walking down the wrong street or worrying about friends that had been beaten and arrested by the police. Although it was encouraging to see so many people attempting to stop the FTAA from passing, I found myself wondering how effective our presence in Miami was going to be in terms of halting unfair trade negotiations.

After returning to New York, I attended the FTAA report-back at Judson Church. I had not expected such an enormous turnout. Compared with the number of people at the FTAA planning meetings, it was massive. I felt inspired by all the faces I saw and the stories I heard. I hope the momentum continues once the smoke clears from the fires that the events in Miami ignited.

Over 280 arrests and brutal police repression in Miami showed me that a lot of important organizing, particularly in our local communities, still needs to be done. Even with a watered-down version of the FTAA, there is CAFTA, scheduled to pass by March of 2004. So as I left Miami, I began looking ahead to the future teach-ins and other informative events to organize back in New York.

THE MIAMI MODEL

PARAMILITARIES, EMBEDDED JOURNALISTS AND ILLEGAL PROTESTS. THINK THIS IS IRAQ? IT'S YOUR COUNTRY.

By JEREMY SCAHILL
DEMOCRACY NOW!

After the Miami free trade summit, no one should call what John Timoney runs in Miami a police force. It's a paramilitary group. Thousands of soldiers, dressed in khaki uniforms with full black body armor and gas masks, marching in unison through the streets, banging batons against their shields, chanting, "back... back... back." There were armored personnel carriers and helicopters.

The forces fired indiscriminately into crowds of unarmed protesters. Scores of people were hit with skin-piercing rubber bullets; thousands were gassed with an array of chemicals. On several occasions, police fired loud concussion grenades into the crowds. Police shocked people with electric tasers. Demonstrators were shot in the back as they retreated. One young guy's apparent crime was holding his fingers in a peace sign in front of the troops. They shot him multiple times, including once in the stomach at point-blank range.

My colleagues and I spent several days in the streets, going from conflict to conflict. We saw no attempts by any protesters to attack a business or corporation. With the exception of some graffiti and an occasional garbage can set on fire, there was very little in the way of action not aimed directly at the site of the FTAA meetings. Even the Black Bloc kids, who generally have a rep for wanting to smash everything up, were incredibly restrained and focused.

There was no need for any demonstrator to hurl anything at the forces to spark police violence. It was clear from the jump that Timoney's men came prepared to crack heads. And they did that over and over. After receiving \$8.5 million in federal funds from the \$87 billion Iraq spending bill, Miami needed to have a major combat operation. It didn't matter if it was warranted.

Miami Mayor Manny Diaz called the police actions a model for homeland security. FTAA officials called it extraordinary. Several cities sent law-enforcement observers to the protests to study what some are now referring to as the "Miami Model."

This model also included the embedding of undercover police with the protesters. At one point during a standoff with police, it appeared as though a group of protesters had gotten into a brawl among themselves. But as others moved in to break up the melee, two of the guys pulled out electric tasers and shocked protesters, before being liberated back behind police lines. These guys, clearly undercover agents, were dressed like any other protester. One had a sticker on his backpack that read: "FTAA No Way."

The IMC has since published pictures of people dressed like Black Bloc kids - ski masks and all - walking with uniformed police behind police lines.

The only pause in the heavy police violence in Miami came on Thursday afternoon. The major labor unions held their mass rally and march. Led by AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, the march had a legal permit and was carefully coordinated with the police. Many of the union guys applauded the police as they marched past columns of the body-armored officers on break from gassing and shooting unarmed demonstrators.

But as soon as the union's permitted march began to disperse, the police seized the moment to escalate the violence against the



ESCALATION: Miami cop points gun at peaceful protesters and journalists during suppression of anti-FTAA protests.

other protesters. Fresh from their break during the union rally, Timoney's forces ordered the protesters to clear the area in front of the Intercontinental Hotel. Some of the demonstrators shouted back that they had a right to peacefully protest the FTAA.

Boom. The concussion grenades started flying. Hiss. The tear gas was sprayed. Rat-at-tat. The rubber bullets were fired. Bam, bam. The batons were swinging.

The police methodically marched in a long column directly at the several hundred protesters who believed they had a right to protest, even without John Sweeney at their side. The police fired indiscriminately at the crowds. One woman had part of her ear blown off. Another was shot in the forehead. I got shot twice, once in the back, another time in the leg.

Eventually, the police forced the dissipating group of protesters into one of the poorest sections of Miami, surrounding them on four sides. We stood there in the streets with the eerie feeling of a high-noon showdown. Except there were hundreds of them with guns and dozens of us with cameras and banners. They fired gas and rubber bullets at us as they moved in. All of us realized we had nothing to do but run. We scattered down side streets and alleys, ducking as we fled. Eventually, we made it out.

THE REAL CRIME: FAILURE TO EMBED

The next day, we went to a midday rally outside the Dade County Jail where more than 150 people were being held prisoner. It was a peaceful assembly of about 300 people. They sang "We all live in a failed democracy," to the tune of "We all live in a yellow submarine." They chanted, "Free the Prisoners, Not Free Trade," and "Take off your riot gear, there ain't no riot here."

Representatives of the protesters met with police officials at the scene. The activists said they would agree to remain in a parking lot across the street from the jail if the police

would call off the swelling presence of the riot police. They reached an agreement... or so the police said.

As the demonstration continued, the numbers of fully armed troops grew and grew. And they moved in from all four sides. They announced that people had three minutes to disperse from the "unlawful assembly." Even though the police violated their agreement, the protesters complied.

But that was not enough. The police then attacked the dispersing crowd, chasing about 30 people into a corner. They shoved them to the ground and beat them. They gassed them at close range. My colleague from Democracy Now!, Ana Nogueira, and I got separated in the mayhem. I was lucky to end up on the "safe" side of the street. Ana was in the melee. As she did her job - videotaping the action - Ana was wearing her press credentials in plain sight. As the police began handcuffing people, Ana told them she was a journalist.

One of the officers said, "She's not with us, she's not with us," meaning that although Ana was clearly a journalist, she was not the friendly type. She was not embedded with the police and therefore deserved arrested.

In police custody, the authorities made Ana remove her clothes because they were soaked with pepper spray. The police forced her to strip naked in front of male officers. Despite calls from Democracy Now!, ACLU lawyers and others protesting Ana's arrest and detention, she was held in a cockroach-filled jail cell until 3:30 a.m. She was only released after I posted a \$500 bond. Other independent journalists were locked up for much longer and are facing serious charges, some of them felonies. In the end, Ana was charged with "failure to disperse."

The real crime seems to be "failure to embed." In the times in which we live, this is what democracy looks like. Thousands of soldiers, calling themselves police, deployed in U.S. cities to protect the power brokers from the masses.

ANA NOGUEIRA

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MASS MEDIA DISTORTS REALITY: YOU KNOW IT WHEN YOU SEE IT

By MATTHEW EVINGER

The majority of my knowledge of the world comes from television, movies, books, and newspapers; very little is based on direct experience. So even when I know a fact intellectually and can defend it in an argument, I still don't really believe a thing until I am jolted by the reality of observing it in front of me.

So after the police took over downtown Miami, we decided to watch some local news. Phrases like "extremist anarchist" and "violent protester" seemed to be popping up a lot. This was a little surprising, given what the stations themselves were airing. One happy clip showed a motionless teenager face down on the street, his backpack completely covering his head, with two generously sized and fully armored riot cops kneeling on top of him, wrenching his arm back and yelling at him to "stop resisting." Another showing two police simply dragging a girl wailing at the top of her lungs along the street for ten or fifteen feet.

The most telling shots came from the reporters "embedded" with the police. In more than one instance, cops punched people outright or clubbed people who were walking away. Again, no hint from the reporter that all of this might be a little excessive. It was instead the protesters who were, in the words of Chief John Timoney, "coming to terrorize and vandalize our city."

Throughout the week, the population of downtown Miami seemed to be entirely cops and demonstrators. Local government and media did a fine job of scaring people away before hand.

Despite that, whenever we went to other parts of the city a lot of people (mostly poor, mostly of color) expressed appreciation or empathy. When one guy found out that a friend of mine was injured by the police, he just said, "those motherfuckers." Even those unfamiliar with the FTAA were well-versed in Miami-style policing.

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ANDREW STERN/INDYMEDIA

FTAA NEGOTIATIONS FAILED BEFORE THEY BEGAN FREE TRADE ON THE ROCKS

By MARK ENGLER

Bush wanted a win in Miami, and he got one, so the White House says. Any honest observer, however, knows that the negotiations for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) failed before they ever began.

Almost a week before the November summit, trade officials announced that none of the substantive issues for the agreement would be on the table for discussion. Negotiations over key matters that have caused conflicts between the U.S. and the nations of the developing world – like agricultural tariffs, intellectual property and rules for foreign investment – would be postponed until next year. In order to avoid the type of collapse experienced by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Cancun just a few months ago, the United States, instead promoted a face-saving "FTAA-Lite" that puts a sunshine spin on an impasse.

Has "globalization" ended? Why are mechanisms like the WTO and the FTAA failing? And why did thousands of us gather outside the Miami meetings to denounce an agreement that was effectively dead?

The Bush Administration, which maintains its bullying unilateralism in trade negotiations, deserves credit for sinking the Miami talks. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick did not present any of the concessions

demanding by the Latin American elite – real moves toward the opening of United States markets. This makes it difficult to determine a reason for the global South to offer up compromises of its own.

But the global justice movement can also claim a fair part in halting the progress of the FTAA. Uprisings throughout the hemisphere have badly shaken the idea that U.S. economic plans represent an inevitable and welcomed march of progress. Protests have also coincided with increasing defiance from many governments in the developing world, who are less susceptible than in the past to White House threats.

