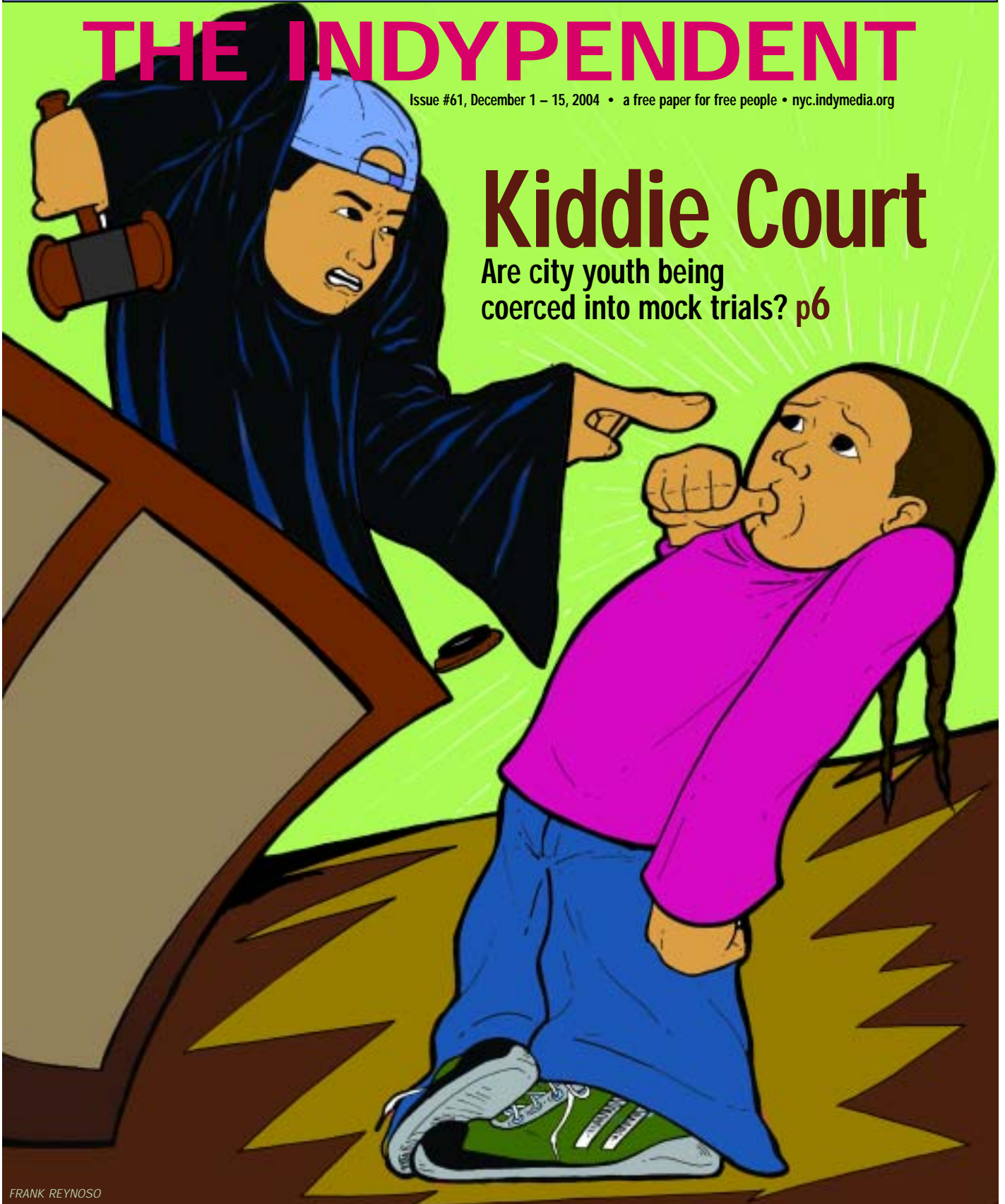


THE INDYPENDENT

Issue #61, December 1 – 15, 2004 • a free paper for free people • nyc.indymedia.org

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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 self-representation. We seek to analyze issues affecting 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 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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NBA Basket Brawl



LOUIS PETERSON

BY DAVE ZIRIN

I don't think we'll be hearing the 'NBA Action is Faaaantstic' slogan revived anytime soon. The aftermath of the most violent player/fan brawl in U.S. sports history has met with the hand wringing we usually associate with Janet Jackson's right breast. The fight between several members of the Indiana Pacers and a garrison of Detroit Pistons fans veered wildly from the frightening to the ridiculous.

Pacers forwards Ron Artest and Stephen Jackson swung haymakers at anyone with a potbelly and a Pistons jersey. There were their 5'9" 220 pound combatants throwing punches at Artest like he was Joey from the block and not a 6'8" pro athlete who could cave in their face. There was Rick Mahorn of all people - the tough guy of the 1980s Pistons teams, getting up from the broadcast booth and pulling people apart - like an 'old timers brawl' of sorts (I kept looking for Charles Oakley to emerge from the crowd and hit Mahorn with a folding chair.) And there was that moment when tragedy truly became farce: seeing Rasheed Wallace step in as 'peace maker'.

As soon as Artest was pelted by a cup of ice, hurdled into the crowd and started

throwing haymakers like Clubber Lang, you knew that NBA commissioner David Stern would bring down the hammer, and he did not disappoint. Artest, the reigning NBA defensive player of the year, received a 73 game suspension, the longest in NBA history. Also getting nailed with historic time away from the court were the Pacers' Stephen Jackson who got a 30-game vacation, and all-NBA forward Jermaine O'Neal who was not only pegged with 25 games but also faces charges for cold cocking a fan off camera in full view of several Auburn Hills' cops.

Whenever an event this out of the ordinary occurs, the sports establishment ever fearful of a black eye, treats it like a catastrophic epidemic and has already offered PR solutions ranging from banning beer sales to circling armed cops around the court (that is exactly what was needed amid the chaos - guns).

What this approach ignores, including logic, is the opportunity to confront a new phenomenon in U.S. sports: the simmering animosity between ticket holding (emphasis on ticket holding), fans and the players. Here, whether Stern and the NBA brass want to discuss it or not, we have a mulligan stew of race, class and grievance that says a great deal about the uneasy place of pro

sports in U.S. society. First, as columnist Jason Whitlock commented after the brawl, "Many fans love the sport but just hate pro athletes." Athletes in the eyes of many fans are too spoiled, too loud, too "hip-hop" too tattooed, too corn-rowed - all of which translates to players as "too black."

Also in this era of fantasy leagues, yipping high testosterone sports radio, high-ticket prices and league sponsored EA sports video games that wallow in computerized bench-clearing brawls, fans more than ever see themselves as participants rather than observers (the EA sports slogan actually is "get in the game"). Those fans in Detroit, \$50 tickets in hand, believe they have more than the right - they have the duty to throw punches at opposing players if the opportunity presents itself. One striking scene from the Auburn Hills fight was when a man clearly on the gray side of forty, appears to be pulling at Artest to break up the fight, and then throws three straight rabbit punches to the back of the 6'8" forward's head.

This man also happened to be white, which is the other side of the fan/athlete resentment. NBA players, the overwhelming majority of whom come from poor inner city backgrounds, don't look at the stands and think, "Hey! What a terrific group of 40-year-old white guys I'm going to be dunking for this evening!" As one player said to me, "I look at the seats and don't see anyone from my old hood or anybody that looks anything like me. It's like you're a monkey in a cage." So we have angry white fans trying to punch out angry black players with the players returning the favor. This animosity is very real and not going anywhere.

This violence is also heated by the bloodshed engulfing U.S. society - not street violence, but the state-sanctioned variety. ESPN has replayed the "horror" of the fight ad nauseum, in black and white, with all kinds of slow-motion angles. They have reveled in this fight and are crying all the way to the ratings bank. But as the "World Wide Leader" cries over the punches thrown, remember that this is also a network that did a week of Sports Centers in Kuwait, on a set made up to look like a machine gun nest. Ask people in Falluja what violence really looks like, and the role a network like ESPN plays in promoting the acceptance of such violence. An NBA player's union rep gave some grounding perspective to the brawl, commenting that, "Yes it was violent. But there is violence everywhere. There is violence in war." This is a thoughtful comment with at least a modicum of perspective. He will probably be fired.

This is excerpted from a longer article. See edgeofsport.com

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Critical Mass

BY CHRIS ANDERSON

The 500 or so bicyclists who converged on Union Square for the Nov. 26 Critical Mass had probably become resigned to the presence of the NYPD at their monthly event. The August Critical Mass, which drew over 5,000 people three days before the start of the Republican National Convention, resulted in over 250 arrests. This marked the beginning of a period of intense police harassment of the ride, which had previously gone on unmolested for years. In September, nine participants were arrested and 40 bikes were seized, while October saw 35 arrests.

Little could have prepared the Critical Mass riders for what awaited them in November, however. According to reports on the New York City Indymedia website, "the NYPD had over 50 police vans, 40 scooters, 600 bike cops, dozens of police cars, 20 flatbed trucks, 7 mobile police station and camera vans, and two helicopters" in Union Square on Nov. 26. Seventeen people were arrested over the course of the night, which saw the ride dispersed into small groups across Manhattan.

The attack on Critical Mass appears to be the latest round in a decade-long battle waged by the City of New York against "unpermitted activities" of all kinds, beginning with Rudy Giuliani. According to statements from the Bloomberg Administration, the City's primary problem with Critical Mass seems less that it exists than that it occurs without leaders, central organizers or parade route permits.

Perhaps ominously, the fate of Critical Mass in its present form rests, at least in part, with the local courts. "A federal judge has given the cyclists until Nov. 30 to respond [to the city's call for a permit]," the Associated Press noted on Nov. 29. "Then the city has until Dec. 6 to counter their reply. A hearing has been scheduled for Dec. 8."



