

FREEDOM ROAD

STRUGGLE • SELF-DETERMINATION • SOCIALISM



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AFTER 9/11

CHALLENGES
FOR THE
GLOBAL JUSTICE
MOVEMENT



Also in this issue

- Talking to a woman guerrilla in the Philippines
- Zapatistas maneuver in new conditions
- The invention of the white race

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Very Good First Issue

Dear Freedom Road People:

Hi. I recently came across your magazine—actually someone sent their copy to me because they felt I'd like to see it. They were right, I think you've put out a very good first issue and it has also introduced me to your organization.

I find a lot of unity with your opening words from the editor. Your clear insight on the key importance of anti-racism and support for self-determination for any serious socialist or revolutionary organization is very important. Likewise the ideas on "left refoundation" and the need to avoid sectarianism is what many people, myself included, think is necessary. Of course what this means in practice is what counts, and different people might read the words in different ways.

Your seeming to focus on already existing groups and struggles and drawing on their experience makes a lot of sense to me. I also feel that Marxism-Leninism must be seen and used as a tool, not as the "magical formula," as you stated. That's not to say that I don't seriously value the experience and theoretical conclusions that people like Lenin and Mao and other leaders put down, but we need to apply the tools to our realities today.

So anyway, I just wanted to tell you I like your magazine and will keep my ears and eyes open to the FRSO. I've also shared these thoughts and your address with some people who I thought would be interested in hearing about you folks.

I'd like to be put on your magazine mailing list. I'm in a very locked down situation right now, not allowed to have a job, etc., but I'll see if I can get someone to send you all some dollars of support for my sub.

Much success to your and your work.
AMANDLA!

— Jaan Laaman
Ohio 7 anti-imperialist
political prisoner

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THE GLOBAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT AFTER 9/11

In the wake of September 11th, people all over the country are trying to figure out what the attacks and the US response mean for the various pre-existing movements. In particular, the newly emerged global justice movement, which played a central role in jump-starting the struggle against the war in Afghanistan, faces big questions about which way forward.

This issue had been planned to focus on the global justice movement when 9/11 happened, and so this editorial addresses the implications of 9/11 for that movement. Dennis O'Neil's article, "We Build a Movement," deals with the incident's impact on the movements of people of color and the labor movement, which we'll also develop further in upcoming issues.

Global Justice and the War

The global justice movement in the US was pretty seriously derailed by the events of September 11. The IMF/World Bank and WTO mobilizations, which had promised to be some of the most dramatic yet in the U.S., evaporated. The united front in the global justice movement has narrowed; in particular, the link of young activists with the trade union movement is fraying severely. We face a protracted struggle to rebuild it all.

Bringing the global justice movement back into motion depends in large part on how the war and the anti-war movement go. At the time of publication of this issue in early November, this is pret-

ty impossible to predict.

An immediate question at hand is how to relate these two movements. Can we somehow combine the struggles of the anti-war movement and the global justice movement? It's pretty clear that we can't just mush together the demands on the one hand for an end to the bombing and the mass starvation in Afghanistan with the demands on the other hand for an end to worldwide economic exploitation. Yet we can certainly look for every opportunity available to make connections between the issues in our propaganda, to show that the same forces and the same interests are behind these different phenomena. We can also look at the possibility of raising overlapping demands at globalization-related actions that come up in the future.

For the time being, then, should global justice or anti-war activism be given primary emphasis? Freedom Road believes the answer is straightforward: The anti-war movement should continue to be the main work of global justice forces as long as war is on the agenda. The U.S.-led war efforts are, after all, the main factor presently shaping the balance of power internationally. People should look for ways to keep some attention on the World Banks and the G-8s, but this work should remain secondary for now.

Building on our Strengths

There are some valuable particular contributions the global justice movement brings into the anti-war struggle. Global

justice forces within the anti-war movement should pay special attention to these contributions and seek to develop them further.

For one thing, the global justice analysis this movement brings to the table is key. The peace movement has historically been focused mainly on anti-militarism and anti-intervention. The international economic and social justice themes that the global justice movement brings with it complement this orientation well. These themes together provide the potential for a much more rounded opposition among the people to U.S. policies.

There have also been difficult but good struggles around white supremacy within the global justice movement, and some real advances in consciousness and practice have been made. (See the article "Redefining Success: The Whiteness of Politics in the Global Justice Movement" by Gabriel Sayegh in this issue.) This experience is a highly important contribution to the anti-war movement and needs to be continued.

Similarly, movements such as the one against the prison-industrial complex have provided important lessons on racial oppression for global justice activists. One of the most important points, vital for the anti-war movement as well, is the central need to connect with the daily struggles against police terror, racial profiling, environmental racism and immigrant-bashing in US communities of color.



The truly global character of the global justice movement is a big part of what has made it so powerful. We must continue and build further the international ties in the anti-war work as we can only fight a globally organized war machine through a global united front of the people. In particular, as inhabitants of the main imperialist power in the world, we have a responsibility to explicitly ally ourselves with the peoples of the Third World whom our government and corporations are beating down.

In addition, the global justice movement brings with it new ideas about structure and organizing. These ideas,

We must continue and build further the international ties in the anti-war work as we can only fight a globally organized war machine through a global united front of the people.

around things like affinity group and cluster structures, mass decision-making, direct action, and so on can't merely be mechanically copied over into the anti-war movement, but they do provide a well-spring of new ways of thinking about things, which is on the whole very healthy.

Tying Together the Threads of Anti-Imperialism

The globalization struggles of the last few years have helped bring the more experienced activists within the movement to a relatively high level of understanding of the relationship of the U.S. to the rest of the world. Many have come to understand that it's more than just "globalization," more than just evil multinational corporations in and of themselves—it's a system of capitalist

imperialism with the U.S. sitting right on top. There are some things to be careful about, however.

In particular, it is important to avoid the temptation to try to make outright anti-imperialism the basis of unity for the movement. To do so would go against the great need to build a broad united front in the movement. If we want to stop the war and prevent the U.S. from doing more evil to the people of Afghanistan and other countries, we have to ultimately win over a large section of the people of this country. We can't do this by demanding, whether explicitly or merely through the tone we set, a consistent anti-

imperialist analysis from everyone walking into the mass organizations we work in.

Those of us who understand the problem is imperialism have the task of uniting the folks who have developed the same kind of understanding, at the same time we all continue to do work in mass groups which function at a lower level of unity. Over time we strive to win over the folks in the middle who have aspects of this understanding but haven't put it all together. The mass organizations, however, need to maintain a low threshold of entry. We won't have a chance to develop a consistent anti-imperialist consciousness among millions of people if they can't find any place to plug into one of the mass organizations of the anti-war movement.

Tactics in the Movement

The terrain has shifted for the time being, like it or not. While on the one hand there are significant new openings to discuss the history of U.S. imperialist policies among the people, the space available for more militant tactics has definitely narrowed for the time being, and most likely for some time to come.

Around any actions that are confrontational in character, we must be prepared for the "terrorist" label to be thrown around. There may need to be more struggle within the movement around tactics if "black bloc" actions continue to push tactics that are clearly adventuristic under present conditions. The danger of splitting the united front is now much greater than it was before 9/11.

However, we always need to keep in mind that this is a constructive struggle among allies and not an antagonistic one. We are all comrades even if some still mistakenly believe that a strategy most threatening to the ruling class automatically means using the most militant available tactics at every opportunity.

Staying on our Toes

It's hard to avoid nostalgia for the days before 9/11 when the global justice forces were making major advances, round after round, against the dogs who rule this unjust world. But the fact is that history dumps new conditions in our laps on a moment's notice, and we have to shift our thinking to keep up with these changes. The war won't last forever, and the better we do our work, the less forever it will last. It's not easy to be unpopular, but sometimes principle dictates you take a stand. When the war is over we'll still need a global justice movement to carry on the struggle.

A FIRST DRAFT OF HISTORY: WE BUILD A MOVEMENT

This article is excerpted from a longer, more detailed piece by the author.

BY DENNIS O'NEIL

In the first days after the 9/11 attacks, phone and email networks hummed as the first planning meetings were held, the first tentative vigils began. The base of the movement were self-defined lefties, activists, veterans of earlier movements like Central American solidarity. Many of these folks have good organizing skills, but the first month of the crisis saw relatively little outreach. The movement concentrated on getting itself organized, drawing on several important social forces:

The churches. The clergy responded impressively during the first days, helping lay the groundwork for the movement. In Atlanta, the Sunday after 9/11 saw an after-church march and rally for peace, organized on the southwest side by an African American lawyer; over 1000 people from thirteen churches attended, but there has been no follow-up. Around the country, there was a spate of ecumenical services, introductory lessons in Islam, sermons against hatred and revenge, etc. (A major lesson about this is that the secular left has to learn a lot more about the church. For instance, it can be difficult to systematically and quickly propagate radical messages through the Black church because, as writer Michael Eric Dyson has pointed out, sermons are not shared but jealously guarded.)

The peace movement. More central were traditional peace churches, which have long served as social justice centers. They are a part of the long-standing peace movement which helped drive resistance to war in many localities.

Groups like the American Friends Service Committee and the War Resisters League and local forms like the Washington DC Peace Center played a key role in building actions and forming local and national coalitions.

As the developing anti-war movement grappled to respond to 9/11 and the onset of war, the ideological stand that dominated by default was that of the peace movement. Pacifist slogans like the famous Gandhi paraphrase, "An eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind," dominated leaflets and demonstrations. The strength of this was that it gave the movement a consistent and reasonable line to build action and organization on. The problems were threefold. First, everyone involved isn't a pacifist and there wasn't deep discussion as to why this should be the unity of the movement. Second, it left less room to raise analyses that pointed to imperialism. Finally, pacifism is simply not a strong current among the working-class majority in this country.

The student movement. Campus activists, already battle-tested in recent struggles around sweatshops and globalization, were among the first to move. In the first weeks, actions against war took place on hundreds of campuses, with impressive turnouts at centers like Berkeley and Madison. Soon spontaneous efforts at regional and national coordination arose.

The global justice movement. The struggle against the war owes the new movement for global justice two enormous debts. In the scant two years between Seattle and 9/11, it had created a change of political climate in which questions about US foreign policy and

Lina Pallota/IMC



who it really serves were raised more sharply than at any time since Vietnam. This helped get the idea that the attacks might have some relationship to US government and corporate misdeeds a much wider hearing. The second debt is the large force of experienced young activists, including many anarchists, who saw the direct connection between their movement and the attacks the US was preparing to launch. These folks became a core in city after city for the first vigils and the first mass meetings.

For the three days following the explosions, organizers scrambled to salvage the S30 mass mobilization planned for Washington DC. Not a chance. The AFL-CIO, which had committed its name and some resources, pulled out. As the top union leadership called for support for the "war on terrorism," the young folks who had been the shock troops of the movement moved en masse into the struggle against war preparations. This breach in the united front may not be permanent, but it will not simply vanish of itself.

The Movements of Oppressed Nationalities. In contrast to the invisibility of big-name leaders in communities



Diane Greene Lent

Some of the ten thousand people who rallied in New York City against the war on October 7th.

of color, progressive organizations have played an important role in providing an anti-war voice. Vieques activists were in the forefront. The Black Radical Congress just weeks after the hijackings refocused its national campaign around the theme: *No to War, Racism and Repression! Yes to Peace, Reparations and Justice!* Similarly, local groups made up of young activists of color took the initiative in many places. STORM in the Bay Area quickly called a vigil for September 13 which drew over 600 people, mainly oppressed nationality. The Brown Collective in Philadelphia held weekly public vigils. These forces faced the dual task of struggling against white chauvinist tendencies within the broader movement and mobilizing in their own communities.

More on the Role of the Left

The Socialist Left. Often it was veteran socialists—whether in socialist organizations, in local action/education centers or as individuals—who took the lead in building anti-war coalitions and activities, and not just in NYC and the Bay Area. Activist San Diego, a computer network and organizing center, pulled together actions and forums from Day One and provided activists who appeared on local media, speaking for anti-war forces.

We in the Freedom Road Socialist Organization are known for pushing hard for the socialist left to undertake a process of “left refoundation.” The 9/11 crisis has been very instructive. Certainly, the overwhelming lesson is the absolute need for revolutionary socialists to develop organization national in scope and large and coordinated enough to help provide a framework for a movement like this.

However, in practice most of the existing socialist groups simply did not deem it worth their time to try and meet out-

side of mass coalition settings. This did happen at a city level in places like Boston and Atlanta where serious and productive inter-group contacts were built on previous left refoundation efforts, but at a national level only limited bilateral interactions took place.

In one of the least surprising developments of a topsy-turvy period, the Workers World Party chose to go it alone. Solid anti-imperialist and solidarity work has been their trademark for decades. Operating through the International Action Center and International ANSWER, they converted the September 29 action, for which they already held the permit, into the first national anti-war march, which drew 10,000 to Washington. They never reached out to other forces for an open process of planning and coalition building. Nevertheless, those who want to see the strongest possible movement will have to struggle both with Workers World and with folks who cite WWP’s repeated past practice as a reason for refusing to deal with them.

The labor movement. The trade unions resounded with calls for military action. Their spirit was captured in John Sweeney’s statement right after the start of US bombing: “We support the aggressive, considered military action ordered by President Bush this weekend, and we stand with all Americans behind the men and women who are now in harm’s way.”

Organized labor can take one of three basic stances: A) We support the war and should be rewarded for our contributions. B) The war that we are concerned about is the war on working people here at home. C) The war and the policies tied up with it mean nothing but bad news for working people. So far the AFL-CIO leadership has tried various combinations of the first and second stances, with little luck. As they scramble to dam the rising flood of anti-worker laws, they are

still being tarred as “unpatriotic” for opposing the administration’s economic plans at all.

If one big question is “Who will pay?” the ruling class has already made its view clear. And there’s worse to come as the recession deepens and conditions for working people continue to skid downward. Almost unnoticed, in NYC in early October the first 200 families were cut off welfare forever, their time-limited benefits expired. Meanwhile, a city-sponsored job fair was so overcrowded and offered so few prospective jobs that even reactionary news outlets mumbled nervously about social unrest. Ultimately, workers will have to take a stand that “We’re Not Paying” for the war, but that can only come when the war itself is seen as not worth supporting.

Thus initial steps around the country to build a force of unionists willing to stand publicly against the war are very important. In NYC, hundreds, including thirteen local presidents, signed the statement of Labor Against War, a quickly assembled response network. Such initiatives set the stage for the long fight to win the labor movement to the ranks of the anti-war struggle and to set up a pole in the battle for the soul of the unions.

Tackling Problems under Fire

As we set about building a movement, we faced a two-pronged attack from the ruling class. The main thrust was simply to ignore the growth of anti-war sentiment. Weeks went by before many media outlets even acknowledged the existence of anti-war attitudes and organizing. When they did, it was generally dismissive.

The other prong was considerably more sinister: repression. Professors who spoke out were attacked by the media and administrators. Demonstration permits were denied. Travelers were turned back at the Canadian border. And Congress passed by huge margins the “USA Patriot Act,” the most sweeping curtailment of civil liberties since the McCarthy era.

For many, the scariest thing was not government repression but simply the reported depth of patriotism and support

for retaliation among the residents of this country. Some chose to sidestep the issue of the drive to war and focus on defense of the Arab American community and other victims of bias crimes.

A big question surfaced in every effort to call demonstrations and build coalitions: What should the movement say to get a hearing among the people? The main dispute generally came down around the question of Osama bin Laden. A lot of folks insisted that if we didn't highlight a call for bin Laden's capture and punishment, we would be seen as supporting the 9/11 attacks. Others of us argued against making this position a bottom line. One problem is wording such a call. If the main thing is to capture bin Laden and bring him to justice, how hard can you object if it winds up being the US

By the first day of bombing, less than a month after the cataclysmic events of 9/11, we had a rudimentary but functioning anti-war movement in place in this country.

that does the capturing? (In principle all people and states that commit crimes against humanity should be held accountable before the world's peoples, through fair international bodies not controlled by US imperialism or any dominant powers. But there is no way of making that happen right now, and we can't afford to get sidetracked into debating what should happen to bin Laden, al Qaeda, and the Taliban leadership rather than showing why the war must be stopped.)

Further, emphasizing calls to capture and try the perpetrators undercuts one of the most powerful arguments against retaliation, the danger of entering into a long ongoing cycle of violent retribution with Islamic fundamentalism. Lastly, many, especially young activists of color, argued against these calls, asking questions about who determines what's justice, and what justice people of color ever get in this white-supremacist, capi-

talist-dominated world, including in its international bodies.

This debate thus overlapped another important task facing progressives—building a movement with organizers of color who can mobilize the anti-war potential of oppressed-nationality communities. Organizers have learned that it is a really bad method of work to start a coalition or organization, get its policies and structures set and *then* reach out to invite activists of color to participate. Thus, the concerns of groups of young people of color and in particular of Palestinians and other Arab immigrants had to be taken into account very carefully.

For many reasons, including principled leadership from activists of color, the task of involving people of color from the outset was taken more seriously in

this movement than in ones before. These advances have not been won easily. In Atlanta, young white radicals recently tried to block the Georgia Coalition for Peace from endorsing a rally to defend Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney against right-wing attacks. They objected because she had not voted with Barbara Lee. Such a move might well have driven out the Coalition's African American members. And progress so far is no reason to become complacent. Activists of color will retain deep suspicions about the merits of hooking up too closely with a predominantly white peace movement, and the objective need for separate organizing based in oppressed-nationality communities will continue and grow.

Three final problems challenged the movement in its early days. How to deal with the growing economic crisis, how to deal with the rapidly chilling climate for immigrants, and how to deal with the

government's drive toward increased repression. Anti-war actions and literature mentioned all three problems, but no real program was developed to address the issues and tie them into the struggle against the coming war. Fighting repression was left to a diverse alliance of left liberals like the ACLU, right-wing forces suspicious of Big Brother, and the libertarians of cyberspace.

Meanwhile, all of this was very draining on people. Many fine, experienced organizers found their energies turned inward toward dealing with principles of unity and organizational structures. The greater task of reaching out to broad sections of the residents of this traumatized country was only haltingly begun, as shown by the dearth of useful mass literature aimed at giving people a basic understanding of the situation.