On the eve of the FTAA ministerial, the Bush administration announced that it would pursue individual, bilateral trade agreements with countries like Colombia, Peru and Bolivia. Such one-on-one deals eliminate the inconvenient possibility of a unified Southern trading bloc.

Yet, after Miami, the United States has lost the key economies of the hemisphere: Venezuela, Argentina, and most important of all, Brazil. The leftist Brazilian government of Lula da Silva co-chaired the talks and participated in the charade of promoting FTAA-Lite. But it did not budge on the demands that are almost certain to doom future negotiations.

The Venezuelans, who had called the full FTAA agreement a "colonial project that seeks to impose itself over the constitution of every sovereign nation," were more blunt about Miami's outcome. "This is an extraordinary victory in the struggle against the FTAA," said Edgardo Lander, a member of Venezuela's Presidential FTAA Committee. "They wanted a full-scale, comprehensive agreement, and they didn't get it. They will never get it. This is not the end of the game. But it is a major, major defeat of the U.S. agenda."

Our movement, accustomed to warning against the dangers presented by "NAFTA on steroids," has been slow to take this message to heart. But if we do not applaud the failure of the FTAA talks, we risk aiding the Bush Administration's effort to spin its Florida defeat as a stride forward. The truth is that trade ministers ended their talks early because they had nothing to discuss.

Protesters had earned a day in the sun. And more might have taken a celebratory trip to the beach, were it not for the police.

It is hard to feel victorious after a crackdown. Moreover, some observers of past protests, seeing the collection of young people amassing on the Miami streets, marching with the Steelworkers along a route safely

distanced from the trade negotiations, and witnessing the police's later use of force, felt that there was little out of the ordinary in the scene.

But the protests were something new for South Florida. The area lacks a strong history of labor organizing and sits far removed from centers of campus radicalism. Holding the FTAA meetings in Dade County was the domestic equivalent of the WTO's decision to conduct negotiations in the isolated nation of Qatar in 2001.

Rallying a crowd as large as 20,000 for a main day of action represented an impressive feat of organizing. With the bulk of downtown Miami preemptively locked down by a riot-armored police force, the demonstrators strongly reinforced the point that no matter where in the hemisphere trade ministers go, they will not be allowed the back-room anonymity they enjoyed when cutting their deals only a few years ago.

Contrary to Timoney's assertion, local residents spent months rallying their communities. Palm Beach County community activists, students and area Greens supported street protests. A coalition called Root Cause, made up of grassroots organizations like the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, the Miami Workers Center and Low Income Families Fighting Together, led a pioneering three-day march from Fort Lauderdale to Miami, highlighting the impact of globalization on people of color in South Florida. Jobs with Justice and local unions held meetings that shunned reactionary nationalistic solutions to trade and imbued the protests with a spirit of labor internationalism.

With trade talks in a state of disarray, this internationalism will be more important than ever. Our vision of globalization, based on solidarity, fair exchanges and respect for human rights, has not ended. Nor has the global worship of profit that we oppose. Bush is not a globalizer; he is a power-projector, a latter-day imperialist. He will continue a pursuit of corporate interest even without the multilateral trade mechanisms that we have made visible and familiar, and may ultimately present even more difficult challenges for advocates of global justice.

Yet, for now, the prospect that the FTAA will likely dwindle again into obscurity is cause for celebration. The people of the Americas, I suspect, will never miss it.

Research assistance for this article provided by Jason Rowe. For more writings by Mark Engler, check DemocracyRising.org.

STEELWORKERS CALL FOR CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION INTO POLICE ASSAULTS IN MIAMI

UNION CONDEMNS USE OF IRAQ RECONSTRUCTION FUNDS TO SUBSIDIZE "HOMELAND REPRESSION" AT FTAA MEETINGS

PITTSBURGH — The United Steelworkers of America (USWA) is calling for a Congressional investigation into "a massive police state," created in part with federal funds, to intimidate union members and others critical of the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas and limit their rights during FTAA meetings in Miami last week.

"Last week, the fundamental rights of thousands of Americans... were blatantly violated, sometimes violently, by the Miami police, who systematically repressed our Constitutional right to free assembly with massive force, riot gear and armaments," said Leo W. Gerard, USWA international president, in a letter to Congressional leaders.

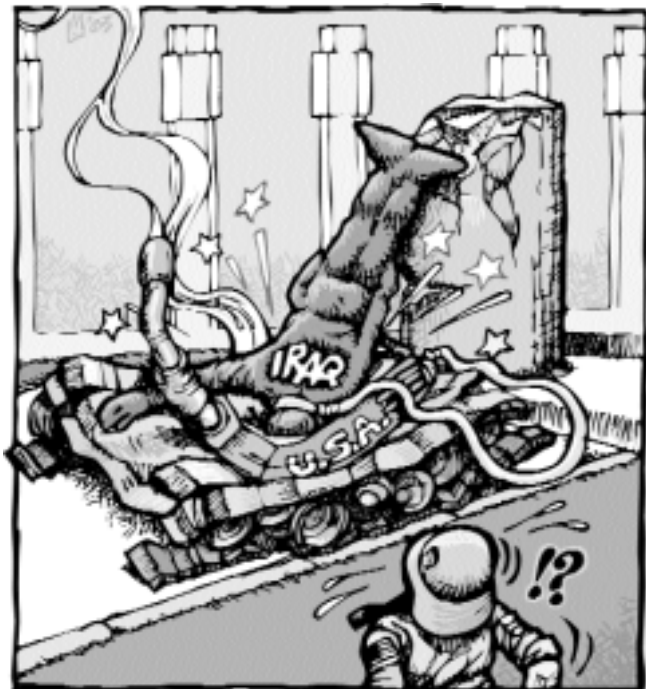
"It is condemnable enough that a massive police state was created to prevent American citizens from directly petitioning FTAA negotiators for redress of their grievances," Gerard said in the letter.

"It is doubly condemnable," he added, "that \$9 million of federal funds designated for the reconstruction of Iraq were used toward this despicable purpose. How can we hope to build democracy in Iraq while using massive force to dismantle it here at home?"

Citing "countless instances of humiliating repression in which the Miami police force disgraced itself," Gerard said that Miami police chief John Timoney should be fired, all charges against peaceful demonstrators should be dropped, and a Congressional investigation into the Miami police department's systematic repression should immediately be launched.

"To do less would be to endorse homeland repression in the guise of homeland security," Gerard's letter concluded.

THE ROAD TO THE WHITE HOUSE RUNS THROUGH IRAQ



MIKE FLUENOCK

By A. K. Gupta

To understand the United States' situation in Iraq first consider this dichotomy: the Pentagon has assembled the mightiest war machine ever, with unassailable dominance of land, air and sea, outer space and cyberspace, but it is losing the war to small bands of Iraqi fighters armed with only the weapons they can tote on their shoulders.

But here's the twist: The White House is aware of this, but it apparently doesn't care. No longer is the talk of winning hearts and minds. The war is now being driven by an electoral strategy of smothering the resistance, which means harsh military rule of ordinary Iraqis, until the presidential elections on Nov. 2, 2004. If Iraq and the Middle East blow up the day after it is of no concern to Bush as long as he remains enthroned.

The evidence is in the White House's "de-

escalation" plan. Administration officials say the 131,000 U.S. troops in Iraq will be reduced to 105,000 new troops now deploying in Iraq. But the current troops won't start leaving until March 2004 - and that's only if everything goes "according to plan." The real strategy is to increase troop strength to some 180,000 with the overlapping deployments and flood the so-called "Sunni Triangle" with shock troops next year in the form of 40,000 U.S. Marines. (Additionally, the Pentagon is emphasizing that the new troops are trained and outfitted for urban combat and guerrilla.)

The lesson from a century of guerrilla warfare in Algeria, Indochina, Southern Africa and elsewhere is that popular insurgencies can be contained with draconian methods, but only at the cost of alienating the entire population and losing the war in the long run.

For Iraqis, raids, detentions, and checkpoints will multiply along with brutality,

humiliation and deaths. The number of Iraqis in detention has doubled in a few months to 11,000, including children, women, and the elderly. A report in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* states that all the cases are being funneled through just three officials, forcing even the innocent to remain jailed for months and resulting in similar waits for family visits.

These tactics are strengthening the resistance, intensifying anger on the Arab street, destabilizing the region, as is happening in Saudi Arabia and Turkey, and accelerating the fragmentation of Iraq into a Kurdish north, Sunni center, and Shi'a south.

The increase in U.S. troop is also a tacit admission that "Iraqification" is a failure. The Iraqi Governing Council has collapsed. Of its 25 members, only four or five are said to show up for meetings, where nothing gets decided, and most are out of the country at any one time. The Governing Council members are so isolated behind guards, blast barriers and razor wire that one Iraqi political analyst says they can't mingle with people in the street for fear of their lives.

Even the Council's U.S. benefactor holds it in contempt. U.S. officials hid from Council members the fact that the new census bureau could have voter rolls ready for direct national elections by next September. They instead told the Council that it was impossible to prepare voter rolls in time and pushed them to approve plan for indirect elections for a "transitional assembly" next June. The occupiers have maneuvered themselves onto a collision course with Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani who wants direct elections.

So far the Shi'a have stayed on the sidelines, allowing the Sunni Arabs to bear the costs of resistance.

In terms of security forces that could assume control, there are six, and counting, with nearly 150,000 Iraqis under arms. However, all are being pressed into service with inadequate training. Almost half are police and another 50,000 are serving in a facilities protection force, usually with just a few days instruction. (They're also deserting. Almost one-half of the 700-man Iraqi Army has already quit.)

