

FREEDOM ROAD

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- Ex-Ranger Stan Goff on the mess that is US military doctrine
- A new short story by Terry Bisson, Mumia's biographer
- Campus workers organize in North Carolina and Tennessee

A SPECIAL SECTION

Revolution in the Air

Looking at Max Elbaum's book on the '70s movement

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SPECIAL SECTION

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AS WE FACE A NEW WAR, LET'S NOT FORGET THE LESSONS OF THE OLD WARS

As we go to press, the US remains poised on the brink of attacking Iraq. Although they face growing worldwide resistance and dissenting voices even within the ranks of the ruling class, the Bush administration seems heedless of all this in their march toward war.

This is one of those historical moments that have greatly heightened repercussions. Decisions made and actions taken during the next few months will shape the terrain of the left for years to come. Organizations that misread the situation and take a wrong turn will be pushed back into (greater) irrelevance, and others that choose correct strategies will gain new footholds.

A New Vietnam, or a New Gulf War?

As someone who cut my political teeth in the first Gulf War, I remember the melancholy many existing progressive groups were stuck in after the slaughter in the Iraqi desert in the winter of 1991. It took years for much of the movement to climb out of its Gulf War Syndrome and begin to build again. A certain measure of this was probably unavoidable, but a lot of it might have been avoided had more activists properly grasped the objective conditions we faced.

The war was going to be horrible and bloody for the US, we warned. It would be a new Vietnam; thousands of GI's were going to be brought home in body bags. (This emphasis was partly based on the lie propagated by the ruling class that the movement against the war in Vietnam had spit on GI's rather than uniting with their resentment and rebelliousness.) Then the US attacked and only 133 US troops were killed. Once it started, the masses in the US swung behind the president, and the anti-war movement dried up and blew away. The overwhelming summation within the movement was one of failure.

This summation was wrong. It was

based on an error of philosophical idealism—of underestimating the role of conditions out in the world and overestimating our own limited ability to change those conditions. Despite a major split in the movement and the errors in overemphasizing potential US casualties, we built a big movement and built it fast; however, in retrospect there was no way we were going to stop that war no matter what we did. If the movement had spread a summation based on this reality, the movement during the '90s might have come out a little healthier.

Why didn't the movement develop a more accurate summation of the first Gulf War? It didn't have the opportunity. There were few vehicles to spread a common summation, rooted in a dialectic

Whatever happens in the upcoming weeks and months, the single most important thing we can do is to learn from the battles we fight and strive to fight even better the next time around.

tical materialist outlook, of the experiences of the movement. The *Guardian*, the much-missed newspaper of record for the Left, was in the process of falling apart. The internet was only in an embryonic stage. There were (and are) no large left parties. The Soviet bloc was falling apart and the US ruling class was declaring the end of history, leaving many left groups confused and disillusioned. The combination of all these factors left the movement subject to people's spontaneous emotional responses rather than clear-headed analysis.

Reading the Possibilities Properly

The common and natural tendency for people fighting today against a new attack on Iraq is once again to proclaim that we face a new Vietnam in the Middle East. But we should look at the first Gulf War as a much closer parallel to the situation we face now. To do otherwise could once again have disastrous consequences for us down the road. If Bush and his junta are unlucky, the situation after an invasion and occupation could well degenerate into something a whole lot messier, but the initial war is likely to look more like 1991 than 1971. Let's not set ourselves up for despair once again.

Despite the fact that opposition to the war is broader than a decade ago, we face a regime hell-bent on attacking Iraq. And despite all the (accurate) jokes we make about what a dim light bulb Dubya is, his regime filled with

people with visionary plans for geopolitical control of the main oil-producing region of the world, and they're willing to take much short-term political damage to carry out those plans. That's not to say that they won't have it all blow up in their faces a few months from now. But the fact is that our limited forces can only have a limited impact at this point. We should certainly all be working as hard as we can against the war, but we also shouldn't have any illusions about this fact. The thing we should keep in mind as we organize is the likelihood of *imperial overreach* down the road. We may not stop this war, but we can prepare to make the most of the

fallout from it, because there could be a lot. North Korea has already given them a good taste of it.

Build Organization, Build the United Front

Another lesson to take from our limited strength is that we desperately need more organization. More mass organizations in local communities, in neighborhoods, on campuses. More sectors of the population. More national networks and alliances. Bigger and stronger revolutionary organizations. All these take time, to develop, of course; there are no secret shortcuts. There is only the demand that we be relentless at building organization, on all these levels.

The movement against the war has been slow to build in oppressed nationality communities in particular for a variety of reasons. But those activists who do step forward are finding a very positive reception. For example, when the People's Organization for Progress in New Jersey, a group based mainly in the Black community in Newark, decided to hold an anti-war picket, some members were afraid it would derail their police brutality work. But the event went off better than even the proponents had expected, and it convinced the group to turn anti-war work into one of its main focuses.

It is more important than ever that different forces on the left dispense with sectarianism and be on their best behavior. One of the ironies of the present moment is that groups like the Revolutionary Communist Party and Worker's World Party, which have been known to have difficulty working well with other groups, are getting along while traditional peace groups which think of themselves as nonsectarian have too often tended to re-fight old battles with forces to their left.

One of the potential strengths of the movement this time around is that anti-imperialism is more widespread than in 1991, when many groups leaned more toward social chauvinism—valuing our own people more than those of Iraq.

(The development of the global justice movement during the '90s is probably one of the main reasons for this advance.) We should do what we can to spread anti-imperialist politics far and wide within the movement. Rhetoric-laden ranting and raving, though, is not a substitute for an anti-imperialist message spoken in a language people will understand. We must also avoid demanding that a pure anti-imperialist outlook be the basis of unity for any coalitions or alliances we build. Our task is to build a *united front*, bringing together all those forces that can be united against the Bush regime's war drive. United for Peace and Justice, a broad national network of a broad range of groups working against the war, is one model we can learn from and hopefully develop further.

Being Good at Learning

A dialectical materialist outlook teaches us that people learn from practice: from efforts to try to change the world we learn what works, what doesn't, which ideas seem to be right, which wrong. Today's anti-war movement has already absorbed some of the lessons of previous anti-war movements: Big demos are insufficient without local organizing. We need institutions of mass communication for the Left like *War Times*, email lists, Indymedia, Common Dreams. New forms of organization like Racial Justice 9-11 and US Labor against the War are important. We should avoid declaring that the sky is falling. Connecting the war to the political and economic effects at home is key. We should base anti-war organizing on the needs of particular communities. And so on.

Whatever happens in the upcoming weeks and months, the single most important thing we can do is to learn from the battles we fight and strive to fight even better the next time around. That's the only way we can become strong enough to defeat this monster we're up against.

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In This Issue

As we build a movement against an imperialist attack on Iraq, we can't lose focus on the countries the US is lining up to target next. Two of the chief countries of concern are Colombia and the Philippines. This issue of *Freedom Road* has an article on page 15 by Jeff Crosby about the mass killing of trade union leaders going on in Colombia, along with an interview on page 18 with Raul Reyes, a member of the secretariat of the central command of the FARC, the largest guerrilla organization in Colombia.

We also have a piece on page 24 by Doug Wordell on the need to defend Jose Maria Sison, the intellectual leader of the Philippine revolutionary movement. Sison is in exile in the Netherlands, and the US wants to extradite him here despite the fact that he hasn't been charged with any crime.

Stan Goff, author of the book *Hideous Dream: A Soldier's Memoir of the US Invasion of Haiti*, has contributed a valuable article, on page 20, for those trying to understand the difficulties the US faces in its current military adventures. Stan argues from first-hand experience that the military doctrines the US has developed since the Vietnam War are creating increasingly difficult swamps for US forces and that Iraq will likely present more of the same.

Finally, this issue of *Freedom Road* features a whole section of articles, starting on page 26, on *Revolution in the Air*, the notable recent book by Max Elbaum on the history of the New Communist Movement, the collection of Third World-oriented revolutionary Marxist organizations which grew directly out of the movements of the '60s. The reader of this magazine may not be shocked to learn that one reason for such a close look is because the *Freedom Road* Socialist Organization comes out of this scene. For more information on this history, including a family tree of the New Communist Movement, you can click on "who we are" at our website freedomroad.org.

—Eric Odell, Editor

9/11

BY JAMES CREEDON



ONE YEAR LATER: The Thoughts of a NYC Paramedic

On the morning of September 11th, I awoke to the now-famous image of the Twin Towers burning on my television screen. As a NYC-911 paramedic, I had been trained over and over again for different types of disasters—bombings, chemical spills, building collapses. And growing up under Reagan and Bush, I was accustomed to seeing images of violence on my TV—Nicaragua, Panama, the Gulf War. But on that morning, every line became blurred and every image came together into the most deeply affecting day of my life.

As I put on my uniform, geared up and drove to downtown Manhattan, I could see the plumes of smoke billowing out towards the sea. “We’re under attack,” said the radio. America was under attack. Innocent people were dying, and no one could understand why now, why here, why us.

I arrived on scene, and quickly found my Lieutenant. We started setting up a treatment station a few hundred feet from the South Tower, trying to help people move away from the area. Already, we could hear the sound of falling bodies hitting the ground. Already, we could see the remains of people on the pavement around us. But we had to stay focused; we pushed aside our own fears for the sake of helping others.

And then the air changed, and our hearts stopped: looking up, we saw a giant black cloud reaching out over us and starting to rain stone. First it was

pebbles, then rocks, then girders. All of us ran for safety, some diving under fire trucks and ambulances, others running towards the nearest building. As I ran, my helmet was knocked off my head by a piece of debris. Then came the shock-wave, throwing each of us through the air. And then the blackness...

I was breathing through my shirt, gasping for air, each breath bringing more dust and ash into my lungs. The sound of falling girders was tremendous, as was the roar of burning ambulances. People all around were crying for help, and I urged them to stay calm. As black turned to brown, we linked arms with each person we found and walked by the light of the fires. We had to wash out eyes, get oxygen and bandages to the wounded, move those who could walk away from the area. I was carrying a young girl in my arms, ready to load her onto a police boat, when the North Tower came down. We all ran south for safety, I with a little girl in my arms, and a mother somewhere balancing her fear for her life with her trust in me to take care of her child.

September 11th was a long day. I was hurt in the collapse, but wanted to keep working. We had four men from our squad who were in those towers and were unaccounted for. Another had been dug out of the first collapse only to barely escape the second. And still others were like me—hurt, but unwilling to speak up for fear that they would take us away from the site.

Life and Death Choices

“How could they jump?” I was asked. An hour earlier, they were, say, prep cooks at Windows on the World, trying to make a decent salary to feed their families and make a life for themselves. And now they had to choose between burning to death, or jumping. Innocent people, caught up in something so much larger than themselves, but forced to make the decision nonetheless. “How could they jump?”

On October 9, 2001, George W. Bush began bombing Afghanistan. Within a few days he destroyed a food warehouse of the Red Cross, a marketplace full of innocent civilians, and an office where four United Nations workers were coordinating efforts to de-mine Afghanistan—the most heavily mined country in the world. In a week, he had driven the majority of humanitarian aid agencies out of that country. To counter criticism, he pointed to his small program of food drops, widely criticized by these same agencies.

And so there came a choice for the people of Afghanistan—starve to death without markets and food supplies, or risk being blown up by a land mine in an attempt to reach the (very) few food packages that were dropped into dangerous areas. Just weeks earlier, these people had been working each day, trying to feed their families and get a better life. And now, their lives were being turned upside-down by a war they knew little to nothing about.

Taking Up Responsibilities

After the North Tower collapsed, I found myself with this small child in my arms, but no mother in sight. I couldn't possibly take care of her myself—there were so many people hurt, so many other tasks to be done. And so I called into a crowd of people, huddling in a temporary shelter we had set up: "Can someone take care of this child?" Out of the crowd came an older woman, and took her from my arms. How long would she have to take care of her? How would she find the mother? How would she protect both herself and the child?

But for her, there were no questions of race, or gender, or class, or religion. She never asked me for a reward, her face never made the papers as a hero. She stepped up and took on responsibility for the life of someone else, in a context where her own prospects were uncertain. And she did it without hesitation.

Within hours of the attacks, people began to gather in Union Square. By nightfall, there was a growing vigil. And by the next day, a scene of flowers and candles, music and tears, stories and knowing glances. Soon, signs for peace began to be posted. People started holding vigils in their communities, in their churches, in their very homes. And out of this came the beginnings of an anti-war movement. Jews started volunteering to walk with both Muslim and non-Muslim Arabs to ensure their safety on the streets. Vietnam veterans began to talk about their experiences with those of my age, who were just entering high school as the Gulf War was happening. Organizations that had never before heard of each other, or who had long-standing tensions, began to work on projects together—sometimes because the personal loss overwhelmed political differences.

Before any of us knew it, we were a movement. And we could feel ourselves growing as a movement. Tens of thousands in Washington, and again in Times Square. And more importantly, hundreds of small events in towns and cities throughout the country, with words that still ring clear, like "Not In

Our Name" and "Our Grief is Not a Cry for War."

In each place, people from an incredible array of backgrounds came together to take on responsibility for stopping injustice where they saw it: in Bush's War on Terrorism. Even as they were cautioned by White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer that they should "watch what they say," they said it loud and clear. In some places, this growing movement found rejection and resentment. But in many others, the reality of popular opinion became clear: many feared to speak out against the war, but with a growing movement came a growing number of voices. Without hesitation, even as our own prospects were uncertain, we came together to struggle against the killing of more innocent people—and we discovered that we were not alone. There were no questions of "How long will we have to do this?" or "Can we really challenge these policies?" First came the deeper impulse, the desire to stop injustice and to take up responsibility in that struggle. First the commitment, then the questions of how.

Facing Reality

As I write this, almost one year later, I can still remember every instant of that day, and of the weeks of searching that followed. I remember when they identified the bodies of our fallen brothers and sisters, one as recently as a few weeks ago. And I still feel deeply the waves of pain, loss, confusion, rage, and sorrow that went through me after 9/11. I still see it in the eyes of other paramedics who were there with me, and in the faces of the families and friends of people who died because of those two explosions.

On television I see that Palestinian ambulances are being shot at, that paramedics just like me are being killed by Israeli soldiers, even as they have asthmatic children in the back needing urgent treatment. I read that Bush wants to invade Iraq, against the opinion of even most US allies and the UN, knowing that women in labor there are

giving birth to children with birth defects due to the radioactive weapons used by the US. And I hear about increased aid to Colombia and the Philippines in the "War on Terror," while hundreds of thousands of peasants and workers struggling against poverty and sickness are seeing their leaders massacred.

With every bomb I read about, every weapons sale that is revealed, I see Ground Zero. In every "accidental" killing of people in a wedding party in Afghanistan, or "unfortunate" destruction in Palestine of an apartment building full of children, I see Ground Zero.

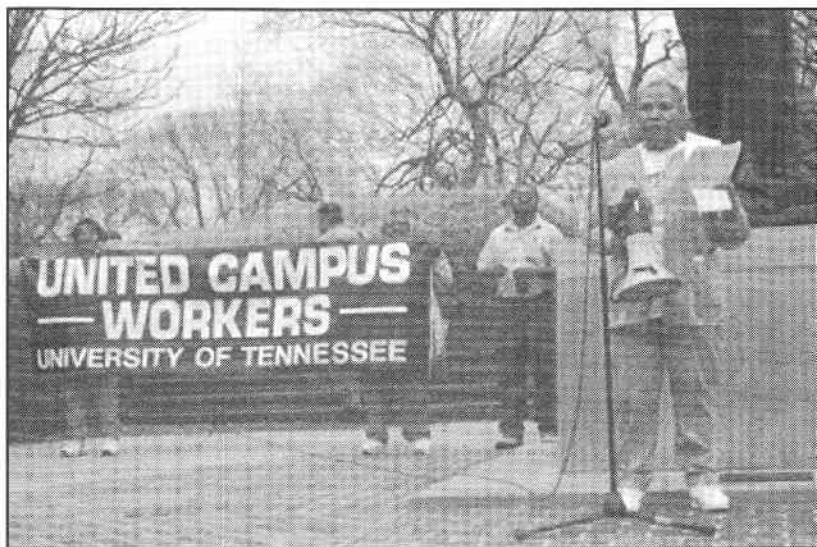
September 11th taught us many lessons, and the struggle over what those lessons are and how they should be put into effect will continue on. But I can speak most honestly from my own experience when I see the deaths of innocent people being reported on television. In one hour, I saw three thousand people die. And on that day I vowed "never again." Neither here, nor in any other country.

Now is the time for us to redouble our efforts against the "War on Terror." We must bring together all those who believe that another world is possible. We must continue to put pressure on those in the government who are pushing this war forward, and must use every means at our disposal to change their course.

One year later, I will have a time of silence to remember the thousands of innocent people who died that day, and who have died since. And then I will join the millions of people around the world who proudly proclaim "This silence is ours, and we end it as we began it—with a commitment to the global struggle for justice and peace."

James Creedon is a former student activist in the City University of New York system and is currently studying medicine in Cuba.

'With the Union We Can Play a Part in Our Own Destiny' Campus Workers in Knoxville, TN Stand Up



Campus rallies make normally "invisible" service workers impossible for the administration to ignore.

BY CHAD NEGENDANK

"I wanted to go into denial about losing my job, but the union helped make it obvious what was happening," says Joel Burnette, University of Tennessee van driver for the last four years. Van service at UT's flagship Knoxville campus was in the process of being contracted out behind the scenes, and Joel felt he had a duty to alert the other drivers that they were being lied to by their bosses. "The union gave me the courage and ability to tell my co-workers that we were about to lose our jobs and that we had to act."

After Joel began to talk to his co-workers day and night and his union, United Campus Workers, began to publicize the threat, the administration retreated. They were forced not only to tell the truth, but also to give the drivers eight months to transfer to another job—a new chapter in history for the University, whose past is filled with examples of kicking people to the street without warning.

"There's nothing worse than hopelessness, when someone else is completely controlling your fate," says Burnette. "Now, by joining with the union and seeing more and more what is happening around me, I feel there is a way for me to play a part in my own destiny—to have at least some control, some say, over my life."

The UCW

Joel's experience is just one example of workers at the University of Tennessee coming to a sense of their own power. Since March 2000, workers from the library, dining services, the physical plant, and other areas have joined the United Campus Workers, an independent union of hourly and non-managerial employees based on the Knoxville campus.

The UCW emerged from a campus living wage campaign that began in Fall, 1999. That campaign was originally led

out an organization to protect their interests for the long term, the administration could take back any promised concession. Person by person, department by department, UCW members and volunteer organizers have taken to the worksites to spread the word, fight for workers' rights on the job, and in the process build the union.

Southern Worker Solidarity

Tennessee is a right-to-work state—what's worse, state law forbids collective bargaining for public sector employees,

Unlike many others across the country, the campaign at UT from the outset had a goal that workers should be the leaders of their own struggle.

by students and community supporters who had been active in pushing for living wage legislation in the city of Knoxville as a whole. However, unlike many others across the country, the campaign at UT from the outset had a goal that workers should be the leaders of their own struggle.

While winning a living wage remains a top priority for the UCW, many UT workers have come to realize that with-

including those who work in the state university system. At UT Knoxville many employees continue to live below the poverty level. Building the union in this terrain is difficult, and many claimed that it could not be done. But models such as UE Local 150 and Black Workers For Justice in neighboring North Carolina, emphasizing worker solidarity and organization in the South, have inspired the union to keep



Even though Tennessee public employees have no legal right to unionize, the UCW has won a series of concrete victories for campus workers.

up the fight to build a statewide public sector workers union in Tennessee.

UCW has become a sister union with UE150, and the skills and knowledge passed on from its leadership have been invaluable. Saladin Muhammad, organizer for UE150, has helped to lead trainings and speaking engagements on the strategic importance of organizing the South. An early visit by Barbara Prear, a UNC housekeeper and president of UE150, was a large factor helping rank and file members, especially our base of African American women, to find the courage and determination to get involved.

The University of Tennessee living wage campaign published a “wage study” in 2000 that revealed what the workers already knew—there are great inequities in the pay scale, with women and African Americans the most negatively affected. This pushed the union to recognize racism and sexism as primary targets in the struggle for justice on the UT campus and across Tennessee. It has motivated workers to challenge discriminatory supervisory practices and highlighted the need for Black and female leadership in the union. Despite the “whiteness” of some of the current union leaders and of the allied student organizers, conscious efforts are being made to transform this reality through an ongoing staff hiring process, through organizing the lowest-paid workers, and through consistent educational efforts to undo the deep-set oppressions of mainstream society.

The Role of Students

The organizing drive thus far would not have been possible without the help of

students. The UCW has built an important relationship with the Progressive Student Alliance, the student organization that established the Worker Support Brigade two years ago to help with organizing efforts.

Tom Smith, the current chair of the Brigade, remarks, “The struggle has become more and more important to me because of the relationships I have built with members of the union. And I see that the greatest resource students can bring is more free time to help organize—to do what some full-time workers can not get done during the workday.”

But he admits that the patience needed for effective organizing is not the easiest thing for students, who generally want to see massive change within the few years they are on campus rather than to spend the time necessary to help build a union from the bottom up.

“I think that there are always class contradictions in student-labor coalitions—sometimes students want it to go a certain way, to integrate a radical tendency that the workers may not be ready for in the beginning. I think the best way to overcome that is to be deeply involved with the union as opposed to just acting—to get in there and get to know the people, and to meet them where they are at.

“Some students only have a short period of time to be campus activists, and they want to contribute something. But patience is key if working folks are to lead their own struggle.”

Victory

One of the problems that came up in the early months of the campaign dealt with health and safety issues. Custodians were at risk of coming into contact with hepatitis B from their work cleaning dorm showers and bathrooms. UT’s refusal to pay for hepatitis B vaccinations quickly became a focus for the union.

After months of educating co-workers about the issue, petitioning, and holding protests, the university agreed in June 2000 to provide free vaccinations to custodians. The UCW had

demonstrated that organizing and collective action, with workers in the lead, could win.

Similar campaigns have led to other concrete victories. These include reforming UT disciplinary policies, fighting off privatization threats, winning unjustly fired members’ jobs back, ending forced overtime in Housing, and pushing the bottom pay level up an unprecedented seventeen percent.

Although none of this can be guaranteed as permanent benefits without a contract, these wins have given the union hope and will to push on.

Affiliation

Without any paid staff or other resources to make a campus-wide organizing drive a success, the question of affiliating with a larger national union came into focus after two years of organizing and only holding a relatively small minority of the workforce in membership ranks. Although numbers have not hampered the union’s ability to push forward and win demands, ultimately they are what the union must have to seriously challenge the power of the university and the state government.

Rodney Pardue, husband of food service worker Sherri Pardue, thinks numbers are important: “We need to be more powerful. There is power in numbers, and that’s what a larger organization might be able to help us with. But we have taken the search for help slowly and carefully.”

There is also a long history of anti-union sentiment at UT and in the South in general. This comes from a combination of the old Southern tendency to think of the union as the “outsider” and right-to-work’s strong roots in white supremacy, not to mention more specific and immediate examples of union-busting at the university. Present legal obstacles around right-to-work and the lack of collective bargaining rights for the public sector make campus organizing in the South one tough battle, especially for an international union considering making an offer of

assistance to a small but militant organization of workers.

A long-term relationship with local staff, and activists of the Communication Workers of America has proven to be the best connection for affiliation, through which the union can increase its power and presence on campus and eventually across the state.

Hugh Wolfe, organizing coordinator for CWA District 3, voices his enthusiasm for working with the union through this uphill struggle. "We've been keeping up with the work of the UCW and recognize the need for resources in fighting this battle—a public sector battle which CWA is committed to assisting in whatever way possible. Government workers in Tennessee, including those working on the UT campus, are funded by taxpayer money, and as taxpayers and workers, we have the right to help decide where the money goes and how the government treats its employees."