NEW YORK SAFE FOR SUV'S AGAIN: (At left) Bike riders arrested during November Critical Mass. (at right) New York's Finest lined Park Ave with orange netting to contain the pedal-powered threat to society. PHOTOS: STANLEY W. ROGOUSKI



Many New York City Indymedia readers have offered suggestions for how Critical Mass can both continue and effectively counter ever-increasing police harassment. Some of their thoughts include:

"We need to take control of the debate ... We want a safer, more cycle-friendly city. We want motorists to stop killing cyclists and pedestrians. Besides fighting in court and keeping up the rides we each can do our bit to promote critical mass by writing letters in response to the reports in the corporate media, which seem to be turning against us." —BND

"Someday, in the near future, there will be another terrorist attack in NYC. After-the-fact, the NYPD will deliver feeble excuses — they "didn't have a clue about the planning and preparations of the attackers." They were spending time and money monitoring and chasing a group of bicyclists! Sending helicopters up for hours to watch bicyclists! Way to go NYPD brass! What a bunch of over-paid, under-worked morons." —Pedal Power

"I don't think going through the courts is going to do anything. What's the point

when Bloomberg calls the shots now and the NYPD obeys like a pack of Nazis? If freedom means being a criminal, then count me in." —b

"The fact that the founder and head of one of the world's largest companies, and mayor of what used to be one of the world's most enlightened cities, has only been able to simply resort to such expensive and counterproductive bullying tactics demonstrates his inability to grasp such a simple and evident expression of human rationality and dignity. It is wonderful that a bunch of "kids on bikes" have demonstrated a superior capacity to match wits with one of the world's largest bureaucracies and overpaid appendages." —Gustavo

"Above all we need to remind ourselves that we are on the winning side of this battle. Cities will become greener as a matter of necessity. It's inevitable. And petty tyrants like Bloomberg and Kelly are already dinosaurs. They've got a lot of resources to fart around with at the moment but they're history and they know it." —Ghost of the green future

For more, see nyc.indymedia.org



Mahmadoo Daffee attends a vigil on Friday Nov. 19 for a fellow bike messenger who was killed the day before at 8th Ave. and 49th St. in Manhattan. PHOTO: CAITLIN BENEDETTO

Waterfront Rally

North Brooklyn Demands Affordable Housing



EDGAR MATA

Hundreds of demonstrators assembled at the Grand Street Waterfront Park in Williamsburg on Nov. 18 to rally for affordable housing in the North Brooklyn area.

The demonstration was held both in response to massive displacement of long-term residents of the area due to an influx of wealthier tenants from Manhattan, and also to the city's proposed rezoning of the industrial waterfront area of Williamsburg-Greenpoint.

Demanding that no less than 40 percent of housing resulting from the planned rezoning be affordable to long-term residents, demonstrators marched from the rally and fanned out all along the waterfront for a candlelight vigil. —E.M.

BUY NOTHING DAY

Reverend Billy and nearly 200 other non-shoppers celebrated Buy Nothing Day in Midtown on the day after Thanksgiving, traditionally the busiest shopping day of the year. One participant reported on the NYC Indymedia newswire that "Children loved our costumes, and were despondent that our patriot star spangled get-ups were not for sale in the store. Parents were overheard saying, "They want peace for Christmas!" to which children responded, "I do too!" PHOTO: CAITLIN BENEDETTO



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Screening: A new episode of Dyke TV hosted by Julie Goldman

Dyke TV will be presenting segments from its new one hour episode, including a film preview about the murder of Sukia Gunn. Dyke TV is the first and only cable access TV show by, for and about lesbians. This is good television! It's designed to incite, subvert, provoke and organize while providing a platform for queer women's voices to enter popular culture.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10TH @ 7PM - FREE
Release Party: Three Zines in One Night!
So it's a party for New York City radical zinesters and readings from their new stuff. Joseph Phelan reads from his poetry-fiction zine "I do not want our deaths anymore", while KT's chronicles her cross-coastal move to New York in "destination is not the end of the journey", and Andy Cornell unveils "The Secret Files of Captain Sissy (Issue #5)" with sordid tales of militant food co-op strikes, brain-erasing skateboarding concussions, and union organizing with Kentucky steelworkers.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11TH @ 7PM - FREE
Political Slam / Open-Mike: "Bush The Aftermath"
Hosted by the Youth Activist & Poetry series is all about the math of politics and the aftermath of the last election. Hear yourself and other creatively express political opinions at this event on every second Saturday at Bluestockings. And of course, anyone and everyone is welcome to come up.

No Thanks

Protesters Commemorate the Holiday's Forgotten History

By JOHN TARLETON

PLYMOUTH, Massachusetts—About 300 protesters gathered on Thanksgiving to commemorate the holiday's forgotten history. Memories of massacres past and present lingered in the damp, late autumn breeze.

"Given what they did in Mystic, Sand Creek, Wounded Knee and so many other places, why would they hesitate to level a whole city?" Asked Mahtowin Munro, co-leader of the United American Indians of New England (UAINE). "Whether we're talking about 1676 in New England, 1966 in Vietnam or 2004 in Iraq, these same American monsters are pursuing a path of death and destruction."

"I pray every day that the war will end and that the U.S. will withdraw all its troops from Iraq and allow the Iraqis to go their own way," added Moonanum James, co-leader of UAINE. "It's called self-determination."

A murmur of dismay rippled through the crowd when James announced that a new U.S. military offensive south of Baghdad had been named Operation Plymouth Rock.

Native Americans have marked a National Day of Mourning at Plymouth every year since 1970. That year, Moonanum's father, Frank James, led a band of 500 warriors from the American Indian Movement, who took over a replica of the Mayflower and also shoveled dirt over Plymouth Rock where legend has it that the Pilgrims first set foot ashore.

"We didn't land on Plymouth Rock. Plymouth Rock landed on us," said Tall Oak, who also took part in the original 1970 action.

This year's ceremony began on a hill overlooking Plymouth Harbor. Participants circled around a statue of Massasoit, the Wampanoag Indian *sachem* who welcomed the original Pilgrims in 1620. The smell of sage and sweet grass wafted through the air as a Native American elder prayed to the four directions. Nearby, a homemade banner told the story of Metacomb, Massasoit's son who was captured and beheaded in 1676 after leading a rebellion against English settlers. After listening to speeches (all of which were made by Native Americans), the crowd marched through downtown Plymouth to the sound of a lone drumbeat and then shared a common meal at the local Unitarian church.

The words of the Native Americans echoed with many non-native participants.

"When I hear the stories of these Indians, I can't help but think of the Caribs and the Arawaks who inhabited Haiti before it became other things," said a Boston woman whose parents emigrated from Haiti.

Arturo Perez Saad, a grad student at Pratt Institute, traveled from New York with a busload of activists organized by the International Action Center. He said he was immediately



Americo Fermin of Inca Son participates in National Day of Mourning ceremonies in Plymouth, MA. PHOTO: PETE STIDMAN

skeptical of the story of Plymouth Rock, which lies half-buried in sand under a temple-like edifice with the number "1620" etched on its top. He worried that myths spun in Plymouth can have serious consequences.

"Myth can start out telling a partial truth but with time it can be so twisted and skewed that it can turn into an obvious lie."

Tony Pinckney, a railroad switchman from Haverhill, MA, said he first asked his parents "where are the Indians?" while celebrating Thanksgiving when he was six years old. For him, the march was a chance to apologize.

"We don't celebrate slavery or the holocaust but we still celebrate Thanksgiving," he said. "Why the hell are we celebrating something that went so terribly wrong?"

Celebrating 400 Years of Turkey Shoots



1864

Days after the first anniversary of the new Thanksgiving holiday, 150 Cheyenne Indians are massacred at Sand Creek in southeastern Colorado by the Colorado Volunteers. The victims are mostly women, children and the elderly. The victorious soldiers scalp all the dead bodies and cut off women's genitals to decorate their hats and their saddle horns.

1890

300 half-starved Lakota Indians are massacred at Wounded Knee, South Dakota after leaving the reservation in the middle of the winter. This marked the end of more than 250 years of warfare between European-descended settlers and native peoples.

1914

Jennie Brownscombe's idealized painting (above left) of the First Thanksgiving becomes a symbol of the holiday for many Americans. It reached a wide audience and influenced the national understanding when it was later printed in *Life* magazine.

1939

President Franklin Roosevelt moves Thanksgiving up to the fourth Thursday in November to add more time to the Christmas shopping season.

1970

Hundreds of American Indian activists upstage the 350th anniversary celebration of the landing of the pilgrims by taking over a replica of the Mayflower and by shoveling dirt over Plymouth Rock. National Day of Mourning protests have been held on Thanksgiving in Plymouth every year since.

1997

Police use pepper spray and tear gas to assault protesters. Twenty-five people are arrested. In a subsequent court settlement, the town of Plymouth agrees to allow future Thanksgiving protesters to march without a permit, as long as they notify the town in advance of their parade route.

2004

About 300 protesters rally in Plymouth to commemorate the annual National Day of Mourning in Plymouth while thousands of U.S. Marines carry out a new offensive in southern Iraq called Operation Plymouth Rock.

1620

The Mayflower lands near what is now Provincetown, on the tip of Cape Cod. The pilgrims raid Indian burial grounds where winter provisions are stored. Eleven days later, they disembark in Plymouth. More than half of the original 100 settlers perish over the winter.

1621

Local Wampanoag Indians take pity on the pilgrims and teach them how to survive in their new environment. Chief Massasoit and 90 Indian warriors attend an end-of-harvest feast in the autumn of 1621. No mention is made in the Pilgrims' records of celebrating a day of Thanksgiving.

1637

English and Dutch militia massacre 700 Pequot Indians who have gathered to celebrate the annual Green Corn dance on the Mystic River, in what is now Connecticut. Massachusetts Gov. William Bradford calls for America's first official day of Thanksgiving to celebrate the victory.

1676

Metacomb, son of Massasoit, is captured and executed after leading a failed rebellion against English settlers. Metacomb's severed head is left on a pike in the middle of Plymouth for over 20 years.

1863

During the darkest days of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln declares the final Thursday in November to be a day of Thanksgiving. Lincoln's proclamation was a triumph for Sarah Hale, who had doggedly campaigned for the holiday for nearly four decades. Hale, editor of a popular ladies journal, was also the author of "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

Jesse: We Wuz Robbed

SUSPICIONS GROW AS TIME RUNS OUT FOR OHIO RECOUNT



A volunteer says goodnight to poll machines in Cleveland on Nov. 2.
PHOTO: ANTRIM CASKEY

BY BOB FITRAKIS & HARVEY WASSERMAN

COLUMBUS, OHIO—Preaching to a packed, wildly cheering congregation, Rev. Jesse Jackson blasted the presidential election back into the national headlines Nov. 28. Jackson said new findings cast serious doubt on the idea that George W. Bush beat John Kerry in Ohio Nov. 2. A GOP “pattern of intentionality” was behind a suspect outcome, he said. At stake is “the integrity of the vote” for which “too many have died.” “We can live with losing an election,” he said. “We cannot live with fraud and stealing.”