Others forces such as the border patrol and a new "counterterrorism" force of 850 Iraqis are being drawn from various factions, particularly Kurdish ones, which is feeding the growing separatism.

Iraqi police tend to be barely trained, ill-equipped, hostile to the Americans and are a chief target of resistance attacks. Nonetheless, numerous police tell reporters they support those fighting the occupation, and U.S. com-

manders admit that some police are even aiding insurgents by providing them with intelligence on troop movements and facilities.

The Pentagon stumbled back to its war footing after a stunning series of attacks by an organized, adaptive and ruthless insurgency.

In just weeks, resistance cells:

- downed five helicopters killing 39 GIs
- carried out five nearly simultaneous suicide bombings at four police stations and the Red Cross, forcing the medical aid group out of Iraq
- almost assassinated war architect Paul Wolfowitz in a rocket attack on his hotel in the occupation authority's ultra-secure "green zone" in central Baghdad; and weeks later two more rocket attacks were staged in the supposedly even more secure green zone, this time using donkey-drawn carts to slip past the rings of security
- tracked and killed seven Spanish intelligence operatives plus five other internationals from Japan, South Korea and Colombia in one weekend
- blew up two U.S. tanks, an M-1A1 and a Bradley
- staged a missile attack for a French photographer so all the world could see a guerrilla's shoulder-fired missile hit a commercial cargo plane taking off from Baghdad airport
- killed 17 Italian paramilitary police in a car bombing
- assassinated a slew of Iraqis working with the Americans from judges and police to politicians, bureaucrats and oil company officials
- blew up vital oil pipelines in the North causing gas shortages that are further inflaming anti-American sentiment
- and mortared Paul Bremer in his Republican Palace every night for almost a week.

The resistance strategy is to isolate U.S. forces, and it's working.

Bombings forced the U.N. from Iraq months ago and neither the U.N. General Assembly nor the Security Council will ride to the rescue as long as Bush wants to keep control. Virtually all international aid groups have fled the chaos, hamstringing humanitarian aid and reconstruction.

No country is going to contribute troops that hasn't already and the ones already in there are looking for a way to get out. Spain and Poland, for example, are begging the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to wade in, but only Germany and France can contribute troops in a meaningful way, which is about as likely as Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld becoming a can-can dancer.

Even if U.S. forces staunch the stream of casualties in the short term the anger they are creating among Iraqis will redouble the insurgency once the lid of troops is removed. In trying to smash the Iraqi resistance, the Pentagon knows its efforts are akin to hammering water: it just spreads elsewhere.

REMEMBERING MATTHEW HALL

By OSAGE BELL

It's so much colder now with the wind cutting through. We're in December now. Yet just a while ago it was still feeling like summer. People were enjoying the warm nights-hanging out, kickin' back. And then it had happened.

Matthew Hall was killed. Shot in the back by a youth he didn't know. Matt was just 18 years old.

We found out in different ways. Some of us got a phone call we couldn't believe. Some of us were there that night in Harlem when his life was cut horribly short for reasons unclear.

Matt had done so much with the time he had had. I met him when he was about 14 years old through Act Your Rage, a free politically-conscious open microphone for youth. It was a rare kind of space where youth of all nationalities, from all over the city, got together to spit rhymes, sing songs, recite poetry - and fuse all this with radical politics.

He used hip-hop as a way to bring different people together, and it became a complete way of life for him, leading him to the Universal Zulu

BY KEVIN KEATING

A friend who was in the U.S. military during the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War told me that before President G.H.W. Bush visited the troops in Saudi Arabia, enlisted men and women who would be in Bush's immediate vicinity had their ammunition taken away from them. This was supposedly done to avoid "accidents." But it was also clear to people on the scene that Bush and his corporate handlers were somewhat afraid of the enlisted soldiers.

The suppressed history of the last big U.S. war before the 1991 Gulf War shows that the Commander-in-Chief had good reason to fear and distrust his troops. Our rulers want us to forget what happened during the Vietnam War – especially what happened inside our armed forces. They remember it all too well.

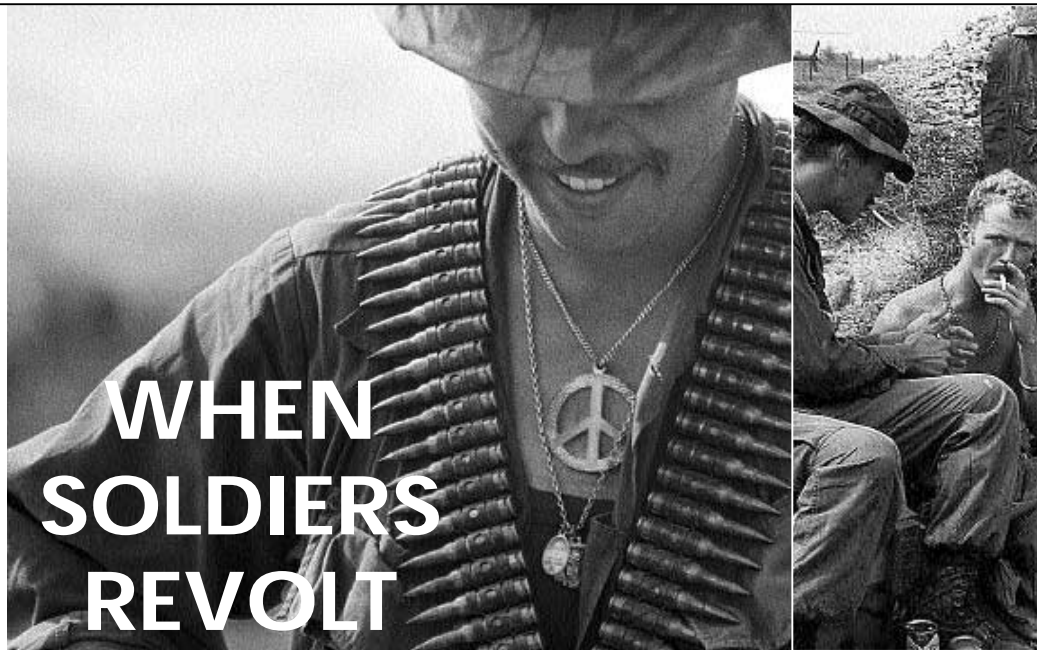
Until 1968 the desertion rate for U.S. troops in Vietnam was lower than in previous wars. But by 1969 the desertion rate increased fourfold. This trend wasn't limited to Southeast Asia; desertion rates among GIs were on the increase worldwide. For soldiers in the combat zone, insubordination became a way to avoid horrible injury or death.

As early as mid-1969, an entire company of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade sat down on the battlefield. Later that year, a rifle company from the famed 1st Air Cavalry Division flatly refused – on CBS TV – to advance down a dangerous trail. In the following 12 months the 1st Air Cav notched 35 combat refusals.

From mild forms of political protest and disobedience of war orders, the resistance among the ground troops grew into a massive and widespread "quasi-mutiny" by 1970 and 1971. Soldiers went on "search and avoid" missions, intentionally skirting clashes with the Vietnamese, and often held three-day-long pot parties instead of fighting. By 1970, the U.S. Army had 65,643 deserters, roughly the equivalent of four infantry divisions.

In an article published in the *Armed Forces Journal* (June 7, 1971), Marine Colonel Robert D. Heinl, Jr., a veteran combat commander with over 27 years experience in the Marines and the author of *Soldiers of the Sea*, a definitive history of the Marine Corps, wrote: "By every conceivable indicator, our army that remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and noncommissioned officers." Heinl cited a *New York Times* article that quoted an enlisted man saying, "The American garrisons on the larger bases are virtually disarmed. The lifers have taken our weapons away... there have also been quite a few frag incidents in the battalion."

"Frag incidents" or "fraggings" was slang for the killing of unpopular and aggressive officers and NCOs. The word apparently originated from enlisted men using fragmen-



WHEN SOLDIERS REVOLT

tation grenades to off commanders. "Bounties," Heinl wrote, "raised by common subscription in amounts running anywhere from \$50 to \$1,000, have been widely reported put on the heads of leaders whom the privates... want to rub out. Shortly after the costly assault on Hamburger Hill in mid-1969, the GI underground newspaper in Vietnam, *GI Says*, publicly offered a \$10,000 bounty on Lieutenant Colonel Weldon Hunnicutt, the officer who ordered and led the attack. The Pentagon has now disclosed that fraggings in 1970 (209 killings) have more than doubled those of the previous year (96 killings)."

Congressional hearings on fraggings held in 1973 estimated that roughly 3 percent of officer and NCO deaths in Vietnam between 1961 and 1972 were a result of fraggings. But these figures were only for killings committed with grenades; they didn't include deaths from automatic weapons fire, handguns and knifings. The Army's Judge Advocate General's Corps estimated that only 10 percent of fraggings attempts resulted in anyone going to trial.

By 1972 roughly 300 anti-war and anti-military newspapers, with names like *Harass the Brass*, *All Hands Abandon Ship* and *Star Spangled Bumme* had been put out by enlisted soldiers. Riots and anti-war demonstrations took place on bases in Asia, Europe and in the United States. By the early 1970s the government had to begin pulling out of the ground war and switching to an "air war," in part because many of the ground troops who were supposed to do the fighting were hamstringing the world's mightiest military force by their sabotage and resistance.

With the shifting over to an air war strategy, the Navy became an important center of

resistance to the war. In response to the racism that prevailed inside the Navy, black and white sailors occasionally rebelled together. The most significant of these rebellions took place on board the USS *Constellation* off Southern California in November 1972.