Recognizing the strategic importance of the public sector, CWA has voiced its commitment to the goal of transforming the United Campus Workers into a statewide union of all public sector workers—a long and hard process, but one for which it's worth fighting. CWA is presently building non-majority public sector unions in the South with noticeable success, specifically in Mississippi, Texas, and at the University of Virginia—a recent affiliate with whom the UCW has been in contact.

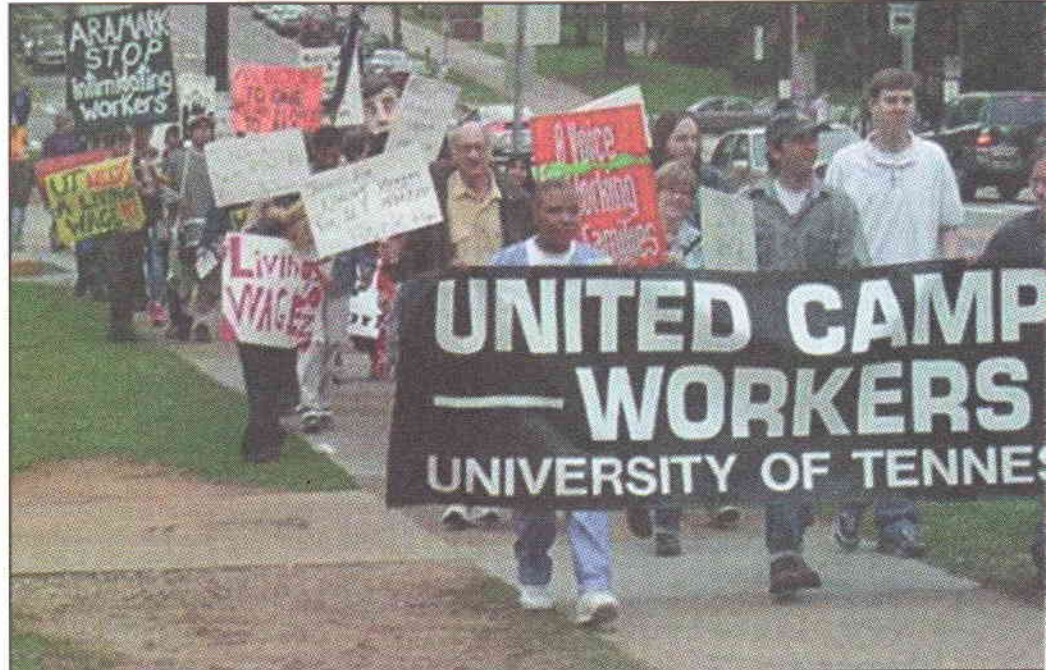
After months of discussion with other CWA locals and activists, the UCW voted last fall to formalize this relationship through affiliation with the Communication Workers of America. The pending agreement allows the UCW to maintain its democratic culture and provides for full-time staff and other resources—the resources necessary to push this battle forward, deeper into the power structure of the university and the state government.

Major Challenges

The big issues facing state workers continue to shake up the campus and force

the small union to face the public and raise hell in the name of all UT staff. A recent shutdown of the University due to the Tennessee state budget crisis put a scare into many hourly employees. Only "essential" employees were to report to work during the state shutdown—leaving the "non-essential"

lending the status quo on a more significant level. Without the resources needed to build the membership base and to reach out to other state workers, the UCW would remain a small but still effective and meaningful force. Union members like Joel Burnette know that affiliation and larger numbers will make



Building on their successful organizing over the last three years, the UCW has affiliated with the Communication Workers of America, bringing new resources to the struggle.

workers out of work for an undetermined amount of time.

An impromptu picket was planned for the first day back on the job at the end of the three-day shutdown, and hundreds of emails and phone calls were used to spread the word to the workforce and to the media. Within hours, the university met the demand of back pay for all furloughed workers!

"This is a huge victory for the union," proclaims Linda McMillan, UT secretary and UCW member. "It shows how big an impact a small group of dedicated folks can have on a huge number of working people who need some form of representation."

Other members echo these same sentiments, and it is clear that this is just one step towards the ultimate goal of building real worker power and chal-

lenging the status quo on a more significant level. Without the resources needed to build the membership base and to reach out to other state workers, the UCW would remain a small but still effective and meaningful force. Union members like Joel Burnette know that affiliation and larger numbers will make

still greater advances possible exactly because they've seen the power that even a small group of people can have on the fight for social and economic justice: "For once in my life, I'm a part of this community—I'm really giving something. The union makes me feel like I am a contributor."

Chad Negendank is a history major at the University of Tennessee and makes his living filing maps as a Student Library Assistant. He was formerly the chair of the Worker Support Brigade of the Progressive Student Alliance.

For more information on the UCW-CWA Local 3865, check out: <http://www.korrnet.org/ucw>



BUILDING A UNION FROM SCRATCH:

The Struggle to Organize University Housekeepers in North Carolina

BY CHIP SMITH

During the summer of 1989 a small group of housekeepers met at the University of North Carolina (UNC) in Chapel Hill. Today that core has grown to become a statewide union—the North Carolina Public Service Workers Union—with several thousand members. Their union, United Electrical Workers Local 150, is on the cutting edge of organizing the South, here in a right-to-work state with the smallest percentage of unionized workers, at 3%, of any state in the union.

But as new workers are steadily added to the membership rolls, the problem of consolidating an internal structure led by the workers themselves has become increasingly urgent. The three-person staff is struggling with how to balance new organizing against servicing the needs of the current membership, which is spread across the entire state. Meanwhile the unpaid, statewide rank-and-file leadership is working step by step to build the internal structures, cohesion and organizational culture that already established unions tend to take for granted.

The Realities of Organizing Low-wage Workers

The effort required to move everything forward is monumental. Take the conditions that housekeepers, the core of the university division of UE150, have to deal with. This overwhelmingly female workforce must often work more than one job to make ends meet—or struggle to get by on near-poverty wages. Then factor in the

normal demands that are part of raising a family and the travel time required to come to work from well outside the upscale university area, and you begin to have a sense of the basic conditions of life of low-wage African American workers in the South.

In the early part of the '90s, the UNC Housekeepers Association held periodic rallies and focused on demanding a grievance procedure that served the workers' interests. Crucially the association pushed a legal suit against a pattern of harassment by university supervisors and higher management. Grants allowed a full-time organizer to build the organization not only at UNC, but at North Carolina Central University in Durham and North Carolina A&T in Greensboro as well, over a three-year period ending in 1996. Support from faculty and students was high, and the organization raised thousands of dollars from periodic fundraising activities.

In 1997 the legal battle resulted in a \$1 million out-of-court settlement. More importantly, the court compelled the university to "meet and confer" regularly with the Housekeepers Association over a three-year period. The president of the university system, Molly Broad, issued a letter stating that workers throughout the university system have the right to join a union. A separate statement recognized their right to be accompanied by an organizational representative during grievance proceedings.

During 1997 the housekeepers' leadership summed up where the organization stood in light of the legal victory and decided to make the major

shift to become a trade union. Letters went out to several national unions, among them the AFL-CIO-affiliated unions AFSCME and UFCW. As it turned out, the independent United Electrical and Radio Workers of America gave the warmest response. UE brought in organizers and with the help of students and other non-union supporters they "blitzed" the university system during 1998. The result was chapters made up of housekeepers, maintenance workers, and groundskeepers on 11 of the 16 campuses. In 1999 the founding convention of UE150 formally established the new organization, including organizational forms for graduate students (UE150A), Durham city workers, and employees in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Growing Pains

Overall this development into a statewide union unleashed new energy and brought whole new sections of the workforce under the UE150 banner. Still, these gains did not come without costs for the original housekeeping unit at UNC. With the shift to being a union, the anti-union climate in NC took its toll even among progressive forces. Support among faculty members and foundations dropped off sharply.

Moreover, once the consent degree enforced by the courts expired in the year 2000, the various separate university administrations one by one reverted back to their former management styles—putting up roadblocks to meetings, clamping down on union leaders' movement outside their work areas,

and stonewalling on the grievance mechanism.

One of the union's victories has had a double edge. The winning of dues check-off from the state has provided a steady flow of limited funds—dues are just \$10/month for housekeepers—to help maintain the organization. But the demands on staff time together with the minimal level of administrative support has resulted in complaints from some housekeepers along the lines of, "What are they doing with our dues money, anyway?"

The best answer is "organizing"—but that's not always satisfying for someone facing harassment and feeling strangled by a tight personal budget. Over the past year UE150 has pushed into new institutions in the mental health field, building on earlier victories and a core of very active workers at the flagship state mental hospital, Dorothea Dix. Also, each spring the union mobilizes members from its three state worker divisions—the university system, DHHS, and Durham city workers—to lobby the state legislature around pay increases and working conditions.

Last year the union helped fight off the state's threat to close down mental health hospitals and the School for the Deaf as the governor moved to balance the state budget on the backs of the poor and infirm. A decade of tax cuts for business and the wealthy in NC has resulted in repeated cuts in education, health supports, and other human services. The union has been a major force in working to shift the tax burden back onto those with the ability to pay. With North Carolina, like states around the country, facing budget crisis, the impact of the current round of cuts on pay scales and workloads look increasingly ominous.

Young Workers and the Need for New Leadership

Barbara Prear, the president of the statewide UE Local 150 and a twelve-year full-time housekeeper at UNC, sees upcoming budget decisions as likely to have a strong impact on workers' job

conditions. "There's a long history of housekeepers' organizing—there was even a union back in 1932. When the new budget is announced, workers will see once again how important the union is."

Up until 1972 the only job that a Black woman could hold at UNC was housekeeping. If you weren't a housekeeper, you weren't even allowed on campus. In some ways, not much has changed. Prear talks about how bad she feels for the young people who start working in housekeeping with the hopes of being able to move up. One promising young woman commented that when she put in for a position that was posted, the administrators wouldn't even consider her application. "As soon as they saw I was from housekeeping, they checked off 'unqualified.'"

"There's just this stigma to the job," commented Prear. The young worker has since moved on, as have many others over the years.

With a new part-time administrative staff and the regularizing of monthly contact among the executive board members, the rank-and-file leadership of UE150 is moving to tighten up its internal functioning. Leadership training has targeted the development of new layers of leadership, so far being drawn mainly from the DHHS division.

Over the past year the organizing in DHHS has paid off in new forces that can help shift the balance of power toward frontline workers in the state system. At the same time, there is pressure not to leave behind the hard-pressed workforce on the university campuses—stretched near the breaking point by the harsh conditions of employment in "progressive," Black Belt North Carolina.

Increasing numbers of activists across the country see organizing low-wage workers in the South as central to labor's revival nationwide. The argument for this strategic perspective is compelling. Up close, however, the practical work of turning this vision into reality can at times seem over-

whelming. The staunchness of the workers and the organizers under these conditions is truly remarkable and deserves our admiration, solidarity and active support.

Organize the South and Southwest!
Build UE150!

Chip Smith is the director of a workers' center and an anti-war activist in Eastern North Carolina.

To support the work of UE150:

- Financially support UE150's organizing drive with a contribution to the Southern Workers Education and Research Fund, UE150, 205 South Gregson Street, Durham, NC 27701.
- Have your union or community organization form an organization-to-organization relationship with one of the divisions or chapters of UE150. Develop personal ties with union members, share your work and organizing experiences, visit and get to know conditions in North Carolina first-hand, sponsor a speaker to talk with your membership and others in your city about organizing in the South.
- Encourage your union to provide support services to UE150 in the areas of research, publications, and database management.
- Suggest that your union hold its national convention in North Carolina, and through the convention help spread the message of the union movement to unorganized workers in Charlotte, the financial center of the South, Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, Greensboro or Asheville.
- Do political education around anti-union "right-to-work" laws, and support legislation that provides for democratically controlled unions at the workplace.
- Encourage your national union to join with other organizations in the labor movement to launch a concerted effort to organize the South and Southwest.



'And We're Not Going Back!'

IMMIGRANT WORKERS REBUILD MOVEMENT FOR LEGALIZATION

BY BILL GALLEGOS

One of the most critical social issues sidelined by political fallout from 9/11 has been immigrants' rights. Prior to that day, immigration had emerged as a key national issue in US politics. The movement seemed poised to win a relatively expansive legalization program from the Bush regime, which was eager to make inroads into the growing Latino electorate and to politically shore up the new Fox government in Mexico.

The "War on Terrorism," however, has dramatically altered the scene. Immediately following 9/11 the federal government rounded up thousands of Arabs, Arab-Americans, and Muslims, holding them for indefinite periods without formal charges or right to counsel. The Bush regime has also reversed its previous tepid support for immigrant legalization, opting instead for increased repression of immigrant workers, such as the firing and/or detention of hundreds of immigrant airport personnel and the detention of almost 500 Iranians in Los Angeles who responded to an Immigration Service requirement for "registration." Clearly, a low-intensity war is raging against immigrants, waged by the Bush regime as a component of its overall efforts to repress any possible opposition social movements.

A May Day Miracle

Last May 1st, a "miracle" took place in Los Angeles. On a typically balmy Southern California day, an atypical mass action enveloped the streets of downtown LA. Twelve thousand immi-

grant workers and their supporters took to the streets to celebrate May Day and demand legalization and other rights for immigrants. "¿Qué queremos?" ("What do we want?") shouted hoarse march monitors through the megaphones. "¡Legalización y Justicia!" ("Legalization and justice!") roared the marchers in response. "¿Cuándo lo queremos?" ("When do we want it?") "¡AHORA!" ("NOW!") demanded the marchers, shouting their defiance of

ties. Even march organizers from the Multiethnic Immigrant Workers Organizing Network (MIWON) were surprised by the incredible turnout. The high number of attendees (much larger than the previous year) suggests that immigrant workers will not be intimidated by the new anti-immigrant political atmosphere.

This event was both a political affirmation of their determination as well as a collective psychological victory for

As usual, race and class are at the core of new anti-immigrant attacks, as it is primarily dark-skinned workers from the Third World suffering the brunt of them.

Traditionally, Mexicans and Central Americans have been at the top of the immigrant-bashing list, but since 9/11 Arabs, Arab-Americans, and Muslims have been the principal targets of the new anti-immigrant hysteria.

intimidation with the chant "¡Aquí estamos! ¡Y no nos vamos!" ("Here we are! And we're not going!").

The "miracle" was in the size, composition, and militancy of the march. It occurred in the wake of rampant post-9/11 anti-immigrant ("terrorist") hysteria and growing systematic harassment, round-ups, detentions, and deportations in immigrant communi-

ties still suffering enormous "collateral damage" from Bush's War on Terror. Not that immigrant bashing is confined to the Republicans. Post-9/11, the Democratic Party has dropped legalization efforts as if they came straight from Osama Bin Laden. The Democratic retrenchment on the issue is a significant loss because, before 9/11, they had finally begun to promote the

A new network, MIWON, has played a key role in uniting different immigrant groups.



concept of a broad-based legalization platform. This shift was largely because of pressure from Latino communities and the AFL-CIO, which has come to see immigrant workers as the best hope for growth, and hence a reinvigorated and politically relevant labor movement.

Arabs and Muslims at Center of New Anti-Immigrant Hysteria

As usual, race and class are at the core of new anti-immigrant attacks, as it is primarily dark-skinned workers from the Third World suffering the brunt of them. Traditionally, Mexicans and Central Americans have been at the top of the immigrant-bashing list, but since 9/11 Arabs, Arab-Americans, and Muslims have been the principal targets of the new anti-immigrant hysteria. As mentioned above, thousands have been rounded up by federal authorities as potential terrorists or terrorist supporters. Yet, in spite of these highly publicized pogroms, *only one person* has even been charged with any crime related to terrorist activity. Islamic mosques and charities have also been harassed, raided, or shut down by Attorney General Ashcroft. In a perverse illustration of the link between domestic and world politics, civil rights violations against the US Arab populations have also flared up since Israel has intensified its destruction of the occupied territories in the West Bank and Gaza.

Arabs in the US are not the only victims of inflamed anti-immigrant practices. For instance, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has instituted a draconian new border crackdown to try and prevent crossings at the Mexican border. Thanks to this militarized "Tijuana Wall," border crossings have dramatically fallen off. Meanwhile, INS raids at factories and job sites have significantly increased, resulting in hundreds of workers being terrorized, driven from their jobs, jailed, and deported. US courts have also joined the anti-immigrant frenzy. The US Supreme Court ruled in April that undocumented immigrant workers

who were fired from their jobs for union activity were not entitled to back pay even though it was illegal for the company to fire them for union organizing!

While the ruling does not eliminate immigrant workers' rights to organize and join unions, it is clearly meant to weaken such efforts. Meanwhile, right-wing Republicans (the "family values" people) have introduced legislation that would make it even more difficult for immigrants to bring over family members, and would severely limit student visas. Such is the hysteria that Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein has floated the idea that the US should stop issuing *any* student visas at all for a "temporary period."

These political attacks have created a pervasive climate of fear in immigrant communities. In response, thousands of immigrant homes and cars have sprouted the US flag in an effort to challenge racist images of brown immigrants transporting bombs across the border. The Democratic Party's virtual abandonment of the immigration issue has also caused many immigrants' rights advocates to become more cautious about advancing a broad human rights agenda for immigrants. Their caution was also influenced by the AFL-CIO leadership's initial uncritical support for Bush's foreign and domestic war policies.

What Is the Way Forward?

The Los Angeles May Day march highlighted some of the complicated issues facing the movement as it struggles to determine the best way to advance. As great as the march was, there was a glaring absence from among its ranks of immigrant workers and supporters. While the march included supporters of the Palestinian struggle wearing the Arab *kaffiyeh* in solidarity, there were almost no Arab Americans or Muslim immigrants marching with the large

contingents of Latinos, Koreans, and Filipinos. If the decision not to invite Arabs and Muslims to participate in the march was made on the basis that significant Arab participation might alienate potential support from Democrats, or from organized labor, then that decision was wrong.

The failure to include Arabs and Muslims in the May Day March reveals an immigrant rights movement that has not yet recognized potentially important new allies in the Arab and Muslim communities and the need to confront the fear and political opportunism of its allies among the Democratic Party politicians and the trade union leadership. This is just one of a number of important questions that the movement needs to address if it is to beat back the Bush-Ashcroft assault and win any serious expansion of immigrants' rights. Here are some thoughts on some of those questions, and on how to build and advance the immigrant rights movement in this period.

First, the movement needs to stand up for the rights of Muslims, Arabs, and Arab Americans. The attacks on these communities and the situation in Palestine have impelled them into political motion, challenging repressive policies at home, and US war policies abroad. If the immigrant rights movement should represent anything, it



While politicians backpedal, immigrant youth are pushing forward.

The struggle of immigrant workers will be a decisive factor in decades to come.

should be a consistent spirit of internationalism and solidarity. What's more, the repressive policies being used against Arabs and Muslims can easily be turned against other immigrant communities (and non-immigrant communities) who might later be considered a risk to "national security." To their enormous credit, the Japanese-American community in Los Angeles—drawing on the experience of their own World War II internment by the US government—has been outstanding in showing political support and solidarity with Arabs and Muslims. As past experience suggests, excluding Arabs and Muslims from the immigrant struggle is not likely to move Democratic politicians to champion the cause of legalization anyway.

Second, the demands of the movement should go beyond legalization to include the new issues raised post-9/11. Without seriously challenging the new Bush-Ashcroft attacks on immigrant

the roundups, arrests, and detentions of Arabs, Arab Americans, and Muslims; an end to the harassment and firing of airport workers; an end to INS factory and community raids; and opposition to any laws that make immigration and family reunification more difficult.

The movement also needs to address Bush regime efforts to divide the INS into a "service" wing that processes naturalization, and an "enforcement" wing that patrols the border and immigrant communities. This initiative provides an opportunity to demand that the Border Patrol be completely dismantled, with all the resources being directed to helping workers process their documents for legalization, residency, and citizenship. At the very least, the movement should demand that the majority of INS resources be directed to the "service" component, and that the Border Patrol be subject to civilian oversight and control.

Third, the immigrant rights movement should make special and concerted efforts to unite with the African-American community. It's no secret that fairly serious divisions exist between African Americans on the one hand and Asian and Latino immigrant communities on the other, and that these divisions weaken our struggles. These divisions are largely due to competition for scarce jobs, educational resources, and health care and social services, as well as to the narrow nationalism of many of the mainstream leaders in these communities.

The immigrant rights movement can help to overcome these divisions by supporting issues important to the Black community. The movement should, for example, pressure the trade unions to pay special attention to organizing Black workers even as it steps up efforts to organize immigrant workers. In particular, the movement should challenge the AFL-CIO to finally keep its long-delayed promise to organize the South, especially African-American and Latino workers. Solidarity should also include support for African American



demands to end racial profiling and the police brutality that so horribly mirrors the terror that immigrants face from the Border Patrol.

Another important issue facing the movement is its relationship to organized labor and the Democratic Party. It is critically important now to build an independent immigrant workers movement that allies itself only strategically (rather than generally) with the AFL-CIO and the Democrats, being mindful how easily those two forces can co-opt the movement and/or sell it out by compromising with the Bush regime.

One model is the Multiethnic Immigrant Workers Organizing Network (MIWON) in Los Angeles, a coalition led by the Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates, the Garment Workers Center, the Pilipino Workers Center, and the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles. Each of MIWON's member organizations is building a base among immigrant workers around workplace issues as well as community ones, such as housing, health care access, and educational rights. It is only through building these kinds of independent worker organizations that the movement can challenge any effort to hand the movement over to the Democratic Party leadership.

While safeguarding its independence, the immigrant rights movement should strive to build unity with particular labor unions, such as the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE), the United Farm Workers Union (UFW), and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). HERE and SEIU have thousands of immigrant members and are focused on organizing many thousands of others in campaigns such as "Justice for

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Having labor on board has given a big boost to the immigrants' rights movement.

workers, *the struggle for legalization itself will be weakened*, as thousands of immigrants lose their jobs, are harassed in the community, are indefinitely jailed without charge. A failure to stand up to this repression will ultimately demoralize the very forces that need to be mobilized to win a legalization program. For these reasons, the movement should demand an end to

COLOMBIAN TRADE UNIONISTS: AN UNENDING SLAUGHTER

BY JEFF CROSBY

The 35-member Witness for Peace delegation in which I participated in January of 2002 included union members, students, teachers, religious activists, and environmentalists. In Colombia I visited the cities of Bogotá and Barrancabermeja, and part of the delegation traveled to the rural province of Putumayo. In a packed schedule, we met with many union leaders, women's organizations, representatives of the Colombian Armed Forces, human rights organizations, the US Embassy, a Bishop, the Barrancabermeja Chamber of Commerce, Afro-Colombian organizations, and academic experts on the Colombian economy, history, and the "drug war."



Luis Cardona (l) and William Mendoza (r), leaders of SINALTRAINAL, the union of Coca-Cola workers in Colombia. Cardona escaped an assassination attempt and has since been brought to the US by the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center for a year to work with US unions and to talk about the situation in Colombia to American audiences. Mendoza has gone into hiding in Colombia, and his four-year-old daughter barely escaped a kidnapping in Barrancabermeja. The United Steelworkers of America and SINALTRAINAL have filed suit in the US to prove that Coca-Cola was a knowing collaborator in the murders of at least six Coca-Cola union leaders in Colombia.