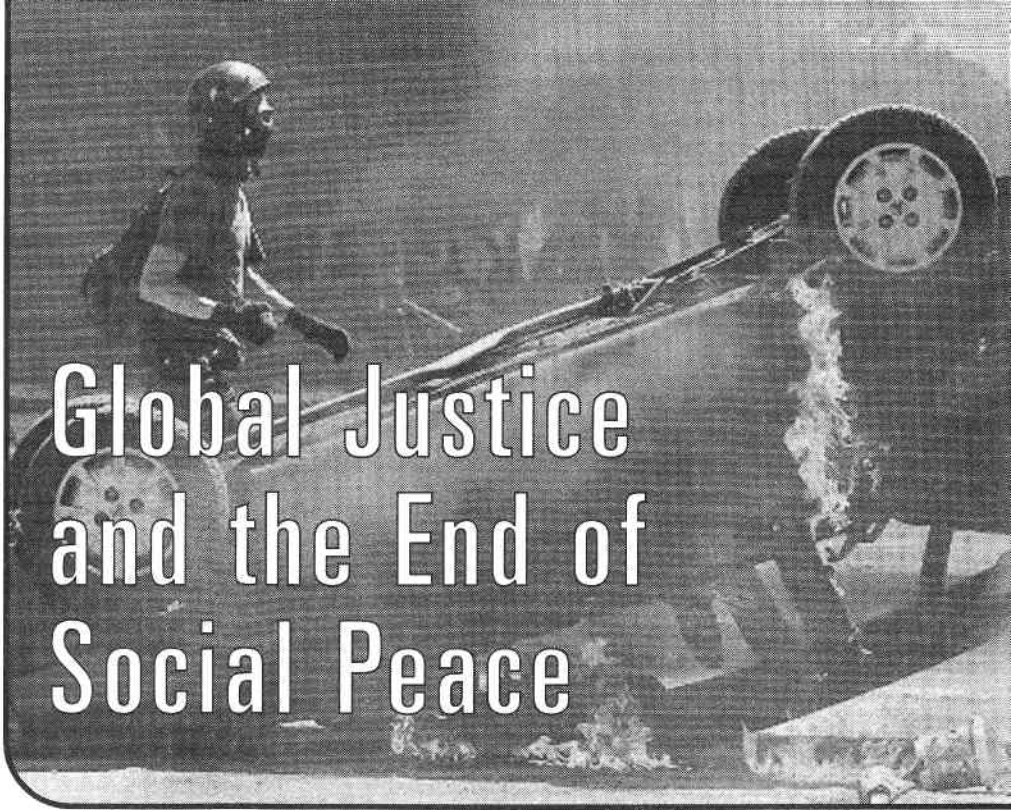
Interestingly though, activist after activist found that once you stepped out of the movement ghetto, things were often not as bad as feared. Sure, outreach was somewhat easier in more liberal and poorer neighborhoods in big cities. Sure, some folks rabidly denounced us. Still, there was a surprising openness to our arguments and frequent thank-yous were directed at leafletters and tablers.

By the first day of bombing, October 7, less than a month after the cataclysmic events of 9/11, we had a rudimentary but functioning anti-war movement in place in this country. There were many problems. The organized coalitions embodying this movement were still in formation, still handicapped by the under-representation of activists of color, still operating largely on a local level, and still divided over some of the questions of line and approach cited above. The work is hard and the prospects daunting. Most important, we have to turn outward, talking to our friends, our neighbors, our coworkers. But the foundation we have laid is an enormous accomplishment. The building will continue.

Dennis O'Neil works at the Morgan facility of the US Postal Service in Manhattan. So far he doesn't have anthrax.

GENOA.

BY STEVE MCCLURE



Global Justice and the End of Social Peace

On July 19–21 Genoa, Italy witnessed the largest demonstrations against corporate globalization and neoliberalism to date in the global North. That weekend the “G-8,” a grouping of the seven richest countries in the world plus Russia, was meeting in town. Most of the participants in the demonstrations were Italian, with strong contingents from Spain and Greece. People came from as far away as Siberia, and there were significant numbers from Poland, the Balkans, and other eastern European countries as well.

It was for me a powerful but disturbing time. Margaret Thatcher announced back in the 1980s that “There Is No Alternative” to free-market policies and privatization, but since Seattle, opposition to neoliberalism has shaken even the core industrialized countries. Genoa occurred in an escalating climate of violent repression. This past summer throughout Europe, authorities have countered mass protests with gas, clubs, containment, border restrictions, and live ammunition.

I came to Genoa with a set of expectations based on my experiences over the last year or so at direct actions in Washington DC (IMF/World Bank), Washington DC (inauguration),

Cincinnati (police killing), Quebec (FTAA), and Philadelphia (Republican Convention). This one was very different. At other actions it was possible to control the degree of risk; in Genoa, there was no way to limit exposure to police repression. All demonstrators were targets. In Quebec, stores and cafes remained open, and one could move from the front lines and sit down for a meal or cup of coffee. There was a festival atmosphere. The other demonstrations, while being inherently risky, still had the character of political protests in limited but real democracies. Genoa felt like a war zone, in which protestors were all combatants. Unlike previous demonstrations, there were no demonstrator-established green, yellow, and red areas identified by levels of legality and risk; to enter Genoa was to enter a battlefield. Only two areas were identified, a yellow zone where free passage was allowed but no demonstration, and a red zone open only to residents and those on official business.

Friday: Into the Fray

I flew to Paris, and took the train down to Milan so I could figure out how to get around the police blockades and into Genoa. From the start it was weird. The

trains going south toward Milan were all full of demonstrators, and there was a very visible paramilitary presence on the border. In Milan everyone knew that there was likely to be police violence, and most were prepared for gas. There were special trains organized to get people into Genoa. It was usually only a two-hour trip; however, trains for the Genoa Social Forum were routed so that the trip would take over five hours, circling far around the city to the east and then coming up the coast from the south.

When we arrived, instead of disembarking at the central train station, we were unloaded along the tracks some distance from the city center and were taken by bus to the assembly points for the direct actions already underway. I could already hear the clashes and see the columns of smoke rising in the distance, as well as the plumes of gas canisters being shot high into the air.

The entire train I came with was full of members of Tute Bianche and Giovani Comunisti prepared with gas masks, helmets and other protective gear, who, upon disembarking, immediately proceeded to form up into cordons in order to join the fight along Via Tolemaide. Other groups included black blocs as well as many people with no organizational affiliation. It was inspiring to see thousands of young Italians and others of various nationalities marching together towards police lines singing anthems of the World War II resistance such as "Bella Ciao" and "Bandiera Rossa."

I followed Tute Bianche to see how their tactics worked. The formations moved down the street along with a sound truck, which was giving tactical instructions to the crowd. They approached the police lines and marched straight into them, attempting to push through them using their shields. The confrontation didn't last very long, it seemed to me at the time, but it actually continued for over three hours. The lines collapsed when people's gas masks gave out. The carabinieri were quick to gas and club people in the front lines, concentrating on heads and testicles, and

from what I heard afterwards fired shots as well so as to create a panic. There were lots of injuries, and as the protest broke up into small group actions, the police moved in with mass quantities of gas and clubbing towards Piazza Tommaseo, pushing us up a hill and onto Via Trento, down which I was able to get to the convergence center.

The police that day also attacked the convergence space with armored personnel carriers, closed an internet point, and shot and killed Carlo Giuliani, the first martyr of the global justice movement within the countries of the North. Around Piazza Rossetti, there were stores smashed and fires, as well as hospitality tents and tables set up by Rifondazione. From there, I could see police lines, and even witnessed what appeared to me to be police agents setting fire to a bank adjacent to the piazza.

Inside the Piazzale, which was the seat of the Genoa Social Forum, I was able to get a really good lunch. I had some delicious prosciutto and melon, which was nice and light after my having been repeatedly tear-gassed. Other people chose the tortellini, which I thought was too heavy for the circumstances. I also got, more importantly, an update on the situation.

In all the recent demonstrations, there is a surreal quality in that normal routine activities coexist with violent confrontation. In Quebec it was funny to see a man calmly walking his dog in a cloud of tear-gas, while Molotov cocktails were being tossed at robocops. In Genoa good food coexisted with burning cars. It was impossible to move anyplace in the city as bus service was discontinued by the police, along with phone service. The whole thing reminded some people I talked to of what they had seen in Bosnia.

At one point I sat down and watched three guys burn a bank and then walk back to the police lines. The police didn't do anything to them. Later on, similar reports started pouring in. Many people had witnessed groups of slightly older, generally beefy types dressed up in black attire that was a little bit too uniform,

GLOSSARY

Black bloc: A tactic for street protests based on autonomist or anarchist organizational forms, rather than a formal organization. Black blocs wear all black and masks and engage in confrontation with police, unarresting pacifists, and property destruction.

Convergence Center: A legal space used for meetings, information, and food distribution in the spokescouncil-convergence model of street protest.

Giovane Comunisti: The youth branch of the Communist Refoundation Party.

GSF: The Genoa Social Forum, a coalition modeled on the World Social Forum including non-governmental organizations, political parties, unions, and social movements, using the formal consensus process.

IMC: The Independent Media Center, AKA Indymedia, a web-based consortium of independent print and video activists.

Neoliberalism: An economic theory which stresses open markets, privatization, and reduction of state services or intervention in the economy on behalf of working people.

Rifondazione Comunisti (RC): A party with roots in the section of the Italian Communist Party that retained its traditions and politics rather than becoming social democrats after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Tute Bianche: The "white overalls" movement, an anti-neoliberal group organized to resist limitations on movement. Organized along anarchist lines, they use padded protective gear and mass formations to break through police lines.



The murder of Carlo Giuliani raises the stakes in the struggle for global justice.

engaging in highly provocative acts and then melting away just as the police attacked or sitting in cars chatting away with uniformed police officers. It subsequently came out in the news that the Italian authorities also knowingly allowed at least 600 fascists into the country to sabotage and discredit the global justice movement by engaging in provocative actions within the protests.

Saturday: "Complete Pandemonium"

That night, I slept in the park with the RC to avoid being trapped inside the Social Forum, and in a large crowd to avoid being beaten up by roving gangs of police during the night. On Saturday morning I moved along with some Italian activists towards the starting point for the scheduled march. The thing was huge, somewhere between 100,000 and 300,000 participants. It seemed to me that the bulk of assembled groups were affiliated with the RC and various communist groupings throughout Southern Europe.

After a while, I got tired of standing in the hot sun and went back down to the GSF stage area and info tents. As I arrived there, a battle was beginning, with gas, concussion grenades, and smoke bombs along with the usual clubbings. When I looked back to where I had come from, I saw that police had split the march, and even from the distance I was at could tell that they were attacking the crowd. Once again there were ambulances streaking around town and thousands of people running in all directions to escape the attacks. It was complete pandemonium. I

went up to the Diaz School, the one that would be attacked later that night, to get out of the crowd, and I hung there until it was safe to move back down to the Social Forum.

At that point I had a nice lunch at a tent in the GSF area: a big panino with cheese and prosciutto which tasted

very good, and a mixed green salad. After lunch, I waited with others to proceed to the train station in a large group to get back to Milan safely. We marched through the police with our hands in the air to avoid further attacks.

When I got back to Milan that night, I heard about the brutality at the school. The building which housed the Independent Media Center and where some activists were sleeping had been raided Saturday night. Scores of GSF and IMC activists were beaten bloody and senseless. Many had broken bones, teeth knocked out, and other serious injuries. Sixty were hospitalized. The walls and floors inside were smeared with blood.

A New 'Strategy of Tension'?

The following days saw an outpouring of protest in every city in Italy. Hundreds of thousands of Italians took to the streets to oppose the criminalization of protest. Throughout Europe the major papers are condemning the Italian government, and the various sectors of the Italian Left have found common ground in opposition. The period of social peace is over; no one knows how it will go from here. The events of 9/11 underscore this point further.

In Genoa the police strategy was to treat the protest as if it were a military campaign and try to break down all forms of internal organization within the movement. This was another example of what has been referred to as asymmetrical warfare, in that the target, namely us, is basically unarmed, and the objective is to control rather than kill. Information control and media manipulation are central to this kind of conflict. During the lead-up to the G8 summit, the media

were flooded with dire predictions of violence and terrorism to create a climate of fear. Preparations for the protests were highlighted, including the showcasing of missile emplacements and border controls. Genoa was sealed off from the outside world, and access to and from the city was limited to only a small narrow corridor. It was a political victory by demonstrators even to get to the city.

The first reports on Radio Popolare focused on the negative role played by the so-called black blocs in disrupting non-violent direct actions, engaging in wanton property destruction, and making actual attacks on other activists. The police made every effort to undermine the ability of the GSF to consolidate communications and organization, assumed a proactive role in repressing all dissent irrespective of what tactics being used, and infiltrated groups to act as agents provocateurs. Police ignored provocative actions by black bloc groups in favor of attacks on unprepared nonviolent protesters and, as described previously, actually instigated violence themselves.

All this points to a "strategy of tension" reminiscent of the period of the Red Brigades during the 1970s. The Red Brigades were ultra-left communist cells engaged in armed struggle in Italy. They had surprising support among the general public but gradually lost it as their actions became more isolated. It's since been discovered that many of the bombs and violent acts attributed to the Red Brigades were actually instigated by the police. The phrase "strategy of tension" refers to the theory and practice by the police of placing bombs and generating terrorist



activities in order to discredit the Left and of using agent provocateurs in order to create divisions among Left groups.

I think that whole military model breaks down in that this is ultimately a political struggle, and that the end result of the heavy-handed tactics by the Berlusconi government have only resulted in further radicalization of the opposition. Much the same way that Seattle galvanized the new movement here, Genoa has forced the

legal forms of protest such as non-violent direct action and property destruction. The objective of these actions is not so much to actually stop the meetings from occurring but to demonstrate a withdrawal of consent from these institutions. The process of planning and executing an event of this kind is a process of popular education; it gives local activists a tool for mobilizing their base around the local issues they encounter.

In Genoa the police strategy was to treat the protest as if it were a military campaign and try to break down all forms of internal organization within the movement.

scattered left groupings in Italy to find common ground against the criminalization of protest, neofascism, and neoliberalism. I think that it's important that the more militant groupings not be isolated from the larger protest movement. While I disagree with some of the tactics that I feel are counterproductive, I believe strongly that mutual respect and a combination of legal and illegal forms of struggle is essential.

Assessing the New Forms of Protest

Two basic models for protests are contending: the standard one of mass mobilization into contingents with a central tactical leadership, and the new model of convergence into affinity groups with decentralized coordination. In the former, organization and communication depends on a political structure such as a political party to be the glue that maintains order. In the latter, communications, training and collective decision-making in small groups give cohesion to the action.

I think the strength of the actions to date has come from the combination of tactics—the integration of legal marches and rallies, street theater, and the less

The ability to maintain organization was severely curtailed by the police in that the heavy wooden poles traditionally used by the left to form cordons were prohibited from Genoa. The ability of the demonstrators to use the affinity group model was limited by the shutting down of the telecommunications system and public transport and by the roving bands of police beating individuals and small groups of protesters moving about the city. It was no coincidence that Genoa ended up looking like Bosnia for two days, and that the demonstrations evolved into a bloodbath. It was fortunate that only one person lost his life. Just the sheer size of the demonstration alone, not to mention the language problem, created an almost impossible situation to organize under the best of circumstances.

Genoa was the largest mobilization to date in the global North.

The current debate on tactics has been reduced to one between legal permitted marches versus “violent” property destruction. I think the conversation should be more along the lines of how to improve communications, coordination, and education. It is critical now to creatively develop effective strategies to limit the ability of police agents to infiltrate and reduce the possibilities for gratuitous violence. I don't think that the experience of Genoa can be applied directly to North America, in that the history of struggle and forces in motion are very different, but the containment techniques and escalation of violence by the police do carry over.

The sheer scale of the Genoa demonstrations attests to the growing importance of this movement and to the difficulties the state will hopefully have in isolating it. Working to build unity between different popular forces in an increasingly polarized environment is a difficult task, but made easier after the events in Genoa. *Avanti popolo!*

Steve McClure is a windowdresser, silverplater, and tinker as well as an activist in the global justice movement in Washington DC.



REDEFINING SUCCESS

THE WHITENESS OF POLITICS IN THE GLOBAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT

BY GABRIEL SAYEGH

In the growing resistance to capitalism within the United States, many white activists consider Seattle as the “beginning of a movement” and gauge anti-capitalist work using Seattle as the measuring stick. Extensive efforts have been made by organizers of all stripes to replicate both the coalitions and tactics which enabled us to shut down the World Trade Organization (WTO) trade ministers’ meeting. But the success in Seattle was not without its failures, perhaps the most glaring of which could be found amongst white activists: a dangerous absence of any analysis of white supremacy. And while the white Left has not been entirely successful in replicating another Seattle, it has found great success in perpetuating racism and upholding white supremacy.

Seattle: Not the Beginning, but a Good Place to Start Looking

I worked with the Direct Action Network (DAN) in organizing against the WTO. DAN was composed of a broad coalition of direct action activists, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), students, labor rank and file, and more. From DAN’s inception in the spring 1999 and through its development the following summer, DAN was focused on and committed to the complete shutdown of the WTO. However, in our collective analysis of capitalism and the WTO, we did not have a commitment to challenging white supremacy (or oppression in general, for that matter).

This lack of commitment was evidenced in how we organized: while we

verbally denounced all forms of oppression, discussions about white supremacy were few and far between. There was only one person of color even remotely involved in DAN’s creation and planning. As the network grew, there was never a collective effort to address the obvious and particular issues of racism that developed within DAN, or the white privilege which would come to define the group. A small number of white organizers actually did address racism—fairly consistently, too—but they found them-

Coalition for Environmental Justice, People of Color Against Aids Network, and Bayan/People’s Assembly Against the WTO. We made no effort to work with these groups, save one token instance when DAN activists joined a People’s Assembly march.

The anti-WTO convergence began in mid-November 1999, two weeks before the big WTO protests. The convergence was a gathering to share various skills and ideas, build networks, and prepare for the actions against the WTO. There were

There was no genuine effort to share the ownership of anti-WTO organizing with people of color because there was no collective recognition that such co-ownership was important.

selves shut down by other white organizers who declared that “racism is not the issue; the WTO is.”