Responding to a threat of less-than-honorable discharges against several black sailors, a group of over 100 black and white sailors staged a day-and-a-half-long sit-in. Fearful of losing control of his ship at sea to full-scale mutiny, the ship's commander brought the *Constellation* back to San Diego. One hundred thirty-two sailors were allowed to go ashore. They refused orders to re-board the ship several days later, staging a defiant dockside strike on the morning of Nov. 9. Despite the seriousness of the rebellion not one of the sailors involved was arrested.

Sabotage was also an extremely useful tactic. In one incident, the USS *Anderson* was preparing to steam from San Diego to Vietnam on May 26, 1970. But someone had dropped nuts, bolts and chains down the main gear shaft. A major breakdown occurred, resulting in thousands of dollars worth of damage and a delay of several weeks. Several sailors were charged, but because of a lack of evidence the case was dismissed.

The House Armed Services Committee summed up the crisis of rebellion in the Navy: "The U.S. Navy is now confronted with pressures... which, if not controlled, will surely destroy its enviable tradition of discipline. Recent instances of sabotage, riot, willful disobedience of orders, and contempt for authority... are clear-cut symptoms of a dangerous deterioration of discipline."

An examination of what happened to the

U.S. military during the Vietnam War can help us see the central role "the military question" is going to play in a revolutionary mass movement in the 21st century. It isn't a question of how a chaotic and rebellious civilian populace can out-gun the well-organized, disciplined armies of the capitalist state in pitched battle, but of how a mass movement can cripple the effective fighting capacity of the military from within, and bring about the collapse and dispersal of the state's armed forces.

Of course, the rebellion in the ranks in Vietnam didn't emerge simply in response to battlefield conditions. In addition to the civilian anti-war movement, urban uprisings in Watts, Detroit, Newark and other cities had an explosive effect on the consciousness of working-class African-American and Latino GIs who served in disproportionate numbers in the military.

The armed forces are vulnerable to social forces at work in the larger society that spawns them. Revolt in civilian society bleeds through the fabric of the military into the ranks of enlisted soldiers. The relationship between officers and enlisted people mirrors the relationship between bosses and employees, and similar dynamics of class conflict emerge in the military and civilian workplaces.

Our rulers know all this. Our rulers know that they are vulnerable to mass resistance, and they know that their wealth and power can be collapsed from within by the working-class women and men whom they depend on. We need to know it, too.

Much of the information for this article has been taken from David Cortright's Soldiers in Revolt: The American Military Today, published by Anchor/Doubleday in 1975.

Nation, a "hip hop awareness movement" which struggles against racism and promotes spirituality.

As Optimus Rhyme, Matt would spit rhymes.

"Matt was all about resistance music, words, actions, ideas. No matter where they were happening he was there, he was reading about it, he wanted to talk about it, learn from it, and make sure all these other people were hip to it too," said Araby Carlier of Refuse & Resist!

With his death, it seemed that the whole city started talking about him. He was on the front page of several newspapers and for over a week there continued to be articles about the positive impact Matt's life had on people.

News articles tried to say that the police cared about Matthew. But the truth is, they treated him like dirt the night he died.

According to some folks, the police didn't arrive until after

the ambulance left. They went through his bag, calling all the people in his phone book, and making some come in to "talk."

People were inspired by the spirit with which he had lived. And that spirit included a real faith in the powerful mixture of youth and art. Last year, when everyone was in full throttle to protest against a U.S. war in Iraq, Matt decided to do another Act Your Rage.

That was the thing – Matt would go to all these places – literally, or just in his head, and he would take you along with him, invite you to take a deep breath and dream, or raise your fist, hold a banner. He invited you into his world and helped you to see how another one was possible.

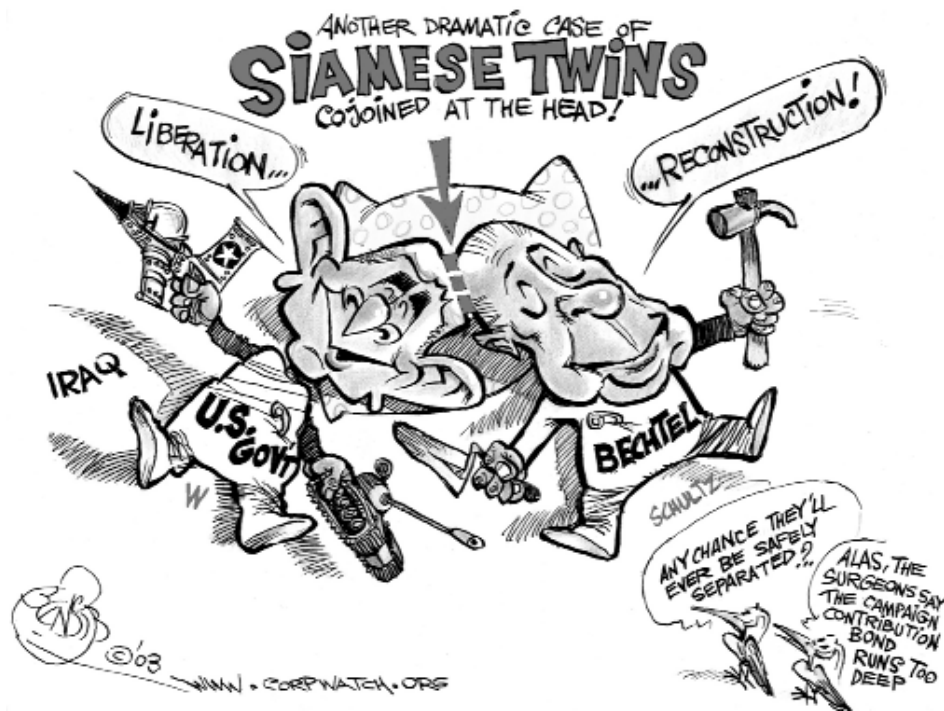
His friends say this respect and love came from his close relationship with his parents, and you could see that in how they spoke about him.

His father, George Hall, a church organist and retired

teacher, said about Matt: "He was my best friend. He was a better man than I was."

"Matthew was a man of peace, love and hope – that's the message I want to give," said his mother, Chantal, a Swiss-born psychologist. "We all have to work toward it. We all have to do something that makes the world better."

Miles Solay, who participated in doing an anti-war, anti-recruitment TV ad with Matt, who had been friends with him since high school, said one thing he learned from Matt is "you've got to make your moments count, make them matter with people." In remembering his friend, Miles said, "Some people live three times as long as Matthew did and never change anybody. They just follow the beaten path. Matthew was a rebel. He never accepted things the way they were. He loved the people, and he hated injustice. He got that dynamic down right."



BEND IT LIKE BECHTEL

'RECONSTRUCTION' FIRM FAILING IRAQI SCHOOLS

By KARIM EL-GAWHARY

In Iraq, school administrators are struggling to keep their classroom doors open and their students educated, in the face of many obstacles unleashed by the occupation of the country. Looting has become commonplace, while lack of supplies and the decay of basic infrastructure make teaching a challenge.

Into this situation steps Bechtel Corporation, the San Francisco-based engineering and construction giant. In April Bechtel was awarded a contract by the U.S. Agency for International Development for the reconstruction of Iraq's primary and secondary schools, as part of a deal worth up to \$1.03 billion to rebuild Iraq's infrastructure. But the question remains whether Bechtel, like the U.S. Army, is part of the solution or part of the problem.

Headmaster Abdel-Razzaq Ali's school is located in a predominantly Shi'ite quarter in a poor area of Baghdad. More than 1,500 students attend the Anbariyun School in two shifts: boys in the morning, girls in the afternoon. Looting has not been a problem at his school. But Abdel-Razzaq has his share of problems in the new Iraq. "The parents are constantly complaining to me, but who can I complain to?" he wonders. He is particularly skeptical about the refurbishment plans for the school, which are being carried out by Bechtel.

The Anbariyun School is one of 1,500 schools being refurbished by Bechtel using American funds. Within the framework of its reconstruction program, Bechtel has subcontracted work to 65 Iraqi companies. The project is referred to on its web site as "a truly humanitarian effort."

"Of all the things we're doing here, this one really touches individuals – students, parents, teachers and entire communities – in a very personal way," Thor Christiansen, manager of the Iraqi School Program, is quoted as saying, Abdel-Razzaq, however, shakes his head in response. "If they had given the money to us directly," he explains, "we would have done a far better job."

At the start of the program Abdel-Razzaq received a visit from a representative of the Iraqi company, Adnan Mussawi, which Bechtel subcontracted to carry out the work. The headmaster was asked to sign a declaration that the work had been completed, which he refused to do until the work had actually been done. Twenty days later, the walls were painted, the rusty doors painted over, new electric cables laid and

some of the sanitary facilities replaced. However, the real problem with the toilets – namely the sewage pipes – were left untouched. So Abdel-Razzaq is sure that next winter once more, there will be a lake of sewage in the bathrooms.

Most of the cheap plastic cisterns are already broken. Even a broken banister – that resulted in one child falling one floor down – was not considered to be part of Bechtel's renovation plan. So the director ordered it welded again, paying for the work out of his own pocket. The work on the school, according to Abdel-Razzaq, was completed without a single person from Bechtel appraising the work. "Why do we need Bechtel? They have done absolutely nothing," he said.