Union Leaders a Prime Target

The meetings with union leaders were the focus of our visit. The crisis for labor leaders in Colombia continues to worsen. One hundred seventy-one union members were assassinated in 2001, with 30 more attempted assassinations and 79 union members "disappeared" or kidnapped. This was an increase over the 157 trade unionists murdered in 2000. Arrests and trials for the murderers are unheard of. It does not happen.

We met with union leaders whose organizations had been directly affected by the slaughter. The Mineworkers Union leaders, for example, asked if any of us were from Alabama. Many of their members work for the Drummond Coal Company, which has laid off coal miners in Alabama to import coal from Colombia. The president we spoke to was the third to hold the position within a year. The first two had been assassinated. The miners had asked Drummond to be allowed to sleep in the mine after their lives were threatened, but were refused, and were subsequently pulled from a company bus and murdered. The miners met with the US Embassy and asked for an investigation of Drummond's practices, but had not received any response as of our visit. We promised to raise their plight when we met with embassy officials at the end of our stay.

A leader of SINALTRAINAL (the food and beverage workers union) described the murder of several union leaders at Coca-Cola. In 1996, Isidro Segundo Gil was assassinated inside the factory after refusing to resign from the

union. Just this year Oscar Daro Soto Polo, another Coca-Cola union leader, was assassinated as he walked his daughter to school. We met with another leader who had narrowly escaped assassination but had been "displaced," moving with his family three times as the paramilitaries discovered his location. At the time we met him in an unmarked union office in Bogotá, he was sleeping in the union hall with his wife and five-year-old daughter, and was about to move again. He told us he was not afraid, but the hardest part was the fear for his family. (During a recent visit to the US, a leader of SINALTRAINAL updated me on the Coca-Cola workers we met with in Bogotá. One has applied for political asylum in the US and the other is underground after a failed assassination attempt.)

Armed Forces and Paramilitaries in Close Cooperation

The only people we talked to who argued that the Colombian armed forces were not working in concert with the right-wing paramilitaries were the Colombian Army itself (we met with them twice) and the US Embassy. In a two-hour meeting, embassy spokesmen said there is no coordination between the Colombian Army and the paramilitaries "at the command level." Yet in Barrancabermeja the paramilitaries operate openly, and can be identified by even a casual observer on the streets. For example, the *paras* always wear loose shirts over their pants to cover their guns. They followed our van during our tour of the city.



The Embassy pointed out that the new Colombian Army battalions trained by the US for the “war on drugs” have not been accused of human rights violations. But the part of our delegation that traveled to the rural area of Putumayo was stopped at a paramilitary blockade only a quarter of a mile from the base camp of one of the new anti-narcotics battalions. And peasant

tured or killed. A human rights worker suggested that when we meet with the Colombian Armed Forces we ask how many of the paramilitaries who were “captured” were actually tried and imprisoned. Colonel Ibarra of the Nueva Granada Battalion in Barrancabermeja told us his forces had “captured” 86 paramilitaries in the last year. I asked him how many had been

**One young woman led us in learning salsa dancing—
trust me, she was a very patient person. The next day
we learned she had been kidnapped and released by the
paramilitaries only three days earlier.**

organizers, environmentalists, church workers and others continue to be murdered and displaced from the area. The slaughter has simply been “outsourced” in traditional corporate style.

The military lists the numbers of right-wing paramilitaries they have cap-

jailed. He replied, “Oh, 30 were released immediately for lack of evidence, and I don’t know what happened to the others.” Later we were told that Colonel Ibarra himself had founded a paramilitary death squad in the 1980s when they were temporarily legalized by the government.

Keeping On in the Face of Terror

In the face of all of this, the Colombian unions continue their work. The main federation (the CUT) has started a

“Jesus of the Oil Fields” in Barrancabermeja Oil Industry Center. Colombia has many resources and developed industries. Enron, Occidental, BP, and other US and European oil companies own most of the profits. The USO oilworkers union in Colombia has suffered some of the most brutal attacks, kidnapping and tortures at the hands of the right-wing, US-supported paramilitaries.

“community mothers union” of home day care workers. Since the women don’t work for traditional employers, they are not legally eligible for the state health care program. The CUT is working to change the law. The leader of the “community mothers union” died after she was shot thirteen times.

The Coca-Cola workers told us, “We insist upon representing our members,” despite the repression. Temporary workers are replacing the permanent workers, making them ineligible for union membership. And the paramilitaries demanded written resignation from the union in one plant, to be signed on forms printed by Coca-Cola. Since the paramilitaries had the run of the plant, everyone resigned.

There is so much more, story after story. Yet I left Colombia inspired, not just saddened and angry. When we arrived in Barrancabermeja, a town controlled by the death squads, we joined a party given by a community-based women’s organization, the Organización Feminina Popular. One young woman led us in learning salsa dancing—trust me, she was a very patient person. The next day we learned she had been kidnapped and released by the paramilitaries only three days earlier. A mobilization by the OFP had secured her release.

Some leaders of unions and other groups appeared exhausted and carried haunted expressions. Others seemed to be full of joy, humor and peace, despite living each day in the face of death.

A leader of the Coca-Cola union, who never slept in the same place twice and only traveled armed and with bodyguards, was asked how he could keep doing his union work in these circumstances. He responded with a smile, “This is how I make sense out of life. Tell the North Americans that people



Members of Organización Feminina Popular (OFP) sing their anthem in Barrancabermeja to the visiting delegation from Witness for Peace. “If your children, hungry, don’t even have clothes to wear to school, it is not because of the rich, but because of those who refuse to fight!” go the words. Several leaders of the OFP have been murdered or kidnapped by right-wing paramilitaries since they hosted Wfp in January of 2002.

down here are not walking around with machetes killing each other. We want to live. That's all."

The Deep Involvement of the US

There is no way to look at the relationship between the US government and the Colombian military without concluding that the US government is arming a force that is aiding the physical destruction of the Colombian trade union movement, something from which US corporations will benefit.

The "drug war," which is the excuse for the US intervention in Colombia,

A leader of the Coca-Cola union was asked how he could keep doing his union work in these circumstances. He responded with a smile, "This is how I make sense out of life."

has failed. Cocaine is as available as ever. Coca production in Colombia is growing, even according to the US government, and is spreading back to Peru and into Ecuador as the chemical spraying and violence spread. As long as there is a multi-billion-dollar demand for cocaine, and starving farmers who have no other means to live, the sturdy coca plant will be grown somewhere in the world.



Aurora (left) and her two daughters-in-law all lost husbands to paramilitary massacres in Barrancabermeja. The three have started a shoe-making store with the help of a local economic development organization that works with survivors. That group (funded in part by the World Bank) has itself suffered at least three murders at the hands of the paramilitary death squads.

Many of the unions and other groups told us they expected that after 9/11 the left-wing guerrillas in Colombia would be equated with the Taliban, and the US would use the moment as an excuse to increase military aid to Colombia. This is exactly what is happening. The trade unions and human rights organizations will be the ones that suffer the most. The paramilitaries and Colombian army do not seek and are not capable of large confrontations with the guerrillas.

Colombian analysts such as economist and human rights activist Hector Mondragon see the US aid package

"Plan Colombia" as the military side of the US corporations' effort to totally dominate Central and South America through "free trade" agreements like the "Free Trade Area of the Americas" treaty against which we protested in Quebec last Fall. And they point to a regional pattern such as US threats to Argentina, the effort to destabilize the government of Venezuela, the recent coup and attacks on unions in Ecuador, and assassinations of labor and elected officials in Brazil as examples of a region-wide crisis.

The Colombian Coca-Cola workers came to Atlanta in July to present their information at Coke headquarters, and have asked that US unions support their defense against the death squads. The Teamsters helped with a protest at the Coca-Cola stockholders meeting. My own union (CWA District 1) has accepted a proposal that the 195,000 members of the District take up solidarity with the Colombian labor movement as an international project. The AFL-CIO is working through their Solidarity Center to bring threatened

Colombian union leaders to the United States for protection and training.

Difficult Prospects for Peace

The road to peace and justice in Colombia is extremely difficult. The guerrillas have twice in the last fifteen years put down their arms and entered electoral politics under negotiated peace agreements with the government—and on both occasions been slaughtered by the thousands for their commitment to peace. They are understandably not likely to declare a cease-fire without government action to disarm the murderous paramilitaries—and there is no prospect of that whatsoever.

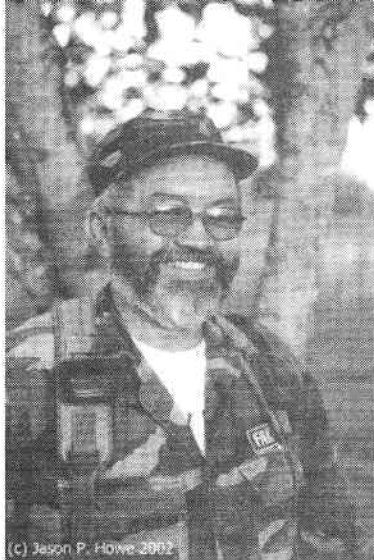
In fact the Colombian government and military seem confident that in the post-9/11 world the US will continue to increase military aid to Colombia regardless of the human rights atrocities of the paramilitaries.

Also, it is hard to imagine the Colombian ruling class, with decades of blood on its hands, ever actually negotiating the future economic and political structure of Colombia with the FARC (the largest guerrilla group), as was theoretically on the agenda for the peace process that was aborted earlier last year.

Some Colombian trade unionists are at least sympathetic with the goals of the rural-based FARC and the smaller ELN. Others are convinced that no armed route to a just Colombia can ever succeed, and are critical of the wide-scale kidnappings which fund the guerrillas, drive the middle classes to the right, and gave the government cover in its inevitable abandonment of the peace process.

Whatever the developments in Colombia, our task is two-fold: specific solidarity with Coca-Cola and other Colombian unions and popular organizations, and a broader fight against US intervention and military aid to Colombia—the military aspect to the extension of "globalization" to South America.

Jeff Crosby is president of the North Shore Labor Council in Lynn, Massachusetts.



An Interview with Comandante Raúl Reyes of the **F A R C**

The FARC (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*), in spite of savage repression by the Colombian government, death squads and the US military, continues to wage the longest continuous guerrilla insurgency for national liberation in the world. In a FARC-controlled zone of Colombia last year, Martin Eder interviewed a major leader of the group for *Freedom Road* magazine.

Thank you for your time in the middle of this national crisis. Tell us what is your role and position within the FARC?

I am a member of the Secretariat of the Central Command of the FARC, responsible for the dialogues with the government, and head of foreign relations for the FARC.

From your viewpoint how could the international community help further the peace process in Colombia?

The international community has been involved. We have had help from France as well as a representative of the UN's Kofi Annan, who want to continue as facilitators to prevent the liquidation of the process by the enemies of peace who would like to see the dialogues ended.

What could those of us who struggle for social justice and human rights contribute to the peace effort?

All ideas and efforts are healthy. We have received expressions of support from many organizations, NGOs and

others who fight for social justice, asking the government and the FARC to continue to look for ways to overcome difficulties and make peace with justice a priority, as Colombia requires, knowing war only brings destruction and death, backwardness and misery to the people. For us this is very important because our struggle is for social justice, independence, sovereignty and dignity for the poor of this country.

Do you see a contradiction between an armed struggle which wants to transform the society and your stated goal of seeking peace?

In Colombia there have been very many attempts to reach the objective of political peace, even through political representation and even in the execu-

members killed for having different thoughts than the traditional Liberal and Conservative Parties—for seeking solutions without armed struggle, for seeking a better Colombia than we have today.

In this last year more than 100 trade unionists were assassinated without finding a single responsible person. And there are the campesinos and the people who die anonymously, including primary and secondary school teachers and workers, because they want to contribute to social justice, so they are assassinated. The problem is that political rights are eliminated. This has made it so people who want to struggle for social justice have no choice but to do it through armed struggle. But none of us

First recognize that the FARC is a *pueblo*, a people in arms; the FARC is a revolutionary political organization with programmatic goals for the struggle, precisely because the Colombian state does not protect the rights of citizens.

tive branch, but the majority of those who have attempted this have been assassinated. Most recent is the example of the Union Patriótica [a legal left political party which successfully ran many candidates and whose presidential candidate was assassinated—Ed.]. The UP had close to 5000 of its

who are in the FARC carrying arms do so because we like war, but because we have been left no other alternative means of struggling for those objectives. The foundation of our cause is to reach a real and defined peace, which the country wants.

Now that Colombia figures as one of the countries where human rights have been violated more than in any other part of the Americas, what about those people who point and say, "Look, the FARC are certainly no example of human rights"? Understanding that no human is perfect or no struggle is perfect, what would you say to people who have huge doubts about the way the FARC has conducted the struggle for social change?

First recognize that the FARC is a *pueblo*, a people in arms; the FARC is a revolutionary political organization with programmatic goals for the strug-

One big problem of this government is they think that they can intimidate the FARC. It is what they have always done, the use of psychological terrorism to frighten the people so the people will not ask for a living wage.

gle, precisely because the Colombian state does not protect the rights of citizens. In Colombia many people die from hunger, children from malnutrition, many kids are in the streets without education or food, and the government couldn't care less. Thus the primary violator of human rights is the government. They should protect all human beings from birth to death.

We have elderly in the streets without work or who have worked all their lives without retirement benefits. People who organize in unions or are in the leadership of community groups or in any groupings are repressed by the security apparatus of the state. Since the government does not comply with protection of the human rights of the people, the situation generates many different forms of struggle, and one form is armed struggle.

Clearly in carrying out our armed struggle there are mistakes anew. It is involuntary but there are errors and

then follow the other results—the violation of international human rights.

One of the big problems of Colombia is the falsity, the manipulation of the media where they fail in their ethical duty to inform, being partisan and confusing the people. The media in our country—because they are part of the principal economic power of the country and belong to ex-presidents who with very few exceptions come out of office having benefited themselves, then they get to be in charge of the media networks—comply with the direction set by the owners. So one of the serious problems of our country is the lack of

an independent press, genuinely ethical, which is not part of party politics but which informs.

What type of solution, what program does the FARC have for developing a new society, for those who aspire for a society with social justice and a change of systems. What are your platforms now and for the future?

FARC, since 1993 during its eighth conference, produced a program which is still valid for a new government: patriotic, pluralistic and democratic with national reconciliation, which looks more than anything to democratize the country to give participation to all workers, the intellectuals, the indigenous people for all the people to help construct the country which we all want. It is characterized as patriotic because Colombia should be sovereign, independent, with self-determination. This does not imply that we have to break relations with any other state but

work with mutual respect and reciprocal respect. This is the proposal we offer the government and the one we are advancing and is the basis of the twelve points we have been discussing with the government for three years.

What do you make of President Pastrana seen firing machine guns, showing off new American weaponry, mobilizing the Air Force and giving 48 hours notice of invasion?

One of the big problems of this government is they think that they can intimidate the FARC. It is what they have always done, the use of psychological terrorism to frighten the people so the people will not ask for a living wage; yet, on the contrary, the people keep struggling. If all the money spent on the machinery of war had been used to benefit the people, to create employment, used for the children dying of hunger or for those who want to study or for all the teachers who have to strike to get paid or for the hospitals that are closing because there is no government subsidy, it would be a different thing. We are aware that there are 30 million Colombians who are suffering in poverty; these people are waiting for those who will resolve their problems. The big monopolies are the ones who want war.

What message would you send to those who work to end Plan Colombia and seek peace and social justice?

The FARC is wholeheartedly in defense of the rights of the poor of Colombia. We struggle for peace, we fight for a new economic order, against neo-liberalism, against Plan Colombia, because it is ruining not only the social environment, but the ecosystem too. Plan Colombia is a plan for war and our struggle is for peace. And we would say to the people of the world, especially to the North American people, that the FARC is not against any people but instead an admirer of the American people. We have observations and political criticisms of the American government.

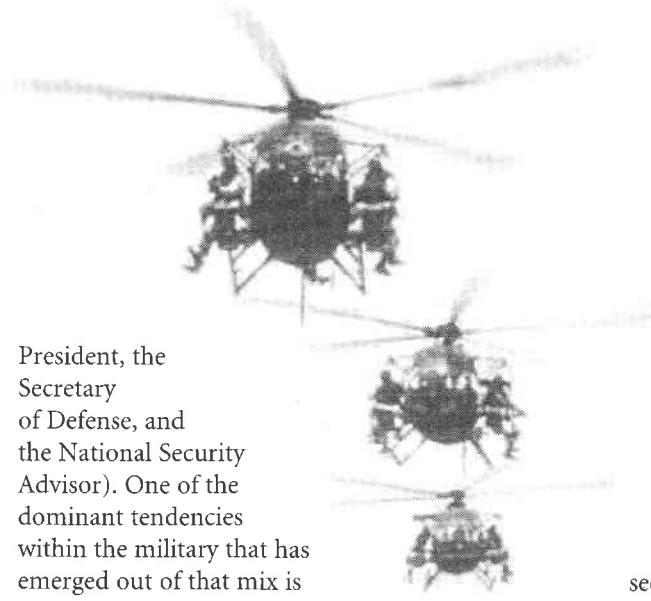
In trying making sense of the post-9/11 state of Infinite War in which the Bush administration has embroiled the country, I find myself reflecting a great deal on the experience of Somalia, where I participated as a member of the ill-fated Task Force Ranger in 1993. This debacle, now lionized and mythologized by Columbia Pictures in the hugely successful propaganda piece *Black Hawk Down*, can instruct us about the current military adventures in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

The experience in Somalia can begin to tell us something about the doctrinal frameworks driving US military actions. If we examine that doctrinal framework, we can identify systemic weaknesses in US military doctrine in Afghanistan: weaknesses in the military realm, and weaknesses that are reproduced out of the larger political system

President, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Advisor). One of the dominant tendencies within the military that has emerged out of that mix is called the Powell Doctrine.

Somalia: The Powell Doctrine at Work

The UNOSOM mission to Somalia, Operation Restore Hope (ORH), set the stage for the famous defeat in the Bakara market district of Mogadishu,



An inherent weakness for outside forces in this situation is the necessity to develop fixed installations, then supply them.

The airport had to be secured to maintain an air-head. The roads from the airport to Sword Base (the main installation), a good forty-minute drive by armored convoy, past a miniature Maginot line of 10th Mountain Division roadside bunkers (each one vulnerable to small attacks), went all the way around

FULL-SPECTRUM ENTROPY: SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN A SPECIAL PERIOD

BY STAN GOFF

within which this military is embedded, which potentially carry with them direct military consequences. Some of those weaknesses are temporarily remediable at the military level; however, others are systemic and thus essentially insurmountable in the absence of systemic change.

It is important to understand that military doctrine is not developed in a vacuum, but is influenced by biases from past doctrine, competing military science theories, inter-service rivalry, bureaucratic protectionism, weapons contractors and their elected representatives, the politics of promotion to the highest levels of command, and the peculiar biases, opinions, illusions, and delusions of the members of the National Command Authority (the

Somalia on October 3, 1993. The UNOSOM mission transformed from a multi-national humanitarian-civic action (HCA) mission (whatever the cynical motives for various participants), with a military security component, to military operations to “stabilize” Somalia. (One can already hear the echoes in Afghanistan.)

The HCA, for all practical purposes was then essentially over. These two missions are antithetical and cannot be carried out simultaneously with equal emphasis on both, unless the military actually arms, lives with, and shares hardship with the “protected” population. This is true, even if there is a coherent state with a singular and coherent enemy. There was neither in Somalia.

Mogadishu to avoid the mines everywhere and mortar/sniper attacks. These two installations and the corridor that linked them were all “fixed.”

Against a highly mobile, lightly equipped enemy, this translates into a total loss of battlefield initiative. The mobile indigenous force can pick away at the edges of the fixed positions, when they want, and how they want, at minimal risk to themselves (especially in the urban areas). Each mildly successful strike can inaugurate a whole new set of policies, procedures, and counter-measures from the fixed force, keeping them perpetually in a state of responding to the initiatives of their enemies. The US political emphasis on “force protection” (that is, an obsessive avoidance of any US combat casualties, an

implicit component of the Powell Doctrine) only increases the loss-of-initiative vulnerability. This not only drains resources and decreases flexibility, it is very hard on troop morale.

There is a way out of this dilemma from a strictly military perspective, and that is to regain the initiative through audacious, aggressive, and sustained ground action against a specified military organization. But the Powell Doctrine is one that seeks to avoid ground combat engagements, unless there is overwhelming technical superiority and a low likelihood of American combat casualties. For the ground tactical commander, ever mindful of the priorities of his or her superiors, that translates into a powerful reluctance to engage in decisive combat, or to even risk combat, and an inordinate emphasis at every level of command on force protection.

Audacious, aggressive, sustained offensive operations against a singular enemy organization will yield tactical victories, but it will inevitably cost “friendly” lives, and thereby risks losing the unseen but essential element in all military operations—the support of the civilian population at home. This is a systemic contradiction.

A key and integral part of the Powell Doctrine is information/spin control. The US population is fed “information” not to inform, but to gain their acquiescence for a military action. They tend to remain quiet until American bodies begin to be flown home; then they start to ask questions. So regaining the tactical initiative depends on a type of action—one with a higher probability of “friendly” casualties—that could threaten domestic acceptance of the military action. This is one reason the Bush-Rumsfeld regime is warning the public so much about “the costs” of the Infinite War. We are being inoculated in order to give the military more tactical flexibility.

Controlling the public’s perceptions of operations is as important a part of military operations, under this doctrine, as logistics or intelligence. One of

the primary difficulties for the US military, for example, in Haiti (where I participated in “Operation Restore Democracy”), was that Haiti’s porous borders allowed swarms of uncontrolled international reporters loose across the country. Not so in Iraq, and not so in Afghanistan. These actions were sifted, sanitized, and packaged for public consumption. With the release of *Black Hawk Down*, we have seen the retroactive application of this policy to past operations.

The Blunders of Task Force Ranger

I was part of Task Force Ranger (TFR), though I was sent home after a conflict with a dim-witted captain named Steele several days prior to the Bakara defeat (a blessing in disguise, perhaps). Several of us, veterans of Special Ops blunders like the Grenada invasion, informally complained to one another about the way we conducted the series of raids leading up to the Somali National Alliance (SNA) ambush that trapped TFR on October 3rd.

Our complaints centered on the execution of one raid after another, using the exact same template, which we were convinced was giving the SNA and others an opportunity to analyze that template and prepare counter-measures. Each time we raided another target, we would simply go back to the airport and hunker down for a day or two until we did it again—the same way.

Our little group of malcontents were saying that we should fire up the coffee pots, and launch one raid on top of another, using a different template each time, as fast as we could re-arm and refuel, until we were dropping out from exhaustion, then sleep for six hours and start again. But, alas, we were not in charge.

The Powell Doctrine mandated “force protection” and overwhelming offensive action. The Special Operations commanders were a generation removed from an earlier Special Ops establishment that made the soldier, the team, and creativity the

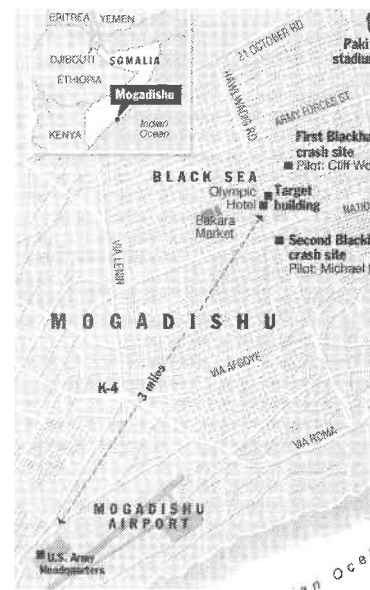
centerpiece of its doctrine, and had been raised under a regime that constructed its doctrine around its technology (instead of the reverse). And the political context—political science being a different “course,” you see, than military science—was very poorly understood.