Jackson is the first major national figure to come here challenging the idea that Ohio has given George W. Bush a second term in the White House. Jackson emphasized that the vote “has not yet been certified” and demanded the removal of Ohio Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell from supervising the recount, which Jackson termed a case of “the fox guarding the chicken house.” Blackwell co-chaired the Bush-Cheney campaign in Ohio and has been widely criticized for a series of partisan decisions that have thus far indicated Bush carried the state. Exit polls by Zogby and CNN showed Ohio going for Kerry with 53% and 51 percent respectively, which would win him presidency in the Electoral College.

Blackwell says a complex series of rules allows him to limit a recount to just a few days. He says he may certify the Ohio vote between Dec. 3 and 6, with any recount due

to be completed Dec. 13, when Ohio’s electors are scheduled to meet.

Jackson has demanded Blackwell recuse himself, saying “the owner of the team can’t also be the referee.” A broad-based legal team – now including Jackson’s PUSH/Rainbow Coalition as Plaintiff – is preparing to file an election challenge asking the election results be overturned. Jackson says computer forensic experts must be given full access to electronic voting machines that have provided no paper trail, but which could be electronically analyzed from within. Jackson said he has spoken with Democratic candidate John Kerry, who indicated his support for the recount process.

New findings indicate that Kerry’s margins in 37 (of 88) Ohio counties are suspiciously low when compared to those garnered by Judge Ellen Connally, an unsuccessful Democratic Supreme Court candidate. The calculations focus on standardized county-wide ratios between bottom-of-the-ticket tallies won by Judge Connally versus those won by Kerry in heavily Republican, rural counties. According to a wide range of experts, there appears to be a systematic removal of Kerry votes by hackers who overlooked the Connally votes, which now clearly implies something went wrong. “It’s simply not credible that a vastly underfunded African-American female candidate at the bottom of the ticket could outpoll John Kerry in Butler County,” said Cliff Arneback, a lead attorney for the challenging legal team. Jackson said

the situation “does not pass the smell test.”

Before some 500 supporters, Jackson preached a litany of doubt surrounding the Ohio outcome, prompting at least 50 congressmen to file affidavits documenting their own experiences trying to vote Nov. 2. Several hundred such documents have been filed at a series of hearings in Columbus, Cincinnati and Cleveland.

According to the sworn testimony, a systematic denial of voting machines to inner city precincts resulted in waits of three, five and even 11 hours for thousands of voters, many of whom left in frustration without casting their ballots. Charges of intimidation, misinformation, faulty registration lists and denial of provisional ballots are listed. So are serious questions about the integrity of touch-screen machines, many of which were widely reported to have registered Kerry votes into Bush votes. In Warren County, Homeland Security was inexplicably invoked to bar independent observers and the media, leaving the vote count under control of Republicans. In the Franklin County precinct of Gahanna, 4,258 votes were registered for Bush where only 628 people voted. In another county, a GOP election official took voting results to his private home for final, unsupervised reporting.

“We need federal supervision of federal elections,” said Jackson. “Right now we have 50 separate but unequal ways to vote. There can be no safe harbor for a flawed process that leaves people disenfranchised.”

“You can’t have public elections on privately-owned machines, especially where one of the owners has vowed to deliver the state for George Bush,” Jackson added, referring to Wally O’Dell, a major Bush supporter and CEO of Diebold, a leading Ohio-based supplier of electronic voting machines and voting software.

“You can hack these machines,” Jackson said. “The playing field is uneven. These numbers will not go away. We as Americans should not be begging a Secretary of State for a fair vote count. We cannot be the home of the thief and the land of the slave.”

“This is not about John Kerry versus George Bush,” said Jackson. “This is about Medgar Evers and Fannie Lou Hamer and Viola Liuzzo. About Goodman, Cheney and Schwerner, and twenty-seven years in prison for Nelson Mandela,” he said, referring to heroes of the movements for equal rights. “It’s about a will to dignity. It’s not too much to ask for our vote to count.”

This article was originally published at freepress.org



Harmonic Insurgence

Chrissy Word (left) and Mara Goodman (right) of the a capella group Harmonic Insurgence sing about unequal wages between men and women at the community church on East 35th Street. Harmonic Insurgence also sings about AIDS, War, Freedom and the disappearing pacific salmon.

PHOTO: ANTRIM CASKEY

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structive," he said. "But why does it have to follow a judicial model? Why don't we have kids who do social work or peer counseling?"

MEASURING "SUCCESS"

There's no real proof whether or not the Harlem Youth Court "works." The coordinators measure success by the number of defendants who complete their sentences. Sered said that an average of 86 percent fulfilled their sanctions last year. But the coordinators said they had no way of knowing whether the court had achieved its goal of preventing children from committing more serious crimes later on in their lives. Although some defendants stay involved and a few go through training to become members of the Youth Court themselves, the court does not officially track defendants after they complete their sentences.

Fagan said that even if the youth court did more follow-up work with former defendants, the sample of kids would be so small that it would be difficult to make any meaningful claims about the success of the court. For every 100 kids that the police refer to youth court, only about 20 percent end up at hearings.

"They get a tiny fraction of the number of kids who get into this," said Fagan. "And I don't know if you can argue that these kids are less likely to get involved in crime."

After a defendant completes the sentence, the youth court coordinators say they send a note to the police precinct that opened a file on the defendant.

But at the Red Hook Youth Court, coordinator Kathy Barker was uncertain if anyone followed up with the police precinct to make sure youth court participation was noted in the child's file.

And officer Paul Grudzinski of the 76th Police Precinct in Brooklyn said that although the police did note referral to the Red Hook Youth Court in children's files, they never recorded the outcome.

"We note referral, but not sentence completion," said Grudzinski.

Police officers in Harlem were unavailable to comment on whether they followed up on a child's youth court progress in his or her file.

Deirdre started doing her assigned community service on the Saturday following her trial. The Harlem Youth Court runs a program on Saturday mornings for children whose sentences include community service. Together with the adult coordinators, the children plan and implement service projects such as bake sales and clean-up days.

At 11, Deirdre has just entered the phase of adolescence during which most youth offenders first get into trouble. Her mother hopes that the youth court had taught Deirdre "a lesson she won't forget," but that she was nervous about the years to come in her daughter's life. Neither her son nor her many nieces and nephews had ever had any involvement with the police.

"She's the first," said Alice Jones.



WILL THE SUN SHINE ANOTHER DAY? Frank Madera, Sunshine Garden.
PHOTO: ANTRIM CASKEY

Lawyers for Sunshine, Family Group and Latinos Unidos community gardens in Melrose Commons in the South Bronx reached a settlement with the city on Dec. 1 that will move the gardens to other less desirable sites in the neighborhood. 167 units of housing will be built on the vacated lots. Three days earlier, gardeners and supporters celebrated a fiesta with roasted turkey, rice and beans, salad and fresh fruit. Many Melrose residents expressed concern that the destruction of the gardens would deprive the neighborhood of a safe haven, a community greenspace and a place to learn how things grow. Frank Madera (left) of Sunshine Garden recalled a child saying to him upon seeing tomatoes ripening on a vine, "I thought they came from a can."

For more info, see moregardens.org

Legal Rights on Trial

BY ANN SCHNEIDER

John Ashcroft has decided to pass the baton of U.S. Attorney General, but the impact of his tenure leaves many questions. In a federal courtroom at 40 Centre Street in downtown Manhattan, the ongoing trial of longtime civil rights lawyer Lynne Stewart may answer one question: can the government undermine such basic legal rights as the confidentiality of attorney-client relations?

Following the September 11 attacks, Ashcroft issued a new regulation allowing the Department of Justice to conduct surveillance on attorneys meeting with clients in federal prisons "to the extent necessary to deter future acts of violence or terrorism." This new rule, unveiled on Oct. 31, 2001, went into effect without any congressional action or public comment. No warrant or judicial application is required — the Department of Justice itself decides who needs the monitoring.

Months later, FBI agents raided Stewart's law office, seized her computer and removed box after box of her files on April 9, 2002. Using the 1996 Antiterrorism Act, Ashcroft accused Stewart of aiding an "international terrorist organization" by providing material support to Sheik Abdel Rahman, her former client who was convicted on conspiracy charges relating to the World Trade Center bombing in 1993. In a bizarre twist, Ashcroft came to New York City and appeared on the David Letterman Show to announce the indictment of Stewart and three others in the case.

It turned out that the government had been spying on conversations between Stewart and Rahman for some 18 months prior to Ashcroft's October 2001 ruling.

What did Lynne Stewart do to earn the enmity of the Justice Department? As the ethical canons require of an attorney, she has defended many unpopular clients, including her successful defense of Larry Davis, who was charged with attempted murder after wounding six cops in a Bronx shoot-out. Most likely, Ashcroft saw in her an easy target and a way of attacking the attorney-client privilege itself.

In July 2003, Judge John Koelt threw out charges that Stewart provided "personnel" to terrorists as too vague, saying that under that theory, any legal services or representation provided by a lawyer to a defendant accused of terrorism would become illegal. But the prosecution just rewrote the indictment using a slightly different theory of material support.

AN ATTRACTIVE TARGET

Stewart made an especially attractive target because of her public belief that the "entrenched, ferocious kind of capitalism that perpetuates sexism and racism can only be overcome by a people's revolution." Indeed, prosecutor Andrew Dember repeatedly questioned her about this statement during four and a half days of cross examination of Stewart that took place in November. The obvious point was that an avowed revolutionary is also a terrorist, and any attorney who represents someone accused of terrorism becomes guilty by association.

Stewart's co-defendants Ahmed Abdel Sattar and Mohammed

Yousry served as paralegals and translators for her prison meetings with the Sheik in Rochester, Minnesota, in May and June 2000. (A fourth co-defendant, Yassir al-Sirri remains in England where they have refused to extradite him, citing insufficient evidence.)

The primary evidence against the three is the audio and videotapes made of their private attorney meetings in the Minnesota prison where the Sheik was being held in May 2000. The tapes were made pursuant to a foreign intelligence investigation, not subject to the Fourth Amendment warrant requirement against unreasonable search and seizure. They show that Stewart, along with the Arabic translator, provided news clippings and a few letters from his followers to the Sheik, in violation of a special prison regulation imposed on him.

The prosecution's case rests largely on Stewart's apparent violation of her agreement to respect this "Special Administrative Measure." But the defense showed that Stewart was forced to agree to this measure as a condition of visiting her blind, elderly and diabetic client in jail; that the terms were not negotiable and they essentially kept the Sheik incommunicado, since no one in the jail spoke Arabic. Judge Koelt has ruled that the prosecution must prove that Stewart knowingly and intentionally violated this agreement in order to win a conviction.