LACK OF OVERSIGHT

Dr. Nabil Khudair Abbas, from the planning center at the Ministry for Education, which is responsible for a quarter of Baghdad's schools, confirmed Abdel-Razzaq's sentiments. He meets with representatives of Bechtel weekly, and presents his complaints with regard to its school reconstruction program. The program is anything but transparent, he tells them, and none of the work is checked. Nobody in the Ministry of Education knows exactly how much the U.S. has given Bechtel to implement the program, or the details of the work to be carried out in individual schools.

"The impression we often get at the meetings is that Bechtel is more powerful than the Army," he said. Bechtel representatives, however, want no more complaints from Dr. Abbas. The program is a gift from U.S. taxpayers, and has been approved by Congress, they say. "No matter what we do, the Iraqis will never be on the losing end," a Bechtel representative told him. His grievances – the fact that of the 750 schools which are included in his mandate, 20 were destroyed during the war and 170 were looted because the occupation forces failed to provide adequate security – do not in the least interest Bechtel.

For Abdel-Razzaq, the old school bell symbolizes all that is wrong with the Bechtel program. The big, old, fully functioning bell was removed and replaced by a small, highly polished silver version. "Do you want to hear it?" asks Abdel-Razzaq, and presses the button. The clapper hits the bell, which croaks in response. This is a new bell for a new Iraq, says the headmaster. "Do you seriously believe I can summon 1,500 students to class with this?" But the clever headmaster came up with a special solution. After recess, a child from each class walks over the school yard, gathering their class-

mates – enthusiastically swinging a little bell in its hand.

TEACHING UNDER OCCUPATION

Unlike Abdel-Razzaq, Khadija Ali Medshwal is worried about the security situation at her school. The Naguib Pasha Primary School in Baghdad is adjacent to several foreign embassies as well as the homes of several members of the Interim Governing Council. All are targets for attacks "against the occupation." She is also concerned about the safety of the children at the school.

Kidnapping the offspring of wealthy parents has been the norm since the end of the war. If this were not enough, she says, U.S. soldiers regularly turn up unannounced at the school – like today – and the children can then study a special American military maneuver. Lt. Corban Sawyer marches ahead while one of his armed soldiers covers his back. When Lt. Sawyer enters the principal's office, his rear guard takes up his post at the door, automatic weapon resting on his knee, eyes suspiciously on the potentially hostile school yard.

Lieutenant Sawyer says he feels good about helping the neighborhood get back on its feet, even though he is actually responsible for military "intelligence gathering." His job for today: inventory. He asks Khadija, the headmistress, if she needs anything for the school. Khadija hands over a list with a smile and asks if perhaps barbed wire can be added to the top of the wall. She also allows the officer to take her photograph; "for our files," explains Lt. Sawyer, leaving the school accompanied by his corporals, though not before expressing his astonishment at the friendliness exhibited by the Iraqi people.

This friendliness, however, is short-lived. As soon as the officer leaves the office, Khadija's smile quickly fades. "I hate it when they turn up unannounced," she explains. "The first time they came here, they went from classroom to classroom with guns dangling over their shoulders, asking the terrified children whom they loved more, Saddam Hussein or George Bush." The school principal expects little from the Americans. The list of provisions needed for the school, she says – tables, chairs and a television set – has been given to the Americans at least a dozen times. At first she used to write a new list for each visit, now she simply copies the old one. "There is no point, nothing happens anyway," she explains.

This article originally appeared at CorpWatch.org

THE HANDWRITING IS ON THE WALL

By GHAZI HAMAD

GAZA STRIP—It is impossible to enter any Palestinian refugee camp, village or city without noticing the vibrant colors and meticulous calligraphy of graffiti on most every wall. In some places it is like an unending open-air art gallery that stretches along the entire length of a street onto a school wall or a factory gate and then into the narrow alley of a refugee camp or a wide main street like the Omar Al Mukhtar Street in Gaza City.

But the graffiti is not there for aesthetics primarily. "The walls have become a daily notice board for us," says Saad Hassan from the Shati' Refugee Camp in Gaza. "It saves you the bother of reading the newspapers or leaflets being distributed here and there."

On this "notice board" one can read about almost every aspect of everyday Palestinian political and social life. News of the activities of the Palestinian factions can be found in their near entirety. On this wall, Hamas announces that it exploded an Israeli tank in the northern Gaza Strip near the Dugit settlement. On that wall, Fateh's military wing, the Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, claims responsibility for a military operation in Ramallah. Saraya Al Quds, the armed wing of the Islamic Jihad uses wall space to announce that it carried out a bombing in a Haifa restaurant, giant-size letters spelling out the name of the bomber: Hanadi Jaradat.

Political slogans and positions are also given due space. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine proclaims that the "resistance will continue and will not stop. It is the only option for the Palestinian people." An Islamic Jihad slogan calls on the Palestinian Authority to abandon the political process and to "join the ranks of the resistance." Responding to recent events, Hamas graffiti on a wall near the Islamic University in Gaza accuses Palestinian signatories to the Geneva initiative of making too many concessions and of selling short refugees' rights.

Most common of all is the graffiti glorifying the dead. All along Al Nasr Street in Gaza City, are pictures of Islamic Jihad "martyrs," some on walls and others on huge iron panels. On the wall of the Islamic University, Hamas has painted pictures of its slain members including Salah Shehadeh, Imad Aql and Yihya Ayyash. Near the Shifa Hospital in

Gaza City is a large portrait of Jihad Amareen, the head of the Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in Gaza, who was assassinated by the Israeli army a year and a half ago.

But it is not only political messages that are posted on Gaza's walls. Palestinians in Gaza also share their personal joys and enmities through graffiti. Many times one can find congratulatory messages for a newlywed couple or congratulations to a Muslim returning from the Haj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. Some messages convey congratulations to a person who has received an official position in government. Occasionally, threats are posted on the walls, especially in relation to family or tribal feuds. Some messages call on the Palestinian Authority to "mete out a punishment and try the murderers," when there has been a killing.

FIERCE COMPETITION

Haytham, 17, and still in high school, introduces himself as a member of Hamas. "I have been writing graffiti for the past two years," he says, clearly proud of his work. "[Hamas] discovered that my handwriting was nice, so they asked me to write on the walls." His profession holds no fear for Haytham. "During the first Intifada, young men used to mask their faces so not to be recognized by Israeli soldiers," he says. "After that, they covered their faces for fear of the Palestinian security forces. But now everyone writes without fear of anything."

But, much like sought-after advertising slots, the factions grapple with each other for the "best" and most wall space, such as the Gaza City Square or Omar Ibn Mukhtar Street, one of Gaza's most prominent streets, which stretches for ten kilometers. Often, factions have fought over empty "white" space on a wall or have scribbled "private" on a section so others will not trespass.

Haytham does not deny that squabbles occur between the factions on who will write what on which wall. "Sometimes I see one faction erasing what another wrote to add its own slogans. This is where the problem arises," he says. But, he adds, ongoing dialogue between the factions has lessened the friction.

PART OF THE INTIFADA

Dr. Farid Abu Dheir, a professor of journalism and media at Al Najah University,



RECLAIM THE STREETS: Palestinians and internationals color up the wall around the West Bank.

says graffiti constitutes a healthy phenomenon in society as well as being an inexpensive way of expressing opinions. Graffiti, he says, provides an outlet for everyone at a time when official media have been monopolized. Semi-official outlets do not always do justice to everyone's opinions.

Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi, however, goes further, and says graffiti "has played a major role in awakening the emotions of the people and in encouraging them to resist the occupation and glorify the martyrs." Its effectiveness, says Rantisi, is evident in Israel's efforts "to stop the intifada by any possible means, starting with washing the slogans off the walls."

During the first intifada, graffiti came to be considered an effective and influential method of resistance because of its necessity at the time in relaying messages to the people in the absence of other forms of communication available to Palestinians. A similar reasoning applies to the art's resurrection during the al-Aqsa intifada, though some argue that with the advent of the Internet, various media outlets such as radio stations, land and satellite television channels, and many free publications, graffiti's importance as a means of communication is less today.

Most Palestinian factions, however, say that these "wall journals" serve to raise educational, factional and national awareness and even if other methods of communication have improved over the years, graffiti still has an enormous impact on the Palestinian street and is part of the culture of resistance.

For more, see palestinerreport.org

IN BRIEF

BUSH CRONY TAKES OVER IRAQ DEBT NEGOTIATIONS

Bush family confidant James Baker was appointed on Dec. 5 as special envoy in charge of overseeing Iraq's foreign debt which is believed to total anywhere from \$128 billion to \$200 billion. Baker currently serves as senior counsel to the Carlyle Group, a private investment firm with extensive links to military contractors. As secretary of state under George Bush Sr., Baker helped increase Iraq's debt with a \$5 billion loan from the U.S. Agriculture Department's Commodity Credit Corporation so Saddam Hussein could keep his weaponry up-to-date.

U.S. BORROWS ISRAELI TACTICS TO SUBDUDE IRAQIS

Liberating the Iraqi people requires more raids, enclosures, checkpoints, demolitions and arrests, as the U.S. military increasingly borrows from Israeli tactics used to subdue Palestinians. "With a heavy dose of fear and violence, and a lot of money for projects, I think we can convince these people that we are here to help them," said Col. Nathan Sassaman in a *New York Times* interview. The U.S. military has fenced off trouble spots in Iraq with razor wire and Iraqis must use English I.D. cards to move around. "I see no difference between us and the Palestinians. We didn't expect anything like this after Saddam fell," an Iraqi man told the *Times*.

U.S. TROOPS RANSACK UNION HQ IN IRAQ

Iraqi trade unions, decimated by years of Ba'athist rule, received another blow on Dec. 6 when U.S. troops ransacked the headquarters of the International Federation of Trade Unions and the General Union of Transport Workers. Eight IFTU members were arrested. "Our building was just a shell. We had absolutely nothing, not even a computer. For them to destroy it is absolutely outrageous," said Abdullah Muhsin, the IFTU's international representative.