There was no genuine effort to share the ownership of anti-WTO organizing with people of color because there was no collective recognition that such co-ownership was important. Indeed, there was only a paternal effort to include people of color in our work, and we did not support work being done by people of color-led groups in the Seattle area. Community organizations of color were very active in anti-WTO organizing, and included such groups as the Northwest Labor Employment Law Office, Community

trainings at the Convergence Center on legal rights, nonviolent direct action, consensus decision-making, affinity group structure, and street medic skills. We also built puppets, practiced dance steps, created spoken word, and developed street strategies. This sharing of skills enabled many people to stick together while being shot at, beaten, poisoned, and otherwise brutalized by an out-of-control paramilitary police army.

Trainings on challenging white supremacy should have been included in the convergence, but were not. We had no trainings or workshops to teach white people about white privilege and racism,

no discussion about the implications of direct action for people of color, no commitment to make the convergence space culturally accessible and relevant to anyone but white people. Thus the Convergence Center was a space created exclusively by, and thus for, white people.

Talking Racism but Resisting Dialogue

By teaching each other skills to stop the WTO but not the analysis and skills needed to attack and challenge white supremacy, we created and perpetuated a number of contradictions in our actions that week. We engaged in nonviolent direct action tactics (historically developed by people of color) but failed to discuss how these tactics have different implications for white activists and activists of color. We enthusiastically confronted police lines and encouraged everyone to join us, but failed to realize that people of color have to face hostile police forces every day without getting to decide, as white people do, when and where such confrontations will occur. We had not worked with organizations of color before the WTO and did not develop an anti-racist analysis of globalization, and after the WTO we made comments amongst ourselves about the “low turnout of people of color to the protests.” The well-known chant “This is what democracy looks like!” failed to recognize that our vision of “what democracy looks like” excluded most people of color.

To be sure, in the months leading up to N30, a handful of white organizers in both Seattle and nearby Olympia made repeated attempts to challenge white supremacy within our organizing. Sadly, they were most often met with anger, resistance, and, ultimately, avoidance by most folks in DAN. The small number of white organizers committed to challenging white supremacy was dwarfed by the much larger contingent of whites who wanted put racism on the back burner—it was something that could be dealt with after the “real work” was done.

When racism within DAN became too prevalent to be ignored, resistance to

addressing it intensified. For example, immediately after the WTO actions, the Sleazy Cowboys—a white affinity group from Olympia that played an important role in anti-WTO organizing—distributed an open letter to white leadership within DAN, identifying racism as a major problem in the group. They called for an immediate halt to all DAN organizing so that racism and white privilege

The well-known chant “This is what democracy looks like!” failed to recognize that our vision of “what democracy looks like” excluded most people of color.

within DAN could be evaluated and effectively addressed. The white men in receipt of the letter—all of whom played leadership roles in DAN—dismissed and ignored it, chastising the authors for “breaking up unity” and being “too anal.” Ostracized and neutralized by DAN leadership, the Sleazy Cowboys, along with other organizers, left the group.

Seattle was a victory in some ways, and a familiar failure in others.

New Models and the Need for Listening

So what might a more effective approach look like? How can white activists do better work? It might be useful to examine another mass action that was spawned from Seattle-style mobilizations: the 2000 Democratic National Convention (DNC) in Los Angeles. I was in L.A. doing support work in the Convergence Center, as I had in Seattle. One clear difference in L.A. was the various strategies to bring together multi-racial coalitions. This was due, in part, to the majority of people of color who were organizing for the L.A. actions and their commitment to multi-racial organizing. Another important difference between L.A. and Seattle was that the L.A. organizers were committed to anti-racist local organizing.

The organizers in L.A. were well aware of the problems created by hordes of

white activists descending on a city and into a community of color to protest. In Washington D.C during the spring of 2000, white activists convened in Black neighborhoods to protest the World Bank, but made little contact with leaders from that community. This created tension between the neighborhood residents, who might otherwise have been supportive, and white protestors,

who were largely clueless.

The L.A. Convergence Center was in the MacArthur Park area, which is a predominantly Central American neighborhood. The organizers made great effort to go door to door handing out information in Spanish and English, talking with residents about what was transpiring. They explained what the Convergence Center was, what the actions against the DNC were about, and, if people were interested, how they could participate. Neighborhood residents were given a heads-up on what to expect when thousands of mostly white protestors showed up in L.A. to take on the Democrats. As L.A. organizer Kimi Lee said, “The actions against the DNC would have happened whether white people showed up from out of town or not. We were just worried about what to



do with them once they got here.” Great effort was made by L.A. organizers to minimize the impact of incoming activists. This preparatory work meant that many of the local residents and small business owners in the Macarthur Park area were supportive of the protestors.

Part of this prep work involved providing anti-racism trainings for white activists along with many of the same training that had been offered in Seattle. Anti-oppression principles were discussed at length in the anti-racism and

RiseUP/DAN Principles of Anti-Oppression Organizing

1. Power and privilege play out in our group dynamics and we must continually struggle with how we challenge power and privilege in our practice.
2. We can only identify how power and privilege play out when we are conscious and committed to understanding how racism, sexism, homophobia, and all other forms of oppression affect each one of us.
3. Until we are clearly committed to anti-oppression practice, all forms of oppression will continue to divide our movements and weaken our power.
4. Developing an anti-oppressive practice is life long work and requires a life long commitment. No single workshop is sufficient for learning to change one's behaviors. We are all vulnerable to being oppressive and we need to continually struggle with these issues.
5. Dialogue and discussion are necessary, and we need to learn how to listen non-defensively and communicate respectfully if we are going to have effective anti-oppressive practice. Challenge yourself to be honest and open and take risks to address oppression head on.

other anti-oppression trainings held throughout the convergence. RiseUP/DAN, one of the coordinating bodies for the DNC protests, printed up their “Principles of anti-oppression organizing” (see sidebar). These were included in the Action Packet handed out to every activist and were also blown up into posters and hung from the walls of the Convergence Center.

An anti-racist and anti-oppression analysis and practice was the foundation of the organizing in L.A. The organizers also made great effort to connect local struggles (particularly within the community where the convergence space was found) to national and international struggles. An example of this was the march and civil disobedience action at the corrupt L.A. Police Department's Ramparts Division. As Chris Crass, one of the march participants, wrote, “Ramparts is currently under federal investigation as a result of police brutality scandals. The march had demands that were specific to L.A., but the connection to police violence (particularly against communities of color) throughout the United States was made clear.”

The L.A. organizers chose to approach organizing differently, moving past the limiting formula of numbers of people + street disruptions = success. They had observed with a critical eye the mistakes made in previous mass actions, and they worked hard to integrate anti-racism into the L.A. mobilization.

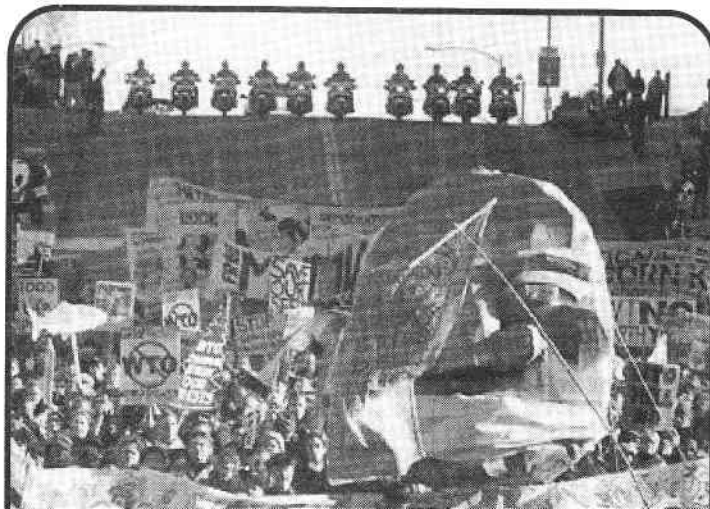
In various conversations I've had with white folks, and in articles written by whites, many have expressed that L.A. was “not radical enough” because, among other things, there was no call for a shut-

down of the DNC. Disappointment has been expressed with L.A. because the organizers chose tactics which included getting permits for some marches and rallies—a tactic which many white organizers were critical of as “legitimizing the state.” Whereas L.A. was certainly not a direct action spectacle, direct action is not the only tactic available to us. Nor should success be measured only by shutdowns.

While I may not be interested in pursuing a permit for a march or action, I must recognize that as a white man I face different circumstances than people of color do when confronting state power. In squaring off with the Ramparts police, I faced a brutal police force—whereas people of color from the Macarthur Park area of L.A., squaring off with the same cops, faced a brutal police force responsible for numerous murders of their own community members. Such vicious brutality is not my everyday experience, and as often as I may be harassed by the police, I can be reasonably assured that it is never because of my skin color.

I find it ironic that so many white activists are quick to call a permitted march “liberal” or “reformist” when it is clear that as white folks we can often afford not to get a permit. Living in a white supremacist society, we know, consciously or unconsciously, that we can often rely on our whiteness when we get in a jam. However, in the Macarthur Park neighborhood, due to institutionalized racism, where many people have to contend with immigration agents or three-strikes-you're-out legislation, there is no “ace in the hole” to rely upon. The decision to seek permits was part of a broader strategic effort to make the

actions accessible not only to activists, but also to some people who for very good reason might not otherwise participate.



No Easy Solution

All this is not to say that the actions in L.A. were perfect or that they couldn't have been improved. There were, of course, difficulties that arose in the organizing and actions, and things that could have been done better. And though L.A. was different from Seattle, there were also some unfortunate similarities, particularly around racism and white privilege.

For example, many white organizers/activists attempted to take over the organizing efforts in L.A.—which had been initiated by people of color—rather than work with, and find leadership from, the organizers who had been doing that work for some time. When I asked some of these white organizers about this, they responded that they “needed to take over” because the L.A. organizers (read: people of color) had “never organized a mass action before” and “didn't know how to put it all together.” Such patronizing statements were fairly commonplace among white organizers. Certainly there were skills both white organizers and organizers of color could have learned from one another, but this sharing was inhibited by the paternalistic behavior of many white organizers.

Another problem in L.A. was the complications resulting from the influx of white activists, like myself, into a community of color—the very problem that Kimi Lee said organizers in L.A. worked hard to address. In one spokescouncil meeting, the arrival of white activists into the community and our subsequent impact was addressed by L.A. residents. There were specific concerns about the increased police presence and the striking newness of having groups of white faces march through the neighborhood of color. Some out-of-town white folks seemed genuinely interested in being accountable to these

concerns, and made suggestions of ways we could respect and give back to the community—such as picking up trash in the park or helping to cook more food to serve to people in the area. However, the more common sentiment among whites was summed up clearly when one white activist from out of town stood up and said, “I didn't come here to deal with these people's trash or their problems. I came here to protest the DNC.”

Such actions and behaviors on the part of white activists resulted in the refusal by many people of color to even come to the Convergence Center—including, notably, organizers who had helped put the convergence and the actions together. Days before the convergence was to begin, in a Convergence Center meeting of organizers and support people, an organizer of color who asked to remain anonymous commented,

These meetings used to be mostly people of color, and now it's mostly white folks. Some organizers of color won't have anything to do with the Convergence Center because they feel like this space has become dominated by white organizers. I myself wouldn't come back here if I didn't have to, but my community is coming here and I want to make sure they feel welcome.

Perhaps these white organizers could have benefited from one of the eight Anti-Racism For White People trainings offered at the convergence. Despite extensive efforts to encourage white people to attend, only four of those trainings were held due to lack of participants.

Where To Go Now

White activists are in dire need of a new, localized, anti-racist direction, as it is becoming increasingly clear that mass mobilizations alone are not enough. We can find direction by closely examining



what organizers of color prioritize in their work. The mistakes we made in Seattle don't negate the incredible victories achieved there. Nor do our mistakes negate the potential of this movement. But our mistakes—and our failure to address white supremacy and white privilege—will stagnate and destroy the movement if we don't address them seriously.

Shutting down a trade meeting or disrupting business gatherings does not equal total success: when we shut down the WTO, the capitalists focus on regional agreements like the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA). They'll come up with ten new institutions for every one we break down—so we also must fight the systems that give power to those institutions. One of these systems is white supremacy. As white activists, we need to open our eyes and ears to understand how white supremacy is not an “issue,” but a fundamental element of the capitalism we are committed to destroying. Until white activists begin to challenge white supremacy, we will be unable to forge the alliances and coalitions necessary to bring about a new world.

Special thanks to Chris Dixon, Sonja Sivesind, Alan Rausch, and Therese Saliba for their feedback on this article. Thanks to Trevor Baumgartner, Jennica Born, Lydia Cabasco, Chris Crass, Stephanie Guilloud, Hop Hopkins, Kimi Lee, and scott winn, for the discussions that helped flesh out these ideas.

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For an in-depth analysis of white supremacy, and a list of definitions which are extremely helpful, check out the Challenging White Supremacy Workshop webpage at: <http://www.cwsworkshop.org/>

For excellent analysis and critique on white supremacy and the anti-globalization movement, check out Colours of Resistance at: <http://www.tao.ca/~colours/>

BY JULIET UCELLI

TED ALLEN AND THE INVENTION OF THE WHITE RACE

One of the ironies of recent politics is that while white mainstream journalists, pundits and ordinary people are more willing to acknowledge the existence of white privilege, some sections of the predominantly-white socialist left remain resistant to it. Some socialists see class as all-encompassing and dismiss all discussion of racial privilege as falling into “identity politics” and therefore “divisive.”

Yet for increasing numbers of ordinary white people, the newspaper headlines and the Black and Latino community organizing against racial profiling have made certain realities more obvious. Some aspects of life (e.g. where you can live, how police and store security treat you) are very different based on your skin color, even for people who earn the same income and have attained the same educational level.

There are probably three main aspects to the concept of white privilege, and readers of this magazine are likely familiar with them. (1) White privilege exists, still today, as an observable, documentable material reality. (2) To say it exists is not to guilt trip white people but to call for taking action against inequality. (3) White privilege and the concept of “whiteness” itself only came into being in the late 1600s when the ruling class of the British North American colonies deliberately granted differential treatment and legal status to European-born bond laborers as a social control strategy—to prevent them from uniting with their African peers in rebellion. Before this happened, people didn’t go around thinking of themselves as “white” or “Black.”

The last point about the historical origin of whiteness and white privilege is contested by some scholars and is of much more than academic interest. The idea that there are separate races (rather than a continuity of variation of human skin color) and the inextricably linked idea that the white race is superior to others have been the source of and justification for brutal oppression. But if these ideas were historically created by deliberate human action, then they can be historically ended by conscious human action. This thesis, therefore, gives the lie to the lament and cop-out

bourgeoisie has been able to contain rebellion by using “white race solidarity” as “the country’s most general form of class-collaboration.”

Throughout the two volumes, Allen stands on the shoulders of and gives the props to Black Marxist scholars like DuBois and Trinidad’s Eric Williams, author of the pathbreaking *Capitalism and Slavery*. Williams wrote in 1944, “Slavery was not born of racism; rather racism was the consequence of slavery.” Allen himself has been working on this theory since co-authoring the late ’60s pamphlet that was an eye opener for

White privilege and the concept of “whiteness” itself only came into being to prevent European-born bond laborers from uniting with their African peers in rebellion.

that’s accompanied almost every article I’ve seen in the mainstream press about the Durban conference on racism: “Racism has been with us since time immemorial, it’s part of human nature, how foolish and utopian it is to think we can end racism.”

Ted Allen’s two volumes on *The Invention of the White Race* offer the most comprehensive and meticulously documented presentation of the historical or, as he calls it, “sociogenic” theory of racial oppression. Following W.E.B. DuBois, Allen believes that this thesis also contains the roots of a general theory of U.S. history. That is, it can explain how the U.S.

many of the New Left generation: “White Blindspot/Can White Workers Radicals Be Radicalized?”

What Is Racism?

One of Allen’s most useful theoretical contributions and mind-benders is a definition of racism as being a social practice specific to modern colonialism but not necessarily dependent on either skin color difference or chattel slavery. His thesis is that the Irish (who were no darker-skinned than the English) and the American Indians (who were mostly not enslaved)—as well as enslaved Africans—were all racially oppressed by



English/British and Anglo-American colonialism.

The particular character of racism, Allen says, flows from a colonial situation in which a society with private property in land and resources subdued a society with collective, tribal tenure of land and resources. The colonizer destroyed the original forms of social identity of the oppressed groups (tribal and kinship associations), and then excluded the oppressed groups from admittance into the forms of social identity normal to the colonizing power. All members of the oppressed group were reduced to one undifferentiated social status. This was enforced by four elements of discrimination: "(1) declassing legislation, directed at property-holding members of the oppressed group; (2) deprivation of civil rights; (3) illegalization of literacy; and (4) displacement of family rights and authorities." (Volume I, p. 81)

Although not all are to be made slaves of the colonizing power, the object is social death for the subjugated group as a whole, whether individually and in groups they are forcibly torn from their home country to serve abroad among strangers, or they are made strangers in their own native land. They are "desocialized" by the brutal rupture of the relations which characterize the social person. (p. 35)

The British shifted their Irish policy beginning in the 1770s, by allowing class differentiation and fostering an Irish bourgeoisie as a buffer social control stratum. But before that, British laws regarding Irish people prefigured the white-supremacist slave codes in continental Anglo-America:

If under Anglo-American slavery "the rape of a female slave was not a crime, but a mere trespass on the master's property," so in 1278 two Anglo-Normans brought into court and charged with raping Margaret O'Rourke were found not guilty because "the said Margaret is an Irishwoman." If a law enacted in Virginia in 1723 provided that "manslaughter of a slave is not punishable," so under Anglo-Norman law it sufficed for acquittal to show that the victim in a killing was Irish. Anglo-Norman priests granted absolution on the grounds that it was "no more sin to kill an Irishman than a dog or any other brute." (p. 46-7)

From Temporary Bond Laborers to Slaves

Volume II is dedicated to showing that the white race, and thus a system of racial oppression, did not yet exist in the 17th century tobacco colonies, with a main focus on Virginia. Rather, the relative social status of African Americans and European Americans was indeterminate and was being fought out. Allen cites diverse forms of evidence from the historical record. African Americans owned significant amounts of land in the 17th century. In some cases, African Americans became owners, buyers and sellers of European-American bond laborers. Inter-marriage among Africans and Europeans was not uncommon. But most telling, for Allen, was Bacon's Rebellion of 1676, which showed that the white race did not yet really exist:

In their solidarity with the African-American bond laborers in Bacon's Rebellion, the laboring class European-American bond-laborers had demonstrated their understanding of their interests, and bond-laborers had had the sympathy of the laboring poor and propertyless free population. (p. 248)

Allen does not deny that some steps towards the denial of rights to African Americans had been taken before the rebellion. For example, a 1660 law limited to five years the length of bond servitude—but the limitation only applied for those "of what Christian nation soever." Yet, for Allen, it was the defeat of Bacon's Rebellion (in 1677) that

was the turning point, clearing the way for the establishment of the system of lifetime hereditary bond servitude. Then the subordinate status of African Americans, even those who managed to free themselves from slavery, became embedded in numerous social practices and encoded in law.