LYNNE STEWART'S TESTIMONY

In taking the stand in October, Stewart testified that she was concerned about the Sheik's health and access to medical treatment. In her prison meetings with him, she was considering whether to bring a lawsuit to try to alleviate his conditions of confinement. She testified that her legal goals were to keep the Sheik alive in the eyes of the Egyptian public and to try to get him transferred to serve his prison term in his home country.

To this end, she issued a press release in June 2000 to the Arabic press at the Sheik's request, withdrawing his support for a ceasefire between Islamic militants and the Egyptian government of Hosni Mubarak. Rahman's press release stated he had changed his mind about the utility of the ceasefire, but it ended with the language, "I am not there, I could be completely wrong. Consider this my advice only." Stewart's attorney, the renowned Michael Tigar, proved that the Islamic Group decided to maintain the ceasefire anyway.

The prosecution failed to meet the huge burden they assumed — to show that the Sheik's press release actually led to acts of terrorism committed on his behalf by third persons in foreign countries. Instead, they subpoenaed journalists whom Stewart had spoken to in order to confront her with her past political statements. This demonstrates that there was never any substance to the case, only show.

Stewart's statements on the stand were thoughtful and modest. Asked by her attorney would she do it over again, that is, issue the press release at the Sheik's request, she broke down in tears. "It's a very difficult question. I am diminished by the loss of my clientele. My family has suffered tremendously. I don't know if I would do it again." Regaining her composure, she added "But I don't believe I violated any law or regulation of the U.S., or any ethical duties to my clients."

The significance of this show trial is to deter attorneys from representing anyone accused of "terrorism." As the Bush administration continues its basic assault on the rule of law anywhere in the world, that term is likely to be applied to many dissenters if the prosecution of Stewart succeeds.

THE BATTLE FOR SEATTLE: 5 YEARS LATER & BEYOND

URUGUAY MAKES A SPLASH

By CAITLIN BENEDETTO

Uruguayan voters approved a constitutional amendment Oct. 31 that defines water as a public good and guarantees civil society participation at every level of management of the country's water resources. Supporters of the initiative, which passed by 65 percent, hailed it as a historic precedent.

"[This] sets a key precedent for the protection of water worldwide, by enshrining these principles into the national constitution of one country by means of direct democracy," said a letter by the environmental group Friends of the Earth International that was signed by 127 organizations from 36 different countries in support of the initiative.

The victory in Uruguay follows successful protest movements in recent years against water privatizers in Argentina and Bolivia, and marks a dramatic move away from the pro-privatization trend that started in Latin America in the early 1990s.

Uruguay, a small South American nation of 3.3 million, also voted in a leftist government for the first time in its 174-year history giving the Frente Amplio ("Broad Front") 52 percent of the vote.

The water initiative was spurred by the National Commission in Defense of Water and Life. The commission was formed in 2002 when the government of Uruguay signed a letter of intention with the International Monetary Fund, clearing the way for future privatization of the country's utilities.

The battle over Uruguay's water comes at a time when water privatization is speeding up around the world as international water barons buy up water resources in the Global South to support soft drink and bottled water production. Privatized water utility services have in turn been frequently plagued by price-gouging and shoddy maintenance.

Two competing visions of the future clashed five years ago on Nov. 30, 1999 when an eclectic crowd of 50,000 people from around the world poured into the streets of downtown Seattle and shut down a meeting of the World Trade Organization. "Teamsters and turtles together at last," read one banner. Hailed as the first great protest of the 21st Century, Seattle helped inspire similar protests wherever global elites tried to meet, and also spawned the Indymedia network (indymedia.org) of which this paper is a part. Though the Global Justice Movement has been eclipsed (at least in the U.S.) by September 11 and its grim aftermath, the questions it continues to raise – How will the world come together? And to whose benefit? – are likely to endure ones years to come.

Incurably Optimistic BATTLE OF SEATTLE ARCHITECT STILL LOOKS TO UPROOT THE SYSTEM

Globalize Liberation: How to Uproot the System and Build a Better World (City Lights, 2004)

By JOHN TARLETON

When Czechoslovakia's dissident playwright Vaclav Havel wrote in 1986, "hope is not prognostication. It is an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart," he might have had someone like David Solnit in mind.

A pioneering puppetista and a key organizer of the anti-WTO protests in Seattle five years ago that electrified tens of millions of people around the world, Solnit has been plugging away for the past two decades in a wide array of grassroots peace, justice and environmental campaigns. During that time, he has been a tireless advocate of building "directly democratic" movements that see radical social change not as a fixed destination but as an ongoing process.

Now, he has produced *Globalize Liberation*, a collection of 33 essays from thinkers and activists embedded in the new radicalism that burst into the public consciousness in Seattle. Written

to stimulate discussion and reflection among activists, the book analyzes the problems posed by global capitalism, meditates on how to confront it and looks at a dozen case histories of ideas being put into action by groups as diverse as migrant farm workers in southern Florida, the *disobedientes* of Italy and neighborhood assemblies in Argentina.

The book's tone is urgent yet relentlessly hopeful and encourages readers to push open new spheres of collective self-empowerment. Upon putting it down, you will want to join up with others and do something. As the incurably optimistic Solnit writes in the introduction, "All we have to do is change everything."

However, the book's range of vision is at times highly selective. A number of writers (Naomi Klein, Elizabeth "Beta" Martinez, John Jordan, etc.) celebrate the Zapatistas, whose 1994 rebellion in Mexico's southern province of Chiapas is widely considered by activists to be the beginning of the new radicalism. History's first post-modern guerrilla movement, the Zapatistas eschewed seizing state power, spoke in enigmatic riddles instead of ideological certainty and called for "a world that fits many worlds" instead of a one-size-fits-all model of change.

In a world both more interconnected and fragmented by the forces of globalization, the Zapatistas have inspired activists with their vision of a decentralized yet interlinking movement of movements waging local battles for autonomy and community empowerment.

But, the Zapatistas are no closer to achieving their stated goals than when they began. If anything, their movement is slowly disintegrating due to internal fissures as well as the relentless pressure of the Mexican government's beneath-the-radar counterinsurgency. Meanwhile, the neo-liberal restructuring of the country continues on under a president who is a former Coca-Cola executive.

In recent years, the leading edge of the global justice movement has shifted to South America. The different experiences of social movements in Argentina (autonomous and decentralized) and Venezuela (aligned with the elected leftist government of

Hugo Chavez) may offer unique insights into the question of whether it is wiser to wield state power or to try and dissolve it. The book, however, does not tackle the issue.

For many younger leftists in the United States, small affinity groups, consensus process and an aversion to organizational structure have been mainstays since Seattle. It's time to look more closely at what is working and what's not. For example:

- Is the new radicalism's squeamishness about power and money ultimately counter-productive, i.e., does it make it impossible to build lasting counter-institutions?
- How useful is consensus process, where everyone in a group has to agree for a decision to be made? Consensus at its best allows each voice to be heard and teaches good listening skills. On the other hand, it tends to consume more time and produce more acrimony than any other form of decision-making and can still end up being dominated by "informal" leaders.
- Do people want to live in a direct democracy? Going to meetings all the time is tiring. A minority of people will make the sacrifice when there's a sense of urgency or expectation (like before a large protest). How many are ready to make it a way of life?

As someone who has worked on *The Independent* for the past three and a half years and moved through various counter-cultural milieus for a decade prior to that, these are some of the big questions I often find myself bumping up against as our collec-

For more, see globalizeliberation.org



...and the police respond.

DAVID SOLNIT



Anti-WTO protesters take to the streets in Seattle ...

CHILE HEATS UP

PHOTOS: SANTIAGO INDYMEDIA



APEC protesters in Chile



By FINN FINNERAN

Protesters opposed to U.S. President George W. Bush, the war in Iraq and corporate globalization marched through the streets and clashed with police to protest the annual Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit and the visit of President Bush, which took place in Santiago, Chile from Nov. 20-21.

On the eve of the APEC summit on Nov. 19, 25,000 to 40,000 protesters took to the streets in Santiago, Chile's capital, and Valparaiso, Chile's second biggest city. Some left-wing and anarchist groups led smaller street protests of their own all week. Protesters threw Molotov cocktails and stones, burned U.S. flags, attacked a McDonald's and offices of the Spanish phone company Telefonica. They ransacked the lobby of the four-star Prince of Asturias Hotel, breaking windows and dragging furniture into the street.



The demonstrators were met with water cannons and tear gas fired from the police's armored vehicles, ending the riots abruptly. On Nov. 23, the BBC reported more than 700 people had been arrested during the protests.

"We want Bush to know he is not welcome here," said Monica Cerón, a college student. "Our government may want to do business with him, but the Chilean people oppose his genocidal war on Iraq and his designs on Latin America."

APEC's 21 members represent 55 percent of world trade and 57 percent of global GDP. Together, they are home to 40 percent of the world's population – roughly 2.5 billion people. However, the APEC summit is defined as a meeting of economies, not countries.

A longer version of this story originally appeared in the *Asheville Global Report* (agnews.org).

OPEL WORKERS GET THE BOOT

By DERQ QUIGGLE

BOCHUM, Germany—Bochum is a gray, gusty city in Germany's Ruhr Valley where residents identify as strongly with automobile manufacturer Opel as the citizens of Flint, Michigan, once identified with General Motors. It even gives off the deteriorating, day-late, dollar-short feel of Flint – more so now that GM, the owner of Opel, recently announced it will lay off 4,000 Opel autoworkers, or roughly 50 percent of the global giant's remaining regional workforce.

Reaction from Opel workers, who feel the company belongs to Bochum, was immediate and furious, resulting in an illegal week-long strike, which was ultimately futile. Every sector of Bochum society, from the mayor's office to local restaurants to the city's many theaters, drew up placards and got into the streets to support workers and express their outrage at the "Wild West" methods of General Motors' management.

The struggle of Opel workers in Bochum illustrates how traditional, democratic forms of protection against giant corporations have become impotent and can no longer influence corporate decision-making. GM will continue to downsize operations in Germany and Western Europe, even as it increases production in Eastern Europe and South Korea. The local origins of Opel, the decades of blood and sweat with which local workers have drenched its factory floors, are made irrelevant. Opel workers were especially outraged by the reason GM gave for the layoffs: "To maintain competitiveness," which translates as "to increase profits."