SECRET CABLES: KISSINGER OK'D ARGENTINE "DIRTY WAR"

Recently declassified U.S. documents reveal that in 1976 Secretary of State Henry Kissinger gave Argentina's military the go-ahead to continue its "dirty war" against leftists in Argentina. This document, obtained by the National Security Archive through a Freedom of Information request evidence of U.S. support for the "dirty war" which resulted in the deaths and disappearances of approximately 30,000 Argentines between 1975 and 1983.

According to the document, Kissinger told the Argentine Foreign Minister, "we would like you to succeed. I have an old-fashioned view that friends ought to be supported."

RIGHTS GROUP SUES EX-SALVADORAN GENERAL

Thousands of critics of El Salvador's government were killed when Nicolas Carranza was vice-minister of defense from 1979-81. Now, the San Francisco-based Center for Justice and Accountability is suing Carranza, who lives in Memphis, for crimes against humanity.

"The case is about sending the message that you can't commit crimes against humanity and then retire to the United States," said the center's director, Sandra Coliver.

IRAQI WOMEN: "WE HAVE REBUILT BEFORE"

By PHIL ANDREWS

While bitter cold winds whipped about Judson Church Dec. 2, Daisy Kahn, executive director of the American Sufi Muslim Association, sang the first words of the Koran in traditional Muslim cadence. Thus opened a dialogue between 200 mostly Christian women activists and two Iraqi women, Amal Al-Khedairy and Nermin Al-Mufti, who were present as part of a 13-state tour coordinated by the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

The American public usually only hears Iraqi voices handpicked by the Governing Council, which is made up of Iraqi expatriates, the majority of whom hold U.S. or British citizenship.

The Women of Iraq speaking tour seeks to address that gap. Amal Al-Khedairy and Nermin Al-Mufti have not only lived through the decade-long U.S. aggression, but are internationally respected in their fields. Unlike most "Iraqi experts," these two chose to remain in their homeland during hard times, and paid the price.

Despite having her life's work and childhood home twice destroyed by American forces, Al-Khenairy's anger is remarkably muted. "I don't know where these (U.S. soldiers) came from, because I come here to find all these kind faces," she said of her recent travels in America. She spoke of the years she spent converting the home her father had built into Baghdad's only independent art center, dedicat-

ed to hands-on teaching and exhibits of known and unknown artists.

"You cannot imagine," she said, speaking of war-weary Iraqis, "how much joy these people found in learning how to express themselves through their art." Her assessment of the current situation bordered on hopeless. "We have nothing left to rebuild with," she said, adding that, "even the humanitarian aid agencies have gone which once gave us hope." She is not surprised that Iraqis are violently resisting the U.S. occupation, considering the terrible conditions, while "Bremer and his people enjoy the palaces and swimming pools" of the recently deposed regime. But still, "We have rebuilt before, and will do it again if the Americans leave."

Al-Mufti took no such pains to conceal her rage. Speaking in rapid, severe tones, she indicted the U.S. rush to war with sharp political analysis and painful personal stories. She lamented that "Cheney's own Halliburton controls the oil" while 129 publicly owned Iraqi businesses have been "sold off to American corporations." She had harsh words for Bush, who should "apologize and then pay for the rebuilding with his own funds." She criticized the current wave of "de-Baathization," which has swept up countless civil servants and government workers whose only crime was receiving a paycheck from the state. Of the 28,000 public-school teachers recently fired and subsequently barred from employment by this policy, she asked, "Would you blame every American government worker for the policies of Bush?"

REVIEWS

CULTURE, POLITICS & CRITICISM



HOW THE INTERNAL DOCUMENTS OF A DEFUNCT ANARCHIST GROUP CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

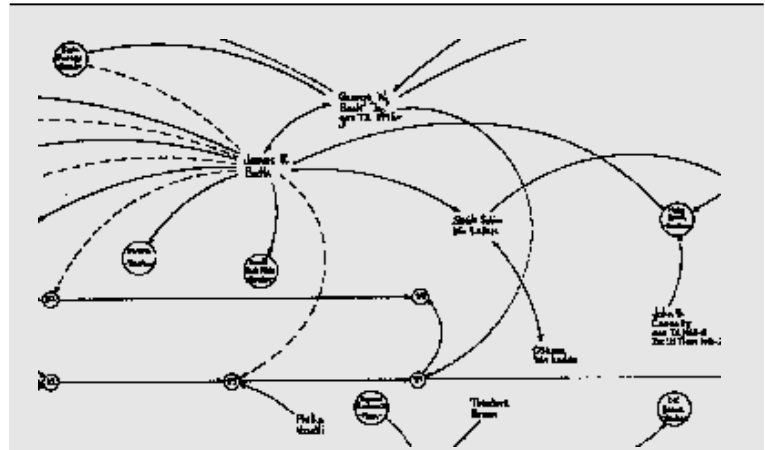
A NEW WORLD IN OUR HEARTS
Ed. Roy San Filippo
AK Press, 2003

Every time I hear the Clash's "Guns of Brixton" I think that was our song. The Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation's May 1998 split was like a bad divorce. We fought over the newspaper and the name (both sides lost), we blamed each other for destroying what we'd worked so hard to build, and we all got seriously demoralized. But it wasn't nostalgia that spurred my old comrade Roy San Filippo to put together a book of LnR's writings, *A New World in Our Hearts*. While I'm disappointed by some of his choices – all but one of the 20 pieces are by men – the book revives valuable debates that were cut short by LnR's split in 1998.

Love and Rage was always on the fringes of the anarchist movement, somewhat disliked for our emphasis on organization and our own disdain for what we called lifestyle anarchism. Yet we ended up splitting on two questions that are still hot topics among anarchists today: how racism relates to capitalism, and whether anti-authoritarians can learn from other revolutionary tendencies.

Most of the writings in *New World* deal with these two issues, and not by accident – it's the most useful way Roy could have filled the 140 pages allotted to the book. Still, because the voices of women are largely absent, there are vital insights missing.

I was of the quiet majority in the middle when the two factions emerged. Solidly an anarchist, I'd worked three years with excellent, principled organizers of various communist and nationalist stripes for access to education at CUNY. I'd learned a lot from them about strategizing for revolution and building multi-racial, democratic participation while engaging in a reform struggle. Chris Day (New York LnR) wrote "The Historical Failure of



DRAWING OUT THE OCTOPUS

MARK LOMBARDI'S DIAGRAMS AT THE DRAWING CENTER

Mark Lombardi portrays the collapsing world of American democracy in an exhibition of revelatory drawings that map networks of corruption, criminality and collusion among and between presidents, government officials, business leaders, intelligence agents, racketeers and financial institutions.

Researching published sources, Lombardi recorded his findings in an archive of index cards that grew to number more than 12,000, and transformed the information into graphic terms – lines, squiggles, arrows, circles and within each circle handwritten notations.

The drawings, now on exhibit at The Drawing

Center, 35 Wooster St., until Dec. 18, delineate numerous, difficult-to-decipher scandals from the mid-1970s through the early 1990s, and the related activities of such personages as George H. W. Bush, George W. Bush, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, Meyer Lansky, Margaret Thatcher, Osama Bin Laden and Pope Paul VI.

Lombardi, a Syracuse University graduate, artist, reference librarian, art gallery owner, committed suicide by hanging in 2000. Examples of his work have recently been acquired by the Museum of Modern Art and Whitney Museum of American Art.

— DONALD PANETH

F15 THE DAY THE WORLD SAID NO TO WAR

Edited by Barbara Sauermann, "2/15: The Day the World Said NO to War" is a photo documentary of that fateful day. From Antarctica to Karachi and back to London, the energy and decency of everyday people is on plain display. Artists made art and militants made faces. And for once, politics as such stood down in the fact of common human decency.

There's never been anything quite like it. Still reeling from the aftermaths of September 11, New York City erupted into one of the largest local demonstrations we've ever seen when half a million people defied the mayor and the police to march against the war on Iraq. The message was clear: our pain will not be used to justify an imperial war. But that wasn't why February 15, 2003 made history.

In virtually every city on earth, crowds poured into the streets and the world's first unified protest against imperialism was born. Estimates range in the tens of millions and what locally was undeniable became further confirmation of what many have begun to say without embarrassment: another world really is possible. The governments can no longer say they act in our interests when the people speak so clearly.

That protest doesn't stop war should surprise no one. But there is more than one audience for a demonstration – and in this case the people of the world looked to themselves and said hello.

— JB

Anarchism" (not failures, as the book states – that would have been a better, less incendiary title) after Marxists we worked with challenged him on anarchism's weaknesses. The feisty document put many Love and Ragers on the defensive. Others studied the histories of successful popular revolutions to find ideas that could move us beyond Bakunin.

It was a piece called "Mandar Obedeciendo" by Jessica Parsons that won me over to something called "mass line" from Maoist theory. The Zapatistas called it *mandar obedeciendo* – leading by obeying. Jessica gave examples from LnR's activism, explaining that we worked best when our politics responded to the communities we worked with: "We cannot discount the ideas of the people... only when we start from where the people are at, and struggle with them to make the changes they want, can we put forward the ideas of anarchist revolution with any effectiveness." She also pointed out that the LnR members most hostile to borrowing anti-authoritarian

ideas from authoritarian tendencies were not doing any activist work that explained why they offered no concrete solutions, only generalizations that our problems could be solved "from within anarchism."