In 1723, the Virginia Assembly voted that "no free negro, mulatto or indian whatsoever shall have any vote at the election of burgesses or any other election whatsoever." (p. 241) Allen describes this as "a deliberate act by the plantation bourgeoisie; it proceeded from a conscious decision in the process of establishing a system of racial oppression, even though it meant repealing an electoral principle that had existed in Virginia for more than a century."

This insistence on the social distinction between the poorest member of the oppressor group and any member, however propertied, of the oppressed group, is the hallmark of racial oppression. (p. 243)

Allen's analysis emphasizes both how deeply ingrained racism and white privilege have been in the development of Anglo-American and then U.S. capitalism, and how these categories are also historically created and fluid. This is a point worth keeping in mind for the twenty-first century as we see people of color becoming a majority of the population in California already, and eventually across the U.S. Just like Irish, Jews and Italians over the past century and a half, some groups now defined as people of color may be redefined into white by a ruling class seeking to perpetuate their oppressive and exploitative system. White supremacist bourgeois rule is a pretty flexible and creative system, and we need sharp and nuanced analysis, strategy and tactics to fight it.

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Theodore W. Allen

The Invention of the White Race

Volume One: Racial Oppression and Social Control (1994)

Volume Two: The Origin of Racial Oppression in Anglo-America (1997)

London & New York, Verso Books

FREEING THE CHARLESTON



THE LARGER SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DOCKWORKERS CASE

By BILL FLETCHER JR.

Working-class victories are few and far between these days. However, in Charleston, SC, the termination of the cases against five members of the International Longshoremen's Association, Locals 1422 and 1771, represents one such victory. Pleading no contest to a downgraded misdemeanor charge and fined \$100 each, these union members walked away from a horrific ordeal which, had it ended as the state's Attorney General had hoped, would have landed them in jail for alleged riot and conspiracy to incite to riot.

Rarely are matters so straightforward. In early 2000, in the port city of Charleston, members of ILA Locals 1422 and 1771 found themselves protesting the use of a non-union stevedore company to unload freight from ships.

There are many things unusual about South Carolina, but one of them is that despite a unionization rate of only 4.2 percent, the docks are solidly union. Also, there is a major Black presence among the dockworkers. ILA 1422 is largely Black and has an important role in the community.

Local 1422, led by a young African-American second-generation dockworker named Ken Riley, peacefully protested the use of scab labor. Through the grapevine Riley discovered that Attorney General Charles Condon had a surprise in store. He was going to mobilize South Carolina state police against the protesters. So as not to fall prey to Condon's plans, no formal demonstration was called on that day. Nevertheless, many of the dockworkers, seeing 600 police materializing on their docks, decided that something needed to be done.

Condon was clearly determined to provoke a disturbance. In addition to 600 cops, there were also armored personnel carriers and armored horses. The jails had been cleared. Despite the efforts of Riley and other leaders, the police provoked a scuffle. Riley himself was hit over the head by a state policeman while attempting to defuse a confrontation between a dockworker and a cop.

The Attorney General ultimately brought charges of conspiracy to incite to riot and inciting to riot against five dockworkers. Twenty-seven others face civil charges brought by the non-union stevedore company (WSI) because they allegedly obstructed the company's right to gain business and a profit.



The Broader Context of Repression

If that were the whole story, it would be compelling enough, but in the background, more is taking place in South Carolina.

Rabidly pro-business forces have dominated the state since the crushing of the Reconstruction governments in the late 1800s. In the 1930s, South Carolina was a key site in the great textile strike of 250,000 textile workers across the country. South Carolina mobilized its National Guard, set up concentration camps for strikers and their families, and permitted the murder of strikers. The walkout was defeated.

To build the state economy today, the government advertises the state's largely non-union status. What's more, the status of social legislation is abysmal. Environmental protections are few, and efforts to raise the minimum wage have failed repeatedly.

Recently, the political Right has moved to weaken workers' rights further. Legislation has been advanced to exclude union members from holding appointed positions in the port authority. Efforts are underway to strengthen so-called "right-to-work" laws, which permit workers to refuse to become union members while benefiting from union-won collective bargaining agreements. One proposal would grant individual workers the right to bring harassment charges against union organizers.

Political and business figures in the state probably believed that they could carry out their attack without much of a fuss. They miscalculated. The leadership of ILA 1422 and the presi-

dent of the South Carolina AFL-CIO, a very progressive woman named Donna Dewitt, together initiated a defense campaign. With assistance from the national AFL-CIO, the Committee for Workers Rights in South Carolina came together. It drew on progressive forces in the state and set out to reach a national audience.

The Black Radical Congress quickly responded with support. The West Coast-based International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) also took up the case, donating thousands of dollars to the legal defense. Slowly but steadily, defense committees emerged across the country, turning the defense of the Charleston 5 into a *cause celebre*.

The Significance of the Situation

The South Carolina situation is more than the case against the Charleston 5, though that is the cutting edge of the contradiction. The stakes involve large-scale repression against workers and ultimately a threat to democracy.

The repression in South Carolina must be seen in the light of globalization and other ruling-class attacks now underway in many capitalist countries. As globalization (the system of declining trade barriers, universalization of capitalist relations, privatization of everything which exists, free flow of goods and money) advances, the world experiences dramatic polarization of wealth, income and resources. Fewer and fewer people accumulate ever-greater percentages of the world's wealth. At the other end of the hourglass, the world's people find themselves fighting over fewer resources. They also, at certain key moments, engage in massive resistance to this piracy.

Thus, the forces of capital, on the one hand, hold up the pretense of democracy and rights but, on the other, restrict the ability of working people to exercise any control over their own lives and over society. In capitalist country after capitalist country, individual rights are decreasing. The police-state phenomenon that we experience in the US is not isolated to the US. Nor are its targets restricted to people of color.

In the US, as in other countries where racism is central to capitalist rule, the ruling elites pursue their objectives by playing the "race card." The equation is quite simple: attack groups considered vulnerable or despised, and introduce social changes through these attacks. Assume that other forces in society will ignore the attacks until too late.

This modus operandi has been common in the US, and we've seen it played out in South Carolina. The fact that ILA 1422 is largely Black led the political Right in the state to assume the attack would be ignored, if not supported, by non-Black sectors of the population. Had the leadership of the South Carolina AFL-CIO been in the hands of reactionaries, it might have worked. Fortunately, the alliance between ILA 1422 and the state AFL-CIO withstood the tripwire of race, and a common front was built.

The Danger of a Police State

It is very common on the political Left to cry out about the danger of fascism at any hint of political repression. While we must guard against this, we must also understand that the danger of a police state, that is, increasing repression, is very real. This has become all too clear in the post-9/11 period with the flagrant disregard of civil liberties in the name of opposing terrorism.

The repression in South Carolina coincided with countless examples of police brutality, including killings, against Black people. In addition, so-called "hate crimes" exercise another form of terrorism over sections of the population, especially people of color and gays/lesbians. Such situations are particularly dangerous when they go unanswered. Popular toleration of any of these abuses weakens democracy and increases terror.

The forces of capitalism are not increasing their tendency toward a police state because of a vibrant mass movement out there opposing their moves. Rather, it reflects their deep-seated fears of the potential for such a movement to

grow. In other words, the bourgeoisie is making a "preemptive strike," i.e., attacking first before their potential opponent has a chance to get organized and go on the offensive.

The moves in South Carolina represent just such a preemptive strike. With all due respect to the union movement there, as well as other popular movements, there is no immediate threat to capital. But carrying out this level of repression—both against the Charleston 5 and through passing reactionary legislation—was clearly important to set a tone nationally as well as prevent a coming together of popular forces to reverse the tide.

This is not about a conspiracy theory; it is about crude politics in a world which has come to be dominated by what has been called "capitalism on crack," i.e., neo-liberal globalization. The movement to defend the Charleston 5 and stop the reactionary moves in South Carolina was one step in blunting the capitalist offensive.

While the criminal case is over, the civil case remains. The charges against the union and the individual workers are nothing but harassment. The Charleston 5 support movement cannot simply go out of existence, but instead must fight on for the dismissal of the civil case.

Long term, the struggle of the Charleston 5 has been one front in the struggle not only against neo-liberal globalization, but closer to home, against "right to work" laws which inhibit the workers' right to self-organization through unions. The mobilization both within South Carolina and nationally demonstrated a determination to fight for economic and social justice in places where both are rarely evident.

The courage of the dockworkers in South Carolina should serve as inspiration to us all to remember that resistance to neo-liberal globalization is essential. Failure is not an option.

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is a national co-chair of the Black Radical Congress and a long-time trade unionist. He has been very involved in building the Charleston 5 defense effort.

A TALK WITH A FILIPINA GUERRILLA

By DINA

In the spring of 2001, my partner and I had the rare opportunity and, as it turned out, the great privilege to travel to the Philippines and into the outlying rural areas that dominate the small country of islands. Our hosts for part of our visit were an unlikely crew—a guerrilla unit of Red Fighters, a part of the armed branch of the Communist Party of the Philippines. For three days and two nights they took a carefully calculated risk and brought us into their unit to give us a look through the window of their daily lives and work.

Our second morning with the unit we spent in the rice fields of a small village. It was one of the few times we were able to go outside without the cover of darkness, and we watched the threshing in the heat

of the day and talked with the peasants as they took their water. Soon after we got back, our host (one of many trusted families in the area that hid the Red Fighters from government troops and spies) cooked up a bunch of rice and some vegetables for lunch. When we finished eating, we sprawled out on the floor in a bedroom off to the side, which was really a bamboo platform elevated to provide some relief from the sticky heat.

Her activism began in the church, she related. A devout Catholic since she was a kid, she gradually became an activist when she was a university student. She learned that “revolutionaries—like God—serve the people.” When she decided to join the movement full time, her family turned their backs on her. They disowned her as a daughter and issued an ultimatum: if she went to the guerrilla front, she could never return to

When she decided to join the movement full time, her family turned their backs on her. They disowned her as a daughter and issued an ultimatum: if she went to the guerrilla front, she could never return to them. She left anyway.

Meeting the Fighters

When we woke, Chuck, the leader of the squad, was back from a meeting, bringing with him some folks for us to meet. Among them was a young woman who had been a Red Fighter for almost two years. We asked about her personal history, and she told us about how she got involved. As we started talking, Frankie, the Red Fighter in charge of provision, gave her three pieces of the chocolate that we had been instructed to bring when we asked what people in the countryside “needed.” She ate one and gave the rest to the kids gathered in the room.

them. She left anyway. She was on the front for a year and a half and had no contact with her family, but when she finally went back to the city for her first visit, they reconciled. They still did not agree with her political views, but at least they reclaimed her as their daughter.

So here was one of the rare intellectuals who gave up her studies and her life in the comfortable city to become a Red Fighter—and stayed. We asked her whether she had moments of uncertainty, to which she answered, “Of course.” She had been a city girl who never even walked in a field before and never knew much hardship. So the adjustment period of about three months was difficult.





We were torn between wanting to know what her experiences were as a woman Red Fighter and not wanting to just ask her questions related to women—we didn't want to box her in. But imagining myself with my shortcomings in her position, I had to ask whether

weak and always put her in the middle of the single file when they moved at night. "But now," she said, "they know I can walk as fast as them in the fields, and I can carry and use my weapon." And the fact that she stayed a year and a half before her first visit back to the city

hours with people staring at her before she realized she had blood on her pants. Since she'd joined up, though, the Party policy changed so that every squad that has a woman fighter has to have at least two. She's found it much easier to have another woman to share support.

How about her work organizing peasants? Did she ever find that when she talked to people they had less respect for what she had to say? Sometimes, maybe. But in general, she found that people admired and respected her more for dispelling the myth that women are not cut out to be guerrillas. She also found that women often have an advantage when doing organizing, because a strange woman's face at the door doesn't engender the same kind of distrust and fear that a man's does—even if she is carrying a gun.

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The "Shorts Question"

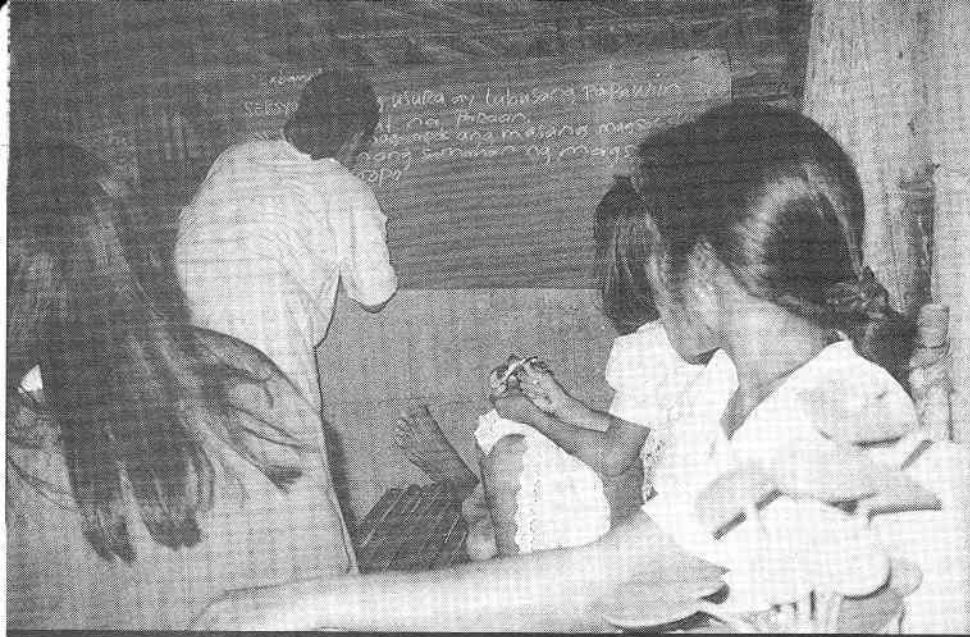
she felt like she had something to prove because of her gender. At first she said no, that there was equality in the squads. The Party dictated that women and men be given the same treatment in the context of the material fact that most women don't have as much physical strength.

But later, when we asked about what happened when there were instances of chauvinism in the squad, she offered a little more. She said because comrades in the squad are still from this society, they do have leftover feudal thinking. So in the beginning they tended to think of her as

earned her a lot of respect as well.

Again putting myself in her shoes, I gave in to my urge to ask her how it was when she had her period. She laughed and said it was like any other day. But what I wanted to know was did the squad get her supplies automatically, or was it hard to get them to understand that she needed things like menstrual pads on a monthly basis. Her squad apparently was quite good at getting her pads, but not so good about letting her know when she leaked blood. They were still embarrassed and she would go around for several

As the afternoon wore on and dinner came and went, more people appeared in the back room and sat listening to our discussion. I had just finished asking the woman fighter if she ever felt awkward because she had to sleep in a different place (one of the regulations in the squads is that unless two Red Fighters are married, they must sleep separately by gender), apart from her comrades (for her squad, sleeping apart meant they slept on the floor and she slept on the chair above them), when a voice came from the room prodding her to tell me



PICTURES IN ARTICLE

All photos are from a different visit, to guerrilla areas in southern Luzon, taken by Jen Schradie, co-director of *The Golf War* (see ad below).

Left to right:

p. 21

Hanging out in a New Peoples Army camp.
Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson
Ka Roger.

p. 22

Women's educational seminar run by the NPA.

about the dress code. I craned my neck to see a middle-aged guy smiling back. So she said that because we are living in this society which still has feudal ideology, the Red Fighter's dress code prohibits women from wearing shorts.

I jumped a bit. "What?" I looked down at my legs, trying to imagine sticking them permanently into long pants in this humid heat. And this was the coolest time of the year. Plus, I'd seen plenty of Filipinas wearing shorts—why this conservatism in the Red Fighters? The explanation she gave was thoroughly unsatisfying. Many of the new comrades in the squad have not been entirely "remolded" ideologically. Men are brought up to think that if a woman wears shorts, she's easy. So it's the women's duty to help her comrades not be attracted to her.

I opened my eyes wide. "But isn't it the responsibility with the squad and the comrades in it to change the ideology, rather than the women's duty to prevent chauvinism?" She looked surprised at my indignation: "But what's the big problem? It's not so much of a hardship for us to wear long pants is it?" I told her it was for me because I have a hard time with the heat, and besides, the point wasn't whether it was a big deal for me to wear pants—the point was the inequality.

Felipe looked at me perplexed, "That isn't right is it?" I didn't think so. Finally, grasping a bit, I asked, "If that's the way society is right now, that the people don't

accept women wearing shorts, then why doesn't the dress code apply across genders so that men and women can be in solidarity with each other?"

"Oh," came the response from the other room, "It does. Men can't wear shorts either. Not short ones." I felt the beginning of a flood of relief. "So both women and men can wear long shorts?" The cut-off point is right above the knee. I looked down again. Mine were at mid-thigh, still conservative by US standards. Felipe's were knee length. I got up and changed into my long black nylon pants, which immediately plastered themselves against my skin. I thought about it later and decided I probably still would've changed at that point, even if the dress code only applied to women. If they were willing to take me into their organization,

then I had to be willing to follow their rules. But I probably would've talked about it a lot more afterwards. As it was now, there wasn't an issue anymore. Just heat rash.

Night fell and figures shifted and moved in and out of the house—still, lively give and take about social and political issues continued. Finally the guy who had prompted the young woman on the dress code—who had edged closer and closer until he finally left the side room to sit with us in the living room—got up and said he had to move out. The woman fighter took her cue, shook hands and disappeared quietly out the front door. The atmosphere had been so warm and energetic that it was hard to say goodbye. And we didn't even know their names.

THE GOLF WAR

Directed by Jen Schradie and Matt Devries



"Potent... bombshell of an exposé"

—Kevin Thomas, Los Angeles Times

Globalization comes to a Philippine seaside community, which has to defend its way of life and ancestral lands against golf course development. A Philippine government plan to transform ancestral farmland into a tourist resort sparks a dramatic conflict when villagers actively resist the

development. As peasants and fisherfolk organize to stop the golf courses and yacht marinas, their seaside community called Hacienda Looc becomes a violent flashpoint in a larger, national battle over land.