What makes the Opel story unique is how the fury of workers and their supporters was skillfully managed by the leaders of one of Germany's largest unions, IG Metall, by an array of German politicians, and by uninformed, myopic journalists. Instead of focusing on the dynamic interaction of global and local political actors who encouraged GM's cut-throat management, many GM critics manipulated Bochum's legitimate outrage into predictable denunciations of the United States.

Germany's leading weekly magazine *Stern* devoted an entire edition to the GM-Opel debacle. Its cover page is revealing: A Gulliver-sized, red, white, and blue cowboy boot with GM embossed on the sole is about to step onto an Opel trademark composed of Lilliputian, picketing German workers. The image is brilliant. But, like all propaganda, it dangerously confuses complex causes and obscures responsibility.

In the same vein, many local speakers indulged in anti-American tirades. They complained about lousy American cuisine and the immorality of Hollywood but didn't blame the GMs layoffs on the pro-free market policies of the European Union (new EU member-nation Poland will supply GM five highly efficient workers for the price of one German worker) or ask how German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's economic initiatives might actually have encouraged GM's schemes.

Opel's downsizing comes at a time when German leaders are Reagan-izing the country faster than Bush invaded Iraq. The Opel workers' fury about the layoffs is driven by fear of the future. Schroeder's economic restructuring plan, which takes effect in January, place severe restrictions on unemployment insurance. Many of the workers GM lets go will find themselves free-falling right through a newly frayed social safety net.

The narrow-mindedness of IG Metall's anti-American rhetoric does not contradict its efforts to establish a transnational labor movement, as it has seemingly achieved in Brazil where the German-based union represents workers at VW's Brazilian plants. As Peter Evans, a union scholar from the University of California, Berkeley, explains:

"IG Metall and CUT (Brazil's largest trade union) share a common interest in trying to tame the volatility of global neo-liberal job flows and preserve as much and as long as possible the extent to which their employment retains some element of social contract. They both understand that becoming mesmerized by the geography of jobs will undermine that larger goal. They also understand that the corporate organization of the firms for which they work presents them simultaneously with a powerful structure of domination which must be resisted and with an invaluable set of opportunities that must be seized."

However, there is a critical strategic error in the unions' not being "mesmerized by the geography of jobs." Such thinking leaves a union powerless to affect corporate decision-making at the local level. IG Metall will survive as a union, but only if it's willing to chase automobile manufacturers around the globe. What good will it do Bochum's autoworkers when IG Metall opens an office in China?

What Evans describes as an internationalist agenda, is merely a survival plan for the union. IG Metall begins to meet the ideal of a modern corporation: "to be anywhere (in terms of its own advantage) and nowhere (in terms of local accountability)."

So much for local workers

Dying to Organize

On Nov. 5, a group of armed men gunned down Teamsters representative Jose Gilberto Soto at his mother's house in Usulután, El Salvador. It appears Soto was murdered because of his interest in organizing Salvadoran port truck drivers that haul goods for shipping giant Maersk-Sealand. Bullets struck Soto at close range in the back and the side, and he died minutes later. There was no attempt to rob him. Soto, a Salvadoran immigrant, worked as a Teamster organizer in Port New Jersey/New York and sought to draw connections between workers in the global North and South. The Teamsters and longshore unions have had limited success using their power on the piers to organize non-union truck drivers and warehouse and dock workers.

"We will bring justice to these workers as a tribute to Gilberto Soto. We know he would not have it any other way," said Teamsters President Jimmy Hoffa, Jr. in a press release.

The El Salvador government has downplayed any political connection to Soto's death and accused American unions of using the murder to thwart free trade deals such as Central American Free Trade Agreement. Teamsters leaders have been highly critical of Salvadoran officials investigating the matter and rejected an investigation by Maersk.

"If the Salvadoran police engage in a cover-up, we will seek the assistance of human rights organizations with a track record of integrity and independence," said Chuck Mack of the Teamster's Port Division.

Truck drivers in New York and New Jersey who carry goods from ports into inland warehouses earn on average \$7-8 per hour without benefits. Most are Latino immigrants. Their counterparts in Latin America earn on average \$1-2 per hour, and work up to 16 hour days, according to the National Labor Committee. In 2001, Maersk truck drivers in El Salvador organized a union and the company responded by waging an anti-union campaign and blacklisting workers. There are about 6,000 freight drivers in El Salvador, around 2,500 of which are owner-operators.

The Teamsters are interested in organizing truck drivers that haul goods from Port New Jersey/New York to inland storage facilities, and Soto had been involved in past efforts. These port truck drivers wait in long lines even though work is not guaranteed. The Teamsters and Maersk have battled over alleged company harassment of non-union truck drivers and Maersk's plan to move its regional headquarters out of New Jersey to an undetermined overseas location.

Organizing drives along East and West Coast waterfronts have met little success despite the efforts of union activists like Soto. Historically, the Teamsters have wrangled with the East Coast International Longshoremen Association (ILA) over work jurisdiction further hurting truckers.

Both the East and West Coast longshoremen unions have considerable leverage and power on the docks and this could be used to organize non-union workers. However, the ILA has stumbled even with small organizing drives.

On the West Coast, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) beat back maritime industry attempts to break the union by successfully striking in 2002 for pension increases and maintaining quality health insurance. Organizing non-union workers has proved more difficult.

"The unions sit in the dock with a relative amount of power," commented ILWU Organizing Director Peter Olney. However, "the work is moving away geographically and in jurisdiction from the ports."

In the past 20 years technology has advanced and the productivity of the longshoremen has increased. The number of dock laborers remained stagnant at about 10,000 workers. In this same time period employment in the marine cargo chain has risen by 50 percent, from 198,000 to 290,000 mostly clerical and trucking workers.

In order to carry on the work of Gilberto Soto, unions will have to form coalitions to tackle transnational corporations and use their power in the docks to leverage inland companies. Strategic vision on organizing targets and linking global port struggles is powerful and will not come without costs. There's an old saying in the labor movement, "don't mourn, organize." It is as relevant now as it has ever been.

—Bennett Baumer



ANDY SMENOS

Is Democracy the Cure?

BUSH & BLAIR PUT THE BLAME ON PALESTINE

The first priority for Palestinian leaders now must be to defend their people against Israel's relentless colonization and violence and not to negotiate with Israeli guns to Palestinian heads. They must formulate a national strategy to regain Palestinian rights enshrined in U.N. Resolutions, clearly explain this strategy, and organize Palestinians and allies everywhere to struggle for it, starting with full implementation of the International Court of Justice decision on the West Bank wall. Palestinians should seek to emulate the success of the African National Congress that freed South Africans from apartheid by confronting and defeating injustice, not seeking to accommodate it.

first person

Israel After Arafat

By YONI MISHAL

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL—Returning to my country in late October after being away 12 months, I found a bitterly divided nation exhausted by a poor economy and ongoing fighting with the Palestinians. The death of Yasser Arafat was widely hailed as a turning point. "This time it's for real. Sharon will bring the peace he promised," said my father, talking about the grand opportunity offered by Arafat's demise.

The headlines were optimistic. Optimistic? Sarcastic would be more appropriate. Jokes about Arafat, the way he looked, talked and especially died were and still are, a common sight on television. Another statement was that with Arafat's death and Bush ("our man in Washington" said a popular leftist figure) winning the U.S. elections, Israel is looking at good times.

"Look and see — they will turn away all the attention from the chance to change the situation" Elad, a friend of mine warned me. I tried to be optimistic — A group of activists just came back from the West Bank, where they helped out in olive picking. "No settlers hit us — that's a lot," said one to me. All this lasted two days. It took me by surprise. The talk of the town was about Suha Arafat, the late chairman's wife. All over the radio, papers and TV she was suddenly the issue. How much money she had, and why, in the name of god, didn't she come back to Palestine when her people were in need? Sharon's promises and the chance for peace faded away into the inside pages of the paper.

The days that followed left me deeply depressed. Apathy runs deep. It has become the normal state of mind. But there is also a subtle undercurrent that can be felt. The death of Arafat in some way flared a public discussion about decreasing moral values. Still in the background, I feel the Left is waking up. The public is polarizing. Right-wing fundamentalists are threatening to shoot soldiers if they come to evacuate them. People feel they have to choose sides.

"This is our cue to say goodbye to them," said my father finally this week, speaking about the settlers. He was a hard-core right-winger for years. Maybe it's a sign.

BY ALI ABUNIMAH

If the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority (PA) can transform themselves to take on this role, they deserve the support of every Palestinian. If, however, they plan to continue as they have before, they must dissolve. As constituted by the Oslo accords, the Palestinian Authority harms Palestinian interests, because it obscures Israel's responsibility as the occupying power without providing any minimal protection for the people in opposition to Israel's continuous onslaught. Its existence has allowed the spurious agenda of "reform" to trump Israel's obligations under the Geneva Conventions and U.N. resolutions. Palestinian leaders should no longer accept the responsibility for governing Palestinians on behalf of the occupying power. Israel should bear the full cost of its choices.

Yet the conventional wisdom says that Yasir Arafat's death provides an opportunity to revive the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. Realities such as Israel's refusal in word and deed to withdraw and allow the establishment of a genuine Palestinian state in the occupied territories have simply been ignored. Dov Weissglas, the most senior advisor to Israeli premier Ariel Sharon, explained in early October that Israel's Gaza "disengagement" plan, which has been embraced by the bankrupt international peace process industry, is actually a ruse to kill — not advance — any peace process. Weissglas said, "when you freeze that [peace] process, you prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state, and you prevent a discussion on the refugees, the borders and Jerusalem. Effectively, this whole package called the Palestinian state, with all that it entails, has been removed indefinitely from our agenda."

Logically, therefore, any "opportunity" for peace through the establishment of a Palestinian state depends either on a clear change of Israeli policy or a clear willingness by the United States and the international community to force Israel to change its policy. So far, the only policy announcement to come from Israel is that it plans a posthumous "anti-Arafat crusade" in the media.

President Bush has already shattered hopes that in a second term, freed from re-election concerns, he might pressure Israel. At his November 12 press conference with U.K. prime minister Tony Blair, Bush was asked if Israel should at last implement a freeze on West Bank settlement expansion. He side-stepped the question, placing the entire burden on the Palestinians: "I believe that the responsibility for peace is going to rest with the Palestinian people's desire to build a democracy and Israel's willingness to help them build a democracy." Bush also stated that peace "can be reached by only one path, the path of democracy, reform and the rule of law." There is no sign yet that the E.U. or Arab states intend to challenge his approach.