Most Love and Ragers supported gathering some ideas from outside anarchism, and the majority who responded to the orthodox factional document "What We Believe" (WWB) agreed with its opponents that anarchism itself – having adopted feminism, queer liberation and environmentalism – is multi-tendenced.

A majority of members also supported the theory of "white skin privilege," that the white working class has real and lived benefits under racism – as opposed to WWB's view that working-class whites were won over to capitalism by "petty and apparent" privileges.

Carolyn (New York LnR) wrote the following in a 1998 response to WWB: "In Brooklyn, where I grew up, there are numerous white, working-class neighborhoods filled with homeowners right next to Black and Latino

neighborhoods filled with people living in public housing projects... every time a Black family saves enough to buy a house in Canarsie, the house is firebombed within the first week."

What gave the WWB faction strong enough teeth to tear things apart was the unexpected alliance between one of LnR's most effective anti-racist activists from the Midwest – who opposed a multi-tendency approach – and the "couch cadre" non-activists with inadequate race politics.

But what finally plowed LnR under history's dustheap was the quiet middle majority, those of us who failed to save it. The final year's Coordinating Committee never met, flaking out completely, and our movement strategizing took a back burner to debates that could have otherwise enriched it.

In 1997, Justine (Minneapolis LnR) argued that LnR's Anti-Fascist Working Group should reflect the fact that Anti-Racist Action (ARA) fought the institutional racism of cops and not just the grassroots racism of nazis. This is an example of theory's interaction with practice. She

also writes: "It's crazy that working groups didn't have time to meet at the last conference. This should have been a priority over... the political statement." Theory dominated, and the link between theory and practice was severed. Most members outside New York felt like the ideological debates were irrelevant to their work in ARA and other groups, so they dropped out of LnR.

Sadly, *New World* repeats the mistake of disconnecting theory from practice. Possibly for cultural reasons, most writings by LnR women invoke details of our activist work, references to other members' statements, etc, and that's why they were left out. It's messy to edit the over-specific meanderings and personal attacks that make up some of the most important political theory. But any idea can sound great on paper if the writing's good – you need to read about how it works out in practice.

On the other hand, the book ignores the fact that several members left anarchism, and excludes any writing that could have either won readers to their ideas or shown that there may be, in fact, a slippery slope to Stalinism. Two ex-LnRs who'd been very active in the debates joined a traditional Marxist-Leninist organization, but you won't find these views in the book.

Hoping for a new incarnation of Love and Rage after the split, I helped start the Fire by Night Organizing Committee, a tiny multi-tendency group active in New York and the Bay Area. FbN's long self-critical evaluation of LnR, "After Winter Must Come Spring," has the book's last word even though it's already published as a pamphlet. Worse, the book leaves out the Afterword explaining that FbN dissolved in 2000 after acknowledging mistakes it made in New York as an all-white group in a people of color-led movement.

You can't join LnR or Fire by Night, but I recommend reading this book and finding your own way to working for revolution. FbN's Bay Area branch joined Freedom Road Socialist Organization-check out fso.org. If you agree with "What We Believe," go to nfac.net (Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists). And visit agitatorindex.org if you want to build a multi-tendency group of anti-authoritarians grappling with the questions raised in *A New World in Our Hearts*.

– SUZY SUBWAYS

THE OLD REPUBLIC

SHATTERED GLASS
Written & Directed by Billy Ray

Shattered Glass, the new movie about a five-year-old scandal at *The New Republic* magazine, concerns a young reporter who wanted very badly to entertain his editors and found that the easiest way was to give them pure fiction instead of real news. The Glass affair generated huge attention within the journalism industry – and a six-figure advance for a novelized version of his life by the perpetrator himself. Now comes the movie version, which counts Tom Cruise among its producers and stars Hayden Christensen, the young actor who played Anakin Skywalker in the most recent Star Wars movie, as Glass.

Why so much attention paid to a mendacious twerp whose pathetic lies finally caught up with him? In part because audiences – and movie producers – love stories that take place inside powerful institutions. Sometimes the result cuts them down to size, sometimes it white-washes them, and sometimes, as in first-time director Billy Ray's competent film, it does both.

The New Republic was founded almost 90 years ago. It has a small (for a national magazine) but well-heeled circulation of 80,000 and boasts of being required reading in Washington. In *Shattered Glass*, characters repeat the line that it's "the in-flight magazine of Air Force One." Its most prized editorial attribute is an "inside" feel that gives readers the sense of being a fly on the wall at the offices and meetings where *machers* in business and government make things happen.

Shattered Glass's cast of characters consist mostly of *TNR* reporters, a select group of young, ambitious Ivy League graduates who join the magazine for low pay and use it as a springboard into heavyweight corporate journalism. Washington policy-making positions, and other circles of power. As portrayed by Christensen, Glass comes across as the sort of precocious, entertaining boy-man who editors love to pat on the head when he brings a good yarn to a story meeting.

The trouble with *Shattered Glass* is that the movie's version of *TNR* has little distinctive personality. It could be any editorial office in any movie you've



ever seen. (Compare *Shattered Glass* with Michael Mann's *The Insider*, which had fun deflating the self-important celebrities at CBS News.)

Perhaps the filmmakers' intention was to make *Shattered Glass* a parable about what can happen anywhere when editors allow themselves to be charmed into not examining their reporters' copy carefully enough. But this isn't a very interesting or unusual story, as anyone who has suffered through the *New York Times*' breast-beating about its own fabulist, Jayson Blair, can testify.

TNR itself, and the elite culture it fosters, are the intriguing part of the *Glass* saga. The magazine has long been the mouthpiece of publisher Marty Peretz, a grumpy, domineering neoconservative millionaire. Young overachievers who are awarded internships or starting jobs with *TNR* quickly learn that to get ahead they must give the boss stories with the right political and cultural slant. At the time *Glass* was working there, Peretz's hobbyhorses included a deep hatred of Bill Clinton, and *Glass* and his staff-mates dutifully churned out pieces castigating the president and his circle. In one of his most notorious "cooked" stories, titled "Monica Sells," *Glass*, who had previously worked at the right-wing Heritage Foundation, claimed to have discovered a joke line of Monica Lewinsky condoms.

Other fictions featured a teenage hacker negotiating an outrageous deal to work as a corporate security consultant, Young Republicans getting high at a party conference, and a group of bond traders who build shrine to Alan Greenspan.

Glass got these fables over

with his editors and colleagues not just because he was a convincing yarn-spinner, but because *TNR* was a major outlet for Tina Brown-era journalism in which a good story just wasn't good enough unless it could be made to read like fiction – or better yet, like pulp fiction on steroids.

Conceivably, a Stephen *Glass* could happen at any publication, however careful its fact-checking. But Peretz, with his insistence on using his magazine as a personal political weapon, and an editorial culture that overvalues punchy, superficially sophisticated storytelling, together made *TNR* more vulnerable than most.

Little of this comes through in the movie. Peretz is portrayed as merely a curmudgeon with an obsession for commas, his political partisanship unmentioned. A supertitle at the beginning of the movie mentions that the average age of *TNR*'s reportorial staff is 26, but the movie fails to indicate why this is so. And while the film includes a telling scene in which one of *Glass*'s colleagues despairs that she can't "write funny" the way Stephen can, it doesn't develop the theme into a critique of *TNR*'s editorial process.

The end result is that *Shattered Glass* fails to connect its main character's story with any larger developments either at *TNR* or in journalism itself. Instead, it offers a standard cautionary tale: We should have been more careful. *TNR* gets its moment in the mud, but in the end, it still emerges as a journalistic paragon. And Marty Peretz is hardly embarrassed: The film's Web site includes an ad for *The New Republic*.

– ERIC LAURSEN



'Superfreak' says Jacko ain't so wacko

Excerpts of CNN Interview.
Aired November 21, 2003

KYRA PHILLIPS, CNN ANCHOR: You're looking good. Now, you and I were talking a little bit this morning. You're in support of Michael Jackson. Tell me why.

RICK JAMES: Because I love him. I think he's fantastic. I love his whole family. I've been knowing Michael since he was a kid. I've know his whole family. I know his mother. I know his father. I know the brothers. I know the sisters. And I have nothing but complete love, and respect and admiration for the whole family.

PHILLIPS: So, Rick, why do you think authorities are going after Michael Jackson?

JAMES: Because he's black, he's rich and he's famous, and they got nothing else better to do.

PHILLIPS: Has Michael ever talked openly with you about his relationship with children, or his love for children, or even *Neverland*?

JAMES: Look, Michael loves children, OK? I mean, to be – I mean, I look at it like this. I mean, all this pedophile crap, you know, why didn't they go after Elvis Presley? He was the biggest pedophile at all. He had Priscilla when she was 14, 15. Why didn't they go after Jerry Lee Lewis. He the second biggest pedophile of all. He married his first cousin. She was 13 years old. Why don't they go after Santa Claus? Why don't they do psychology references on him? They don't know who he is. He's 100,000 different cities and kids sit on his lap, telling him what they want for Christmas.

PHILLIPS: I don't know, Rick, I've sat on Santa Claus' lap, I've never had any issues with Santa Claus.

JAMES: But never mind, Santa Claus, what about Elvis? They didn't do anything to him. He had Priscilla when she was 14, 15 years old. Nobody said a damn thing. Then as soon as you get famous and black, they go after you.

PHILLIPS: Well, Rick, you do continue to be a super freak, and thanks for giving us a super interview.

JAMES: I will be a super freak, and it ain't got nothing to do with children or nothing, just like Michael Jackson has nothing to do with children. It has to do with L-O-V-E – love.

PHILLIPS: L-O-V-E – love. All right, Rick, peace.