The *Golf War* is a provocative portrait of one community's fight for survival against forces of economic "development." Conflicting views are voiced by peasants, developers, bureaucrats, and golf boosters in the Philippines, including Tiger Woods.

39 minutes • Color • Grade Level: 10-12, College, Adult

Bullfrog Films
Box 149 Oley PA 19547
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On August 30, eight indigenous communities in the state of Mexico and Mexico City declared their autonomy and their intention to govern themselves. Simultaneously eight more communities in the state of Michoacán issued a “Decree of the Purepecha People” declaring their refusal to recognize the toothless “Indian Rights” law recently passed by the Mexican Congress. Fourteen other indigenous communities from various states filed suit against federal and state officials, and twenty indigenous municipalities from the state of Oaxaca filed a suit before the Supreme Court against the new laws.

These actions, all coordinated by the National Indigenous Congress (CNI), are the latest chapter in the unfolding confrontation between Mexico’s 56 indigenous peoples and the administration of Vicente Fox. Fox was elected promising to resolve the issues of indigenous rights and autonomy generally, and the Zapatista revolt in the state of Chiapas in particular. Since Fox’s inauguration last December, the Zapatistas and the broader movement for indigenous rights have managed to keep him on the defensive and have progressively eaten away at his popularity by exposing his unwillingness to deal honestly with the demands of indigenous peoples. The dramatic high point of this confrontation so far was the March for Indigenous Dignity. But the recent moves by indigenous communities and municipalities across the country may mark the opening of an even sharper round of struggles.

The March for Indigenous Dignity

The capitalist media called it the Zapatour, a cross between a rock tour and the 1963 March on Washington. On February 24, 2001 a bus caravan carrying 23 leading members of the comandancia of the EZLN, subComandante Marcos, and hundreds of supporters from across Mexico and around the world, set out on a tour of Southern Mexico to mobilize support for the passage of a set of laws and constitutional amendments that would recognize legally, for the first time,

THE ZAPATISTAS’ LONG MARCH:

BY
CHRISTOPHER
DAY

INDIGENOUS
RIGHTS AND
THE FUTURE
OF MEXICO

the unique status of Mexico’s indigenous peoples. The Zapatistas were greeted by huge crowds of supporters all along the way, and ended the tour with a triumphal march into Mexico City. Yet only when they threatened to return to Chiapas did Congress agree to see them, and then the chamber was half-empty.

The March for Indigenous Dignity demonstrated for the umpteenth time the Zapatistas’ remarkable capacity to skillfully frame the political questions confronting Mexico and to command the attention and respect of the Mexican

the new Congress for approval and to reduce the military presence in Chiapas. He also called on the Zapatistas to return to negotiations, which they had broken off when the government had failed to implement the San Andrés Accords.

The next day the Zapatistas broke their silence and declared that they would return to negotiations upon fulfillment of three demands: the release of all Zapatista prisoners, the dismantling of seven key military bases, and the passage of the Indigenous Rights Law. Then came the kicker – in three months, they would lead

The March for Indigenous Dignity demonstrated for the umpteenth time the Zapatistas’ remarkable capacity to skillfully frame the political questions confronting Mexico and to command the attention and respect of the Mexican people.

people. In the months between the July, 2000 election of Vicente Fox, which ended 71 years of rule by the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) and his inauguration on December 1, the Zapatistas were silent. Upon his inauguration Fox immediately announced his intention to fulfill his election promise to send the Indigenous Rights Law drafted by the Congressional Commission for Reconciliation and Peace (COCOPA) to

an unarmed march on Mexico City to demand passage of the law.

The Zapatistas had once more reclaimed the political offensive. Each of their demands was not only reasonable but commanded broad popular support as well. Not only could Fox not accuse the Zapatistas of intransigence, he was now under pressure to turn his own vague assurances into concrete deeds on a deadline. In the following days and weeks most



of the Zapatista prisoners were released, and one by one each of the seven military bases came down. But on the most important demand, passage of Indigenous Rights Law, there was no movement.

The San Andrés Accords

The Zapatista uprising began on New Year's Day, 1994 and was followed by twelve days of fighting, a ceasefire, inconclusive negotiations and another EZLN military breakthrough in December. In February 1995 the Mexican Federal Army launched a military offensive against the Zapatistas that broke up the contiguous territory they had controlled since the ceasefire, but failed in its declared intention of capturing the EZLN leadership. The offensive's failure forced the government to treat negotiations with the Zapatistas more seriously.

When talks were finally restarted in the town of San Andrés Larrainzar, the theme of the first round was Indigenous Rights and Culture. The Zapatistas insisted on bringing to the negotiations a collection of anthropologists, legal experts on indigenous rights, and representatives of a cross section of indigenous peoples' organizations. In order that they not be outgunned, the government announced that they would bring their own set of expert advisors.

This was a fatal miscalculation. The Zapatista uprising had set in motion a sea change in thinking on indigenous rights that reached into governing circles. The Zapatistas were using the negotiations as an opportunity to construct a consensus position among the various indigenous rights organizations that would broaden their own national base of support. The

government's experts were drawn into the ferment of the discussions among the Zapatistas' advisors. One by one they were won over to supporting more and more of the indigenous rights agenda.

The result was the San Andrés Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture, an agreement on sweeping changes in Mexican law that would give indigenous peoples an unprecedented control over

general and seems subject to multiple interpretations. But the San Andrés Accords would provide a foundation for countless legal challenges to many of the government's plans for economic development, from the Megaproyecto—which would run a high-speed rail link from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Coast right through indigenous lands in Oaxaca and Veracruz—to Fox's Puebla to Panama

Within the "provocative cocktail," as Marcos describes the ideology of the Zapatistas, the question of indigenous autonomy has come to the forefront.

their own governance, legal proceedings, education, mass media, land and culture. The Accords were signed by both the EZLN and the federal government on February 16, 1996 and subsequently rewritten by the COCOPA (the multi-party Congressional committee created to facilitate negotiations with the Zapatistas).

The Zapatistas were critical of the COCOPA proposals, which they viewed as a watering down of the original Accords, but they accepted them. The government then proceeded to do nothing to implement these proposals, not even submitting them to Congress. Seven months later the Zapatistas withdrew from further negotiations, conditioning their return on compliance with the San Andrés Accords.

On first glance it is difficult to see what is so threatening in the San Andrés Accords. Much of the language is over-

Plan for regional development linking Southern Mexico with Central America.

In the past it has been a simple matter for the Mexican government to disregard its own laws. But globalization demands a more functional kind of capitalist legality than that. A lot of work has gone into "reforming" Mexican law, that is to say, gutting it of the residual radicalism left over from the Mexican Revolution. Inserting the San Andrés Accords into the Mexican constitution at this particular moment is simply too risky from the point of view of those who have built their fortunes selling off the country to foreign investors.

On April 25, 2001, Congress finally passed an Indigenous Rights Bill that was even weaker than the already watered-down COCOPA proposals. Significantly, the law would subordinate the forms of indigenous self-government to approval



All photos by Chris Day

Left to right:

March against military bases in Altamirano, 1998.

Young Women in Benito Juarez-Mira-mara.

Mural on clinic in Benito Juarez-Mira-mara.

by the separate states, effectively draining any meaning from the guarantees of political autonomy. The Zapatistas and the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) quickly denounced the Congressional law and initiated a campaign to defeat the passage of the various constitutional amendments by the states.

**Indigenous Autonomy,
National Liberation and the
Fight Against Neo-Liberalism**

Since 1994 the EZLN has represented a challenge to the orthodoxies of the Marxist left, not only in Mexico but around the world. In the first days of the uprising the Zapatistas spoke of fighting for socialism, but since then the Zapatistas have spoken “only” of “liberty, justice and democracy” and publicly declared their intention “not to seize state power,” leading many older revolutionaries to characterize them as “armed reformists.” Similarly, the question of indigenous rights, which was not raised explicitly in their first public pronouncements, has become the centerpiece of their political program, leading many to view the EZLN as a peculiar sort of civil rights organization.

But the Zapatistas are neither a conventional national liberation movement nor a more narrowly-focused civil rights organization. Rather, they are a new kind of radical social movement based in the rapidly industrializing global South. There are, of course, important (and often ignored) continuities with the old left. The Zapatistas can trace their roots in different measures to several distinct left trends of the '60s and '70s—from liberation theology to Maoist-inspired

campesino organizing and Guevarist-inspired urban guerrillas.

But what has so far enabled the Zapatistas to navigate the new terrain of post-Cold War Latin America has not been deference towards any of those orthodoxies. Rather it has been an ability to improvise, to find new frames and new forms, to forge unlikely alliances, and to keep moving. Rather than put forward a clear program and strategy of their own for bringing it about, the Zapatistas seem determined to wait for larger social forces to fill in the blanks.

Within the “provocative cocktail,” as Marcos describes the ideology of the Zapatistas, the question of indigenous autonomy has come to the forefront. This is not an accident. The Zapatistas were able to sink roots where they did, when attempts to establish guerrilla bases elsewhere in Mexico were failing, precisely because the question of indigenous rights is strategically central to any effort to organize an effective resistance to the neo-liberal designs of US imperialism in Mexico and Latin America. The Zapatistas called those designs, represented first by NAFTA and now by the FTAA, a “death sentence” for the indigenous peoples of Mexico.

Mexico’s dependent capitalism was built on the foundation of the conquest and continuing exploitation of Mexico’s indigenous population. It cannot be confronted without confronting the legacy of racism and oppression of indigenous people. In the 1960s and '70s radical students and workers spoke of building a national liberation movement to break Mexico’s dependence on the US. But national liberation in Mexico is meaning-

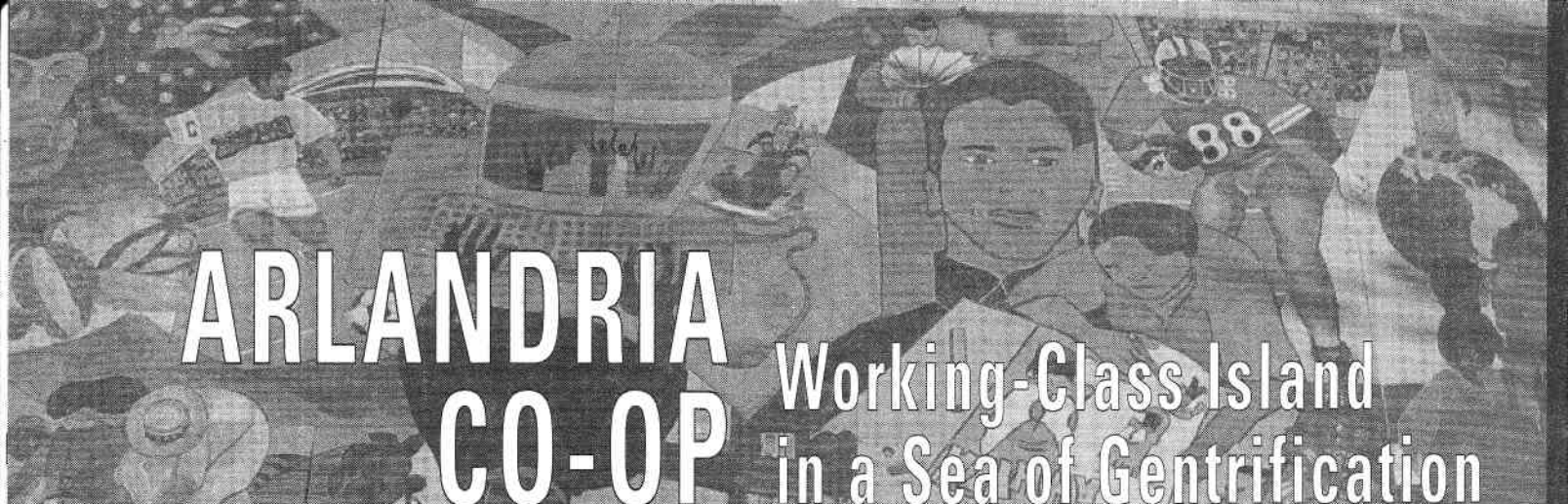
less without a coming to terms with the struggle of the indigenous peoples for dignity and self-determination.

The rise of a powerful movement for indigenous rights confronts much of so-called mestizo Mexico with its own hidden history. For much of “mestizo” Mexico is not so much mestizo as de-indianized indigenous communities that have embraced the outward trappings of the dominant culture—clothes and language—but that still retain much of their ancestral culture. The idea of Mexico as a mestizo nation has been an organizing principle of the state since the Mexican Revolution of 1911. The Zapatistas forcefully challenged that idea, and it has unraveled considerably since they first appeared on a drizzly New Year’s morning.

The Zapatistas don’t have the guns they would need to win a war, and they don’t appear to have a clear strategy for to change that situation. What they do have is a clear understanding of the central place of the fight for indigenous rights and autonomy within the larger fight against neo-liberalism. That clarity has enabled them to survive when nobody thought they could.

The March for Indigenous Dignity failed to force the Mexican Congress to pass the COCOPA law. But it succeeded in further broadening popular support for indigenous rights and in putting the Fox regime on the political defensive. Following Fox’s election many commentators began to call the Zapatistas an anachronism —“Now that we have democracy, the time has come for the guerrillas to put down their arms.” In three short months, however, the Zapatistas demonstrated that Fox was no more able to deliver on the promises of San Andrés than the PRI and that until indigenous rights become a reality one still cannot speak of democracy in Mexico.

Christopher Day spent two years working in Chiapas on the construction of a clinic in the village of Benito Juarez-Miromar. He currently works with the Student Liberation Action Movement in NYC.



ARLANDRIA CO-OP Working-Class Island in a Sea of Gentrification

BY CAMERON BARRON

As 2001 opened, Alexandria, Virginia faced an invasion. The city's 125,000 residents already tend to be affluent, and 60% of them are white. Now it has become *the* place to settle for the rich Republicans flocking to the Capitol to take part in the new Bush administration. They have to be close to the action, but they sure don't want to live in DC itself with its urban character and Black majority.

I live in an island fortress amidst this sea of gentrification: the Arlandria-

With the formation of this co-op, working people in Alexandria have taken a step forward in winning some economic power for themselves. The question of power, or of the lack of it, is inescapable in working people's lives. Whether we are talking about political, social, or economic power, the effort to attain power has always been central to the struggle for freedom.

For oppressed people, what approach to take toward economic development is always an issue. Television and maga-

philosophical underpinnings of capitalism by rejecting individualism, while it also sees that the scope of the difficulties facing laboring women and men is so large that something on a massive scale is necessary. Unlike other nearby housing property owned by landlords, we do not operate to make a profit. There is no excess money being generated. In keeping with our founding principles, we pay our bills, put some money away, and pass any savings along to the members of ACHC in the form of lower monthly carrying charges. Residents of the Arlandria-Chirilagua Housing Cooperative are part of working-class society. We are construction workers and maids and work in the retail stores in and around the city of Washington, DC.

The Landlord Plays Himself. With Our Help

During the mid-1980s, Alexandria saw its population grow as people took advantage of the city's proximity to Washington. Reliable transportation and numerous jobs, both with the private and public sector, created a high level of demand for housing.

In housing, as in other markets, when there is an increasing level of demand, owners attempt to capitalize on the situation by charging more for their product. Our former landlord was no exception. He issued eviction notices, claiming he was going to renovate the property. When the landlord initially issued those eviction notices, he was planning on people's being out of the property in 30 to 90

Formed in February 1996, the resident-owned housing complex represents the triumph of vision and struggle for low-income people in the midst of an ocean of material prosperity.

Chirilagua Housing Cooperative (ACHC). Formed in February 1996, the resident-owned housing complex represents the triumph of vision and struggle for low-income people in the midst of an ocean of material prosperity. Although the median family income in the city is \$79,000 a year, in the Arlandria section it is well under half of that. The tenants who call ACHC's 282 units home are mainly Salvadoran and Honduran immigrants, with a significant number of African-American families as well.

zines are full of well-groomed hucksters who advocate mirroring white America by embracing capitalism, and who hold up a handful of Black and Latino/a success stories as evidence. There are others, fewer today than in the '60s and '70s, who argue oppressed communities need to de-link from the economic system as much as possible and rely on ourselves alone to provide for our needs.

There is a third approach, one which aims to advance the cause of collective ownership. This approach shuns the

days. He then would "renovate" the place by slapping a fresh coat of paint on the apartments, substantially jack up the rent, and cash in on these ideally located housing units. What he did not envision, however, was the outbreak of organized tenant resistance, nor did he calculate what it would cost him.

Resistance took place on two fronts. First, residents showed their anger in the streets in the form of demonstrations and protest rallies. Second, resistance took place in the courtroom with hard-fought challenges to the legality of the evictions. In the business world, where time equals money, this delay in the landlord's plans would cost him his property. Tenant-caused delays, combined with a slumping economy, led the developer to declare bankruptcy in early 1991.

The TWSC

From the beginning, the Tenants' and Workers' Support Committee (TWSC) led the resistance effort. Initially through volunteer efforts, but eventually with paid organizers, the TWSC helped the community navigate through the process of taking ownership. What began as a resistance struggle was transformed into a struggle for local economic power. Born out of an individual capitalist's crisis and drive for profit, the ACHC represents the seizing of opportunities presented by the general and cyclical tendency towards crisis within capitalism.

Unlike the 1960s and '70s, today we live within a country where the powers that be don't even pay lip service to the need to eliminate slum housing and establish decent, affordable housing. According to research conducted by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, there is not a single county in the United States where a family supported by a single adult earning the minimum wage can afford the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment. In 1970, reports the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the number of low-cost rental units exceeded the number of low-income renters by 300,000. Twenty-five years later, there were 4.4 million more

households than available low-cost rentals. This is just another example of how the private market cannot plan for the needs of a city, a county, or a country.

The ACHC represents an alternative vision and path in housing development. However, in a society where the dispossessed continually face the interrelated problems of lack of capital and racial and gender discrimination, how much can having a vision of a new society do to move us from dreaming to living that reality?

We certainly are facing new challenges and new opportunities as the housing cooperative has become institutionalized. The contradiction of a non-profit company trying to exist within the system of capitalism presents enormous threats and challenges. We have already received let-

themselves out on the street, in meetings, and in chance encounters.