Yet at the same time, Bush and Blair declared support for elections in the occupied territories — a position seemingly in

tune with Palestinian aspirations. Indeed, the elections present both dangers and opportunities.

At a minimum, fair elections require international intervention to protect the Palestinians from the occupier and ensure all candidates have fair access to PA-controlled media and are free from intimidation whether by Israel or the PA. The danger is that snap elections in the West Bank and Gaza, under Israel's crushing rule, will offer no fair opportunity for new Palestinian leaders with new strategies to emerge. Elections must provide a genuine contest and not be mere plebiscites confirming the post-Arafat appointments of failed old guard figures like PLO chairman Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia and their backers who control the PA apparatus with money and guns. Ominously, *The New York Times* reports that Israel, under American pressure, has already released \$40 million in blocked PA funds to "strengthen the position" of the old guard.

In the best case, from Israel's perspective, the old guard confirmed in place by flawed elections would continue to offer disastrous concessions as they did throughout the Oslo period. And at worst, they would simply become new scapegoats to whom Israel and the U.S. will deliver impossible demands and then heap blame when they are inevitably unfulfilled. Palestinian leaders must no longer accept this assigned role.

Palestinians should also demand elections in the diaspora as well the occupied territories. Arguably Arafat's greatest mistake is that after signing the Oslo accords, he abandoned the PLO's base in exile. Millions of Palestinians were disenfranchised and the negotiating position of the Palestinian leadership severely weakened because it could not claim that it had to refer any agreement back to its people.

Assistance from the United Nations and host countries would be essential to successful diaspora elections. The recent Afghan election, in which 740,000 refugees in Pakistan voted, proves it can be done. Currently, almost four million Palestine refugees are registered with UNRWA. All exiled Palestinians should have the right to vote and be elected to a Palestinian national assembly with the sole authority to approve any future peace agreement.

This would be in the best interests of Palestinians because it would strengthen and hold accountable any eventual Palestinian negotiating body by ensuring it accepts no deal which compromises basic rights, particularly the rights of refugees. This is exactly why such elections would be strongly opposed by Israel, the United States, the E.U. and the Palestinian old guard.

But now is the time for Palestinians to set their own agenda, to build a new movement, and to see who among their self-declared allies really has their freedom, democracy and rights at heart.

Ali Abunimah is a co-founder of electronicintifada.org

The Revolution Will Be Branded

U.S. MARKETS DEMOCRACY
& DIRECT ACTION TO UKRAINE

By IAN TRAYNOR

With their websites and stickers, their pranks and slogans aimed at banishing widespread fear of a corrupt regime, the democracy guerrillas of the Ukrainian Pora youth movement have already notched up a famous victory – whatever the outcome of the dangerous stand-off in Kiev.

Ukraine, traditionally passive in its politics, has been mobilized by the young democracy activists and will never be the same again.

But while the gains of the orange-bedecked “chestnut revolution” are Ukraine’s, the campaign is an American creation, a sophisticated and brilliantly conceived exercise in western branding and mass marketing that, in four countries in four years, has been used to try to salvage rigged elections and topple unsavory regimes.

Funded and organized by the U.S. government, deploying U.S. consultancies, pollsters, diplomats, the two big American parties and US non-government organizations, the campaign was first used in Europe in Belgrade in 2000 to beat Slobodan Milosevic at the ballot box.

Richard Miles, the U.S. ambassador in Belgrade, played a key role. And by last year, as U.S. ambassador in Tbilisi, he repeated the trick in Georgia, coaching Mikhail Saakashvili in how to bring down Eduard Shevardnadze.

Ten months after the success in Belgrade, the US ambassador in Minsk, Michael Kozak, a veteran of similar operations in central America, notably in Nicaragua, organized a near identical campaign to try to defeat the Belarus hardman, Alexander Lukashenko.

That one failed. “There will be no Kostunica in Belarus,” the Belarus president declared, referring to the victory in Belgrade.

But experience gained in Serbia, Georgia and Belarus has been invaluable in plotting to beat

the regime of Leonid Kuchma in Kiev.

The operation – engineering democracy through the ballot box and civil disobedience – is now so slick that the methods have matured into a template for winning other people’s elections.

In the center of Belgrade, there is a dingy office staffed by computer-literate youngsters who call themselves the Centre for Non-Violent Resistance. If you want to know how to beat a regime that controls the mass media, the judges, the courts, the security apparatus and the voting stations, the young Belgrade activists are for hire.

They emerged from the anti-Milosevic student movement, *Otpor*, meaning resistance. The catchy, single-word branding is important. In Georgia last year, the parallel student movement was *Khmara*. In Belarus, it was *Zubr*. In Ukraine, it is *Pora*, meaning high time. *Otpor* also had a potent, simple slogan that appeared everywhere in Serbia in 2000 – the two words *gotov je*, meaning “he’s finished”, a reference to Milosevic. A logo of a black-and-white clenched fist completed the masterful marketing.

In Ukraine, the equivalent is a ticking clock, also signaling that the Kuchma regime’s days are numbered.

Stickers, spray paint and websites are the young activists’ tools. Irony and street comedy mocking the regime have been hugely successful in puncturing public fear and enraging the powerful.

Last year, before becoming president in Georgia, the US-educated Mr. Saakashvili traveled from Tbilisi to Belgrade to be coached in the techniques of mass defiance. In Belarus, the U.S. embassy organized the dispatch of young opposition leaders to the Baltic, where they met up with Serbs traveling from Belgrade. In Serbia’s case, given the hostile environment in Belgrade, the Americans organized the over-

throw from neighboring Hungary – Budapest and Szeged.

In recent weeks, several Serbs traveled to the Ukraine. Indeed, one of the leaders from Belgrade, Aleksandar Maric, was turned away at the border.

The Democratic party’s National Democratic Institute, the Republican party’s International Republican Institute, the U.S. state department and USAID are the main agencies involved in these grassroots campaigns as well as the Freedom House NGO and billionaire George Soros’s Open Society Institute.

U.S. pollsters and professional consultants are hired to organize focus groups and use psephological data to plot strategy.

The usually fractious oppositions have to be united behind a single candidate if there is to be any chance of unseating the regime. That leader is selected on pragmatic and objective grounds, even if he or she is anti-American.

In Serbia, U.S. pollsters Penn, Schoen and Berland Associates discovered that the assassinated pro-western opposition leader, Zoran Djindjic, was reviled at home and had no chance of beating Milosevic fairly in an election. He was persuaded to take a back seat to the anti-western Vojislav Kostunica, who is now Serbian prime minister.

In Belarus, U.S. officials ordered opposition parties to unite behind the dour, elderly trade unionist, Vladimir Goncharik, because he appealed to much of the Lukashenko constituency.

Officially, the U.S. government spent \$41 million (£21.7million) organizing and funding the year-long operation to get rid of Milosevic from October 1999. In Ukraine, the figure is said to be around \$14 million.

Apart from the student movement and the united opposition, the other key element in the democracy template is what is known as

the “parallel vote tabulation,” a counter to the election-rigging tricks beloved of disreputable regimes.

There are professional election monitors from bodies such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, but the Ukrainian poll, like its predecessors, also featured thousands of local election monitors trained and paid by western groups.

Freedom House and the Democratic party’s NDI helped fund and organize the “largest civil regional election monitoring effort” in Ukraine, involving more than 1,000 trained observers. They also organized exit polls. On Sunday night those polls gave Mr. Yushchenko an 11-point lead and set the agenda for much of what has followed.

The exit polls are seen as critical because they seize the initiative in the propaganda battle with the regime, invariably appearing first, receiving wide media coverage and putting the onus on the authorities to respond.

The final stage in the U.S. template concerns how to react when the incumbent tries to steal a lost election.

In Belarus, President Lukashenko won, so the response was minimal. In Belgrade, Tbilisi, and now Kiev, where the authorities initially tried to cling to power, the advice was to stay cool but determined and to organize mass displays of civil disobedience, which must remain peaceful but risk provoking the regime into violent suppression.

If the events in Kiev vindicate the U.S. in its strategies for helping other people win elections and take power from anti-democratic regimes, it is certain to try to repeat the exercise elsewhere in the post-Soviet world.

The places to watch are Moldova and the authoritarian countries of central Asia.

This article originally appeared in The Guardian U.K.

Big Media’s Democracy Double Standards

By ROBERT PARRY

The *Washington Post* and other leading American newspapers are up in arms about the legitimacy of a presidential election where exit polls showed the challenger winning but where the incumbent party came out on top, amid complaints about heavy-handed election-day tactics and possibly rigged vote tallies.

In a lead editorial, the *Post* cited the divergent exit polls, along with voter claims about ballot irregularities, as prime reasons for overturning the official results. For its part, the *New York Times* cited reports of “suspiciously, even fantastically, high turnouts in regions that supported” the incumbent. The U.S. news media is making clear that the truth about these electoral anomalies must be told.

Of course, the election in question occurred in the Ukraine.

In the United States – where exit polls showed John Kerry winning on Nov. 2, where Republican tactics discouraged African-American voting in Democratic precincts, and where George W. Bush’s vote totals in many counties were eyebrow-raising – the *Post*, the *Times* and other top news outlets mocked anyone who questioned the results.

But why the double standard? Why would Ukrainian exit polls be deemed reliable evidence of fraud while American exit polls would simply be inexplicably wrong nationwide and in six battleground states where Kerry was shown to be leading but Bush ultimately won?

Logically, it would seem that U.S. exit polls would be more reliable because of the far greater experience in refining sampling techniques than in the Ukraine. Also, given the Ukraine’s authoritarian past, one might expect that Ukrainian voters would be more likely to rebuff pollsters or give false answers than American voters.

Instead, the U.S. news media chucked out or “corrected” the U.S. exit polls – CNN made them conform to the official results – while embracing the Ukrainian exit polls as a true measure of the popular will.

So, as the Ukrainian people take to the streets to defend the principles of democracy, including the concept that a just government derives from the consent of the governed, the United States – once democracy’s beacon to the world – presents its commitment to those ideals more through hypocrisy abroad than action at home.

A longer version of this article originally appeared at consortiumnews.com



WORLD AIDS DAY was commemorated on Dec. 1 – with a special emphasis on women and children

(at right): A Malaysian AIDS Council volunteer displays posters to promote HIV/AIDS awareness at a public train station in Kuala Lumpur.