We had a little warning at a traffic circle on one of the raids just before I was “sent home.”

I was with a vehicle strong point outside a stadium adjacent to the traffic circle, and it was pitch dark. The Delta teams were inside the target, a building two blocks away. The supporting MH-60 “little bird” gunships had pulled off to avoid drawing fire. Then out of nowhere, we were probed with close range machine gun fire, very close—like right across the street. The SNA knew where the outer edge of our security was, based on observation of prior raids, and they had come right to us.

The fire was directly in front of me, and I shot the machine gunner, firing around ten rounds of tracer to designate the target for the rest of our strong-point defense team. The Rangers on the strong point had .50 caliber machine guns, MK-19 40-mm automatic grenade launchers, and a phalanx of small arms, and they cued on the tracer fire, pouring an ungodly volume of ammunition into the stadium wall. Then we received fire from the opposite direction, further off, and without tracers, so we couldn’t orient on it right away. When the Somalis took one of the helicopters under fire with tracers, we identified their position and opened up again at a little structure on a low hill, filling the night with a wild arcing river of tracers.

As it turned out, the fire into the stadium, which was filled with homeless people in raggedy



cloth huts, killed quite a few civilians in addition to the two or three who fired on us, and our fire at the hill arced across Mogadishu and rained down on US Sword Base. We had a couple of wounded, and I had to hold a glowing green Chem-lite in my teeth, a nerve-racking experience, to start an intravenous infusion on one of them. When we got back to the airport, we found a .50 caliber bullet hole in the door of one of our vehicles. We had the only 50s out there.

According to the Powell Doctrine, of course, we did the right things (though we could have prevented our minor

only from a tactical standpoint, in the same simple-minded way it was all the way back in Vietnam. The political measure and the critique of the system, as opposed to technical problems, are absent. I eliminated one threat with the shots that hit the machine gunner and suppressed whoever might have been with him. But I probably recruited 100 new militia with the civilians I (and the rest of us) killed and wounded behind him. And our technology, far from affording us an advantage, was becoming a danger to ourselves.

Even had TFR pursued a more *tactically* sound course of action—sustained

Afghanistan will too. No one can predict how, but we *can* predict that it *will* happen. The key similarity between Afghanistan and Somalia is the lack of political coherence and the existence of multiple, well-armed, potentially warring factions. The Bush folks know that, and that's why they are making such a vain and ridiculous effort to cobble something together as a government. This is a tar baby for them, because once together, it is the American military that will have to take ultimate responsibility for maintaining it. The Turks and others are being brought in to take up the slack for now, but the US will be back. The bases have already been built.

An indigenous force fighting a foreign invader or an existing state can use a military action as a first course of action, as a catalyst, as the centerpiece of its political struggle, because it is not fighting to *retain* economic and political control, but to disrupt or prevent that control by another force. Military actions are intrinsically better at creating instability than stability.

The US military is an instrument, and it is subordinated to a foreign policy that is first and foremost about investments and, thus, stability. The fact that it is being used at all is generally an indicator that the US has gotten itself economically and politically cornered. Somalia was a sideshow that came center stage for a few weeks, then receded again. The US felt relatively secure politically and economically, and Somalia was an anomaly. But the US is now in the throes of a political crisis (masked for the time being by the chauvinist fervor being whipped up around September 11), a national recession that is synchronized with a global recession, the collapse of Argentina foreshadowing a generalized Latin American crisis, the slow implosion of Japan, trade war with Europe, and a rising tide of anti-American sentiment around the world. Latent in these turbulent and sullen winds is the potential for the "perfect storm."

If ever there were a propitious time for people around the world to rebel against

Full-spectrum dominance means "the ability of US forces, operating alone or with allies, to defeat any adversary and control any situation across the range of military operations." It did use the word "any" twice, making it perhaps the most grandiose hallucination in US military history, in contrast to the semi-conscious caution inherent in the Powell Doctrine.

casualties by carpet bombing, I suppose). We responded with overwhelming force to ensure force protection. We also reacted to a probe and drew the SNA an even better picture of our operational template.

This raid was called a success, because we pulled a couple of SNA leader Aidid's lieutenants out of the primary target. The impact of the dead civilians was never factored in. The danger to which we subjected Sword Base was never factored in, nor was the failure of coordination. But most of all, no commander stopped and said, "Hey, it looks like they have figured out this plan. Let's change it."

That's partly because success is measured technically, not politically, and

ground operations against Aidid—a tactical success against the SNA would have only strengthened one or more other factions relative to them. The fundamental problem would have remained. In the absence of long-term, sustained ground actions—with significant US casualties—the non-indigenous (US/UN) forces, battered down in their fixed installations, remain a static target, ceding the initiative to the more flexible, mobile, and *variable* forces that surrounded them... with no such misplaced sentimentality about the necessity of risking casualties.

Drawing Lessons

The occupying forces in Somalia were destined to come to harm. Those in



It's hard to believe they made a Hollywood movie out of a defeat as shocking and complete as the Somalia intervention.

the *diktat* of the US, it is right now. Because the floundering and desperate Bush Administration would not be able to handle two, three, a hundred Somalias.

The greatest risk, of course, but one that is there whether it is thinkable or not, is that Bush might listen to Wolfowitz, the Dr. Strangelove of American politics, and consider the use of tactical nuclear weapons in the quest to restructure the planet's political geography.

But as the Haitian proverb goes, if you don't say good morning to the devil, he will eat you. If you *do* say good morning to the devil... he will eat you. There is no option but to fight imperialism.

Full-Spectrum Dominance (FSD) Doctrine

"Full-spectrum dominance" is the key term in "Joint Vision 2020," the Department of Defense "blueprint" issued under Henry Shelton. Full-spectrum dominance means "the ability of US forces, operating alone or with allies, to defeat any adversary and control any situation across the range of military operations." It did use the word "any" twice, making it perhaps the most grandiose hallucination in US military history, in contrast to the semi-conscious caution inherent in the Powell Doctrine.

"Full-spectrum" refers to three things: geographic scope, level of conflict, and technology. This doctrine implicitly aims at world military domination, taking on everything from street riots to thermonuclear war, accomplished with a blank check to weapons developers for an array of highly (some would say overly) sophisticated gadgets. Rumsfeld, possessing a breathtaking faith in this last, is devoted to the doctrine. This explains his selection of military mediocrity Air Force General Richard Meyers, who shares Rumsfeld's techno-religiosity, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

These two doctrinal tendencies, the Powell Doctrine and Full-Spectrum

Dominance, are both being employed, to one extent or another, in Afghanistan. Media control and high-altitude indiscriminate bombing are Powell Doctrine stand-bys. The attempt to coordinate the mass (foreign) casualty tactics of the Powell Doctrine with Special Operations troops employed in various styles of low-intensity warfare runs into conflict on the ground. They are each myopic doctrines on their own accounts, and they are absolutely incompatible when employed together, when a significant part of that "full spectrum" is Special Forces work.

The attempt to combine massive destruction of lives and property through high-altitude carpet bombing with rapport building and military cooperation among the population was tried once before by the US—in Vietnam. And the attempt to co-exist as a (foreign) military force in an essentially stateless combat milieu, with ethnic and clan-based warlords making and breaking alliances with each change of the political wind was also tried once before by the US—in Somalia.

To date, Afghanistan has been an unmitigated military bust. Every independent source available (the US corporate press is not remotely independent) confirms it. The Evil Genius has not been captured or killed. The Taliban has simply gone to ground around Afghanistan and Pakistan to wait for the US to become more deeply submerged in the growing quagmire. The poppy harvest will be the best in a decade. Pakistan proper has become destabilized to the point of risking nuclear war with its neighbor, India. The potential fossil fuel pipeline easements still cannot be secured. And the collateral damage inflicted by bombing and bad intelligence, combined with support for the corrupt and inept Karzai regime, turns ever-larger segments of the population against the Americans each day. The Turkish Army, well known in Turkey for their brutality, can be expected to handle it for a while with their usual aplomb, fur-

ther alienating and enraging the various factions throughout Afghanistan. Then the US will have to intercede again with ground operations.

Morale of the Troops and the Masses

When military planners evaluate the "enemy situation," they take five material categories into account: size, location, composition, disposition, and strength. But included in that evaluation is a sixth category. Morale. It is something difficult to quantify and operationalize, as the positivists would say. And it doesn't correlate well with material well-being. I've seen a highly provisioned, well-cared-for Special Forces A-Detachment turn into moping adolescents, and I've seen troops in protracted and gruelingly austere conditions imbued with a wild fighting spirit. Consider the conditions of the NLA in Vietnam or the Cuban revolutionaries, whose morale seldom flagged.

Morale at home is also a factor, and as the *de facto* American rulers continue to reconstruct the world by dint of arms, the economic costs, then the social costs, will rekindle the political crisis that was temporarily quenched by the 9-11 outburst of chauvinism. But the official story is becoming more difficult to sustain each day. It persists now only because of the grandest of American appetites: denial. Even that can't last forever. And when it does end, this administration can add a legitimacy crisis to their lengthening list of woes. It may be this crisis, at the end of the day, that is their undoing.


Stan Goff also participated in Operation Restore Democracy (in Haiti), and he provides an extensive critique of Special Forces and the US military there in his book, *Hideous Dream: A Soldier's Memoir of the US Invasion of Haiti* (Soft Skull Press, 2000). Hope was not restored in Somalia. Democracy was not restored in Haiti.

Stan wrote this piece in Summer, 2002. Since then, his column "Military Matters" has appeared frequently at www.freedomroad.org. Check it out.

AS THE US TARGETS THE PHILIPPINES: DEFEND

JOSE MARIA SISON!

BY DOUG WORDELL

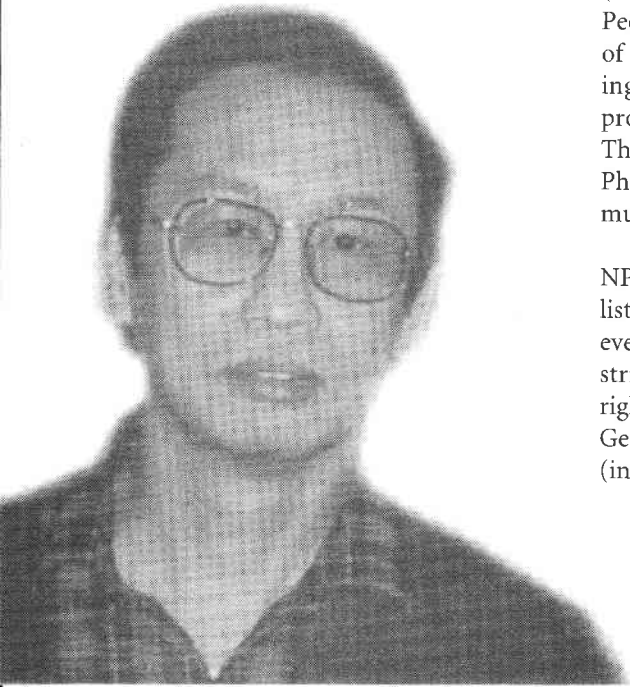


With the US poised to attack Iraq, another US military operation is underway — and it's largely under the radar of the larger anti-war movement. Currently, the US armed forces have thousands of troops stationed in the Republic of the Philippines, supposedly to battle the reactionary bandit group Abu Sayyaf. As many observers had predicted, these US troops are now beginning to target the popular insurgency led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its military wing, the New People's Army (NPA). Under the guise of fighting terrorism, the US is assaulting the revolutionary left and progressive forces around the world. The Bush administration is using the Philippines as a test case to see how much aggression it can get away with.

On August 9, 2002 the CPP and the NPA were put on the US government's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations, even though both organizations have strict policies of upholding human rights and have always abided by the Geneva Conventions and Protocol I (international law in situations of inter-

nal armed conflict). The CPP/NPA, far from being terrorists, undertake popular campaigns to mobilize the Filipino people for land reform, public education, literacy, health and sanitation, and cultural activities. Both organizations operate in the larger National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). Despite the crackdown against the NDFP, this movement is growing rapidly. A broadening layer of Filipinos understand the need to fight against their government's capitulation to the US that has left most of the Filipino people, especially in the rural areas, in deep poverty and misery.

In sharp contrast to the forces of the NDFP, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, acting as a client state for US interests in the Philippines, has consistently sponsored right-wing death squads and terrorized its own people. The Abu Sayyaf have provided an excuse for the Philippine and US militaries to target activists and other innocent people. The decision of Philippine president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to go along with Bush's "War on Terror" has the Philippines on the brink of a return to martial law. In just the past year, 23 leaders of the legal opposition political party Bayan Muna have been killed in an undeclared war



The CPP/NPA, far from being terrorists, undertake popular campaigns to mobilize the Filipino people for land reform, public education, literacy, health and sanitation, and cultural activities.

on all progressive Filipinos. One target of this war is the exiled revolutionary leader, Professor Jose Maria Sison.

Who is JoMa Sison?

Sison, the founder and the first chairman of the CPP and a continuing consultant to the NDFP, is being targeted for extradition to the US—even though JoMa, as he is popularly known, has not been charged with any crime. Sison, jailed and tortured under the Marcos dictatorship for nine years, has been the target of subsequent US-backed regimes in the Philippines. He and his family have been living in exile for the past fourteen years in the Netherlands. Now, as of October 28, the European Union, under heavy US pressure, has also added Sison and the NPA to its own list of “terrorists.” This decision was made with no discussion or due process.

The Dutch government has put the whole Sison family in its crosshairs. The Sisons have lost the housing and the allowance for food and other basic necessities that the Netherlands extends to political refugees. In addition, JoMa has also had his bank account frozen. In response, a worldwide campaign is developing to stop the harassment and extradition of Sison.

Tasks Before the Movement

While Iraq clearly has center stage in the anti-war movement at present, we need to develop a broader movement—one that can also respond to the assault going on right now in the Philippines, Palestine, and Colombia and can begin to roll back the advances of global imperialism. The Philippines in particular is being targeted because of its

strategic importance to the rulers of the US as a military and economic staging area for reaching all of East Asia, especially China. If we want the current wave of anti-war sentiment in this

country to develop the momentum and staying power required to take on Bush’s whole endless, borderless “War on Terrorism,” it will have to be more than a peace movement. It will have to become an anti-intervention movement.

Defending the movement in the Philippines has to be firmly on the agenda of our own movement, and it is the task of progressive Filipinos and their supporters to put it there. There is

no doubt that progressive Filipinos will be facing stepped up and coordinated repression, not only in the Philippines but also in the US and the other nations where millions of them have moved, fleeing repression and poverty. Sison will not be alone.

Activists in the US should be actively preparing for this crackdown—and sooner rather than later. It is also essential that we organize to demand that the CPP and the NPA be removed from US and European “terrorist” lists. In particular, we must demand an end to the harassment of JoMa Sison and the

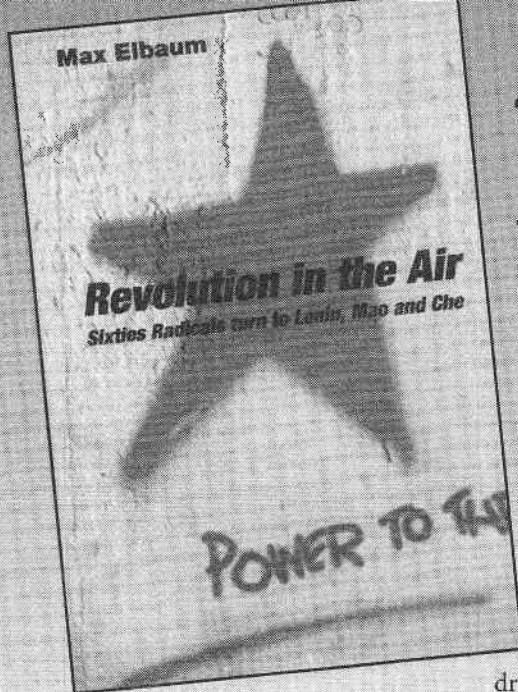
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broader Filipino left internationally. To the extent that the US government is allowed to paint national liberation organizations as terrorists in the Philippines, they can—and will—do it elsewhere. A victory protecting Sison and getting the CPP/NPA off the US government’s hit list will be a profound victory for the left internationally.

To get more information or to support Sison and the Left in the Philippines, contact www.defendsison.be

JoMa Sison became a leader of the Philippines struggle in the '60s.





A SPECIAL SECTION REVOLUTION IN THE AIR

writing of their experience—from the inside! (Although one *veterano* commented, “I was totally into it for the first 90 pages, couldn’t put it down, then I thought, ‘Wait a minute, I know how this turns out!’ Then I was bummed.”) For new revolutionaries, it shows how much the Marxism of that period drew from revolutionary movements of the Third World. Further, its defense of revolutionary organization promises lessons they can use for organization-building within today’s struggles.

Since the Freedom Road Socialist Organization is itself a descendent of many of the groups that arose within that movement, we want to both hail Max’s accomplishment and to raise some points of omission and of difference we feel are important.

This special section features a review by Chris Day from the point of view of a new generation. Then Khalil Hassan challenges head-on Elbaum’s view that Maoist ideology was the key to the movement’s failures, and presents a deep and thoughtful look at the strengths and shortcomings of Maoist theory and practice. One topic that we think calls for more attention is the experience of activists of color within the New Communist Movement; the article by Bill Gallegos focuses on that experience and on the politics of the national question, where our tradition has some real differences with the one out of which Max came. Finally, two long-time organizers from Atlanta interview each other on what it felt like to be a cadre in one of the organizations at the center of the movement.

Only months after its release, Max Elbaum’s study of the US New Communist Movement of the 1970s, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che* (Verso, 2002), has become required reading for veterans of that movement and up-and-coming young activists alike. For the old-timers, it seems almost miraculous to have someone

The Fire Last Time

A New Generation Reads *Revolution in the Air*

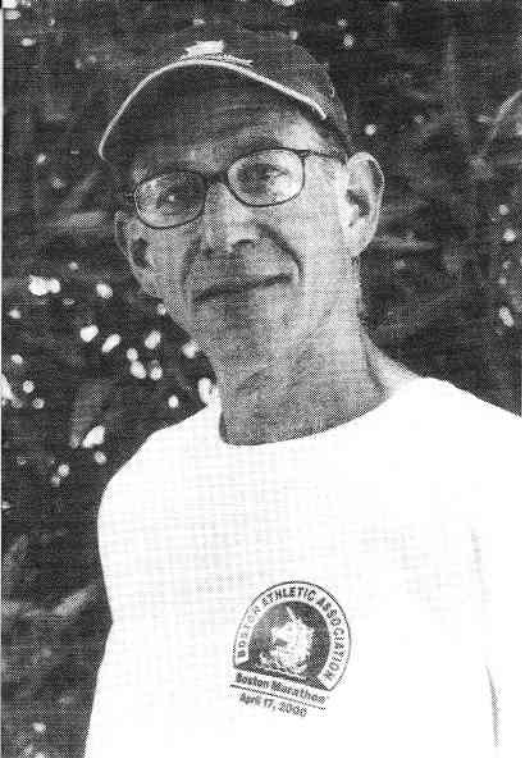
BY CHRISTOPHER DAY

The past few years has seen the emergence of a new generation of radical activists. After an initial upsurge represented by the anti-WTO actions in Seattle, many have begun to ask themselves hard but important questions about what it means to fight capitalism and to make revolution. Questions like: What tactics and strategies actually work? How can we build effective unity, especially across lines of nationality? How do we respond effectively to state repression while remaining a democratic move-

ment? And what are the most appropriate forms of organization for accomplishing all these things?

Those who are quick to offer simple answers to these questions are usually unaware of the history of previous efforts to answer them. In the late 1960s the civil rights movement and the movement against the war in Vietnam radicalized millions of young people of all colors, leading many to become conscious revolutionaries who sought to grapple with the same sorts of questions now confronting the more radical wing

of the global justice movement. Revolutionary-minded young activists looked many places in their search for a coherent theory or ideology to answer these questions. Many white radicals embraced varieties of anarchism and Trotskyism. Many activists of color turned towards forms of revolutionary nationalism. Many women took up radical feminism. But the trend that captured the allegiances of the largest section revolutionary minded young activists was what was broadly called Third World Marxism.



After decades building people's movements and revolutionary socialist organization, Max Elbaum spent the '90s making a different contribution—a historical study designed to be useful to activists.

In his new book, *Revolution in the Air*, Max Elbaum describes the process:

Between 1968 and 1973 layer after layer of young people went in search of an ideological framework and strategy to bring that revolution about. Inspired by the dynamic liberation movements that threatened to besiege Washington with “two, three, many Vietnams,” many

linked aspiring U.S. revolutionaries to the parties and leaders who were proving that “the power of the people is greater than the man's technology”: the Vietnamese and Chinese Communist parties; Amilcar Cabral and the Marxist-led liberation movements in Africa; Che, Fidel and the Cuban Revolution... Third World Marxism... promised a break with Eurocentric models of social change, and also with the political caution that characterized Old Left groups, communist and social democratic alike. It pointed the way toward building a multiracial movement out of a badly segregated U.S. left.

I recently finished reading *Revolution in the Air* in a study group made up mainly of young activists of color in and around the Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM) at Hunter College. While we disagreed on many things, everybody in the study group was agreed that this is a very important book for young activists to be reading. As it turned out, several similar study groups have also been pulled together to read the book in other cities. It's not hard to see why. *Revolution in the Air* is the story of how large numbers of radicalized young people in the United States came to embrace the distinctive Marxism represented by revolutionary movements in Africa, Asia and Latin

revolutionary party. (Instead it resulted in a dizzying alphabet soup of collectives, parties and “pre-party formations”—the RCP, CPML, CWP, BWC, LRS, LOM, RWHq, PUL, and many more.) *Revolution in the Air* describes the ambitious organizing work of these groups and how they were ultimately tripped up by a rising tide of dogmatism and sectarianism that overwhelmed the initial spirit of their projects.

A Different View of the New Left

Revolution in the Air challenges what Elbaum calls the “good '60s/bad '60s” view of history that condemns the turn towards revolutionary politics and the attempt to build serious disciplined organizations as a betrayal of the values of participatory democracy that animated the movement in its earlier years. *Revolution* argues persuasively that the turn towards Third World Marxism was a maturation of the movement in the face of real developments in the world. Experience had taught a generation of idealistic activists that the US was an imperialist power and that attempts to reform it could not change its worst features. Experience had also taught them that the loose organizational style that prevailed through the '60s was very vul-

***Revolution in the Air* is the story of how large numbers of radicalized young people in the United States came to embrace the distinctive Marxism represented by revolutionary movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America and then attempted to build serious multi-racial revolutionary organizations based on those politics.**

decided that a Third World-oriented version of Marxism... was key to building a powerful left in the U.S., within the “belly of the beast.”

Elbaum continues with an explanation of Third World Marxism's appeal:

Third World Marxism put opposition to racism and military intervention at the heart of its theory and practice... It

America and then attempted to build serious multi-racial revolutionary organizations based on those politics.

Elbaum describes how Third World Marxism inspired the creation first of local collectives and then of national organizations that identified themselves as part of a common “New Communist Movement” that they hoped would quickly cohere into a large and serious

nerable to repression and disruption. Tighter forms of organization went hand in hand with the commitment to actually making revolution.

Third World Marxism exercised a particularly strong pull on radical activists of color. Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano and Asian activists came to understand the struggles of their own communities against racism as part of a

NCM activists led many of the most important student struggles of the '70s. Here Kent State University students and supporters celebrate breaking through fences and police lines to occupy the land where the university planned a gymnasium to obliterate the site of the 1970 massacre of four students by the Ohio National Guard.



worldwide struggle of colonized peoples against imperialism. This was a profoundly liberating realization. People of color no longer needed to view themselves as minorities fighting for recognition in a white-majority country. Rather they were part of the global majority fighting against the global domination of a besieged white minority. Third World Marxism upheld the struggles of each group while promoting unity and solidarity between them as well as with white progressives.