In one sense, the ACHC stands today as a realized vision of power in the hands of those who have been historically marginalized. In a larger sense, however, it represents a vision that is yet to be fulfilled. In a global economic system that seems to grow stronger in the midst of its ever-increasing contradictions, the ACHC as an institutional alternative is a model we need not simply to duplicate, but to go beyond. Cooperatives can offer one step toward sustainable economic development. As economic contradictions intensify and other ruptures appear in the fabric of capitalism, new opportunities will emerge and it is up to progressives to take advantage of them.

Unlike the 1960s and '70s, today we live within a country where the powers that be don't even pay lip service to the need to eliminate slum housing and establish decent, affordable housing.

ters from corporations interested in buying the property. Internal discussions about expanding the co-op sound eerily like corporate-motivated plots to win market share and increase profits.

There are the ever-present challenges of the relationship between the African-American community and the Latino community, which can be described as tenuous at best. Different languages and different cultures do not lend themselves to an easy embrace, even when common objectives are identified. Partly due to misunderstanding each other's histories and partly due to the lack of time to understand each other's present day reality, the African-American and Latino communities, though co-existing, do not necessarily do so cooperatively. Tensions that are part of the larger society can play

Finally, it is the process of striving for self-emancipation from the dictates of capital, not necessarily some guaranteed outcome, which is critical. We must continually launch new and invigorating efforts of resistance to capital's onslaught, while simultaneously keeping our eyes on the prize of a new society and a more humane and democratic economy and world.

Cameron Barron is a ten-year resident of Alexandria, Virginia and is currently serving as the interim president of the Arlandria-Chirilagua Board of Directors. He was active in student organizing on the campus of the University of Maryland at College Park in the late 1980s and has worked with various labor unions. He is currently working for the AFL-CIO and is a member of the Black Radical Congress.



Bryce Oates

FAMILY FARMERS BATTLE CORPORATE PIGS

BY STEVE HOLLIS

It seems that George W. Bush has developed a taste for stealing elections. Not long after he took office, his newly appointed Secretary of Agriculture, Anne Veneman, overturned a legally binding national referendum to end the mandatory pork checkoff.

The pork checkoff is a tax paid by all hog farmers on every hog they sell. It is collected by the meatpacker and sent to the USDA-appointed National Pork Board, which then hands nearly all of the money over to the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) and its state affiliates. The money—roughly \$52 million per year—is supposed to be used for research and publicity to increase pork consumption (its best-known ad campaign is “Pork, the Other White Meat”). However, the NPPC has consistently used the money to fuel its corporate agenda.

The Reagan administration first instituted the pork tax in 1986, and since that time farmers have paid out over \$500 million. In this same period, more than 250,000 hog farmers—two out of every three—have gone out of business, hog prices have hit historic lows because of excess production by factory farms, and hog farmers’ share of the retail pork dollar plummeted from 46 cents in 1986 to 25 cents today.

Family Farms, Yes! Factory Farms, No!

The fight to end the pork checkoff goes back several years. In 1995, the Missouri Rural Crisis Center and other grassroots Midwestern farm and environmental groups joined to form the Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment (CFFE).

CFFE’s mission is to preserve sustainable family farms and stop the expansion of factory farms. Right now this fight is

centered on the livestock industry. Will livestock be dispersed throughout the country on a variety of farms typified by local family ownership and diversified farm operations? Or will the meat we eat be produced in huge energy- and capital-intensive confinement facilities that concentrate the animals and their wastes in a single locale and concentrate economic wealth and control in the hands of absentee investors?

Hogwash and Slush Funds

The CFFE’s first target was Premium Standard Farms (PSF), at one time the world’s fourth-largest hog producer. In 1989, PSF set up in Missouri with a few thousand hogs. But once it had ascertained the laxness of the state’s environmental and corporate farming laws, and the politicians’ willingness to overlook sleight-of-hand financing, PSF quickly built up its vertically integrated operation—“from squeal to meal”—and by 1996 it was producing 2.5 million hogs each year. To family farmers who were watching their labor being devalued, and to environmentalists concerned about the runoff from millions of gallons of hog waste, PSF was a clear threat. And a clarion call to mobilize.

In April 1995, CFFE mobilized 3,300 people—Black farmers from Georgia and preachers from St. Louis and Kansas City; labor activists, citizens groups, and environmental groups; and farmers from throughout the South and Midwest—to demonstrate against factory farms in Lincoln Township, Missouri. Borrowing a page from the civil rights movement, family farm activists mobilized 1,000 people later that month to participate in a seven-day Journey for Justice across Iowa. And on an icy November day Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman

was forced to meet with 350 CFFE supporters a mile downwind from PSF’s facilities. Through strong media work and intensive grassroots organizing, the campaign exposed PSF’s atrocious environmental and economic record, convinced grocery stores to stop stocking PSF factory pork, and halted PSF’s expansion in Missouri and Texas. Increasingly concerned about the company’s environmental liabilities and financial losses, investors pulled back. Once considered the shining flagship of factory farms, PSF finally filed for bankruptcy.

The National Pork Producers Council

Throughout the work in 1995 and 1996, a common fact became clear to the members of CFFE. Whether in state capitals, in the media, or in Washington, D.C., their biggest adversary—the organization that consistently defended the factory farms and pushed factory farm policies—was the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC).

When CFFE members began to fight for environmental Good Neighbor policies and enforcement of state laws restricting corporate farming, NPPC state affiliates were at the forefront of efforts to defeat the policies, gut the regulations, and prevent enforcement. Worse, when NPPC worked for factory farm expansion and corporate concentration, it did so as the “voice of America’s hog farmers.”

In August 1995 and June 1996, the CFFE publicly confronted NPPC officials at their headquarters in Des Moines, Iowa, pushing them to change their positions on EPA enforcement, mandatory price reporting, meatpacker consolidation, and government subsidies of factory farm operations. NPPC adamantly

refused to support any family farm or environmental resolutions or change their pro-corporate position in any way.

Late in 1996, NPPC hired Mongoven, Biscoe, and Duchin, a high-powered Washington, D.C., corporate consulting firm that specialized in “issue management” for Fortune 500 corporations, to carry out secret surveillance of three CFFE member groups: Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, Land Stewardship Project, and the Missouri Rural Crisis Center.

But CFFE continued its grassroots mobilization and, on March 20, 1997, organized a militant demonstration, 350 people strong, at NPPC headquarters. To drive their point home, they planted a huge sign on the front lawn, proclaiming the corporate lobby the “National Factory Farms Council.” Bit by bit, CFFE was building momentum and challenging the factory farms’ power base.

The Campaign to End the Pork Checkoff

In late 1997 and early 1998 CFFE leaders began to plan a national campaign to end the mandatory pork checkoff. By law, the checkoff could be ended if hog farmers voted it out in a national referendum. Such a referendum would only take place if 15 percent of all U.S. hog farmers signed a petition calling for a vote. After meeting with hundreds of hog farmers, CFFE decided to undertake the campaign.

The petition drive was tough. Everyone knew how powerful the NPPC was. Many hog farmers feared reprisals if they signed the petition. And relative to the NPPC, the CFFE was at a severe disadvantage. It had no master list of hog farmers. It received little cooperation, and much outright opposition, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. And the NPPC had overwhelming institutional and corporate support to spend on radio and print ads and full-time PR personnel. But the CFFE had something that they didn’t have: the courage and determination of hundreds and hundreds of grassroots organizers. We sent out mailings, spoke at meetings, made hundreds

of phone calls, and drove thousands of miles up and down asphalt, gravel, and dirt roads, visiting hog farmers and concerned citizens one by one. In a year’s time, CFFE had gathered more than 19,000 signatures—20 percent of the country’s hog farmers, according to the official USDA census of 1997.

In May 1999, CFFE submitted the signatures to the USDA, which promptly set its lawyers to work dreaming up ways to avoid calling a vote. The USDA also tried to give the list of petitioners to the NPPC, but was prevented from doing so by a successful lawsuit. After nine more months of bureaucratic stonewalling, on February 25, 2000, Secretary of Agriculture Glickman finally called for the vote. But first the USDA established a voter eligibility rule that hugely favored the factory farms: contractors who raise pigs for corporations and their employees were able to “become” eligible to vote by selling pigs in individuals’ names.

The vote was concluded on September 21, 2000, but the USDA stalled in announcing the results. Finally, on January 11, 2001, after an intense public pressure campaign, outgoing Secretary Glickman announced that family farm hog producers had voted to end the mandatory pork checkoff 53 percent to 47 percent in a binding referendum.

CFFE had waged a low-budget, grassroots campaign against an estimated NPPC war chest of \$4 million—and won! David had beaten Goliath, and there was jubilation across the land.

A Luta Continua

In real life, however, things rarely wrap up as neatly as they do in fairy tales. As soon as the results were announced, the NPPC sued to overturn the vote. President Bush, ever sympathetic to Big Business, put Al Tank, the head of the NPPC, on his agricultural transition team. CFFE pushed to have the final rule issued and kept up the pressure on the media, Congress, and the new administration. After much negotiation, the Department of Justice and USDA lawyers informed CFFE that a “settlement” had

been reached between the USDA and the NPPC: Even though it had been voted down in a national referendum, the checkoff would continue.

Undaunted, CFFE is fighting back in the courtrooms and in the streets. On March 8–9, in Sioux Falls, S.D., they held a press conference and demonstration that coincided with President Bush’s visit to pitch his tax cut proposal. And on March 25–26, CFFE organized hundreds of people to travel to Washington, D.C., to protest the actions of the USDA and the NPPC. Since then, CFFE has sent an open letter to President Bush with 147 organizations adding their signatures. CFFE will not rest until their vote is upheld and the checkoff is terminated.

The campaign to end the pork checkoff started out as a strategic campaign against factory farms and industrial agriculture, but now it has become a matter of basic justice and democracy. “The vote proved that we don’t want money going out of our pockets for factory farms and corporate control anymore,” says Rhonda Perry, a campaign leader and hog farmer from Armstrong, Missouri. “Now they’ve sabotaged our campaign, attempting to squash our efforts to stand up for family farmers and democracy. But the struggle continues, and we will win!”

To learn more, check out “Hog Wars: The Corporate Grab for Control of the Hog Industry and How Citizens Are Fighting Back” at <www.inmotion-magazine.com>. Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment groups include the Missouri Rural Crisis Center, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, Illinois Stewardship Alliance, Land Stewardship Project from Minnesota and legal support from Farmers Legal Action Group.

Steve Hollis is president of AFGE Local 3354 at the US Department of Agriculture and treasurer of the Missouri Rural Crisis Center.



Kari Kuebler

THE GREAT MEDIA, PENNSYLVANIA FBI BURGLARY

BY
DENNIS O'NEIL
AND
JAY D. MAZUR

March 8, 1971 was not a good day for the agent-in-charge at the FBI field office in the small Pennsylvania town of Media. When he arrived at the second floor office, he found the door unlocked. Imagine his horror as he entered to find that every file in the place had vanished!

For the next few weeks, desperation gripped the Federal Bureau of Investigation as agents worked around the clock looking for leads. Then their nightmare deepened.

An unknown group calling itself The Citizens' Commission to Investigate the FBI released a statement to the press taking credit for the burglary. They had acted, the statement said, to investigate FBI intimidation and illegal practices like

Newspapers got big fat packages of material. "Attorney General John Mitchell issued an urgent plea to the press today not to publish information from files stolen this month," reported the New York Times on March 24.

But it was too late. Liberal politicians like Parren Mitchell, a Black Congressman from Maryland, were getting parcels too. The burglary in Media was a crime, he said, but the files he got were full of evidence of other criminal activity, committed by the FBI. He wanted hearings.

Now the newspapers were full of stories. Field offices had been instructed to spy on Black Student Unions. A Boy Scout leader in Moscow, Idaho got his mail opened because he wanted to take his troop on a friendship visit to Moscow, Russia. Agents



against crime and commie subversion.

For several weeks, every time the story would die down, new files would show up in newsrooms. The FBI had infiltrated the Southern Christian Leadership Conference founded by Dr. Martin Luther King and other civil rights groups. The Bureau had news reporters working as informants. And on and on.

As direct result of the Media, Pennsylvania raid, Congressional investigations were called. The biggest one, headed by Idaho Senator Frank Church produced a report detailing—and derailing—the FBI's previously secret and now notorious COINTELPRO program (and similar crimes by the CIA). Citizens won the right to inspect their FBI files, though these are always delivered heavily censored. And tens of millions of Americans learned to distrust anything having to do with the FBI.

Best of all, the daring raiders, who were the FBI's informal target number one for years after the Media raid, have never been identified, let alone caught. Perhaps, because of this, they don't get the proper respect for the immense contribution they made, back in the day...

The daring raiders, who were the FBI's informal target number one for years after the Media raid, have never been identified, let alone caught.

eavesdropping, entrapment and the use of provocateurs and informants. They would be communicating their findings to persons who had demonstrated integrity, courage and commitment to democratic values.

Suddenly activists in the Black movement and the struggle against the Vietnam war started calling their friends: "You won't believe what I found in the mailbox today!"

targeting people's movements were encouraged to take action to "enhance the paranoia endemic in these circles."

From today's vantage point when exposures of the FBI as vicious and anti-democratic (or incompetent or riddled with foreign spies) are commonplace, it is difficult to grasp just how damaging a blow all this was to the Bureau's carefully cultivated image—the dedicated, upstanding, invincible defender of the US

Dennis O'Neil has never been in Media, PA. Honest.

Jay D. Mazur thinks Pennsylvania is a part of Connecticut. He thinks everywhere that isn't part of NYC is in Connecticut.

Left to right:

Herman Wallace, Robert "King" Wilkerson, Albert Woodfox



The Angola 3

BY MICHELLE FOY

On February 16 of 2001, Robert "King" Wilkerson was released from 30 years in Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, after a court overruled his conviction. Along with Herman Wallace and Albert Woodfox, who remain in Angola in solitary confinement, King was serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole. All three convictions resulted from charges fabricated by prison officials who were intent on crushing the men's political organizing in prison.

Woodfox and Wallace founded a chapter of the Black Panther Party (BPP) at Angola in 1971. Wilkerson joined them in 1972. The BPP chapter organized and agitated against the rampant brutality and inhumanity at Angola, a slave-plantation-turned-prison. Although less known than the Oakland, Chicago and Los Angeles chapters of the BPP, the prisoners carried out work inspired by those examples.

The BPP chapter at Angola quickly became popular among prisoners hungry for organization and became a means to challenge not only immediate prison conditions but also the social conditions that led to their incarceration. However, the chapter was not so welcome to the all-white administration at Angola, who would not tolerate political organizing by prisoners, especially Black prisoners. When a white Angola guard, Brent Miller, was found stabbed to death on April 17, 1972, officials quickly charged Wallace and Woodfox. Both were convicted.

Following the conviction of Wallace and Woodfox, Wilkerson was placed in solitary confinement upon his arrival at Angola. He was put under investigation for the murder of the guard, despite the

fact that he was not even at Angola at the time of the killing. Later he was convicted of killing a prisoner. Twenty-nine years after that conviction and after the emergence of significant evidence that proved his innocence, Wilkerson's conviction was overturned. He is currently living in New Orleans, where he continues to fight for the freedom of the remaining brothers in Angola.

Likewise, there is substantial evidence that Woodfox and Wallace were framed. Woodfox has passed a lie detector test, and the prison's own documents clearly prove that officials paid their only "eye-

been organizing throughout the country, including inside prisons. Many of these folks remain incarcerated today.

Scott Fleming, a supporter and attorney working on a legal challenge to the conviction of the Angola 3, states that "the generalized campaign of disruption of the BPP often manifested itself in the form of informants and snitches who could manufacture evidence, which proved to be a very effective legal tactic for the state. This is illustrated by the Angola 3 case, Geronimo ji Jaga, Marshall Eddie Conway and countless others."

For nearly three decades, these three men have struggled together to survive their horrific surroundings and to improve brutal prison conditions. Despite the extreme physical isolation, the Angola

For nearly three decades, these three men have struggled together to survive their horrific surroundings and to improve brutal prison conditions.

witness" for his testimony. In fact, according to attorneys, the entire case against the Angola 3 was built on the testimony of paid jailhouse snitches.

Guilty of Being Activists

The release of King Wilkerson and the overwhelming evidence for the innocence of the Angola 3 demonstrate that the three are not paying for the crime of murder, but for the "crime" of being organizers, revolutionaries within prison walls.

The Black Panther movement was met with state-sanctioned repression and brutality. Repression took the form of cold-blooded murder, as in the case of Fred Hampton, gunned down in a police raid in Chicago, as well as the murders of Bunchy Carter and John Huggins in L.A., now known to be the result of the FBI's Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO). Repression also included the framing of less known Panthers, who had

3 stayed committed to working with other prisoners to challenge individual cases in addition to collectively fighting injustices that affect all prisoners.

The awareness and financial support of folks on the outside is critical. To join the fight for the release of Woodfox and Wallace from Angola, contact the National Coalition to Free the Angola Three, PO Box 221100, Sacramento CA 95822, (510) 595-8264, email <marina@napanet.net>, web <www.prisonactivist.org/Angola>.

Also, check out the new book by Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas, Imagination, Liberation and the Black Panther Party, which details the case of the Angola 3 and looks at the important legacy of the Black Panther Party.

Michelle Foy is a member of Freedom Road Socialist Organization and an organizer with the California Prison Moratorium Project and California Prison Focus.

MICHAEL FRANTI AND SPEARHEAD

STAY HUMAN

Six Degrees Records



Memo
To: Michael Franti,
Spearhead
From: Scott M.X. Turner
Re: Operation Career
Suicide and Lasting
Immortality

Michael...

Congratulations. With the release of *Stay Human*, your new album on Six Degrees Records, you have completed Phase One of Spearhead's Master Plan: Career Suicide. Now comes the tougher Phase Two: Lasting Immortality.

Stay Human, your funky, passionate anti-death penalty concept album, has made nary a ripple on the charts. It's garnered more press in outlets like *The Nation* and the *New York Times* than music magazines and websites. The only chart it's registering on is the one measuring your accountant's heart rate.

Spearhead's had a tough time following in the footsteps of your previous band, The Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy, which followed your previous previous band the Beatnigs. Both bands, with their driving industrial beats (DHH), hard punk 'tude ('Nigs) and tough progressive political themes on California and beyond (both), played to a white college crowd.