(below, left to right): An Indian HIV-positive female sex worker stands before a large banner featuring a large red ribbon, the internationally-known symbol of AIDS prevention, as she takes part in a silent march, in Madras:

A man dressed as a condom hands out leaflets on a street in Hong Kong on World Aids Day. The condom man was from a local group called "International Action" and was protesting about the lack of quality sex education in local schools in Hong Kong:

People lay on the ground as they participate in a rally to mark World AIDS Day in Washington, DC.

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES



Dealing in Death

BUSH'S FEDERAL DRUG ADMINISTRATION

BY DON MONKERUD

After decades of protecting the public from dangerous food and drugs, the FDA has embarked on a new path to protect corporate profits at all costs. Even death is no obstacle.

Concerns about the agency's lack of oversight jumped in November when a leading FDA scientist, Dr. David Graham, acknowledged that Merck's arthritis drug Vioxx caused as many as 139,000 heart attacks, strokes and deaths. Testifying before the Senate, Graham charged that Vioxx had killed between 28,000 to 55,000 people since the FDA placed it on a fast track for approval in 1999. The FDA approval came despite reports that Vioxx carried a high risk for heart attack and stroke. Internal Merck documents reveal that the company has known about the dangers of Vioxx for several years but suppressed the data and marketed it aggressively.

The FDA jumped to Merck's defense and denounced Graham as "irresponsible" and his opinions as "junk science." Previously, Graham said the agency suppressed his findings of increased risks after he reviewed 1.4 million patient records from Kaiser Permanente health care systems, showing that heart attack rates were five times higher with Vioxx, when compared to another drug.

On November 25, Graham announced that he was facing pressure from FDA officials to move out of drug safety into an administrative role, which would sidetrack him from criticizing FDA enforcement procedures. Graham warned that the FDA has abandoned its watchdog role in favor of a cozy relationship with the pharmaceutical industry and that the public can no longer expect government protection from deadly medications.

The pharmaceutical industry has given over \$38 million to the Republican Party since the 2000 election cycle, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

The Senate hearings came on the coattails of the influenza vaccine disaster in October, when half the nation's supply of flu vaccine was found to be contaminated. Some 48 million doses of vaccine from Chiron were taken off the market, leaving the nation far short of the 100 million doses needed for at-risk patients. With flu deaths already at approximately 55,000 a year, some predict that tens of thousands

more will die as a result. After finding bacterial contamination at Chiron's vaccine plant in England, the FDA inspected the plant several times and then relied on telephone conference calls, letters and emails for "reinspection." In October, the British government shut down the plant for drug contamination to the shock of the FDA.

Public reassurances over the flu vaccine and the FDA's response to the dangers of Vioxx are in stark contrast to the recent warnings about the abortion drug RU-486. The FDA issued detailed warnings after one death, reinforcing public perception that the FDA is being used for ideological purposes that have little to do with public health.

The RU-486 warnings come as a surprise from an agency that's increasingly siding with the pharmaceutical industry. OMB (Office of Management and Budget) Watch, a nonprofit government watchdog group found that "This administration has abandoned work on scores of long-identified public health, safety, and environmental problems. The FDA and EPA alone have withdrawn 60 per cent and 52 per cent, respectively, of the agenda items carried over from previous administrations."

In 2004, the FDA failed to meet 70 percent of their own benchmarks for proposed rulemaking, final deadlines and reaching decisions on petitions with deadly consequences. For example, in October 2003, the FDA announced they would issue warnings about the risks and fatal side effects of a toxic heart drug, Cordarone. After 1,000 deaths and thousands of severe medical complications, the FDA has yet to act. The FDA asked the drugs manufacturer, Wyeth, to write their own regulations, which they have failed to complete.

According to OMB Watch, the FDA has withdrawn 48 identified food and drug safety priorities, almost half of all items on their agenda in May 2002. It's no wonder. Responsible for changing the FDA is Bush appointee for legal affairs, Daniel Troy. Former clerk for Robert Bork, litigant for the anti-regulatory Washington Legal Foundation, and tobacco lawyer, Troy last represented drug maker Pfizer, collecting up to \$415,000 a year in fees.

Unlike his predecessor who held one meeting with industry lobbyists, Troy has held over 129 meetings in his three years in office. But Troy's boldest move has been helping drug companies defeat lawsuits. In four separate cases since 2002, the government has asked judges to dismiss potentially costly claims against drug makers.

The lack of FDA enforcement is consistent with Bush's policy of allowing corporations to regulate themselves, akin, critics claim, to "allowing the fox to guard the henhouse." If there's a theme to Bush's oversight of public health and welfare, it's that corporate profits trump public safety and public interest.

IN BRIEF

PSY-OPS COMES HOME

The Los Angeles Times has exposed a Pentagon psy-ops program that sends military spokespersons to U.S. news networks to deliberately spread misinformation about the war in Iraq. In one case, on Oct. 14, a Marine spokesperson appeared on CNN from Fallujah and said "Troops crossed the line of departure." CNN was soon reporting the battle for Fallujah had begun. In fact it wouldn't begin for another three weeks. The military claimed it wanted to see how Iraqi fighters responded to the "news".

CIA V. CHAVEZ

Brooklyn-based attorney Eva Golinger has obtained recently declassified CIA documents that show the Bush administration knew about the plot to overthrow Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez weeks before the 2002 military coup but did nothing to stop it. Until now the Bush administration has claimed it had no role in the failed coup and didn't know one was being planned.

FIRST AFGHANISTAN, THEN IRAQ... OUR NEXT CONQUEST? SPACE

The US Air Force has for the first time adopted a doctrine to establish space as the military's next objective in order to give the country "space superiority." The Guardian of London reports part of the new doctrine calls for pre-emptive strikes against enemy-operated satellites. One portion of the doctrine reads, "Space superiority provides freedom to attack as well as freedom from attack. Space and air superiority are crucial first steps in any military operation."

2,000 EX-SOLDIERS SAY NO TO UNCLE SAM

Nearly 2,000 former U.S. soldiers are resisting orders to return to duty to fight in Iraq. The military has sent notices to more than 4,000 former soldiers on the Individual Ready Reserve, but the New York Times reports 1800 of them have requested exemptions or delays. Of the 2500 who were supposed to attend training in early November, over 700 did not show up.

PRESBYTERIANS THREATENED FOR DIVESTING FROM ISRAEL

The FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms have launched an investigation into death threats sent to the headquarters of the Presbyterian Church. A handwritten letter postmarked in Queens was recently sent to the church reading, "I promise violence against Presbyterian churches... they will go up in flames... that's a terrorist threat... there will be bloodshed." The Presbyterian Church recently became the largest US organization to back a policy of divestment from Israel because of its policies in the Occupied Territories.

SAY GOODBYE TO POSSE COMITATUS

In Los Angeles two military tanks appeared at a small anti-war demonstration on Nov. 9. The tanks drove by the protesters, went around the block and then stopped directly next to the scene of the protest in front of the Westwood Federal Building. Meanwhile the Washington Post has reported 4,000 combat troops may be stationed on the streets of the capital during President Bush's inauguration on Jan. 20.

DEBATE THE NEWS
nyc.indymedia.org

GOD'S REPUBLIC

THE MACHIAVELLIAN MOMENT

J.G.A. POCKOCK
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS (1975)

Millions of middle and lower-class "values" voters set aside their own self-interest in this last election to vote George W. Bush back into the White House. If the displacement of politics by morality is a sign of a certain kind of boldness, as the Bush campaign never tired of telling voters, it also signals an anxiety that runs much deeper than a fear of homosexuality or a woman's control over her own body or fear of the next terrorist strike.

What demands analysis is not the content of Bush's moral vision or how his chief political strategist Karl Rove articulated it, but rather: Why moral vision has come to replace political principles for a substantial number of American voters.

While not for the impatient reader, J.G.A. Pocock's monumental study of the evolution of republican government, *The Machiavellian Moment*, provides a richly instructive background with which to understand America's turn to God's Republic.

To Pocock, the history of republican government is found in the

quarrel between ancient liberty, which emphasizes the positive development of moral character (something that preoccupies many of Bush's evangelical supporters), and modern liberty which is a contract guaranteeing citizens freedom from unreasonable restraints: Freedom from being done unto, freedom from search and seizure, freedom from being enslaved and freedom of speech and assembly. With Bush's return to office, it is tempting to conclude that this highly generative dialogue has ceased.

Pocock, however, describes modern American consciousness of politics slightly less pessimistically: "It may very well be that we ourselves have reached a condition where the knowledge of fictiveness [of politics and society] is unsatisfying to the point of being intolerable; in doubting whether the oligarchy of politicians who oblige us to choose between them represent us in anyway worth speaking of, we doubt whether we have selves left to represent." For example, many Clinton supporters felt not politically but morally misrepresented by the Lewinsky affair – as if they themselves had to atone personally for his adultery and dishonesty by electing Bush. Gore lost for moral not political reasons.

Yet, many more voters have also begun to feel they do not have a moral self capable of being represented politically. A turbo-capitalistic, hyper-mediated post-

modern world blares away that the self, politics and society are mere fictions that can be bought and sold along with anything else in a global economy. The suspicion that one's identity is as fictional as politics induces tremendous cognitive dissonance in any intelligent person. Awareness of the fictiveness of a post-modern world erodes the unity of personality necessary to act in history. Even the simple act of voting feels pointless or absurd. Many check out of politics altogether.

Other, more idealistic individuals respond to the fictiveness of self and politics by resuscitating the classical political ideal of the active citizen, who develops his/her moral virtue and unifies his/her personality through strenuous participation in the republic. The ancient ideal of the *vivere civile*

(civic humanism) drives many members of the Global Justice Movement as relentlessly as it does Bush supporters. Members of both groups want to be participatory citizens; they want politics to be the place where they can keep their personal virtue striated and well-toned – safe from the corruptions of the (post)modern world.

The genius of Rove's rhetoric resides in how it used a lucid, articulate, ultimately empty moral vision to make once-alienated middle and lower-class voters feel like active citizens. The Oval Office wasn't turned into a church so much as churches were turned into oval offices. For true believers, a republican government is an exercise machine on which citizens keep themselves morally fit.

—DERQ QUIGGLE



MAGGIE SUISMAN

BACKLASH PHILOSOPHER

A CHRISTIAN MANIFESTO and THE GREAT EVANGELICAL DISASTER

FRANCIS SCHAEFFER
CROSSWAY BOOKS (1984)

There is perhaps no evangelical writer and philosopher more important to the rise of the Christian right than Francis Schaeffer. Schaeffer helped to construct the present identity of the politically active evangelical Christian. He wrote dozens of books that provided an intellectual groundwork for evangelicals to attack anyone who did not share their Bible-believing political framework. Schaeffer also urged Protestants to take up the anti-abortion crusade which at the time of his death in 1984 was a mostly Catholic movement. Two of his books, *A Christian Manifesto* and *The Great Evangelical Disaster* are good introductions to understand the basis of the evangelical obsession with culture and lack of concern with economic issues.