It is tempting to dismiss the New Communist Movement for its considerable failings. The movement became progressively more doctrinaire and sectarian as the '70s progressed and its influence shrank. It was characterized by

Thousands of young people, largely from middle-class backgrounds, immersed themselves in the life of the working class by taking jobs in factories and moving into working class communities. They dedicated themselves to organizing for revolution, often sacrificing their own health and well being

chance to really make a revolution, but only *if* a serious and disciplined revolutionary organization able to mobilize all sectors were in place. With the benefit of hindsight it seems easy to see where they miscalculated. As the country moved to the right in the late '70s the New Communist Movement remained convinced that big upheavals were just waiting to explode. When they didn't, the movement found itself isolated from the more moderate struggles that actually were taking place. But it is to Elbaum's considerable credit that he is able to recapture the mood and events that led so many to think that revolution really might be around the corner.

Drawing Lessons from the NCM

In the concluding chapter of the book, Elbaum offers what he considers to be the lessons of the New Communist Movement. In addition to warning against the dangers of dogmatism and sectarianism, he identifies several positive lessons as well. These include the importance of having an analysis of the role of US imperialism in the world, the strategic centrality of the fight against racism in the US, and the importance of developing trained organizers and disciplined organizations able to actually carry out the work of building a revolutionary movement. These are lessons from which most of the global justice movement could still really benefit.

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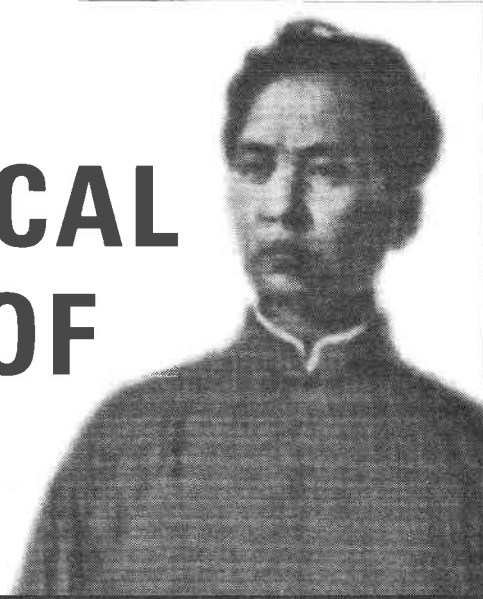
Those who want to build a serious revolutionary movement in the United States today cannot afford to ignore this book. Only a fool would want to mechanically copy the experiences of the New Communist Movement in the 1970s. But only a bigger fool would imagine that there are not important lessons to be learned from carefully studying those experiences.

a high degree of machismo and, with some important exceptions, a particularly backwards attitude towards the newly emergent gay and lesbian liberation movement. Attempts to follow the twists and turns of the foreign policy of the Chinese Communist Party led many groups to increasingly bizarre and indefensible positions. Elbaum is unsentimental in his criticism of these failings. But he is also appreciative of the movement's considerable accomplishments.

and risking beatings and arrests in order to build serious organizations of oppressed people, organizations that could really fight. More than any other trend coming out of the '60s, the New Communist Movement sought to build and sometimes succeeded in building genuinely multi-racial organizations.

The young revolutionaries viewed the upheavals of the '60s as a dress rehearsal for an even greater social conflict that they hoped might offer the

TOWARD A CRITICAL REASSESSMENT OF MAOISM



But neither conversion into joint-stock companies and trusts nor conversion into state property deprives the productive forces of their character as capital. This is obvious in the case of joint-stock companies and trusts. But the modern state, too, is only the organization with which bourgeois society provides itself in order to maintain the general external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against encroachments either by the workers or by individual capitalists. The modern state, whatever its form, is an essentially capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal aggregate capitalist. The more productive forces it takes over into its possession, the more it becomes a real aggregate capitalist, the more citizens it exploits. The workers remain wage-workers, proletarians. The capitalist relationship is not abolished; rather it is pushed to the limit. But at this limit it changes into its opposite. State ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict, but it contains within itself the formal means, the handle to the solution.

— Frederick Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*
(Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1975), pp90–1

BY KHALIL HASSAN

Max Elbaum's *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che* offers the revolutionary Left an opportunity for a long-needed self-examination. A well-written and thoughtful book, it seriously examines much of what led to the formation of a New Communist Movement in the USA, and much of what led to its collapse by the 1980s. An exhaustive review is necessary since Elbaum's book can and should catalyze a needed dialogue and analysis

of that period. At the same time, the publication of this book, and its harsh condemnation of the political tendency known as Maoism as being the principal problem of the revolutionary Left, offers us a moment to begin a reassessment of the political tendency that came to be associated with the late Chairman of the Communist Party of China.

The following essay presents a series of theses toward such a reassessment. A much more in-depth look is warranted, but in light of the discussion that has accompanied the publication of

Revolution in the Air, it is critical to clarify terms, and better understand the Maoist political tendency.

It should be added at the outset that Elbaum collapses most of the problems of the New Communist Movement into his notion of the errors of Maoism. With this thesis, I am in *fundamental disagreement*. The New Communist Movement, a movement that, as Elbaum correctly noted, arose out of the progressive social movements of the '60s and attempted to rebuild a revolutionary current in US politics, died due to an ultra-leftism that crossed political currents, a fact that Elbaum grudgingly seems to accept, albeit in contradiction with his main argument.

This ultra-leftism was grounded less in traditional dogmatism and a slavish support for the nuances of the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China, and more in semi-anarchist assumptions and practices; voluntarism (at the levels of theory and practice); and a search for a mythological orthodox communist heritage. Underlying all of this, however, was *the* critical error: the failure of the new revolutionary Left to recognize and come to grips with the *crisis of socialism*, a crisis that went back to the Stalin era in the former Soviet Union. Our collective failure to understand the crisis of socialism and its implications was linked to a social practice of ultra-leftism.

Maoism and the Crisis of Socialism

It is, therefore, fitting that one should begin a reassessment of Maoism by addressing the crisis of socialism. In its fundamentals, what came to be known first as "Mao Zedong Thought", and later by many as "Maoism," was an effort led by forces within the Communist Party of China (CPC), and later in other communist and revolutionary movements and parties, to address the crisis of socialism. In this regard, to narrow an understanding of Maoism to the specifics of China's foreign policy misses the mark entirely. Foreign policies of any country, regardless of rhetoric, are driven by various forces, including class forces, ideological pulls, historic tensions, perceived national interests, and on and on. Maoism, on the other hand, represented a political tendency, and a complex one at that. It certainly contributed to the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China, but it was not identical with it.

What can we say were some of the elements of Maoism? To borrow from



The Communist Party of China's break with the Soviet Union was rooted in the critique of Khrushchev's revisionism and marked a turning point in the development of Mao's thinking.

the Egyptian Marxist Samir Amin, "Maoism offered a critique of Stalinism from the left, while Khrushchev made one from the right." Maoism emerged as a critique of the Soviet experience. It

did so in a contradictory manner in that it represented both a political critique of the actions of the Soviet Union post-Stalin, as well as an often-implied theoretical critique of the Stalin period.

As such, contained within the broad rubric of Maoism were sub-tendencies or alliances that shifted over time. Thus, within Maoism one could find those who sought justification for their analysis based, ironically, on Stalinism. At the same time one could find those that more overtly critiqued the Stalin period and the approach to socialism that it represented. (Elbaum does acknowledge the sub-tendencies within Maoism, but tends to represent this as some haphazard united front. See p.140.)

All that said, I would argue that the key elements of Maoism that made it more than an amalgam of ideas are as follows:

- (1) It reaffirmed Marx and Lenin's proposition that socialism was not a mode of production but represented a transitional period between capitalism and communism during which elements of both modes of production would exist (and by implication, be in struggle).
- (2) Given point #1, and that there would continue to be classes, class struggle would continue during socialism, but this struggle would take different forms than had existed under traditional capitalism.
- (3) Classes, including antagonistic classes, could in fact re-emerge during socialism. Socialism, therefore, was not a period in which there could be no reversals. The consolidation of capital under the rubric of state property—to borrow from Engels—was insufficient to guarantee a transition to communism or the emancipation of the oppressed.
- (4) The 20th century had witnessed the rise in importance, if not centrality, of the national liberation struggles and struggles for national independence against imperialism. While class struggle in the imperialist countries would remain important, and the struggle on the part of the socialist camp against imperialism could be invaluable, by implication Maoism saw both of the latter as being relatively weak compared with the former.
- (5) The Communist International (Comintern) had been a disaster and undermined the sovereignty of revolutionary movements and their ability to develop revolutionary strategies that fit their concrete conditions. Rather than the Comintern's serving as a body to coordinate revolutionary strategies developed indigenously, the Comintern was seen as imposing strategies from without. Flowing from this was the notion that while there needed to be support of revolutionary movements and parties, the internal contradiction within each social formation must be the decisive measure of the character of a revolutionary movement.
- (6) That a broad united front against imperialism was necessary, including within it a variety of middle forces that were not in and of themselves revolutionary.
- (7) That the worker-peasant alliance was critical in the advancement of any revolutionary process in the so-called Third World.
- (8) That the Soviet Union had degenerated into a capitalist state, and was, in effect, an example of social imperialism.

There are, of course, in addition the points and elaborations on matters of philosophy offered by Mao.

Class Struggle and Retreat under Socialism

It is impossible in this short essay to take on each of the themes, but it is worth offering some summary points.

This essay began with a lengthy quote from Engels in order to illustrate that from the beginning, Marxism has attempted to grapple with the interrelationship between the state, capital, private capitalism and capitalist relations. Engels offered, very presciently, the notion that the state could serve as what he termed the "aggregate capitalist." In other words, the fundamental feature of capitalism is *not* the existence of private capitalists.

Maoism, in attempting to understand the development of the USSR, took this as a key starting point. Stalin had looked at class struggle as a matter of military action either against foreign aggressors or against imperialist agents. In both cases the answer was simple for him: elimination. The notion of class struggle and the possibility of the emergence of a new oppressive class arising from both small commodity production and from within the socialist state and party itself were simply not on the table. For Stalin, as for many of his followers in what came to be known as the New Communist Movement in the USA, socialism was a one way street: the only way for there to be capitalist restoration or otherwise backsliding was through a counter-revolutionary insurrection or an external invasion.

Beginning in the 1940s some Trotskyist tendencies began exploring the possibility that there might be other ways to reverse the socialist course. (The noted Marxist C.L.R. James was among the more prominent Trotskyists to suggest that a form of state capitalism had emerged in the USSR under Stalin.) Maoism, through its various exponents, including but not limited to Mao, saw the key to proceeding along the socialist road in the question of what steps were taken to move against capitalist relations and build the power of the workers and peasants.

Maoism challenged the economic determinism of Stalinian Marxism, even in its post-Stalin incarnations. It suggested that while the development of the productive forces was essential, economic development in and of itself

would not, *ipso facto*, lead toward communism, *even if a communist party were in command*. It is in this context that it is useful to consider the quote from Mao that Elbaum so frequently ridicules: "The correctness or otherwise of the ideological and political line decides everything." The entirety of the quote reads as follows:

The correctness or otherwise of the ideological and political line decides everything. When the Party's line is correct, then everything will come its way. If it has no followers, then it can have followers; if it has no guns, then it can have guns; if it has no political power, then it can have political power. If its line is not correct, even what it has it may lose. The line is a net rope. When it is pulled, the whole net opens out. (Mao Zedong, "Summary of Chairman Mao's talks with Responsible Comrades at Various Places during his Provincial Tour from the Middle of August to 12 September 1971," in Stuart Schram, editor, *Chairman Mao Talks to the People: Talks and Letters: 1956-1971* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), p.290.)

would make a bit of sense. As an author close to the Communist Labor Party (which came to oppose the notion of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union) wrote in the 1970s, the notion of capitalist restoration would be like humans devolving into apes. Yet it was the possibility of capitalist restoration that Maoism attempted to address.

While Elbaum and many others may think that Maoism was completely off the mark in such an analysis, there is an interesting question one must ask: If the USSR was socialist, why was it that a formal restoration of Western-style capitalism transpired so easily? Why was there no civil war? Why was it that cadres of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) did not rally en masse against private capitalism? How, in other words, did the great tree become infested with termites? Short of a conspiracy theory that places all the blame on a cabal of a small group of leaders, there are few answers besides getting to the root of actual class strug-

If the USSR was socialist, why was it that a formal restoration of Western-style capitalism transpired so easily? Why was there no civil war?

While the point was overstated and subject to the wild interpretations by an infantile movement that Elbaum cites, the critical feature of this notion is that *there is no inevitability on the road to socialism*, whether that is in the pre-revolutionary stage or in the post-revolutionary stage. The party's political and ideological line, which Mao *never* reduced to a set of programs and proclamations, but always founded on a concrete analysis, was the battleground in the construction of socialism.

If one does not believe that a socialist society can move backwards short of an insurrection or invasion, then it is clear that none of what Mao elaborated

gle as it was playing out in the former USSR. (And such conspiracy theories have proliferated within the international Left. The Workers Party of Belgium (PTB), an otherwise outstanding force on the Left, retreated from a semi-Maoist analysis of the USSR and focused its analysis of the collapse of the Soviet bloc on conspiracies carried out by the CIA, Gorbachev and Yeltsin.)

Was Maoism correct that the Soviet Union had become a form of state capitalism? I believe that it is far from clear what the actual social formation was. In that regard the characterization of the USSR as capitalist, let alone social imperialist seems more descriptive than

analytical, and even in the descriptive-ness, missed many important nuances. The debates that included such forces as those grouped around *Monthly Review* magazine, the French Marxist Charles Bettelheim, Samir Amin, and others were informative in probing this question but not decisive in answering the problem. Despite the disappearance of the USSR, understanding what transpired remains a key theoretical task of all serious forces on the revolutionary Left.

Actual Soviet Practice

It is important in making this analysis of the Soviet Union and the possibility of the restoration of capitalism (or the creation of some other sort of non-socialist, post-capitalist state) to ask a question about the international role of the USSR, particularly because Elbaum walks very quickly around issues of Soviet international practice while blasting the Chinese for each and every transgression on proletarian internationalism. Influencing both Maoism

well as actual practices. During the Stalin era the CPSU elaborated two important notions with regard to the possibility of a supposed socialist division of labor on both the political party front and on the nation-state front. In the early years of the USSR, the federation that was to become the USSR supported the notion of self-determination up to and including the right of secession. Nevertheless, when forces, including communists, within many of those nation-states suggested that self-determination should be exercised in favor of greater autonomy or outright independence, they were met with repression. This included actions in the Ukraine as well as in what came to be known as Soviet Central Asia.

Coinciding with these purges was the emergence of the notion of the so-called "Russian Elder Brother," i.e., the Russian Republic playing the *leading role* in the division of labor within the USSR. After World War II this notion was further expanded to include the relationship

The other aspect of the socialist division of labor concerned the relationship between parties. Chinese suspicion and resistance to the notion of a new Communist International had little to do with the pragmatism that Elbaum implies, but rather to the actual experience of the Comintern. The Chinese Party, specifically, had a very negative experience with Comintern directives in which disasters unfolded due to dogmatic and otherwise out-of-touch direction. The Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI), the leading body between Comintern congresses, held an international role analogous to the central committee of the communist party of a nation-state. Thus, the Comintern could dissolve a party, alter its leadership, or change its direction. An example of some of the more extreme measures included the physical elimination of the leadership of the Communist Party of Poland (and the dissolving of the party) by the Comintern in 1939, all carried out under the leadership of the CPSU.

Thus, at the level of experience, there was a sound basis to be suspicious of actual Soviet practice. To be added to this can be included Stalin's machinations in the late 1940s to separate Sinkiang Province off from China; the withdrawal of Soviet aid in 1960; the unilateralism of the USSR and the CPSU in its relations with other parties generally, and the CPC in particular; and the twice-discussed/considered nuclear bombardment of China that the USSR contemplated (along with the USA).

It is worth mentioning these points to understand that Elbaum's notion of some sort of grand anti-imperialist front that the Chinese allegedly broke simply does not correspond with the actual facts. Second, that there was a relationship that the Soviets wished to impose on others that was very Eurocentric and assumed Soviet hegemony. These facts all contributed to the development of Maoism as a political

Was the struggle against bourgeois tendencies in THE communist party the only legitimate ground, or was it possible for revolutionary forces to constitute other formations that, while being in support of socialism, might have a difference with the official communist party? Maoism stepped up to the precipice and then halted. It could not answer that question within the traditional Marxist-Leninist paradigm.

and Chinese foreign policy was the question of whether there was an actual threat from the USSR, i.e., a threat to China and possibly to other countries.

In order to answer this it is important to consider theoretical propositions as

between the USSR and the East European People's Democracies as well as the Mongolian People's Republic. In its most extreme form this proposition played itself out in the 1968 Soviet invasion of the then Czechoslovakia.

trend, but also contributed to the development of Chinese foreign policy.

A note should be offered about Chinese foreign policy. Elbaum is absolutely correct that many in the Maoist movement slavishly followed Chinese foreign policy in much the same way that an earlier generation followed Soviet foreign policy. In both cases the results were often disastrous. The failure of any party or organization to independently elaborate its own international line leads to both bad theory and worse practice. In the case of China, there are examples, many offered by Elbaum, that almost defy explanation. The stand of the Chinese on the 1973 Chilean coup and its aftermath is certainly one example. The failure of the CPC to distinguish the objectives of Cuban foreign policy from that of the USSR is yet another example. The withdrawal of assistance to several revolutionary movements, and in some cases defaming such movements certainly unsettled the international anti-imperialist movement.

Yet Elbaum fails to acknowledge in the same bold way that Soviet practice, both pre- and post-World War II left something to be desired when it came to proletarian internationalism. This can include the invasion of Poland in 1939; the division of Europe into spheres of influence; machinations against Yugoslavia; the disastrous advice to the Greek Communists during World War II and the abandonment of the Greek Revolution in the late 1940s; Soviet support of the Argentine military junta in the 1970s; Soviet support of Ethiopia in its war to suppress the Eritrean national liberation movement... and the list goes on.

In the cases of both the Chinese and the Soviets there is much that we did not know and do not know or understand that might explain some of these actions. Other actions were driven by objectives that have little to do with ideology, but a lot to do with the nuances of the national and international class struggle.

Why Did Maoism Fail?

If Maoism was an attempt at a critique of Stalinian Marxism from the Left, why did it fail, possibly permanently, but at the least for the moment? There are Marxists far greater than I who have attempted and are attempting to articulate an answer to this question. As a modest contribution to this discussion, however, I would suggest that Maoism emerged over time, rather than full-blown, as a critique of the Soviet experience. One can see, for example, in reading Mao's *A Critique of Soviet Economics* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977) the beginning of an analysis on the question of socialist society. In other words, Maoism, as a body of theory, cannot be summed up by simply looking at CPC resolutions, Chinese foreign policy, or even the words of Mao at a particular moment. It must be understood as a movement, theory, and practice over a space of time.

Maoism attempted to critique the Soviet experience, and by implication Stalinian Marxism, from within the traditional Marxist-Leninist paradigm. In a peculiar sense, Maoism attempted to both break new ground and simultaneously cling to a certain orthodoxy in order to justify its positions. Maoism became trapped within that paradigm in ways that weakened its possibility of successfully addressing the crisis of socialism. The failure to conduct an outright demarcation with Stalinian Marxism certainly provided fertile ground for a retreat. More importantly, it could not pave the way toward a *revolutionary* resolution of the crisis of socialism.

Ironically, as important as was the worker-peasant alliance in Maoist theory (and for Mao personally), steps were taken during both the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution that were far in advance of where the peasantry was as a class. Certainly on the positive side the development of collective farms and communes represented a step to move further down the socialist road. But capitalist relations

were going to continue at least to some degree under socialism, and this could not be eliminated quickly, particularly in an underdeveloped, formerly semi-colonial country.

To the extent to which a criticism of voluntarism should be accepted (and it should), it could be contained in the tendency within Maoism to identify correctly what needed to transpire, but to assume that victory could be accomplished through persistence. This voluntarism was a response to the depressing determinism of the Soviet bloc theory and practice, but it could and often did lead to counter-productive ends. The cadre and supporters became weary, and cynicism ended up prevailing. Within cynicism, capitalism and capitalist relations find a fertile ground for growth.

Maoism represented a contradictory attitude toward the question of the communist party. On the one hand, the importance of a revolutionary party at all stages in the revolutionary process was constantly reaffirmed. Maoism correctly identified that it was within the communist party and the state apparatus that a new class of exploiters could emerge, precisely because the means of production were no longer owned privately. For this reason, Mao's calls, during the Cultural Revolution, for struggle *against* the party and for the creation of new revolutionary organizations represented an important breakthrough for Marxism.

Yet this call, and Maoism itself, balked. The unanswered question was whether there really was a space for additional revolutionary parties. Was the struggle against bourgeois tendencies in THE communist party the only legitimate ground, or was it possible for revolutionary forces to constitute other formations that, while being in support of socialism, might have a difference with the official communist party? Maoism stepped up to the precipice and then halted. It could not answer that

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THEY WANTED TO SERVE THE PEOPLE

Chicanos and the Fight against National Oppression in the New Communist Movement

BY BILL GALLEGOS

Madness seems to be on a dizzying march. While the US economy continues to crumble, poverty in the country reaches new levels, 41 million people lack any health insurance, and each day brings new revelations of massive corporate crime, President George W. Bush prepares the Final Solution for Iraq, a massive war of destruction opposed by nearly the entire world community. Even as tens of thousands of activists throughout the world work to jam up the US war machine, there seems to be little hope on the horizon for bringing about peace, much less a society not dominated by the most voracious and destructive capitalist system ever known.

Quite a change from 1968, the starting point for Max Elbaum's examination and analysis of what was called the New Communist Movement of the 1960s and '70s, a movement that attracted thousands of activists from all of the major social struggles—challenging the US war in Vietnam, and against national oppression, racism and women's oppression at home. Elbaum is no detached scholar. He is a grizzled veteran of those years, as a member of Students for a Democratic Society and a leader of Line of March, one of the main organizations in the New Communist Movement. Elbaum must be credited with provided a compelling and complex analysis of a movement that was as varied and changing as the social movements from which it emerged. His book is a much needed breath of fresh air compared to the usual genre of books that examine the radical movements and organizations of that period through the prism of a "white blind spot," completely ignoring the role of

activists and organizations of color, or a cynical anti-communism that blames Marxist-Leninists for destroying all the social movements of the time.

In contrast, *Revolution In The Air* takes a much deeper look at the conditions and dynamics that attracted some of the best leaders and activists to create and build Marxist-Leninist organizations in the sincere belief that a better world was truly in birth—and in the not-too-distant future either. I was one of those people. I was an activist in the Chicano Movement who had been attracted to that movement's left wing (the Crusade for Justice, Brown Berets, La Raza Unida Party) and helped to form the August 29th Movement (ATM), the first primarily Chicano communist organization in the US. Later I participated in the creation of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (LRS), one of the main New Communist organizations, with probably the largest concentration (80%) of members of color.

Capturing the Movement's Strengths and Weaknesses

I was drawn to the New Communist Movement because it helped me to understand the root cause of Chicano oppression, what Chicano Liberation could actually look like (i.e., self-determination), what social forces could actually achieve a revolution (the working class and U.S. national liberation struggles), and a socialist vision of an alternative society. As a revolutionary nationalist madly seeking answers to all of these questions, Marxism-Leninism was the only alternative providing not only political direction, but dynamic and disciplined organizations to support our work. Elbaum gets it right when he describes anti-racism as a

defining characteristic of the New Communist Movement.