DHH worked great. Except for the part about people of color not giving a rat's ass. You parted ways with DHH partner Rono Tse and formed Spearhead, an attempt (you said in interviews at the time) to speak to your own community. You released *Home*. With hits like "Hole In The Bucket" and brilliant anthems celebrating African-American culture and politics ("Dream Team" was the coolest), *Home* was a success, perfectly meshing radical and thoughtful politics with music that both grooved and adrenalized.

But the follow-up, *Chocolate Supa Highway*, wasn't so great. It had duller beats, seriously laid-back riffs and only a wispy nougat filling of a theme—people of color's presence on the Internet.



Spearhead lost its edge.

Worse, it was clear that the community was far more interested in the DMXs, Jay-Zs, Destiny's Childs and—good God—SeanPuffyDaddyP.Diddy Combs powering themselves into the community's hearts, minds and CD collections.

With your soul and ethics unflinching, the music biz was killing you more than you were killing yourself.

But now, Michael, with *Stay Human*, you've really done it. You've really committed career suicide. A concept album against the death penalty! Brilliant! No one's gonna buy this slab o'tunes!

Even if it is the best album in years... the best soul/hip-hop/funk/pop masterpiece since Public Enemy's heyday... the best concept album about an unpopular topic since Marvin Gaye's *What's Goin' On*.

Maybe you were worried there was still a chance *Stay Human* might actually move a few units, and that's why you built the album around fictional death-row inmate Sister Fatima, a reference to Mumia Abu-Jamal so transparent that everyone who believes Danny Faulkner's the hero in Philly will put you on their worldwide boycott lists.

Your lucid, eloquent, dangerous (to the power structure) politics guarantee *Stay Human* doesn't net you the Comeback of the Year award at the Grammys.

Which leaves the music.

Rare is the album that adrenalizes revolutionaries and provides make-out music for lovers, but you've done it. This

edition of Spearhead—multi-instrumentalist Carl Young, guitarist Dave Shul, drummer Roberto Quintana and your own beat and sample programming lay a fluid bedrock of grooves and fury, and the best foundation yet for your hip-hop/beat-poet baritone. Folks will probably compare it to *What's Goin' On*—I do, and favorably. Now it's a classic, but back in the day, Marvin Gaye pissed off a lot of people with his shift from Motown machine cog to current-events truth-teller.

If there's any justice in the world, *Stay Human* will be accorded the same status as *What's Goin' On*. Which is kinda ironic, since both albums are concerned with seeing actual justice come to pass. "I stay up late in my room at night/play my heroes on the turntable/opened me to that pure phat groove/help my soul break down them walls," you relate on "Thank You." The power of musicians to inspire activists, the power of activists to inform musicians.

The idea that revolution without love is an empty call binds all of *Stay Human's* songs together... too bad for power structure mouthpieces that would love to label you a shrill, knee-jerk polemicist. You understand that building the community is the first step. "Learn to be skillful movers of the stones that block the heart and turn humans into clones." With lines like that (from "Speaking of Tongues") and dozens of other pro-unity sentiments on *Stay Human*, you might as well paint a bulls-eye on your back and wait for the FBI to show up at your door.

Stay Human's last lyrics, from "Skin On The Drum," made my eyes go moist. "And as all the pepper gas clears/and police and protesters go home/just as the morning dew are tear drops of the night/my emotions are always there for you/and will never leave you dry..." After an entire album's odyssey through political, spiritual and cultural tumult, you've fought the good fight and managed to stay human.

It ain't the music biz definition of success, but it is yours.

Congrats, Michael. The plan's going just fine. If, on the other hand, our plan fails, and a lot of people do get a hold of *Stay Human*, then it's the government that's got some planning to do.

I'll trade our plan for that contingency any time.

Scott M.X. Turner plays guitar with The Devil's Advocates and his alter-ego, Bloody Dick, does the same for the seminal punk legends The Spunk Lads.

Woman Courage

*I wish that I could have courage
You know... go to the store
And return the wrong product courage
...Be lost and ask for directions courage
Send a bad tasting meal back to the kitchen courage
... Woman courage*

*You know... raise children alone courage
Express your genuine emotions courage
Show compassion courage
Estrogen courage
... Woman courage*

*You know...
Dance with your own gender without a second thought courage
Hug and kiss your same sex courage
Sister courage
Mother courage
Daughter courage
... Woman courage*

*You know...
Fifty one percent minority courage
Under utilized intellect courage
Paid less for the same work courage
Forced to be a reproductive machine courage
You know...
Things that a man won't do courage
... Woman courage*

—Joe Navarro

Joe Navarro is a literary *vato loco*, teacher, student and community activist. He has published seven chapbooks of poetry and has been featured in various publications nationally. "Woman Courage" is included in a poetry collection entitled *Ambidextrous (In Two Languages)*.

FREEDOM ROAD

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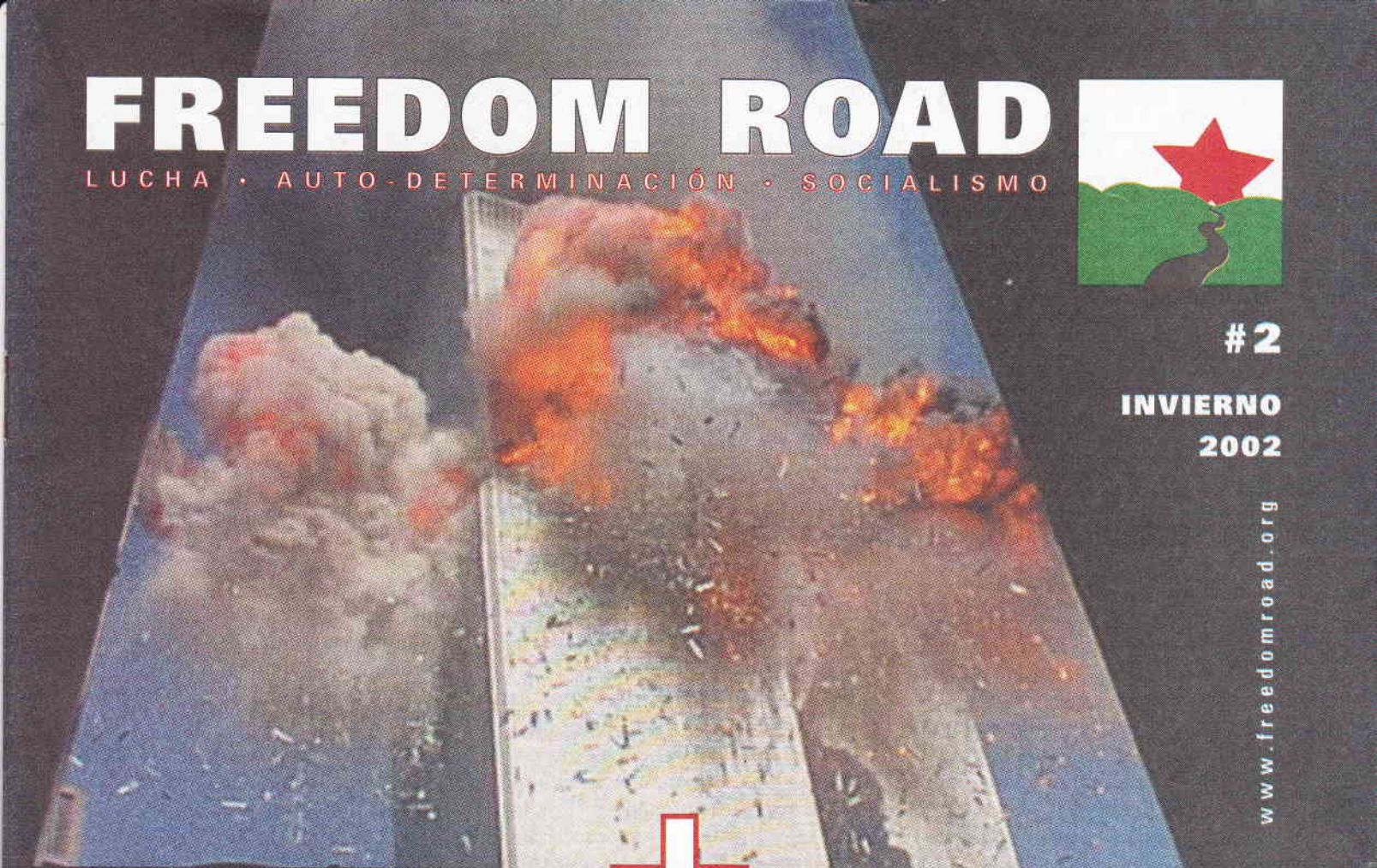


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DESPUÉS DEL 9-11

DESAFÍOS PARA EL
MOVIMIENTO PARA
LA JUSTICIA GLOBAL



En este número:

- Platicando con una mujer guerrillera de las Filipinas
- Cooperativa popular queda firme para su comunidad



¿El Movimiento de Justicia Global después de 9/11?

Después de los acontecimientos del 11 de septiembre, gente en todo el país están tratando de averiguar qué significa todo esto en cuanto los actuales movimientos para la justicia. En particular, el nuevo movimiento de justicia global que jugó un papel clave en iniciar la lucha contra la guerra en Afganistán, enfrenta grandes inquietudes sobre el rumbo hacia el futuro. Este número fue planeado con el enfoque en el movimiento de justicia global cuando pasó lo del 11 de septiembre, y por eso este editorial se dirige a la importancia de los hechos que afectan este movimiento.

La Justicia Global y la Guerra

El movimiento global para la justicia quedó seriamente desviado por los hechos del 11 de septiembre. Muchas consideraban que las manifestaciones planeadas en contra de el FMI (Fondo Monetario Internacional), el Banco Mundial, y las movilizaciones contra el WTO (World Trade Organization) iban a ser sumamente dramáticas; pero se evaporaron. El frente unido de justicia global se ha debilitado; en particular, la alianza de los jóvenes activistas con los sindicatos se deshizo casi por completo. Nos vemos enfrentados con una ardua lucha para reconstruirlo.

Nuestro éxito en reactivar el movimiento depende en gran parte en como van la guerra y los movimientos en

contra de ella. En este momento es casi imposible predecir el futuro de este movimiento.

Una cuestión inmediata se trata de cómo combinar estos dos movimientos. ¿Podremos combinar el esfuerzo contra la guerra y la lucha por la justicia global? Esta muy claro que no podemos combinar las exigencias del, por un lado, acabar con los bombardeos y la muerte de hambre de miles en Afganistán y, por otro lado, con las de traer a su fin la explotación económica mundial. Sin embargo, podemos buscar toda oportunidad para relacionar los asuntos de nuestra agenda para demostrar que los mismos autores son los causantes de estas injusticias. También, podemos considerar la posibilidad de exponer nuestras mismas demandas con respecto a las mismas metas de movimientos en contra de la globalización.

Por lo pronto hay que preguntarnos, ¿dónde poner el énfasis: la justicia global, o el activismo contra la guerra? Freedom Road (Camino a la Libertad) creemos que la respuesta esta muy clara: El movimiento contra la guerra debe continuar siendo el primer propósito de los movimientos de justicia global mientras que las acciones bélicas continúan. La guerra dirigida por los EEUU. es, después de todo, el factor principal que maneja el equilibrio del poder al nivel global. Las fuerzas del pueblo siempre deben buscar las formas para mantener algo de aten-

ción en el Banco Mundial y los G-8, pero por lo pronto este trabajo tiene que tomar segundo lugar.

Reforzando Nuestras Fuerzas

Hay contribuciones de gran valor que los movimientos de justicia global presentan al foro del movimiento en contra de la guerra. Las fuerzas para la justicia global dentro del movimiento contra la guerra deben prestar atención especial a estas contribuciones y buscar formas para que ellas se desarrollen más.

Una cosa es que el análisis que presenta el movimiento de justicia global es clave: El movimiento pro-paz históricamente ha enfocado principalmente contra el militarismo y la intervención imperialista. Los temas de justicia económica y social plantados al frente por el movimiento de justicia global complementan esta orientación. Conjuntos, estos temas crean la potencial para una oposición popular y bien formada contra de los EEUU.

Ha habido luchas difíciles pero significativas en contra de la supremacía blanca dentro del movimiento de justicia global y se ha visto avances reales en la conciencia y la práctica. Esta experiencia contribuye al movimiento contra la guerra, y debe ser reforzado.

De la misma manera, los movimientos como el que opone el sistema industrial de cárceles e encarcelad@s ha proporcionado importantes ensayos sobre la

opresión racial para los activistas pro-justicia global. Uno de los puntos más destacados—vital para el movimiento pro-paz también—es la necesidad central de formar lazos con las luchas cotidianas contra el terror policiaco, la discriminación racial, el racismo ambiental, y ataques contra los inmigrantes en las comunidades de color de los EEUU.

El intrínscico carácter global del movimiento pro-justicia global ha contribuido enormemente a su fuerza. Debemos seguir reforzando los lazos internacionales en la lucha contra la guerra, así que la única manera para luchar contra el bien lubricado ingenio de guerra es por medio de un Frente Popular Global. Sobre todo, nosotros, como habitantes del país imperialista principal, tenemos la responsabilidad de aliarnos explícitamente con los pueblos del Tercer Mundo que nuestro gobierno y las corporaciones capitalistas están aplastando.

Además, el movimiento de justicia global lleva consigo ideas nuevas sobre estructura y organización. Estas ideas relacionadas a tales cosas como los grupos pequeños de afinidad, estructuras de grandes agrupaciones, maneras de tomar decisiones por grupos grandes, la acción directa, etcétera no puede simplemente copiar mecánicamente al movimiento pro-paz, pero sí provee una fuente de nuevas formas de pensar, que es generalmente muy sano.

Coser Todos Hilos Contra el Imperialismo

Las luchas contra la globalización durante los últimos años han contribuido—entre los activistas que tienen más experiencia—en promover una mayor conciencia sobre la relación entre los EEUU. y el resto del mundo. Muchos han llegado a comprender que es mucho más que la “globalización”, más que las corporaciones transnacionales malditas en sí. Es un sistema de capitalismo imperialista encabezado por los EEUU. Sin embargo, hay que mantener “ojo” sobre algunas cosas.

En particular, es importante evitar la tentación de promover el anti-imperialismo como la fundación única de unidad del movimiento. Hacer esto nos llevaría en contra de la fuerte necesidad de formar un frente amplio y unido dentro del movimiento. Si queremos detener la guerra y asegurar que los EEUU. no cometa mayores daños a la gente de Afganistán y otros países, hay que ganar mayores sectores del pueblo de este país. No podemos lograr esto exigiéndoles, ni explícitamente ni por medio de la manera en que nos presentamos, que quien sea de las organizaciones en que trabajamos promueva siempre un análisis anti-imperialista.

L@s de nosotr@s que entendemos que el problema es el imperialismo tenemos la tarea de unir l@s que han desarrollado ideas semejantes, y al mismo tiempo seguir trabajando en grupos de masas que funcionan a un nivel menos avanzado. En el paso de tiempo luchamos para ganar la gente que comprenden aspectos del análisis pero que no hayan logrado formar una perspectiva total. No obstante, las organizaciones de masas necesitan mantener un nivel de entrada más básica. La posibilidad de desarrollar entre los millones una firme conciencia anti-imperialista no nos llegará si no existe la apertura donde ellos puedan involucrarse en una de las organizaciones de masas en el movimiento contra la guerra.

Tácticas en el Movimiento

Bien o mal, por el momento el campo ha cambiado. Por una parte, hay nuevas aperturas para exponer la historia de la política imperialista de los EEUU. con la gente y la oportunidad para experimentar

mayores tácticas militantes ha disminuido por el momento, y muy probablemente por un tiempo largo.

Sobre las acciones confrontistas, hay que ser preparados para los que nos quieren clasificar como “terroristas. Puede que haya necesidad para luchar dentro del movimiento sobre las tácticas si las acciones de grupos como “Black Bloc” siguen con sus tácticas que, dado a las nuevas condiciones, son innecesariamente peligrosas. El peligro de una ruptura en el frente unido es ahora mucho más grande que era antes del 9-11.

Sin embargo, hay que mantener en mente que esta es una lucha constructiva, no antagonística, entre nuestros aliados. Tod@s somos compañer@s aun si algun@s creen equivocadamente que la estrategia más apropiada que amenaza a la clase dominante es siempre una cuyas tácticas sean las más militantes.

Ser Preparad@s para Cualquier Cambio

Es difícil evitar la nostalgia de los días antes de 9-11 cuando las fuerzas de justicia global hacían mayores avances, batalla tras batalla, contra los perros que gobiernan este mundo injusto. Pero el hecho es que la historia nos pone nuevas condiciones en cualquier momento y tenemos que cambiar nuestro modo de pensar para mantenernos actualizad@s. La guerra no es eterna y, a la medida que trabajamos eficazmente, más corta será la espera para el fin. No es fácil manifestar las opiniones no populares, pero a veces hay que ser firme sobre los principios. Cuando se acaba la guerra aun habrá necesidad para un movimiento de justicia global para continuar la lucha.





CHARLA CON UNA GUERRILLERA FILIPINA

POR DINA

En la primavera de 2001, mi compañero y yo tuvimos la rara oportunidad, y como se convirtió después, el gran privilegio de viajar a las Filipinas e ir a lejanas áreas rurales que dominan este pequeño país de islas. Nuestros anfitriones eran un equipo no común—una unidad guerrillera de Combatientes Rojos, una parte del brazo armado del Partido Comunista de las Filipinas. Durante tres días y dos noches ellos se arriesgaron cuidadosa y calculadamente y nos llevaron a su unidad para que pudiéramos echar un vistazo a su forma de vida y a su trabajo.

Nosotros pasamos la segunda mañana con la unidad en los campos de arroz de una pequeña aldea. Era una de las pocas veces que salimos en la luz del día y, viendo el trillar en el calor del día platicábamos con los campesinos a la hora que ellos recogían su agua. Poco después de que regresáramos, nuestro anfitrión (una de las cuantiosas familias de confianza en el área que escondía los Combatientes Rojos del gobierno y sus espías) cocinó una cantidad de arroz y unas verduras para el almuerzo. Cuando terminamos de comer, nos acostamos en el piso de un cuarto, que en realidad era una plataforma de bambú elevada para aliviarnos del calor húmedo.

Conociendo a los Combatientes

Cuando nos despertamos, Chuck, el líder del escuadrón, había regresado de una reunión con unos compañeros para que los conociéramos. Entre ellos había una mujer joven que había sido una Combatiente Roja por casi dos años. La

pedimos platicar sobre su historia personal, y nos platicó como se involucró en la lucha. Cuando empezamos a platicar, Frankie, el Combatiente Rojo a cargo de las provisiones, le dio a ella tres chocolates que nos habían pedido traer cuando les preguntamos “que era que la gente del campo necesitaba.” Después de comer uno, ella repartió los demás con los niñ@s juntad@s ahí.