EL INDEPENDIENTE

ESCUELA DE LOS ASESINOS

MARA BARD, *School of the Americas Watch, Long Island*
TRADUCCIÓN DE SILVIA ARANA

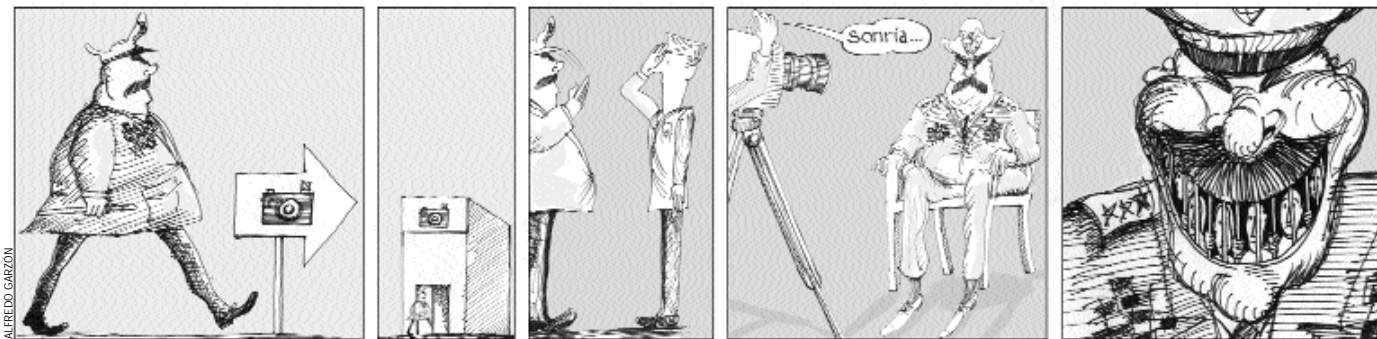
A fines de noviembre demostramos contra la Escuela de las Américas o Escuela de los Asesinos, en la que fueron entrenados numerosos militares latinoamericanos responsables de crímenes contra la humanidad. Fui a Fort Benning, Georgia, con un grupo de 27 estudiantes de Hofstra y la profesora Linda Longmire. Estoy en contacto con ellos desde que fui invitada a compartir mis experiencias como activista durante la dictadura militar en Argentina. El sábado 22 de noviembre mientras los

oradores explicaban porqué habíamos ido a pedir el cierre de esta "escuela" de torturadores y asesinos, desde el fuerte emitían a alto volumen música militar para boicotear la protesta pacífica. Esta provocación psicológica no logró desanimar a los cientos de manifestantes que habían ido a rendir homenaje a las víctimas de torturas y violaciones, a los asesinados, a los desaparecidos y a los que se vieron obligados a emigrar por las acciones de los graduados de la Escuela de las Américas.

El domingo se presentaron testimonios de víctimas de tortura y marchamos frente a las puertas de Fort Benning. La gente llevaba cruces y estrellas de David con los nombres de

las víctimas. Desde el escenario alguien leía el nombre de los que cayeron asesinados y nosotros respondíamos: Presente!

La semana de protesta contó con la participación de más de diez mil personas. A pesar del tono pacífico de la protesta, hubo 54 arrestados. Fr. Roy Bourgeois, fundador de School of the Americas (SOA) Watch dijo: "Desde el SOA al ALCA, y a la invasión a Irak la política exterior de nuestro gobierno sirve a los intereses de unos pocos y nos crea muchos enemigos".



POR UN FUTURO SIN PLOMO

LUCHA POR LA SALUD DE NUESTROS NIÑOS

POR GIBRAN HAQ

Sálimos a las calles para urgirles a los neoyorquinos que llamen al alcalde Bloomberg, porque ya es hora que el proteja a los niños de esta ciudad apoyando la Intro 101A; el Acta de Nueva York para la Prevención de Envenenamiento Infantil por Plomo", dijo Arelis Hernández, del Grupo de Investigación de Interés Público de New York (NYPIRG), mientras distribuía panfletos en la estación de metro de la calle 161 Este del Yankee Stadium. Ella formó parte del grupo de adherentes que distribuyó miles de panfletos el pasado miércoles 3 de diciembre, pidiéndole a la gente de Nueva York que apoye la propuesta para pasar la Intro 101A.

El problema de la intoxicación producida por exposición a pintura a base de plomo ha estado en la atención pública desde los años sesenta, cuando se descubrió que podía provocar una gran variedad de problemas médicos, específicamente afectando el proceso cognitivo en niños pequeños. Normalmente esta amenaza pasa desapercibida debido a la carencia de síntomas, sin embargo puede provocar problemas de aprendizaje, déficit de atención, reducción del coeficiente intelectual y, en casos de severa exposición, daño a los riñones, convulsiones, paros cardíacos y hasta la muerte. Algunos estudios recientes plantean la posibilidad de que agudice la hipertensión en los adultos.

La principal fuente para el envenenamiento de plomo no solo proviene de la ingestión o inhalación de micro partículas de polvo provenientes de pintura descascarada o en malas

condiciones, sino que también por mero contacto con superficies pintadas con pintura a base de plomo, aun estando intactas.

Según El Departamento de Salud e Higiene Mental de la Ciudad de New York (DOMHH), el descascaramiento de pintura en mal estado fue identificada como la causa de intoxicación en el 68% del total de niños envenenados por plomo en Nueva York durante el 2002, mientras que sólo 5 barrios de los 42 que hay en la ciudad concentraron el 35% del total de casos investigados por el departamento en ese mismo año. Estos barrios son Williamsburg-Bushwick, Bedford-Stuyvesant, East Flatbush-Flatbush, West Queens y Fordham-Bronx Park.

Uno de los datos más relevantes de este problema es que afecta desproporcionadamente a niños de bajos recursos y de minorías étnicas. Del total de casos de envenenamiento por pintura a base de plomo durante el año pasado, el 37% era latino, el 36% afro-americano y el 18% de origen asiático. Si tomamos en consideración los daños irreversibles provocados, podemos asumir que a través del tiempo podría conllevar consecuencias catastróficas en el ámbito socioeconómico para estos grupos.

La pintura a base de plomo fue usada extensivamente a través del siglo veinte, siendo prohibida en Nueva York en 1960. El resto de los Estados Unidos siguió el ejemplo hacia 1978. Sin embargo esto no resolvió el problema, ya que de acuerdo al censo de 1990, la mayoría de los edificios en Nueva York (63.5%) fueron construidos antes de los años 60. Ésto convierte a Nueva York en el estado con la mayor cantidad de viviendas construidas antes de 1960. En

cifras, esto significa que alrededor de dos millones de viviendas podrían ser consideradas como nocivas para la salud de sus moradores.

Antes que "Local Law 1" entrase en efecto en 1982, un niño debía literalmente envenenarse antes de que el propietario del inmueble tuviese que remover la pintura tóxica. Esta situación cambió drásticamente en 1982 con la introducción de "Local Law 1", que establecía que cualquier niño menor de 7 años que vivía en un hogar que tuviese pintura a base de plomo, se consideraba en riesgo inmediato y los dueños del inmueble recibían una notificación de "violación peligrosa a la salud tipo C", teniendo solo 24 horas para remover toda la pintura a base de plomo de la residencia. Sin embargo, en 1999 la ciudad aprobó "Local Law 38", reemplazando la ley anterior.

Al comparar ambas leyes, es obvio que la ley 38 se queda atrás de su predecesora en el aspecto preventivo. Por ejemplo, la edad en que un niño se considera en riesgo disminuye de 7 a 6; a los propietarios ahora se les concede entre 10 y 220 días para enmendar la situación, en contraste con la primera ley que sólo otorgaba 24 horas. Otros puntos débiles de la ley 38 son el incremento en la cantidad de plomo que debe haber en la pintura para que califique como peligrosa y sea removida. Como si esto fuese poco, la ley no requiere que los propietarios presenten constancias escritas a las autoridades, pudiendo así eludir el problema durante meses antes de darles una solución a los arrendatarios.

Para más información visite los siguientes links:
www.nyccelp.org/
www.nypirg.org/lead/act.html

BREVES

REPUDIO A WAL-MART

La cadena Wal-Mart conduce las peores prácticas laborales en el país. Sus salarios están por debajo de los estándares, obligan a sus empleados a trabajar horas extra sin pago y se niegan a proveer seguro médico a un costo aceptable.

Por ello un grupo de activistas ha lanzado una petición por Internet para protestar contra la cadena comercial. Hacen un llamado a no comprar en Wal-Mart hasta que la compañía:

- Pague salarios dignos a su millón de empleados.
- Provea seguro médico a un costo aceptable.
- Termine la discriminación contra las mujeres.
- Termine el ataque contra empleados que quieren pertenecer al sindicato.
- Termine su práctica de obligar a los trabajadores a trabajar sobretiempo sin pago.

Para unirse a la petición ir a:
www.workingforchange.com/activism/petition.cfm?itemid=16041

URUGUAY NO A LAS PRIVATIZACIONES

Una amplia mayoría del electorado uruguayo -65 por ciento- votó para derogar la ley que autorizaba a la empresa petrolera ANCAP a asociarse con empresas privadas. Este resultado significó un fracaso para el gobierno y un triunfo para el Frente Amplio, la coalición de izquierda que podría llegar al poder en las elecciones del 2005. Tanto el Frente Amplio como la central sindical única PIT-CNT, fueron los principales impulsores de la derogación de la ley. Fue una derrota de un modelo económico "neoliberal y privatizador", según Hugo de Mello, dirigente de FANCAP, el sindicato que agrupa a los funcionarios del ente petrolero público.

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