The movement also insisted that challenging the oppression of peoples of color lay at the heart of the revolutionary project, and that people of color movements—the Black freedom movement in particular—played a cutting-edge role in driving forward the democratic advance of society as a whole. The New Communist Movement put the fight for equality at the center of its politics and devoted immense attention to analyzing the history, structures and pervasive impact of white supremacy.

For many of us, these ideas were not mainly a product of reading the works of Marx, Lenin, or Mao, but of our own life experiences. We emerged from communities that had suffered a history of slavery, annexation, racial exclusion laws, wartime round-ups into concentration camps, and "no dogs, Negroes or Mexicans allowed" type of segregation. It was real. Marxism-Leninism only helped to validate our experience and to explain its causes and possible paths to liberation. All of us who came from these movements could identify with Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the Vietnamese revolution. Ho had described how he wept when he discovered Marxism-Leninism because it showed him how his people could win their freedom. Many of us wept too.

One of the great strengths of Elbaum's book is in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the New Communist Movement. He provides some important lessons for today's activists—not only the newer generation of anti-globalization, anti-sweatshop, environmental, and peace activists, but for us *veteranas y veteranos* as well: a dogmatic insistence on the purity and inviolability of each

organization's own political line, uncritical subscription to the politics of the USSR, China, or other socialist countries, homophobic policies, and a sectarianism that consistently placed unnecessary obstacles in the way of uniting our organizations into a single group (which could have numbered more than 10,000 members).

Even as Elbaum takes a sharply critical look at the errors of the new communist organizations, he articulates their strengths in a way that should have powerful resonance with today's activists: the need for disciplined multiracial organizations, for sinking roots among the poorest sectors of working people and oppressed communities, of making anti-racism and anti-imperialism a central

tions that adopted those positions simply as groups of blind doctrinaires who attempted to shoehorn uncomfortable historical facts into the National Question mold developed by Joseph Stalin. From my point of view, the issue of Chicano liberation mainly got short shrift from *both* the Old and New Communist Movements. The August 29th Movement was one of the few organizations that attempted a serious analysis. But the analysis did not start with Stalin's definition of a nation, but from a look at the dynamic movement that was taking place at the time, a movement that involved hundreds of thousands of people, mostly from the working class, in struggles ranging from land rights to union rights, and from lan-

from evolving as a part of the Mexican nation, while racism and national oppression had prevented them from becoming part of the dominant Anglo-European nationality. In ATM's (and later the League of Revolutionary Struggle's) view, something new was born—an oppressed nation with the right to self-determination.

ATM and LRS embraced both the broader and stricter definitions of self-determination. As an oppressed nation, we felt that Chicanos had the right to democratically decide whether to remain as part of the United States. This was our answer to the issue of annexation: renunciation of annexation and upholding the national rights of the annexed peoples (Native Americans and Chicanos). But ATM also practiced and supported self-determination in its more popular meaning—as the right of oppressed peoples to choose their own leaders, to create their own organizations, and to pursue their own path to freedom. Members of ATM were among the founders of MEChA, the Chicano student network; of La Raza Unida Party in California, an effort to break the stranglehold of Democratic Party politics among Chicanos; and of many other nationally specific forms of organization. In fact, ATM and LRS opposed the efforts of some communist organizations to replace groups like MEChA with multiracial student organizations that supposedly represented a “higher form” of organization.

While Elbaum gives props to ATM and CASA as two of the main socialist-oriented organizations working among Chicano-Mexicanos during that time, he misses the important fact that both organizations—despite their differences on other questions—recognized that the Chicano people have *national rights*. ATM expressed it as the right to self-determination, and CASA expressed it as “socialist reunification” of the Southwest with Mexico. Both organizations recognized that annexation

We emerged from communities that had suffered a history of slavery, annexation, racial exclusion laws, wartime round-ups into concentration camps, and “no dogs, Negroes or Mexicans allowed” type of segregation. It was real. Marxism-Leninism only helped to validate our experience and to explain its causes and possible paths to liberation.

focus, and combining theory and practice. This last is important at a time when anarchist ideas—with a sharp anti-theoretical bias—exert a strong influence among many younger activists.

Coming Up Short on the National Question

On the other hand, *Revolution in the Air* suffers from some of the same failures as the movement it describes. As a leader in organizations that held—and hold—strongly to the view that oppressed Black and Chicano nations exist within the borders of the US, I cannot agree with Elbaum's description of the organiza-

guage equality to open admissions, and whose tactics ranged from electoral politics to mass actions to armed struggle.

For the August 29th Movement, the starting point for understanding the Chicano National Question was not a somewhat obscure text from the Soviet Union, but the historical fact of annexation. ATM tried to address the determinative question: What has been the impact on the Chicano people of military conquest and colonial domination by the US? And its answer was that annexation and the subsequent colonial domination of the US Southwest had forcibly prevented the Chicano people

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TWO VETERANS OF THE NEW COMMUNIST MOVEMENT LOOK BACK

Vicky and Paul are members of FRSO and both were members of the October League/Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), one of the organizations that was part of the New Communist Movement. Vicky is from the working class and Paul left the student movement to join many who decided to join the working class. They both were members from around 1974 to the organization's dissolution in 1981. The purpose of this "conversation" is to talk about what life was like "in the trenches" as rank-and-file members of this organization and how we view our successes and mistakes.

Why did it make a difference to be part of a New Communist Movement organization working in the South?

Vicky: First of all, my grandparents were former sharecroppers. My mother's family came from a town in rural, central Georgia that was too small and too economically disadvantaged to be segregated, so I was raised with some degree of colorblindness, unlike most southern working class whites. Self-proclaimed white liberals hate to hear this, but if you're white and living under imperialism, you are inherently racist. It's your constant struggle in this society. When I saw the map of the Black Belt and the concept of the African-American nation was explained to me, it just clicked. One of the reasons I was attracted to the OL/CP(ML) was because they had the right line on this question out of all the other organizations. Plus, they gave the best parties.

How did you build a multi-national organization in the South?

Vicky: In the Atlanta district, we tried to pay particular attention to the struggle against white supremacy in our mass organizations and in developing cadre. We addressed cultural differences, talked about white privilege, and made sure that there was minority participation in programs and in leadership. It was because of our uncompromising attitude about challenging white supremacy and supporting the right of self-determination that it made it possible to not only recruit leading members

of the Black liberation movement, but also to lead popular mass struggles in the city.

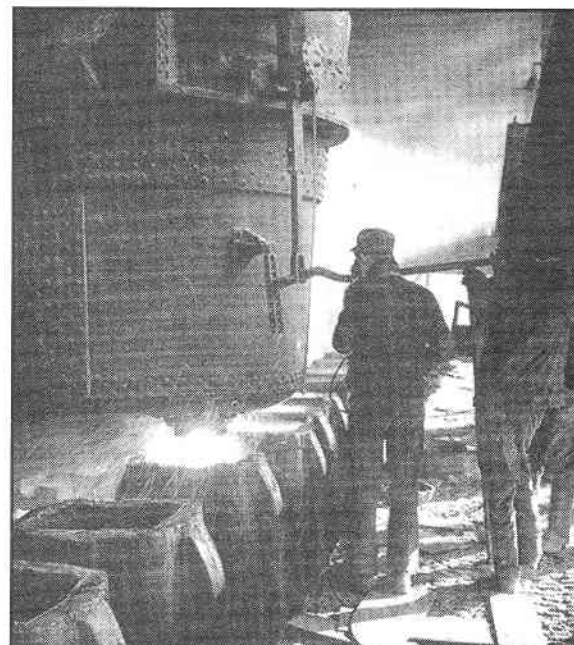
By the way, our mass organization, Atlanta Fight Back, kicked ass. We rented a space across the street from the unemployment office at a time during the early 1970s economic recession. Thousands were laid off but couldn't get their unemployment checks. If you hadn't gotten your check, you came into our office; we marched across the street en masse and sat down in their lobby until they issued the check. Soon, they just assigned someone to assist us when they saw us coming so we wouldn't hang around their office and get folks all stirred up. At the same time, the city was illegally evicting folks from a downtown housing project. We kept a "due process" crew there. The city would move them out; we'd move them back in. That was fun!

Paul: I grew up in a white, middle-class suburb that had a small Black community "on the other side of the tracks." I was fortunate to go to a high school on the edge of the very segregated city of Chicago. Through school organizations, I was exposed to Black history and culture and learned more about the African-American neighborhoods in the city. The murder of Black Panther Party member Fred Hampton by the Chicago police in 1969 had a big effect on me. In 1977, the OL sent

me to North Carolina to help set up a district in a cotton mill town. To me, moving to the South was like moving to another country. I had to learn about its culture, language, and history.

Vicky: He even learned to eat grease and suck bones. I'm proud.

Paul: Even with the low pay of the white mill workers, I saw the worse conditions Black workers faced. Many white workers lived in mill houses close to downtown. Black workers lived on the edge of town on dirt roads in what looked like Third World conditions.



Literally thousands of young people appalled their parents as they graduated college or dropped out and took working-class jobs as part of the New Communist Movement.

When I read Harry Haywood's *Negro Liberation* and saw the map of the Black Belt, things fell into place. I could concretely see that this was not just a question of racism as a set of bad ideas but a struggle for land and political power. More recently, trips to the Georgia Sea Islands educated me about land that has been in the hands of Black families since the end of the Civil War. Today, the fight to hold on to that land continues as developers try to force people off by raising property taxes or steal the land with the stroke of a pen.

What was the difference in the way the OL/CP(ML) dealt with people who came from working-class backgrounds and those from the middle class? How were workers empowered and developed to play a leading role on the local level?

Vicky: We had a policy that all cadre had to have working-class, proletarian jobs. If you were already from the working class you were assigned to a higher paying factory job. If you weren't, you were "strongly encouraged" to work at one of the unorganized, nastier, dirty, low-paying jobs. I liked that! Atlanta Fight Back had a policy of developing working class leaders—what we now call leadership development. There was a relationship between a mass organization and a cadre organization where you could take the most advanced that come out of the day-to-day struggles and develop them into working-class intellectuals.

Mao's concept of "from the masses, to the masses" had a definite meaning to me, and I learned how to study and the importance of theory in becoming a working-class intellectual. I still believe that the working class has to lead a revolutionary movement because they are the most disciplined, dedicated, and staunch about their convictions. Armed with truth and knowledge, the class becomes invincible.

Paul: One of the concepts from Mao that means a lot to me is "remolding your world outlook." To me, this meant

that someone from a middle-class background can change their view of society by joining the working class. I was won to socialism as a student and understood the historic role of the working class in leading a revolution. When I was 19, I got a working-class job and began a life-long process of learning *about* the class and *from* the class. This has changed me for the better, and I would not regret a day of the last 28 years spent as a rank-and-file worker.

One question we have to continue to work on is the relationship between "ideas" and "experience," between intellectuals and the class, and how to develop working-class intellectuals. The idea of listening to what the workers are saying and combining that with revolutionary theory is still correct. In the last ten years, I have done a lot of reading about the history of the civil rights movement and the leadership of people like Ella Baker. She stressed the necessi-

ty of people being empowered to lead their own struggles. It's another example of the "mass line" Mao talked about. We applied this same idea to the development, over fifteen years, of a rank-and-file caucus in my union.

OL/CP(ML), I never bought it. I didn't understand homophobia because of experiences I had with my "special aunts." My mother and sisters grew up with two women who, since their teenage years, had had a romantic relationship. Their own families were ashamed, so my mother's family practically adopted them. I was about ten years old when I asked about them. My mother told me, "Some women and some men had the same relationship with each other as married people." Okay—made sense to me. By the way, my special aunts recently celebrated 54 years together. In the OL/CP(ML), I heard of some gay and lesbians being "deprogrammed" or forced to make a political decision not to be gay. I knew then that sexual orientation was not a political choice, but in those days, it was extremely difficult to fight a political line that had been "handed down" by the hierarchy.

"I was won to socialism as a student and understood the historic role of the working class in leading a revolution.

When I was 19, I got a working-class job and began a life-long process of learning about the class and from the class.

This has changed me for the better, and I would not regret a day of the last 28 years spent as a rank-and-file worker."

Max Elbaum refers to the homophobia that existed in the New Communist Movement. Looking back, how did you feel about it at that time and what are your reflections now?

Paul: I was raised in a strict Irish Catholic family where sex, let alone homosexuality, was never discussed. When I joined this organization, I never questioned the policy of the "working-class family," which meant straight couples with kids. My attitudes didn't change until the late 1980s when I joined a men's group of child abuse survivors. The gay therapist who led the group literally saved my life when I was

Vicky: Even though it was the line of the

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JOSE SOLIS JORDAN *and* STATE REPRESSION TODAY

BY MICHELLE FOY

On July 7, 1999 Jose Solis Jordan, a Professor and Puerto Rican independentista was sentenced to 51 months in federal prison after being convicted of bombing a military recruiting center in Chicago in 1992. Details of the case clearly point to FBI infiltration and provocation in Chicago's Puerto Rican communities in order to discredit struggles to free prisoners of war, against gentrification, and for Puerto Rican independence.

Solis' case is only one example of continuing state repression targeted at left movements.

As with many politically charged trials, the case of the US government vs.

prisoners of war and the Puerto Rican independence movement on and off for ten years. In a court statement, Marrero himself admitted to planting the bomb at the recruitment center.

Solis, in an interview with student activists at Northeastern University in 1999, stated that the provocateur Marrero "hoped his actions [within the movement] would create a spring board for subsequent repressions against the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, community implemented programs at Clemente High School, and the gentrification of the Puerto Rican community."

While Solis' conviction and incarceration is one of the more serious examples of state repression against the

While Solis' conviction and incarceration is one of the more serious examples of state repression against the Puerto Rican movement for self-determination in the 1990's, it is by no means the only one.

Solis was full of shaky evidence. The conviction was primarily based on the testimony of two men, one a self-admitted agent of the FBI and the other a recruit of the FBI agent. The primary witness, Rafael Marrero, was a hired FBI provocateur. Marrero at the time of Solis' trial had been working within the movement to free the Puerto Rican

Puerto Rican movement for self-determination in the 1990's, it is by no means the only one. The Puerto Rican Cultural Center in Chicago has been the target of FBI raids, propaganda campaigns and grand jury investigations. In 1997 the FBI offered to pay former students from the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos high school at the Puerto Rican

Cultural Center to wear wiretaps and return to the school to provide "intelligence" for the FBI.

Solis is now serving time in a prison in Puerto Rico, after spending the bulk of his sentence in federal prisons in Florida and Atlanta.

Parallels in Other Movements

In another movement and another region altogether the FBI has been taken to task for targeting activists. On June 11, 2002 a jury in Oakland, California found that the FBI and the Oakland Police Department had framed labor and environmental activists Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney for making and carrying a homemade bomb that exploded in their car, almost killing Bari and injuring Cherney.

In a most unusual outcome, Bari and Cherney were awarded four million dollars to be paid by the FBI and the Oakland Police Department.

In 1990 Bari, Cherney and hundreds of other environmental activists were in the midst of "Redwood Summer," a campaign to stop corporate lumber companies from destroying old growth forests in Northern California. Unlike many other "traditional" environmental organizers, Bari was making some serious breakthroughs in the environmental movement through concerted work with organized labor and timber workers in Northern California. At the same time, the FBI was investigating and developing plans for the disruption of Earth First and the Redwood Summer project. Following at least 30 death threats against Bari, Cherney and other activists, Bari's car was bombed, and the outright framing and disinformation campaign by the FBI began.

There are very specific connections between Bari's case, the attempt to undermine the Puerto Rican independence movement, and the targeting of other movements. Noelle Hanrahan of the Prison Radio Project notes, "In August 1985, Richard W. Held led 300 FBI agents and US marshals in raids throughout Puerto Rico, trashing offices and homes and arresting scores

of activists. The FBI's overall operations resulted in the creation of files on 74,000 individuals." Richard Held, although officially dropped as a defendant in the case of Bari/Cherney vs. the FBI and the Oakland Police Department, was a key figure in the FBI's investigation and framing of Bari and Earth First. He also was central to many other politically charged cases, including the framing and 27-year false imprisonment of Black Panther Geronimo ji Jaga Pratt.

Brian Glick, an activist who has studied and written extensively about COINTELPRO in the 1980s, states, "Considering the current political climate, the legalization of COINTELPRO, the rehabilitation of the FBI and police, and the expanded role of the CIA and military, the recent revelations leave us only one safe assumption: that extensive government covert operations are already underway to neutralize today's opposition movements before they can reach the massive level of the '60s."

According to Glick, under the pretense of the "war against terrorism," Ronald Reagan officially sanctioned the "influencing" of domestic political activity in 1981 for the first time in US history. This was long before the current incarnation of the "war against terrorism"; however, it is clearly part of the historical precedent for it. Previous to 1981, operations to disrupt social movements were highly secretive and never officially declared.

State Repression in a Post-9/11 World

Unfortunately, over the last year FBI and state powers have only been extended and further sanctioned by the US Congress and the Bush regime. The USA PATRIOT Act and the 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act are two of the ways that expansion is happening.

Everything from minor property destruction during a protest to political activity in solidarity with countries deemed to be US enemies, or support for arbitrarily terrorist-designated organizations within any nation, could be

construed as a terrorist act. For example, the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army in the Philippines are now considered a "Foreign Terrorist Organization." (See the article by Doug Wordell on page 24 of this issue for more details about this FTO designation.)

In addition, the USA PATRIOT Act allows the government to enter a person's home and conduct a search, take photographs, and download computer files without notification. It also gives the CIA power to spy on people in the US and imposes indefinite detention for non-citizens who are held incommunicado within the system, removed from family as well as legal and community support. And for targeting student activists, the Federal Government requires all universities to provide records of immigrant students, as well as students who are US citizens.

The liberal ACLU recognizes the connection to historical repression of those deemed to be a threat by the state. "All of this speaks to the new McCarthyism, where political dissent is being equaled to treason," says Barry Steinhardt of the ACLU.

Attorney Dennis Cunningham, who represented Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney in their case against the FBI and the Oakland Police Department, in discussing the verdict and today's climate said, "Ashcroft is doing precisely the wrong thing to abandon the [preexisting] guidelines and let the FBI go after dissent with a free hand. It's clear that their intention is not about fighting terrorism, it's about suppressing dissent. That's what the FBI has always been about."

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

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We're Not Going Back Continued

Janitors." It was primarily these unions that forced the AFL-CIO to both abandon its support for employer sanctions (for employing immigrants) and to support the demand for a broad-based legalization program. Just recently, these unions joined a coalition of immigrants' rights advocates to re-launch a national effort to win legalization, beginning with a campaign to send one million post cards to Congress supporting legalization. It is important for the immigrant rights movement to unite with such efforts.

Obviously a united front with organized labor has many challenges, not the least of which is keeping the AFL-CIO bureaucracy from co-opting the movement to garner its members, resources, and political connections. Nevertheless, the immigrant rights movement should work with these unions, encouraging them to use their influence in the Democratic Party to put the brakes on moves to sell out immigrants' rights to the Bush-Ashcroft forces--and to mobilize union members in a national campaign aimed at both stopping attacks on immigrants and demanding genuine legalization.

Finally, while the political focus of the movement is correctly on stopping the attacks and winning legalization, it's important to keep in mind the larger human rights agenda for immigrants. This includes demands for immediate unconditional residency for all immigrants, full language rights, voting rights, and the right to education, health care, and social services.

These are difficult times for the immigrant rights movement. But as the 2002 Los Angeles May Day march showed, immigrant workers themselves are willing to stand up and fight. And their message to Bush, Ashcroft, and *la Migra* was loud and clear: "*¡Aquí estamos! ¡Y no nos vamos!*"

Bill Gallegos is Coordinator of the Oppressed Nationalities Commission of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization.

'REMEMBER TO KICK IT OVER'

BY SCOTT MX TURNER

Bullets are flying all over the world. For those of you forced to cancel your Afghani wedding plans due to a few over-zealous US bombing runs, Moscow theater outings due to someone cuttin' the cheese through the ventilation systems, or Baghdad oil-well hops looking for evil-doers, here're some first-quarter '03 Locomotion bullets that dice rather than slice.

- '02 saw the demise of ABC's *Politically Incorrect*. Host Bill Maher could be maddeningly condescending, but it was the only major network TV show where political opinions flowed... at least those not spewed by the networks' paid pundits. Sometimes three conservatives ganged up on a sole progressive, sometimes vice-versa. Maher's Libertarian stance gave him a weird middle ground from which to pound ideologies across the spectrum. What's more, it was fun seeing who from the ranks of Celebritydom really knew their shit, and who were there only because their publicists thought it a good career move.
- Speaking of PI, The Coup's Boots was one of the show's last controversial guests. He was one of the ganged-up-ons—for being a Red and for the since-altered burning-WTC artwork of the band's latest, *excellent* album *Party Music*. Standing up to other guests' childish hectoring, Boots declared himself a communist on national TV and succinctly got his points across. It was interesting seeing how unnerved people get when an eloquent Red says it loud and proud.
- In ballparks across the US, "God Bless America" has replaced "Take Me Out To The Ballgame" during the seventh inning stretch. Not everywhere—Chicago and Pittsburgh are notable exceptions. But the switch—so ordered by Major League Baseball—proves again that sports and politics are intrinsically woven... and that the power structure is using sports as a front-line tool for pumping up the volume for the never-to-end "War on Terror."
- Speaking of baseball, last season's labor war was averted in a staged, last-minute settlement that for the first time has cost the nation's most powerful union some of its hard-won gains. The cliché of "it's the millionaires vs. the billionaires and the poor fans get burned in the end" is just a simplistic, feeling-sorry-for-ourselves whine. Me, I blame us—the fans—for baseball's stupid predicament of high ticket and concession prices, owners who feel no compunction for plundering public coffers for taxpayer-funded stadiums, and players who're mostly out of touch with working people making often hundreds of times less than they do. There's strength in numbers, fellow fans. If not us changing the game, then who?
- No big recording artist has come out fervently against Dubya's anti-evildoers initiative. Well, okay, *one*—see the next-to-last item below. Many of the usual suspects are doing their usual yeoman's work—Midnight Oil, Public Enemy, Michael Franti, and the thousands of grassroots underground cultural activists. Bruce Springsteen could have with *The Rising*, but instead of the intensity of



early desperation songs like the anti-nuke "Roulette" (about a man losing everything in a Three Mile Island disaster), *The Rising* was just one long mid-temp bummer. The album's "We survived but we're not doin' anything to stop the madness" tone was a calming salve for a lot of Americans. Which is just how the Bush regime wants it. Unfortunately, *The Rising's* low-key response to the terror attacks has been set in stone as the template for "acceptable" post-9/11 protest music.

- You want a kick-ass, take-no-prisoners singer? Forget phony gangsta rhymer, angst-ridden metal-rap rebels without a clue and m.o.r.country singers with no roots to plant. Your singer is Remitti (alt. spelling Rimitti), a 78-year-old Algerian raï singer whose unabashed declaration of war on this man's, man's, man's, man's world has forced her into exile in France. Whether recording with Flea from the Red Hot Chili Peppers and the Dead Kennedys' East Bay Ray or issuing traditional Algerian albums, Remitti sings of women's political, cultural and sexual liberation.
- Englishman Attila the Stockbroker has been a touring, recording, political-organizing, socialist, soccer-devotee rabble-rouser for twenty years. Last year he completed his first ever US tour, co-headlining with TV Smith, lead singer of the London '77 punk legends The Adverts ("Gary Gilmore's Eyes"). Both troubadours, appearing solo but for a series of New York shows with The Spunk Lads and

the Last Burning Embers, played hard-hitting sets filled with anti-globalization/pro-worker/counter-materialism songs. Attila and Smith hit you over the head, but they're so charming and humorous you never feel the welts. Their web URLs are their names dot com.