Su militancia se inició en la Iglesia, nos relataba. Siendo una católica devota desde su niñez, ella se transformó gradualmente a activista cuando era universitaria. Aprendió que los “revolucionarios—como Dios—sirven al pueblo.” Cuando ella decidió dedicarse al movimiento, su familia le dio la espalda, la desconocieron como hija y le dieron el ultimátum: si se iba al frente guerrillero, jamás pudiera volver con ellos. Pero ella estaba decidida. Estuvo en el frente por un año y medio sin contacto con su familia, pero cuando finalmente regresó a la ciudad por primera vez, se reconciliaron. Ellos no estaban de acuerdo con su ideología política, pero por lo menos la reconocieron nuevamente como su hija.

Pues ella era una de esas intelectuales raras que sacrificó sus estudios y su vida en la comodidad de la ciudad para convertirse en una Combatiente Roja—y se quedó. Le preguntamos si ella había experimentado momentos de incertidumbre, a lo cual ella respondió, “Por supuesto.” Ella había sido una joven urbana que nunca había caminado en el campo antes y no conoció a las privaciones. Por eso, el período de casi tres meses para acostumbrarse fue duro.

Nosotros estábamos indecisos entre el querer saber todo sobre sus experiencias como mujer Combatiente Roja y dejar de preguntarle sólo sobre las cosas relacionadas con las mujeres, pues no queríamos encajonarla. Pero imaginándome a mí misma con mis debilidades en su lugar, le tuve que preguntar si sentía que tenía que comprobar algo por razón de su género. Al principio dijo que no, que existía la igualdad en los escuadrones. El Partido dictaba que a las mujeres y los hombres se les recibieran todo igual en el contexto del hecho que la mayoría de las mujeres no tienen la misma fuerza física.

Pero después, cuando preguntamos que pasaba cuando hubo instancias de machismo en el escuadrón, nos reveló un poco más. Explicó que por el hecho que los compañeros en el escuadrón radican de la sociedad, algunos guardan los residuos de pensamientos feudales. Al principio ellos tendían a pensar que ella era débil, y siempre la colocaban en medio de la fila de marcha cuando todos viajaban en la noche. “Pero ahora,” ella dijo, “ellos saben que yo puedo caminar tan rápido como ellos en el campo, y soy capaz de cargar y usar mi arma eficazmente.” Y el hecho que ella permaneció un año y medio antes de su primer visita a la ciudad le facilitó en ganar mucho respeto por parte de sus compañer@s.

Al pretender de ponerme en su lugar de nuevo, me rendí ante la curiosidad de saber que hacía cuando le pasaba su regla. Se rió y dijo que era como cualquier otro día. Pero lo que yo quería saber era si el escuadrón obtenía sus materiales

automáticamente, o si era difícil que ellos entendieran que ella necesitaba las cosas como toallas femeninas cada mes. Su escuadrón aparentemente era muy eficaz en obtener sus toallas, pero no eran tan buenos para decirle cuando se manchaba de sangre. Aún tenían mucha pena, y pasaban varias horas antes de que se diera cuenta de que la gente se le quedaba viendo porque tenía sangre en sus pantalones. Pero desde su ingreso, las reglas del partido cambiaron para que todos los escuadrones que tenían mujeres integrantes debe de tener por los menos dos. Se le ha hecho mucho más fácil tener otra compañera para que se apoyaran mutuamente.

¿Pero que de su trabajo organizando a los campesinos? ¿Alguna vez se encontraba con personas que no le respetaba lo que ella les decía? Tal vez en algunas ocasiones. Pero en general ella encontraba que la gente la admiraba y respetaba mucho más por haber enfrentado el mito de que las mujeres no son aptas para la guerrilla. También se enteró que las mujeres tienen una ventaja cuando organizan. Por ejemplo, al encontrar una mujer tocando la puerta, la gente no se siente la misma desconfianza y miedo que genera un hombre—aun cuando la mujer lleva una arma de fuego.

La "Cuestión de los Shorts"

Mientras que pasaba el atardecer y la hora de la cena, más gentes aparecieron en el cuarto de atrás y se sentaban para escuchar a nuestra plática. Acababa de preguntarle a la guerrillera si a veces se sentía incomoda porque tenía que dormir en un lugar aparte. (Una de las reglas de los escuadrones manda que al menos que dos Guerrilleros Rojos sean casad@s, deben acostarse aparte según género.) Separada de sus compañeros—para su escuadrón, el dormir separado significaba que ellos dormían en el suelo y ella en una silla—cuando una voz salía del cuarto pidiéndole a ella que me explicaba las reglas de vestir. Giré la cabeza y vi un señor de edad-media sonriéndose. Fue entonces que ella explicó que por el hecho de vivir en esta sociedad

la cual aún mantiene la ideología feudalista, las reglas de uniformes de los Guerrilleros Rojos le prohíbe a las mujeres que usen shorts.

Me sobresalte un poco. "¿Que?" Me fijé a mis piernas, tratando de imaginarme metiéndolas permanentemente en pantalones largos en este calor tan húmedo. Y esa era la temporada más templada. Además, yo había observado a muchas mujeres Filipinas usando shorts. "¿Porque este actitud tan conservador entre los Guerrilleros Rojos?" pregunté. Su respuesta no me satisfizo para nada. Muchos de los nuevos compañeros en el escuadrón no han sido completamente "indoctrinados" ideológicamente. Los hombres son criados pensando que si una mujer usa shorts, es una "facilita." Pues, la responsabilidad queda con la mujer para que sus compañeros no la encuentren como atractiva. Por eso era la responsabilidad de las compañeras de ayudar a los compañeros no sentir la atracción física.

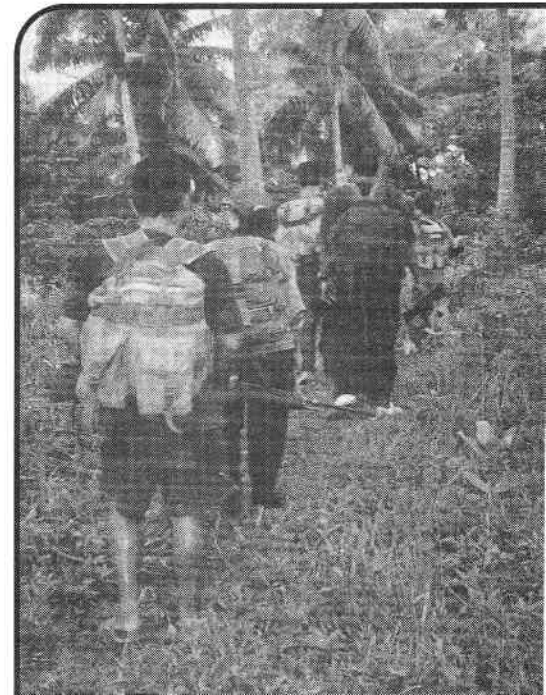
Esto abrió mis ojos. "¿Pero no debe ser la responsabilidad del escuadrón y los compañeros que lo forman a reformar esta ideología, en vez que la mujer sea la responsable de prevenir el machismo?" Se veía sorprendida por mi indignación: "¿Pero cual es el gran problema? No esta tan mal que nosotras usemos pantalones, que no?" Le dije que era para mi así que no aguanto tanto calor, y además, el punto clave no se trataba del usar o no usar los shorts—la cuestión era la desigualdad.

Felipe me observó, y perplejo, preguntó "Eso no es justo, verdad?" Yo no creía que lo era. Finalmente, agarrando la honda un poco, yo pregunté, "Si esa es la manera de la sociedad de hoy, que la gente no acepté que las mujeres usen shorts, entonces por qué es que las reglas no se apliquen a ambos géneros para que los hombres y las mujeres estén en solidaridad el uno con el otro?"

"O," era la respuesta del otro cuarto. "Sí lo es. Los hombres tampoco pueden usar shorts. O sea, no los cortitos." Apenitas empecé a sentir un diluvio de alivio. "Entonces, los hombres y las

mujeres pueden usar los shorts largos?" Se permitía sólo los shorts que llegaban apenas arriba de la rodilla. Me fijé mis piernas una vez más. Los shorts míos me llegaban a medio muslo, aún conservador según los estándares de los EEUU. Los de Felipe le llegaban a la rodilla. Me paré y me puse mis pantalones largos de nylon, los cuales inmediatamente se aplastaban a mi piel. Lo contemplé después, y decidí que de todas formas me hubiera cambiado en ese momento, aun si las reglas se aplicaban sólo a las mujeres. Si estaban dispuestos a aceptarme en su organización, pues debería estar dispuesta a seguir sus reglas. Pero a lo mejor yo hubiera platicado de esto mucho más esto en el futuro. Hasta ese punto, ya no había conflicto sobre este tema. Sólo un salpullido de calor.

Llegó la noche y las siluetas de figuras se movían, entraban, y salían de la casa—aun, un intercambio muy animado acerca de temas sociales y políticos continuaba. Finalmente, el compañero que había animado a la joven mujer a hablar sobre las reglas de vestir—el cual se acercó poco a poco hasta que se salió del cuarto en seguida para sentarse con nosotros en la sala—se levantó y dijo que tenía que irse. La guerrillera entendió la seña, se saludaron de manos y se desparecieron silenciosamente por la puerta. El ambiente era tan acogedor y energético que se hizo difícil despedirme de ell@s. Y ni siquiera supimos cuales eran sus nombres.





LA COOPERATIVA DE VIVIENDA ARLANDRIA ISLA DE LA CLASE TRABAJADORA EN UN OCEANO DE GENTRIFICACIÓN

POR CAMERON BARRON

Al comenzar el 2001, Alexandria, Virginia enfrenta una invasión. Los 125,000 residentes de la ciudad tienden a ser gente de dinero y el 60% de ellos son blancos. Ahora es la oportunidad de radicarse para los Republicanos blancos que están llegando a la Capital y tomar parte en la administración de Bush. Ellos tienen que estar cerca de la acción pero con seguridad no desean vivir en DC, por su carácter urbano y Afroamericanos en su mayoría.

Yo vivo en una isla de fortaleza entre este océano de gentrificación: la Cooperativa de Vivienda Arlandria Chirilagua (ACHC). Formada en Febrero de 1966, la cooperativa propiedad de los residentes de los apartamentos, representa el triunfo de una visión y lucha para la gente de bajos recursos en medio de un océano de prosperidad material. Aunque el salario medio de las familias de la ciudad es \$79,000 al año, en la sección de Arlandria es mucho menos que la mitad de eso. Los inquilinos que llaman sus hogares a las 282 unidades de la Cooperativa, son en la mayoría inmigrantes Salvadoreños y Hondureños, con un número significativo de familias Afroamericanas también.

Con la formación de esta cooperativa, la gente trabajadora de Alexandria ha tomado un paso hacia adelante para ganar algún poder económico por ellos mismos. La pregunta acerca del poder ó la falta de éste, no se escapa de la vida de la gente trabajadora. Al hablar acerca del

poder político, social o económico, el esfuerzo para obtener poder siempre ha sido el centro de la lucha por la libertad.

Para la gente oprimida, que camino tomar hacia el desarrollo económico, siempre es un problema. La televisión y

hombres trabajador@s, es tan grande que algo a una escala masiva es necesario. Diferente a otras viviendas de propietarios, nosotros no operamos para sacar una ganancia. No se produce un exceso de dinero. Manteniendo nuestros principios

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las revistas están llenos de personajes bien elegantes que abogan copiar a la América blanca, aceptando el capitalismo y poniendo de ejemplo a un poco de Afroamericanos y Latinos, como prueba de historias triunfantes. Hay otros, menos ahora que en los años 60 y 70, que argumentan que las comunidades oprimidas necesitan desligarse del sistema económico lo más posible y depender de nosotros mismos para proveer nuestras necesidades.

Hay una tercera forma, una que se enfoca en avanzar la causa de la propiedad colectiva. Esta forma esta contra las restricciones filosóficas del capitalismo, al rechazar el individualismo mientras que también observa el nivel de las dificultades que enfrentan las mujeres y

de la fundación, pagamos nuestras cuentas, ahorramos una parte y distribuimos los ahorros entre los miembros de ACHC, en la forma de rentas mensuales a bajo costo. Los residentes de la Cooperativa de Vivienda Arlandria-Chirilagua, son parte de la sociedad de la clase trabajadora. Nosotros somos los trabajadores de la construcción, las mucamas, l@s vendedor@s dentro y alrededor de la ciudad de Washington, D.C.

El Dueño Se Daña el Mismo, con Nuestra Ayuda

A mediados de los años 80, Alexandria vio crecer sus habitantes cuando la gente tomó ventaja de la cercanía de la ciudad a Washington. Un buen servicio de transporte y muchos trabajos, en el sector

público y privado, creó una gran demanda de vivienda. En la vivienda, así como en otros mercados, cuando hay un aumento en la demanda, los dueños tienden a sacar provecho de la situación al cobrar más por sus productos. Nuestro propietario anterior no fue una excepción. El mandó avisos de desalojo, con la excusa que renovaría la propiedad. Cuando el dueño originalmente envió los avisos de desalojo, anticipó que la gente estaría fuera de la propiedad en un lapso de 30 a 90 días. Entonces él "renovaría" la propiedad pasándole una mano de pintura fresca a los apartamentos y después aumentaría la renta y ganaría de esas unidades de vivienda idealmente situadas. Lo que no predijo fue la resistencia de los inquilinos organizados ni tampoco calculó lo que le costaría. La resistencia se llevó a cabo en dos frentes. Primero, los residentes demostraron su enojo en las calles por medio de demostraciones y mítines de protestas. Segundo, la resistencia se llevó a cabo en la corte al desafiar difícilmente la legalidad de los desalojos. En el mundo de los negocios, donde el tiempo es dinero, éste retraso en los planes del dueño, le costaría su propiedad. A principios de 1991, retrasos causados por los inquilinos combinados con una economía mala, condujo al dueño de la propiedad a declararse en la bancarrota.

El Comité/TWSC

Desde el inicio, el Comité de Apoyo de Inquilinos y Trabajadores (TWSC/Comité) dirigió el esfuerzo de la resistencia. Inicialmente, por medio de un esfuerzo voluntario pero eventualmente con organizadores pagados, el Comité le ayudó a la comunidad a navegar a través del proceso de tomar la propiedad. Lo que comenzó como una lucha de resistencia se transformó en una lucha por poder económico local. Resultado de una crisis capitalista y deseo de ganar, la cooperativa/ACHC, representa el tomar provecho de la oportunidad presentada por la tendencia general y cíclica hacia la crisis dentro del capitalismo.

Contrario a los años 60 y 70, ahora vivimos dentro de un país donde los poderes que existen solamente hablan de la necesidad de eliminar los tugurios y establecer una vivienda decente y a bajo costo. De acuerdo al estudio hecho por la Coalición Nacional de la Vivienda a Bajo Costo, National Low Income Housing Coalition, no hay ninguna región en los Estados Unidos donde una familia mantenida por solo un adulto, ganando el salario mínimo, pueda pagar la renta regular de un apartamento de un dormitorio. En 1970, el Centro del Presupuesto y Prioridades Políticas, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, el número de viviendas de alquiler a bajo costo, excedió por 300, 000, el número de inquilinos de bajos recursos. Veinticinco años después, habían 4.4 millones más familias, que alquileres de vivienda disponibles a bajo costo. Este es otro ejemplo de como el mercado privado no puede planear las necesidades de una ciudad, una región ó un país.

La Cooperativa/ACHC representa una visión y un paso alternativ@ en el desarrollo de la vivienda. Sin embargo, en una sociedad donde el desposeído enfrenta continuamente los problemas relacionados a la falta de capital y discriminación racial y de género, ¿Cuánto nos puede movilizar de soñar a vivir esa realidad, el tener una visión de una nueva sociedad? Nosotros ciertamente estamos enfrentando nuevos desafíos y nuevas oportunidades al haberse institucionalizado la cooperativa. La contradicción de una compañía de no ganancias, tratando de existir dentro del sistema capitalista, presenta grandes amenazas y desafíos. Ya hemos recibido cartas de corporaciones interesadas en comprar la propiedad. Discusiones internas acerca de la expansión de la cooperativa provocan temor parecidos a los planes corporales motivados para ganar acciones en el mercado y aumentar las ganancias.

Están siempre presente los desafíos de la relación entre la comunidad Afroamericana y Latina, que se puede describir de ser tensa en la mayor parte.

Diferentes lenguajes y diferencias culturales no son aceptadas fácilmente, inclusive cuando existen objetivos comunes. En parte, debido al mal entendido de las culturas de cada uno y en parte a la falta de tiempo para comprender la realidad diaria actual de cada uno, las comunidades Afroamericanas y Latinas, aunque co-existen, no necesariamente lo hacen con cooperación. Las tensiones que son parte de las grandes sociedades se dan en la calle, en reuniones y encuentros casuales.

En un sentido, la cooperativa/ACHC se mantiene ahora como una visión realizada de poder en las manos de aquellos que han sido históricamente marginados. Sin embargo en un sentido más amplio, representa una visión que todavía no ha terminado. En un sistema económico global que parece crecer fuertemente en medio de las continuas contradicciones, la cooperativa/ACHC como una alternativa institucional, es un modelo que no necesitamos simplemente duplicar sino que ir más allá de éste. Las cooperativas pueden ofrecer un paso hacia el desarrollo sostenible económico. Al intensificarse las contradicciones económicas y al aparecer otras separaciones en la fabricación del capitalismo, surgirán nuevas oportunidades y depende de los progresistas, tomar provecho de ellas.

Finalmente, es crítico el proceso de lucha por la auto-emancipación de la dictadura del capital y no necesariamente un resultado garantizado. Nosotros tenemos que continuamente lanzar nuevos y energéticos esfuerzos de resistencia para derrocar al capitalismo, mientras mantenemos simultáneamente los ojos puestos en el premio de una nueva sociedad, una democracia y un mundo económico más humanos.

Cameron Barron ha sido residente de Alexandria, Virginia desde hace diez años. El sirve actualmente como presidente interino de la Mesa Directiva de Arlandia-Chirilagua. Trabaja para la AFL-CIO y es miembro del Congreso Negro Radical.