For Schaeffer, an evangelical Christian is someone who believes the Bible is the utmost authority on all matters, reads the Bible as God's literal word, accepts Jesus Christ as savior and most importantly, spreads the word to others. An evangelical also believes that when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, mankind was forever tarnished and made evil. That's why it's necessary to be born again and accept the truth of evangelical Christianity.

Thus sin and moral issues are tantamount and economic justice can never address the more fundamental issue for evangelicals – that man has "fallen" and his soul must be redeemed.

"It is a horrible thing for a man like myself to look back and see my country and my culture go down the drain in my own lifetime," writes Schaeffer in *The Great Evangelical Disaster*.

In both books, Schaeffer laments the decline of traditional American Christianity. He blames that loss on secular humanism, leftist movements of feminism and Marxism, and the cultural rebellion of the 1960s.

"The key to understanding extreme feminism centers around the idea of total equality, or more properly the idea of equality without distinction," Schaeffer contends. "The Bible does not teach the inequality of men and women ... It is an equality which preserves the fundamental differences between the sexes."

Schaeffer believes that feminism disrupts the Bible-based model of heterosexual marriage because the Bible says wives "should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord." For evangelicals a submissive woman is

not oppressed but constitutes a "beautiful picture of what marriage should be" and "equally of the love of Christ of the church."

Homosexuality is the same as sexual immorality and both are strongly condemned by Schaeffer.

Schaeffer's greatest contribution to the Christian right is politicizing evangelical Protestants to take control of the anti-abortion movement. He called for "legal and political action" against abortion providers, setting the stage for the blockades in the years following his death. Schaeffer was also instrumental in encouraging evangelicals to use militant tactics on the courts and government to fight abortion.

"State officials must know that we are serious about stopping abortion ... This may include doing such things as sit-ins," Schaeffer said in *A Christian Manifesto*. "We must make people aware that this is not a political game."

The 2004 election of Bush reaped the harvest of Schaeffer's backlash seeds. Though he denies it in his books, Schaeffer wants to construct a theocracy. He also warns against wrapping religion in the flag, yet that is precisely how Bush supporters garnered another victory. Schaeffer promoted a cultural backlash and the soldiers in this movement are mostly working class. In order to counter this movement, progressives must learn from Schaeffer. We must build organizations to protest the Bush agenda and produce economic benefits for the working class such as unions and worker centers. We also must pressure government and the Democratic Party on universal health care and other economic issues.

—BENNETT BAUMER



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ANTHONY CASKEY

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

DECEMBER

THE INDEPENDENT
has open meetings every Tuesday at 7p.m. at 34 E. 29th St., 2nd floor.

SATURDAY DEC 4
8 p.m. • Free
"Chance Encounters" Gallery Opening
Features four representational artists whose works are either implied or actual narratives. Figurative drawings, paintings and collages which re-contextualize everyday reality as a fantastic yet familiar vision. Gallery hours are 1-6 p.m., Fri. and Sat. Dec. 11 - Jan. 16
Open Ground, 252 Grand Street, between Driggs and Roebling Brooklyn
www.open-ground.org

7:11 p.m. • \$5
Art & Services Auction and Open Mic
Featuring original art work by Seth Tobocman, Eric Drooker, Mac McGill, Fly and more. Services include past life regression, private yoga instruction, voice coaching, canoeing on the East River and more. Open Mic with Emcee's DJ Chrome and Fly. Featuring King Missile III at 9pm and GodCo.Duo at 10pm. Delicious food and beverages. Benefit for community friend and teacher Steve Prestianni.
Sixth Street Community Center, 638 E6th Street btwn Ave B & C.

7p.m. • donation \$5-10
"Mardi Gras: Made in China"
(66 minutes, 2004)
Film screening and discussion with filmmaker David Redmon. Explores the production, consumption, and disposal of Mardi Gras beads, following the bead trail backwards from the bacchanalia at Mardi Gras to the sweatshops of Fuzhou and the oil fields of the Middle East.
Fusion Arts Museum, 57 Stanton Street

SUNDAY DEC 5
2 - 2:50 p.m. • Free
Post-election debate with The Onion and The Daily Show
Writers for The Onion go head-to-head with writers for The Daily Show, in a debate on the future of "news" in the second Bush term as part of the 17th Annual Independent & Small Press Book Fair.
20 West 44th St., Manhattan
www.smallpress.org

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Electronics Recycling Event
The NYC Department of Sanitation is coordinating with the Lower East Side Ecology Center to hold an electronics recycling event. Items that will be collected for recycling include: CPU's, monitors, printers, computer peripherals, and cell phones.
PS 321, Corner of 2nd Street & 7th Ave., Brooklyn
http://www.nycwasteless.org/indiv/electronicsrecycling.html

TUESDAY DEC 7
7 p.m. • Free
One Nation Divisible: Where Do We Go From Here?
Forum featuring former counterterrorism czar Richard Clarke, Democracy Now! host Amy Goodman and journalist Greg Palast.
New York Society for Ethical Culture, 2 W. 64th St. at Central Park West
212-874-5210

WEDNESDAY DEC 8
9 p.m. • Free
SALSA CLASS for beginners, plus Cuban & Classic Salsa, by DJ Tom K.
No dance partner necessary, either for the class or the event. No cover charge.
Bar Below, 209 Smith Street, Brooklyn
www.barbelownyc.com/index.htm

7 p.m. • non-member: \$12, member: \$10, student: \$7
Islamic & Western Philosophy: Affinities & Oppositions
In this talk Michael J. Thompson will discuss the affinities through history between Islamic philosophy and issues in Western philosophy. He will also examine how Islamic philosophy lost its struggle with its own form of enlightenment rationalism and the consequences for the evolution of modernity in Islamic societies.
CUNY Graduate Center, 34th St., 5th Ave.
http://www.opencenter.org

7:30 p.m. • \$6/\$10/\$15
Selling Women Short: The Landmark Battle For Workers' Rights At Wal-Mart
A Book Party/Forum with author Liza Featherstone, moderated by Cleo Silvers.
Selling Women Short combines the personal stories of Wal-Mart employees with investigative journalism to show why women who work low-wage jobs are getting a raw deal, and what they are doing about it.
The Brecht Forum, 122 West 27th Street, 10th Floor
http://www.brechtforum.org

THURSDAY DEC 9
5:30 p.m. • Free
8th Annual Holiday Season of Conscience Candle Light March to End Child Labor and Sweatshop Abuse
Ask NYU students Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen to stand up for the women sewing their Wal-Mart brand clothes by endorsing a Maternity Leave Pledge ensuring they will comply with Bangladesh law and guarantee that maternity benefits are paid. Meet at the arch in Washington Square Park.
http://www.nlcnet.org

7:30 p.m. • donation \$6/\$10/\$15
Let Fury Have the Hour: The Punk Rock Politics of Joe Strummer
A Book Party, Reading & Performance with author Antonino D'Ambrosio and Ricanstruction, the 512 Collective, the White Shadow & Others. Effectively melding raw creativity with radical politics, Strummer transformed punk rock from its early associations with reactionary and nihilistic politics into a social movement. *Let the Fury Have the Hour* collects articles, interviews, essays, and reviews that chronicle Strummer's life both as a musician and a political activist
The Brecht Forum, 122 West 27th Street, 10th Floor
http://www.brechtforum.org

FRIDAY DEC 10
6 p.m.
Women, Violence and HIV/AIDS: Intersections and Resistances
A panel discussion for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, featuring several perspectives on the links between violence against women and HIV/AIDS. Speakers include: Mallika Dutt of Breakthrough; Jodi Jacobson of CHANGE; Marie Lopy of the African Services Committee; Amanda Lugg of HealthGAP; Tanya McLeod of Voices of Women Organizing Project; and moderator Charlotte Bunch of the Center for Women's Global Leadership
5 Washington Place at Mercer Street: Presentation Room, NYU Office of Career Services
http://www.amnestyusa.org/women

6 - 11 p.m. • \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door
Jazz Benefit: Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners.
For Mumia Abu-Jamal and other Class-War Prisoners. Sponsored by the Partisan Defense Committee, this year's Holiday Appeal will feature live jazz with the Bern Nix Trio and will include special guests Oliver Lake, Roy Campbell and Anthony Coleman
6 Harrison Street, Manhattan
212-406-4252

7 p.m. • Free
Critical Mass: Brooklyn
Meet at Grand Army Plaza for a bike ride around Brooklyn. Group chooses route and duration.
www.times-up.org

SATURDAY DEC 11
9 p.m. • Free
Prospect Park Moonlight Ride
Meet at Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn.
www.times-up.org
8 p.m. • sliding scale \$10-20
Paper Tiger fundraising party.
Ice sculpture, door prizes, food and film, plus music by Amayo's Fu-Arkist-Ra - with core members of the inimitable Antibalas. Help Paper Tiger continue 23 years of creative independent media.
Alwan for the Arts, at 16 Beaver St., 4th fl. (btw. B'way & Broad St.)

1 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. • Free
Harlem Town Meeting: Health is a Human Right!
An engaging conversation on the health of the Harlem community. The Avery Institute for Social Change is putting a local face on the national movement for a working health-care system by hosting this town meeting.
Harlem Hospital, 506 Malcolm X Boulevard, at 135th Street
sistafre@mindspring.com
http://www.averyinstituteforsocialchange.org

TUESDAY DEC 14
7:30 p.m. • Free
Cupcake Women Writers' Reading Series
NELL FREUDENBERGER (Lucky Girls) and emerging writer DIKA LAM read at Cupcake, the reading series for New York's best women writers. Journalist KATHERINE LANPHER (co-host of Air America's Al Franken Show) will moderate a short discussion with the writers following the reading. Independent bookseller Bluestockings will have books available for sale.
Lolita, 266 Broome St. (at Allen), Lower East Side.
http://www.cupcakeeries.com

THURSDAY DEC 16
7PM • free
Navigating the Space Between Brilliance and Madness: A Collection of Radical Visions from Bipolar Worlds. An Artshow and Community Gathering
VIEWING HOURS: Sundays 1:00pm - 3pm
Tuesdays & Thursdays 5pm - 7pm
ABC NoRio 156 Rivington Street
http://www.theircarusproject.net

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