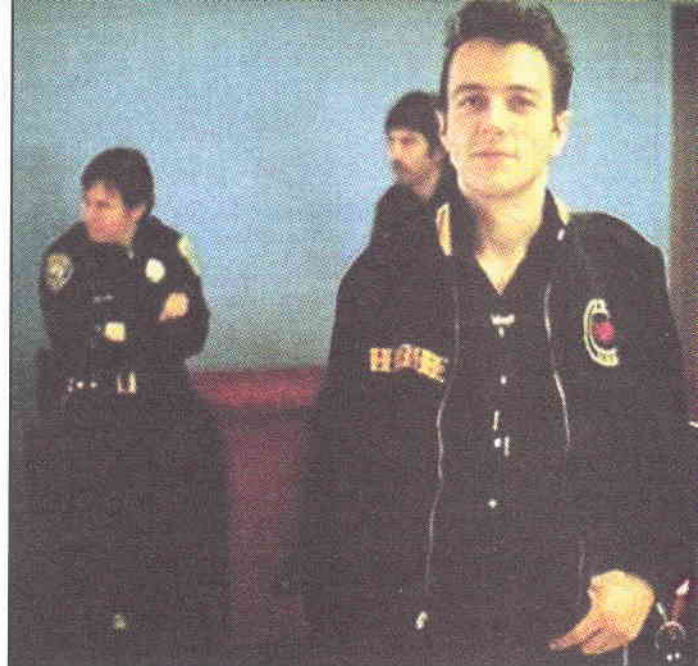
- The best political band in England right now is Asian Dub Foundation. From *Rafi's Revenge* to 2000's *Community Music*, ADF cranks out discs that meld South Asian bhangra with bass-heavy reggae and de la Rocha-style political raps for songs about immigrant struggles in Britain, globalization, US bullying, racial solidarity (I didn't say unity), and the struggle to free Satpal Ram, a south Asian man who was beaten by cops and arrested for a murder he didn't commit. (Ram, after enormous pressure led in good part by ADF, was freed last year after a decade in prison, but the charges have yet to be dropped.) ADF's next album, due in early 2003, will include a guest spot from Sinead O'Connor. It should be in your collection the day it's released. Their previous albums should already be.
- Thank Che for John Sayles, who wrote his recent film, *Sunshine State*, in a fever of disgust at the outcome of the 2000 Bush/Supreme Court coup. Ostensibly about the Florida real-estate industry, *Sunshine State* is a chronicle of corruption and the hol-

low seduction of the American Dream as working-class locals fight mega-bucks developers on Florida's Gold Coast.

- Last September saw the release of the Album Most Likely To Cook A Guy's Ass But Good. The guy with the cooked ass is Steve Earle, who continues his streak of albums packed with integrity, strength, daring, soul, eloquence and politics aimed at whole segments of US society—middle-American middle- and working-class country fans—that no one else tries to sing lefty songs for. The ass-cooking album is *Jerusalem*, and it includes a breathtaking collection of songs aimed at US malfeasance (from the "Drug War" to the "War on Terror") and includes "John Walker's Blues," a song that has drawn howls of protest from conservatives and other numb-nuts who never even heard it before issuing their own American fatwabs. "John Walker's Blues" seeks to understand the "American Taliban's" motives and misappropriation of newfound faith, and to put a face on America's current fave faceless enemy.

For that, of course, contemporary war-obsessed US citizens have called their own jihad and want Earle's head on a pike. At the same time, for those of us who need powerful, soulful eloquence telling the truth in song, Earle's *Jerusalem* is an empowering act. Get the CD—for yourself and to prove that voices that dare to sing unpopular songs don't just do it in a vacuum.

- Finally, the last and most heartbreaking news of 2002: Joe Strummer is dead. Maybe this whole column should've been a eulogy. In a fair world, this whole *magazine* would've been a eulogy. But there's too much



going on, too many struggles. Strummer would be the first to say, "Right, on with it, then." His seminal political punk band The Clash influenced countless activists, musicians, kids, oldsters, beat and dub poets, writers, students and workers to take the path less chosen. Strummer did himself, finding treasures of the heart and old ghost songs on paths still too coarse for most of us. He did the hard work so that we could make sense of this out-of-control world.

The most frustrating thing is, over the last few years, Strummer wasn't done—he'd hit his groove again, putting out fabulous albums (*Rock, Art and the X-Ray Style* and *Global A Go-Go*) that pointed a new way—meshing punk with worldbeat, politics and the heart, broad complex notions with singular, blistering stream-of-consciousness lyrics. Whether celebrating multiculti by way of the dozens of different ethnic restaurants around the corner from the recording studio, or urging us to take only what we could carry from our past and move on to new ideas, energies and dreams, Strummer was the voice that got us through.

And now the bastard with the biggest heart in punk rock is gone. It was that

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Asian Dub Foundation. "World Music" that doesn't go on the racks next to Enya.

BY DENNIS O'NEIL

Panels, religious services, exhibitions, performances, radio programs and a spirited rally of several hundred gave Los Angeles a pronounced political tone last August. The week of activities celebrated the anniversary of the Chicano Moratorium of August 29, 1970, a mighty eruption of mass anger that was attacked in a police riot.

The Chicano Moratorium had varied roots. Most important was the rising Chicano National Movement, whose 1960s resurgence began with the struggle of California and Texas farmworkers for union recognition and had grown to a broad movement for civil rights and justice, with strong nationalist and revolutionary components—like the Black Liberation Movement which helped inspire it.

Its immediate inspiration was the Vietnam Moratorium, the most massive mobilization against that war,

ter of that Moratorium was disproportionately white, reflecting the culture and politics of its liberal and pacifist organizers.

Chicano activists from a wide range of community groups realized that to mobilize anti-war sentiment in their communities, they needed activities that were based in the community and addressed its particular demands and struggles. Two earlier Chicano Moratoriums were held, small but attracting attention each time.

The August 29 Moratorium marked a major breakthrough. Movement veterans looking back at it always point out that Chicanos were then 6% of the population, but 20% of the US casualties in Vietnam. A long tradition of military service and cultural machismo were being exploited by the rulers of this country to garner cannon fodder. The few "mainstream" leaders of Mexican descent had almost unanimously upheld the war on the Vietnamese people.

By August of 1970, Chicanos were saying "*Basta*"—enough. When the 29th arrived, contingents poured into LA from all over Aztlan, the national territory of the Chicano people—from the Bay Area, San Diego and as far afield as Texas and Colorado. Grim determination was matched by growing jubilation as thousands took to the streets, despite scorching heat.

Banners were everywhere. A major slogan was "Our War is Not in Vietnam, It is here at Home!" (*¡Nuestra Guerra es Aquí!*) Some carried flags featuring the Virgin of Guadalupe. At least as many marched with the flag on the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, concretely displaying the understanding that like the Vietnamese, Chicanos were an oppressed people fighting for *tierra y libertad*. At over 30,000, it was the largest Chicano demonstration ever. *La Raza* knew that history was being made.

As the march proceeded on Whittier Boulevard, the main drag of East LA, a police cordon started to close. The LA

County Sheriff's Department launched an attack without warning, clubbing and firing massive amounts of teargas. A massive battle erupted as young marshals were joined by other march participants in trying to protect the children and older community members who were marching. Most marchers were able to escape, pulled into the open doors of homes and businesses. The battle raged on, with Chicanos facing gas, batons shields and gunfire, armed only with sticks and bottles and fists. Police cars were reduced to smoking scrap. Two demonstrators, Lyn Ward and Brown Beret member Angel Diaz, died at the hands of the police.

The battle had wound down and an uneasy quiet settled over East LA when the worst blow hit. Ruben Salazar, a pioneering Chicano journalist who was news director for KMEX-TV and a columnist for the LA Times, widely respected as an outspoken voice for *la gente*, was relaxing with a beer in a joint called the Silver Dollar Café after the police rampage. An Anglo Sheriff's Deputy named Tom Wilson fired a ten-inch teargas projectile into the bar at point blank range, hitting Salazar in the head and killing him instantly. An inquest found Salazar had been the victim of a homicide—but Wilson was never charged with anything!

There were press conferences and protests in the days that followed, but no one had any doubt, no one in the Chicano Nation and no one in the US government, that things had changed forever. The Chicano National Movement came of age in the Chicano Moratorium, and the Vietnam War and the system that spawned it faced a powerful new enemy. Within Aztlan, a revolutionary vision that resonated with the working class majority had come to the fore.

Readers who are good at math may have noticed that these weeklong Chicano Moratorium observances

Continued on page 45



Tens of thousands of Chicanas and Chicanos from all over Aztlan, the Southwest, converged on Los Angeles for the Moratorium.

which took place in many thousands of localities around the country on October 15, 1969. The idea of putting aside the daily functions of life—school, work, shopping, etc.—to protest gained an amazing following. The rallies, marches, candlelight vigils and so on proved that the people of the US were prepared to stand up in the millions against the war. Still, the overall charac-

The Switch

A SHORT STORY

BY TERRY BISSON



It's almost over.

Everything, sooner or later, is over.

The crowd outside the prison is getting bigger and bigger, spilling across the highway and up the hillsides. Helicopters hover overhead. Most are from the networks; several are from the European Union, one is from the OAU, and two are pure security—US Air Force on loan to the sovereign state of Pennsylvania.

Step back. Something's happening. There's an oooh and an aaaaah as a line of long sleek limos moves along the road toward the front gate. Dignitaries. The crowd mutters but we all fall back.

"Amandla! Mandela!" somebody shouts.

"No, that was Ossie Davis."

"Wasn't that Sistah Souljah with Jesse Jackson?"

"In the purple hat? No that was Tutu."

It's almost twelve. "Was the Governor with them?" asks a middle-aged woman with anxious tear-stained eyes.

"Are you kidding?" A reporter glances up from his notepad. He looks a lot like the object of all the excitement—the way he had looked when he, himself, had been a young reporter. Cool, handsome, articulate, full of beans. Not to mention piss and vinegar. Maybe too cocky by half.

That girl-killing grin...

That no-bullshit, warm but sardonic laugh...

Folding his notebook, the reporter moves toward the front of the crowd.

He wants to get a look at the cops and their supporters across the road, behind a grim wall of troopers.

They all carry signs—FRY IN HELL. SEE YOU IN HELL. BURN IN HELL.

"How original," mutters the woman. The reporter is surprised to see that she has followed him through the crowd.

"I recognize you," she says. "You were at the trial." He nods.

"Were you surprised?"

"I'm a newsman. Nothing surprises me."

She ignores his arrogance. "You think he was guilty?"

"Of course not. I know he wasn't. But that was never the main thing to me. The conflict between Black and white, especially in Philly, especially in the '80s, especially between the cops and the people, had all the characteristics of a war. You don't look for guilt or innocence in a war. Or justice."

The woman thinks this over. "Justice." She says with a slight shiver. "It's ten of twelve. Imagine how he feels right now."

The reporter shrugs. "Individual survival was never his main concern."

"Still... you can't help..."

WHOMP WHOMP WHOMP

They both look up as a chopper skims low across the road and lands in front of the wall. There's a roar, mixed with boos and groans, as the Governor gets out.

"Grandstanding son of a bitch," the woman complains.

The reporter shrugs again. "If you're going to make it an international affair, you can hardly be surprised if politicians grandstand."

Rebuked, the woman shuts up. She has the tired shoulders and bright eyes

of a true believer. She watches, shaking her head as the Governor walks to the front of the prison and puts one hand on the big, spot-lighted switch.

"Grandstanding son of a bitch," she repeats under her breath.

It's 11:57.

It's 11:58.

The woman's eyes fill with tears. Unfamiliar but oddly welcome tears. It has been a long long road, and there is little left, at this point, to say.

11:59. She is surprised to feel the hand of the young reporter finding her own. She squeezes back. Looking up, she sees his eyes, too, are brimming.

The crowd holds its breath. The woman and the reporter, the hundreds around and behind them, the hundreds of thousands watching on television screens around the world. The man in the prison for whom the switch is about to be pulled is one of those who have made the world, for better or worse, a smaller and closer place.

The whole world is watching.

The governor pulls the switch. There is a sharp electrical crack as the solenoids hit. A gasp runs through the crowd, rising to a murmur, then a roar, drowning out the scattered boos, as the big steel door slides open and Mumia Abu-Jamal walks out, blinking, into the unfamiliar noon sunlight.

He nods to the state's first Black Governor; waves politely to the waiting celebrities, dignitaries, film stars and heads of state; and plunges—smiling—straight into the crowd.

Terry Bisson has won the Hugo and Nebula Awards for his science-fiction. He is also the author of *On a Move: The Story of Mumia Abu-Jamal* (Litmus).

Elbaum's book sparked some lively debates in our study group. One young Black woman wondered whether Marxism was too Eurocentric a foundation for revolutionary organizing among people of color. A Latina replied that perhaps our outlook was shaped as much by living in the US as by being people of color and that, at least in Latin America, Marxism was an organic part of the political culture. At various points people took issue with aspects of Elbaum's analysis—his views on nationalism, or the Soviet Union, or Jesse Jackson's presidential campaigns. But of far greater interest to the study group than the ins and outs of the various debates that divided the New Communist Movement, was the fact that it had existed at all—that thousands of young activists like ourselves, inspired by revolutionary movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America, had set out to build organizations dedicated to making revolutionary change in the US. More than any other lesson offered by the book, this is the one that stood out: organizing for revolution is possible.

Those who want to build a serious revolutionary movement in the United States today cannot afford to ignore this book. Only a fool would want to mechanically copy the experiences of the New Communist Movement in the 1970s. But only a bigger fool would imagine that there are not important lessons to be learned from carefully studying those experiences. Elbaum relates those experiences, from the appearance of the first Third World Marxist collectives in the late '60s to the last gasps of most of the remaining organizations in the '80s and '90s, and does so in a manner that is neither sentimental nor sectarian. His book is the definitive account of an important chapter in the recent history of American radicalism that until now has been ignored or forgotten.

Christopher Day is the director of the Student Resource Center at Hunter College in the City University of New York.

feeling suicidal. It's hard to be homophobic after that. I feel that the part of the movement that I came out of has paid a price for depriving ourselves of insights and lessons from the gay and lesbian movement. We are only now beginning to appreciate some of these lessons, for example, the relationship between "personal" and "political," and how this false division serves the interest of the system.

What are some of the lessons organizationally from the experience of belonging to this organization?

Vicky: Some people have asked me how I could have been a member of such a dogmatic organization. My father was an Army sergeant and expected my brother and me to be good "soldiers." Belonging to a dogmatic, authoritarian organization felt very comfortable, considering the way I was raised. I remember a line in the movie *Seeing Red* where they asked these women who had been in the CP in the 1950s if they could have accomplished as much as they did if they weren't in that type of disciplined organization. Their answer in the movie, and mine now, would be "probably not."

I now believe we have to have an organization whose purpose may be the same, but its culture has to be more democratic, less rigid, and allow people to have a life with the masses outside their political life. I believe that American socialism must be branded

They Wanted Continued

represented a historical shift in the development of Chicanos and had to be taken as the starting point for understanding the Chicano Movement.

The Chicano Struggle, the Sunbelt and the Border

Elbaum is not alone in his weakness on this question. The New Communist Movement gave little theoretical attention to Chicano Liberation. Most organizations concluded, with little

with the stamp of a true democracy. We have to understand that "personal" issues cannot be separated from "political" ones. We must figure out a new use of power to replace the hierarchical power structure that can create a "party elite." Handling power this way ends up imitating the oppressor. (This issue is what I believe to be part of the "crisis of socialism.") I no longer believe that everyone has to be in the same revolutionary organization. We need a federation or coalition of like-minded organizations like FRSO describes in its "left refoundation" papers.

Paul: Between my father and the Catholic Church, I was well prepared for the authoritarian hierarchy of the OL/CP(ML). Power and decision making was concentrated at the top in the hands of a few. There was centralism with little or no democracy. It took years of therapy and study of feminist theory to understand patriarchy and the use of power to control. My guess is we re-created in our organizations imitations of our family and school dynamics. It felt familiar. Black feminists like Audre Lorde talk about the need to deal with the internalized oppressor we carry around inside. Part of what we have to do in the future is develop self-awareness so we don't repeat mistakes. We have to learn and develop new ways of handling power, decision-making, accountability and the building of revolutionary organizations.

analysis, that Chicanos were a national minority, and not an oppressed nation. Even many of those that correctly upheld the concept of an oppressed Black nation seemed to feel that one oppressed nation with the right to self-determination was enough, thank you very much.

As arcane as this issue might seem to some activists today (if it is considered at all), it is an extremely relevant issue that will influence our efforts to rebuild

a powerful radical social movement, a rejuvenated Left, and new socialist organizations: The Chicano struggle, located largely in the Southwest, will inevitably play a major strategic role in any efforts to fundamentally transform society. The 2000-mile border that the Southwest shares with a volatile Mexico, and the central importance of the Sunbelt region to the short and long-term survival of US capitalism, means that the Chicano Liberation struggle, potentially embracing more than 20 million people, mostly workers, mostly poor, and all oppressed, could be an Achilles' heel for an energy- and low-wage dependent capitalism. Whether or not this potential is finally realized will depend in large part on whether progressives, radicals, and revolutionaries are ready to give this movement the serious study and support that it requires—theoretically as well as practically. If there is one important lesson from the New Communist Movement that I would like to add to Elbaum's pioneering analysis, that would be it.

Bill Gallegos is Coordinator of the Oppressed Nationalities Commission of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization.

Maoism Continued

question within the traditional Marxist-Leninist paradigm. And, when faced with the chaos at a certain stage in the Cultural Revolution, retreated from even asking the question. This, I would suggest, had international theoretical and practical ramifications for the development of the revolutionary Left.

Conclusion

There is certainly much more that can and should be said about Maoism. This essay is only a minor contribution toward that discussion. We should conclude, however, by reiterating the earlier point about the source of the problems of the New Communist Movement. By pinning the blame on

Maoism, Elbaum avoids some deeper questions about problems within the Marxist-Leninist paradigm. By simply looking at those groups that subscribed to Maoism and those that did not, the striking feature was the commonality of problems, and in many cases, practices.

The New Communist Movement emerged out of a social milieu that provided a foundation for ultra-leftism. Was that ultra-leftism avoidable? Certainly. But in order to avoid that ultra-leftism, our movement could have used greater help from prior generations of revolutionary theorists and activists. More importantly, the New Communist Movement would have needed to come to grips with the crisis of socialism. By believing that the problems of the USSR, other revolutionary movements, or even the Communist Party USA were primarily problems of insufficient political will to move in the right direction, we laid ourselves wide open to fall into voluntarist theory and practice.

Maoism broke new ground in asking tough questions that the international communist movement had largely feared facing. It offered the inspiration of a courageous revolutionary practice—in China as well as other countries. Yet, while several of the communist parties that made a critique of the Soviet experience from the right (e.g., the Italian Communist Party, the French) were for their own reasons prepared to call into question many of the fundamentals of Leninism (as transpired during the 1970s and early to mid 1980s with the development of what came to be known as "Eurocommunism"), Maoism was unprepared to challenge Marxism-Leninism from the Left in ways that could have advanced a revolutionary (rather than social democratic) project. Thus, and contrary to Elbaum, we owe a debt of gratitude to Maoism for opening up a door through which we must now pass, even if as a theory it could only take the first steps.

Khalil Hassan is a long-time labor activist and socialist.

Chicano Moratorium Continued

came on the 32nd anniversary of the original. Although there have been observances of this historic day every year since 1971, such extensive commemorations are usually limited to such anniversaries of historic events as the 25th or the 30th. It is hardly an accident that this year was marked by such a searching look back at the historic events surrounding August 29, 1970—the white supremacist rulers of the US are once again driving to an unjust war against a Third World country, and the people of the US will once again be forced to pay a terrible price for it. We will need models like the Chicano Moratorium as we build resistance again—like they did in East LA, back in the day.

Dennis O'Neil has been around long enough to remember the jolt the Chicano Moratorium gave the movement against the Vietnam War.

Locomotion Continued

very heart that gave out at age 50. The last song he wrote was a benefit raising awareness about AIDS in Africa. The last show he did was a benefit for the striking British firefighters that he paid for out of his own pocket. His coffin was festooned with stickers saying "Question Authority" and "Vinyl Rules."

A couple of years ago, Strummer was speaking about The Clash, but his remarks have utter relevance for the political movements some of us belong to: "At least we had the suss to embrace what we were presented with, and that was the world and all its weird varieties. Whatever the group is, it was the chemical mixture of those four people that makes a group work. That's a lesson everyone should learn: 'don't mess with it.' If it works, do whatever you have to do to bring it forward. But *don't mess with it*. And we learned that lesson bitterly."

Slan agus beannacht, Joe.

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.

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- 9/11: Un Año Después
- L@s Trabajador@s inmigrantes construyen de nuevo un movimiento para la legalización
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Al Enfrentarnos a una Nueva Guerra, No Olvidemos las Lecciones de Otras Guerras

A medida que entremos en prensa, los Estados Unidos se mantiene en su postura de atacar a Irak. Aunque enfrentan una creciente resistencia mundial y voces disidentes aun dentro de las filas de la misma clase gobernante, las fuerzas de Bush siguen en su marcha hacia la guerra.

Este es uno de los momentos históricos que tiene grandes repercusiones. Las decisiones y acciones que se tomen durante los meses siguientes determinarán la forma que tomará la izquierda en los próximos años. Las organizaciones que fallan en diagnosticar la situación y den un paso en falso serán empujadas a una (mayor) irrelevancia, y las que escojan estrategias adecuadas se afianzarán más.

¿Un Nuevo Vietnam, o una Nueva Guerra del Golfo Pérsico?

Yo recuerdo la melancolía en la que muchos grupos progresistas quedaron atrapados después de las matanzas ocurridas en el desierto iraquí en el invierno de 1991. Tomó años para muchos del movimiento el poder salirse del Síndrome de la Guerra del Golfo y comenzar a construir de nuevo. En cierta medida, esto probablemente era inevitable, pero mucho de ello pudo haber sido evitado si más activistas hubieran analizado objetivamente las condiciones que enfrentábamos.

Advertimos que la guerra iba a ser horrible y sangrienta para los Estados Unidos. Sería un nuevo Vietnam; los cadáveres de miles de soldados iban a ser regresados a casa en bolsas para restos humanos. (Este énfasis estuvo basado en parte en la mentira propagada por la clase dominante de que el movimiento contra la guerra en Vietnam menospreciaba a los soldados norteamericanos, en vez de unirse a su resentimiento y rebeldía.). Después los Estados Unidos atacaron y sólo 133

tropas murieron. Una vez que comenzó, la mayoría de la población de los Estados Unidos apoyó al presidente, y el movimiento anti-guerra se esfumó. El sentimiento abrumador dentro del movimiento era el del fracaso.

Este sentimiento general cayó en un error. Estuvo basado en un error de idealismo filosófico—de subestimar el rol de las condiciones en que estaba el mundo y sobreestimar nuestra capacidad limitada de cambiar esas condiciones. A pesar de que una gran división en el movimiento y errores en dar demasiada importancia a las bajas estadounidenses, construimos un movimiento grande y lo hicimos rápido; sin embargo, en retrospectiva, no

Debemos estar pendientes de la probabilidad de la sobre-extensión imperialista en el futuro.

había modo alguno para parar la guerra no importa lo que hiciéramos. Si el movimiento hubiera esparcido un análisis basado en esta realidad, el movimiento durante los '90s hubiera salido mejor.

¿Por qué no desarrolló el movimiento un análisis más acertado en la primera Guerra del Golfo? No tuvo la oportunidad. Había pocos modos de esparcir tal análisis, enraizado en un punto de vista materialista-dialéctico de las experiencias del movimiento. *The Guardian*, el tan extrañado periódico de Izquierda, estaba por desaparecer. El Internet estaba en un estado de gestación. No había (ni hay) partidos izquierdistas grandes. El bloque soviético se estaba desmoronando y la clase gobernante de Estados Unidos estaba declarando el fin de la historia, dejando

a muchos grupos de izquierda confundidos y desilusionados. La combinación de todos estos factores dejó al movimiento sujeto a las respuestas espontáneas y emocionales en vez de hacer análisis más objetivo de la situación.

Analizar las Posibilidades Correctamente

La tendencia común y natural de los activistas que luchan hoy contra un nuevo ataque a Irak es una vez más proclamar que enfrentamos un nuevo Vietnam en el Medio Oriente. Pero debemos ver la primera Guerra del Golfo Pérsico como algo mucho más parecida a lo que enfrentamos hoy. Hacerlo de otra manera podría tener nuevamente consecuencias desastrosas para nosotr@s en el futuro. Si Bush y sus socios no tienen tanta suerte, la situación después de una invasión y ocupación podría bien degenerar en

algo mucho más desastroso, pero la guerra inicial es propensa a verse más como la de 1991 que como la de 1971. No dejemos que la desesperanza nos gane nuevamente.

A pesar del hecho que la oposición es más grande que la de hace una década, enfrentamos a un régimen aferrado a atacar a Irak. Y a pesar de todos los (acertados) chistes que hacemos acerca de qué tonto "Dubya" (Bush) es, su régimen está repleto de gente con planes visionarios para el control geopolítico de la región productora de petróleo más importante del mundo, y están dispuestos a sufrir pérdidas políticas a corto plazo para llevar a cabo dichos planes. Esto no significa que no les vaya a salir el tiro por la culata después de un par de meses. Pero el hecho es que nuestras fuerzas limitadas pueden tener sólo

un impacto limitado en este momento. Es seguro que debemos trabajar tan duro como podamos para frenar la guerra, pero tampoco debemos tener grandes ilusiones de poder lograr esa meta. Sin embargo, mientras que organizamos debemos estar pendientes de la probabilidad de la *sobre-extensión imperialista* en el futuro. A lo mejor no podremos parar esta guerra, pero nos podemos preparar para aprender lo más que se pueda sobre ella porque puede haber muchas más. Corea del Norte ya les ha dado una buena muestra de esto.

Construir Organización, Construir un Frente Unido

Otra lección para aprender de nuestras fuerzas limitadas es que de veras necesitamos mucho más organización. Más organización de gente en las comunidades locales, en las colonias, en las escuelas. Más sectores de la población integrados. Más alianzas y redes nacionales. Organizaciones revolucionarias más grandes y más fuertes. Todo esto necesita tiempo para crecer, por supuesto; no hay fórmulas secretas. Sólo hay una demanda que seamos implacables en el construir organización, a todos los niveles.

El movimiento contra la guerra ha sido particularmente lento en desarrollarse en las comunidades de nacionalidades oprimidas por diversas razones. Pero aquellos activistas que dan un paso hacia adelante están encontrando una buena respuesta. Por ejemplo, cuando "La Organización Popular por el Progreso" (People's Organization for Progress) de Nueva Jersey, un grupo basado principalmente en la comunidad afroamericana de Newark, decidieron protestar contra la guerra, algunos miembros temían que esta actividad los desviara de su labor contra la brutalidad policíaca. Pero el evento estuvo mejor de lo que los mismos proponentes esperaban, y eso convenció al grupo de hacer de este tema uno de sus enfoques principales.

Es más importante que nunca que las diversas fuerzas izquierdistas dejen de un lado el sectarismo y que se lleven

bien. Una de las ironías del momento actual es que los grupos como el Partido Revolucionario Comunista (Revolutionary Communist Party) y El Partido de los Obreros del Mundo (Worker's World Party), que han sido conocidos por tener dificultad en trabajar bien con otros grupos, están llevándose bien, mientras que los grupos pacifistas tradicionales que se pueden considerar a sí mismos como no sectarios, tienden a pelear muy frecuentemente de nuevo viejas disputas con las fuerzas de la misma izquierda.

Uno de los potenciales puntos fuertes del movimiento en esta ocasión es que el anti-imperialismo está mucho más propagado que en 1991, cuando muchos grupos se inclinaban más por el chauvinismo social—valorando más a nuestra propia gente que a la de Irak. (El desarrollo del movimiento por la justicia global durante los '90s es probablemente una de las principales razones por tal situación). Debemos

Pase lo que pase en las próximas semanas y en los próximos meses, la cosa más importante que podemos hacer es aprender de las batallas que peleemos y esforzarnos para pelear aun mejor la próxima vez.

hacer lo que podamos para esparcir el análisis anti-imperialista a lo largo y ancho del movimiento. La retórica despotricada y desvariada, sin embargo, no es buen sustituto por un lenguaje que la gente va a entender. Además, debemos evitar el demandar que un análisis puro anti-imperialista sea la base de la unidad para cualquier tipo de coalición o alianza que deseemos construir. Nuestra tarea es la de construir un *frente unido*, conjuntando todas las fuerzas que sea posible unirse contra el régimen de guerra de Bush. Unidos por la Paz y Justicia, una red nacional de una amplia gama de grupos que trabajen contra la guerra, es un modelo de

que podemos aprender y que ojalá podamos desarrollar mas adelante.

Ser Buenos Estudiantes

Un análisis dialéctico-materialista nos enseña lo que la gente aprende de la práctica: de los esfuerzos por tratar de cambiar el mundo aprendemos qué funciona y qué no, cuáles ideas son acertadas y cuáles otras no lo son. El movimiento anti-guerra actual ya ha absorbido algunas de las lecciones de los previos movimientos anti-guerra: Las manifestaciones grandes son insuficientes sin la organización local. Necesitamos instituciones de comunicación masiva para la izquierda, tales como el *War Times* (*Tiempos de Guerra*), listas de correos electrónicos, *Indymedia*, *Common Dreams* (Sueños Comunes). Nuevas formas de organización como Racial Justice 9-11 (Justicia Racial 9-11) y US Labor Against the War (Sindicatos Estadounidenses contra la Guerra) son

importantes. Debemos evitar caer en declarar que el mundo está por acabarse. Conectar la guerra a los efectos políticos y económicos que tenemos en casa es clave. Debemos basar nuestra organización anti-guerra en las necesidades particulares de cada comunidad. Y así consecuentemente.

Pase lo que pase en las próximas semanas y en los próximos meses, la cosa más importante que podemos hacer es aprender de las batallas que peleemos y esforzarnos para pelear aun mejor la próxima vez. Esa es la única manera en que nos podemos volver lo suficientemente fuertes para derrotar a este monstruo con el que estamos luchando.

9/11

POR JAMES CREEDON



UN AÑO DESPUÉS:

La Opinión de un Paramédico de la Ciudad de Nueva York

En la mañana del 11 de Septiembre, me desperté con la ahora famosa imagen de las torres gemelas incendiadas en la pantalla de mi televisor. Siendo un paramédico de emergencia de la ciudad de Nueva York, he tenido extensa capacitación y entrenamiento para actuar ante diversos tipos de desastres y bombardeos, derrames químicos y derrumbes de construcciones. Crecí en la era de Reagan y Bush, y estaba acostumbrado a ver imágenes de violencia en la t.v.—Nicaragua, Panamá, la guerra del Golfo. Pero esa mañana todo eso se tornó borroso, y cada imagen que presencié se convirtió en lo que ha sido el día más profundamente doloroso de mi vida.

Mientras me ponía mi uniforme, recogía mi equipo y manejaba al centro de Manhattan, podía ver las espesas nubes de humo negro avanzando hacia el mar. "Estamos bajo ataque," decía la radio. América estaba siendo atacada. Estaba muriendo gente inocente, y nadie entendía por qué ahora, por qué aquí, por qué nosotros.

Llegué al lugar de los hechos, y rápidamente encontré a mi Teniente. Comenzamos a hacer una estación de tratamiento a unos cien pies de la torre sur; intentando ayudar a la gente a alejarse de la zona. Podíamos ya oír el sonido de los cuerpos que caían y que golpeaban el piso. Podíamos ver los restos de gente en el pavimento a nuestro alrededor. Pero nos teníamos que concentrarnos en nuestra labor, e igno-

ramos nuestros temores para poder ayudar a los demás.

Después el panorama cambió, nuestros corazones se detuvieron, volteamos hacia arriba y vimos una enorme nube negra cubriéndolo todo, y comenzó a llover piedra. Primero fueron guijarros, luego rocas, luego columnas de hierro. Todos corrimos para protegernos, unos nos ocultamos bajo camiones de bomberos y ambulancias, y otros corrieron hacia el edificio más cercano. Mientras corría, mi casco se me cayó al ser golpeado por un pedazo de escombros. Inmediatamente después llegó la ola impactante que nos lanzó al aire, seguida de una absoluta oscuridad.

Estaba respirando a través de mi camisa a punto de asfixiarme, cada respiro llevaba más polvo y cenizas a mis pulmones. El sonido de columnas de hierro cayendo era tremendo, tal como el rugido de las ambulancias incendiadas, toda la gente a nuestro alrededor gritaba pidiendo asistencia, yo les pedía que permanecieran tranquilos. Tan pronto como lo negro se convirtió en marrón, unimos nuestros brazos con cada persona que encontramos, y caminamos iluminados por los incendios. Tuvimos que lavarnos los ojos, dar oxígeno y vendar a los heridos, y movilizar a los que podían caminar fuera del área afectada. Yo llevaba a una niñita en mis brazos para trasladarla a un bote de rescate, cuando la segunda torre se derrumbó. Todos corrimos

hacia el sur para alejarnos del peligro, yo, con la niña entre mis brazos, y una madre que estaba tratando de balancear el miedo por su vida, y confianza en mí para cuidar de su niña.

El 11 de Septiembre fue un día muy largo. Cuando la segunda torre se colapsó, me herí, pero quería continuar ayudando. Había cuatro hombres de nuestro escuadrón que estaban en esas torres y que ahora estaban desaparecidos. Otro había sido rescatado del primer derrumbe cuando ya tenía que escapar del segundo derrumbe. Otras personas estaban como yo, heridos, pero sin decir nada por temor de que se los llevaran de la zona cero por estar heridos.

Decisiones de Vida o Muerte

"¿Cómo pudieron saltar?" me preguntaron. Una hora antes, ellos eran, digamos, cocineros en las Ventanas al Mundo, que sólo intentaban tener un salario decente para alimentar a sus familias y hacerla de algún modo. Y tuvieron que escoger entre quemarse hasta la muerte, o saltar. Personas atrapadas en algo mucho más grande que ellas mismas, pero forzadas, sin embargo a tomar esa dura decisión. "¿Cómo pudieron saltar?"

El 9 de Octubre de 2001, George W. Bush comenzó a bombardear Afganistán. Y unos días más tarde, destruyó una bodega de alimentos de la Cruz Roja, un mercado lleno de civiles inocentes, y una oficina donde cuatro

trabajadores de las Naciones Unidas estaban coordinando esfuerzos para quitar minas en Afganistán, el país más minado del mundo. En una semana, él había logrado que la mayoría de agencias de ayuda humanitaria se vayan de ese país. Y para contrarrestar las críticas, Bush puso en marcha su diminuto programa de asistencia alimenticia, la cual ha sido ampliamente criticada por las propias agencias humanitarias.

Entonces llegó el momento en el cual los afganos tuvieron que tomar una decisión: Morirse de hambre: sin mercados, fuentes de alimentos, o bien, arriesgarse a ser dinamitados por la minas en su intento de alcanzar o localizar los escasos alimentos que les arrojaron en las zonas de peligro. Unas semanas antes, esta gente estaba trabajando diariamente, intentando alimentar a sus familias y mejorar sus vidas. Y ahora sus vidas estaban siendo alteradas, por una guerra de la cual no sabían nada.

Acatando Responsabilidades

Después de que la torre norte se derumbó, yo me encontré con la niña en mis brazos, pero su madre ya no estaba. No era posible que yo me hiciera cargo de ella, había tanta gente herida, y muchas más cosas que hacer. Me dirigí hacia un grupo de gente que se había congregado en un refugio temporario que habíamos instalado. "¿Hay alguien que pueda cuidar a esta niña?" Del grupo de gente salió una señora de edad y la tomó de mis brazos. ¿Por cuánto tiempo tendría que cuidar de ella? ¿Cómo se protegería a sí misma y a la niña al mismo tiempo?

Para ella, no existían dilemas de raza, de género, clase o religión. Nunca me pidió algo a cambio, su rostro nunca se vio en los periódicos como una heroína. Ella simplemente se presentó y tomó la responsabilidad de cuidar una pequeña vida en una situación en la cual su propia seguridad corría peligro. Y lo hizo sin titubear siquiera.

Después de unas horas de los ataques, la gente empezó a reunirse en

"Union Square." Al anoecer había una vigilia creciente. Y al día siguiente, había una escena de flores y velas, música y lágrimas, historias y miradas de reconocimiento.

Prontamente aparecieron símbolos de paz en las paredes. La gente comenzó a reunirse en sus barrios, iglesias, casas. De esto surgió el comienzo del movimiento anti-guerra, judíos empezaron a voluntarear, a acompañar a musulmanes y a árabes que no eran musulmanes para garantizar su seguridad en las calles. Veteranos de la guerra de Vietnam comenzaron a compartir sus experiencias con gente de mi edad, quienes apenas estábamos entrando en la escuela secundaria cuando acontecía la Guerra del Golfo. Organizaciones que nunca se habían conocido entre sí, o que habían tenido tensiones entre ellas, comenzaron a llevar a cabo diversos proyectos juntas. Muchas veces esto se debía a que las pérdidas personales eran mas poderosas que las diferencias políticas.

Antes de que cualquiera de nosotros lo supiera, éramos un movimiento. Y nos sentimos crecer como un movimiento. Decenas de miles en Washington, y también en Times Square. Y más importante aún, cientos de eventos pequeños en pueblos y ciudades a lo largo del país, con una consigna clara, "No lo hagan en nuestro nombre" y "Nuestro dolor no es una petición de guerra."

En cada lugar, gente de muy diversas nacionalidades se unían para detener la injusticia donde la vieran: la Guerra de Bush contra el Terrorismo. Aún cuando fueran advertidos por el Secretario de Prensa de la Casa Blanca, Ari Fleischer, quien les dijo que "mejor se fajaran en lo que estaban diciendo." En algunos lugares, este creciente movimiento encontró resentimiento y rechazo. Pero en muchos otros, la realidad de la opinión pública mostró su verdadero rostro: Muchos tenían temor de hablar contra la guerra, pero con el crecimiento del movimiento pro paz se hicieron oír muchas voces más. Sin dudar, si

bien nuestros propios prospectos eran inciertos, tomamos la lucha contra la matanza de más gente inocente—y descubrimos que no estábamos solos. No hubo preguntas sobre "¿Por cuánto tiempo tendremos que hacer esto?" o "¿En realidad podemos cambiar estas políticas?" Primero vino el más profundo impulso, el deseo de parar tanta injusticia y tomar la responsabilidad en la lucha. Primero fue el compromiso de hacerlo y luego las preguntas de cómo hacerlo.

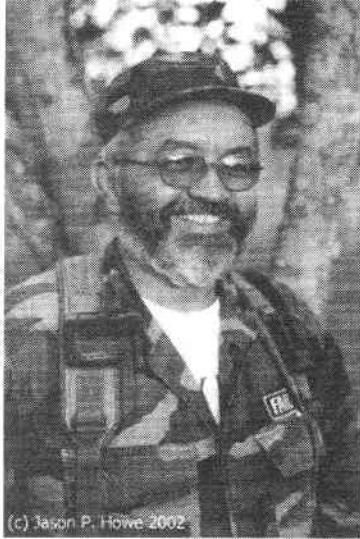
Enfrentando la Realidad

Mientras escribo esto, casi un año después, puedo aún recordar cada instante de aquél día, y las siguientes semanas de búsquedas. Recuerdo cuando identificaron los cuerpos de nuestros hermanos y hermanas caídos, uno de ellos tan reciente como hace unas pocas semanas. Y sigo sintiendo el mismo dolor, pérdida, confusión, rabia, y pena que sentí en esos instantes. Todavía lo veo en los ojos de otros paramédicos que estuvieron ahí conmigo, y los rostros de las personas que perdieron a sus familiares y seres queridos a causa de las explosiones.

En la televisión veo que las ambulancias Palestinas son atacadas, que paramédicos, iguales a mí son asesinados por soldados israelíes, aunque lleven en sus espaldas a niños asmáticos que necesitan asistencia inmediata. Leo que Bush quiere invadir Irak, contra la opinión de la mayoría de los aliados de Estados Unidos y de la ONU, sabiendo que las mujeres están dando a luz a niños con malformaciones físicas debido a las armas radioactivas usadas por los Estados Unidos. Y oigo de la "ayuda" de armas cada vez mayor a Colombia y a las Filipinas en la "Guerra contra el Terror," mientras miles de campesinos y obreros que luchan contra la pobreza y la enfermedad ven masacrar a sus líderes.

En cada noticia que leo sobre un nuevo bombardeo, con cada nueva

Continuado en la página 11



Entrevista Exclusiva con el Comandante Raúl Reyes del **FARC**

La FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), a pesar de la salvaje represión por parte del gobierno Colombiano, los escuadrones de la muerte y las fuerzas militares de los EE.UU., sigue haciendo la insurgencia guerrillera de más duración para la liberación nacional en el mundo. En una zona de Colombia controlada por la FARC, Martín Eder entrevistó uno de los líderes principales del grupo en el año pasado para la revista Camino de Libertad.

Gracias por brindarme su tiempo en medio de esta crisis nacional. Díganos cual es su papel y posición con las fuerzas armadas?

Soy miembro secretarial del comando central de las fuerzas armadas, responsable de los diálogos con el gobierno y cabeza de las relaciones externas de las fuerzas armadas.

Desde su punto de vista, cómo podría la comunidad internacional ayudar en el proceso de paz a Colombia?

La comunidad internacional ha estado involucrada, hemos tenido ayuda de Francia y también una representante de la OUN Cofee Anah, quienes quieren continuar como facilitadores para prevenir el término del proceso por parte de los enemigos de la paz, a quienes les gustaría que estos diálogos no siguieran más.

Qué podríamos hacer nosotros que luchamos por los Derechos Humanos para contribuir al proceso de la paz?

Todos los esfuerzos e ideas son buenos. Hemos recibido expresiones de apoyo por parte de muchas organizaciones, ONG's y otros que luchan por la justicia social, pidiendo al gobierno y a las FARC que continúen buscando maneras de sobrepasar sus diferencias y hacer la paz con justicia una prioridad, como que Colombia proclama, sabiendo que la guerra sólo traerá destrucción y muerte,

do—Ed.) La UP tuvo cerca de 5,000 de sus miembros asesinados por el hecho de pensar diferente que los tradicionales partidos liberales y conservadores—por buscar soluciones sin recurrir a la lucha armada, por buscar una Colombia mejor que la que tenemos hoy. En éste último año, más de 100 sindicalistas fueron asesinados sin encontrar siquiera un solo responsable. Y hay

Primero, reconocer que las FARC es un pueblo, gente con armas, las FARC es una revolución, una organización política con metas trazadas para la lucha, precisamente porque el Estado Colombiano no protege los derechos de los ciudadanos.

retraso en la soberanía y pérdida de dignidad para los pobres de este país.

Ve Ud. Alguna contradicción entre una lucha armada, para transformar la sociedad y meta encontrar la paz?

En Colombia ha habido muchos intentos para alcanzar el objetivo de la paz política, aún a través de representación política y aún por parte del Ejecutivo, pero la mayoría de los que lo han intentado, han sido asesinados. De los ejemplos más recientes está el de la Unión Patriótica (un partido legal, de izquierda, que ganó muchos votos pero su candidato presidencial fue asesina-

campesinos y gente que muere anónimamente, incluyendo maestros de primaria y secundaria, y trabajadores, por el hecho de querer contribuir a la paz social, son asesinados. El problema es que los derechos políticos son eliminados. Esto ha ocasionado que gente que quiera luchar por la justicia social no tenga otra opción más que seguir la lucha armada. Pero ninguno de nosotros los que estamos en las FARC, cargamos una arma porque nos guste estar en la guerra, sino porque no hemos encontrado otra alternativa para luchar por nuestros objetivos. El fundamento de nuestra causa es alcanzar la

paz real, la que el país quiere.

Qué diría ahora que Colombia figura como uno de los países donde los derechos humanos han sido violados más que en cualquier otro lugar de las Américas—qué dirías a la gente que señala y dice: "Mira, las FARC no son un buen ejemplo de derechos humanos—entendiendo que ningún ser humano, ni lucha son perfectos—pero que le dirías a aquella gente que tiene dudas sobre el camino que las FARC han seguido para luchar por el cambio social?"

Primero, reconocer que las FARC es un pueblo, gente con armas, las FARC es una revolución, una organización política con metas trazadas para la lucha, precisamente porque el Estado Colombiano no protege los derechos de los ciudadanos. En Colombia mucha gente muere de hambre, niños por malnutrición, hay muchos niños en la calle sin educación o comida, y al gobierno no le importa. Así que el primer violador de derechos humanos es el gobierno. Ellos deben proteger a todos los seres humanos desde su nacimiento a su muerte. Tenemos ancianos en las

Esta situación genera muchas formas diferentes de lucha y una de ellas es la lucha armada.

calles sin trabajo, o quienes han trabajado todas sus vidas sin obtener ningún beneficio para jubilarse. La gente que se organiza en sindicatos ó están en el liderazgo de grupos, o en cualquier agrupación, están reprimidos por los aparatos de seguridad del Estado.

Si el gobierno no cumple con la protección de derechos humanos de la gente, esto genera muchas formas diferentes de lucha y una de ellas es la lucha armada.

Ciertamente hay errores en nuestra lucha armada, involuntariamente, pero

hay errores que conllevan a otros resultados—la violación de derechos humanos.

Uno de los grandes problemas de Colombia es la falsedad, la manipulación de los medios de comunicación, donde no son éticos en lo absoluto, son parciales y confunden a la gente. Los medios en nuestro país pertenecen a ex presidentes quienes, salvo contadas excepciones se benefician a sí mismos, y para esto toman a cargo el manejo de los medios—cumplen con ordenes de los propietarios. Así que, uno de los serios problemas de nuestro país es la falta de prensa independiente, con ética que no sea parte de partidos políticos, que realmente informe a la población.

¿Qué tipo de solución, que programa siguen las FARC para desarrollar una nueva sociedad, para aquellos que aspiran a una sociedad con justicia social y un cambio de sistema?

¿Cuáles son sus plataformas para el presente y el futuro?

Durante su 8ª conferencia las FARC produjeren un programa el cual sigue teniendo validez para el nuevo gobierno, patriótico, pluralista y democrático con una reconciliación nacional que

busca más que cualquier otra cosa la democratización del país para dar cabida a la participación de todos los trabajadores, los intelectuales, los indígenas, para que toda la gente ayude a construir el país que todos queremos.

Está caracterizada como patriota porque Colombia debe ser soberana, independiente, con autodeterminación. Esto no implica que tengamos que romper relaciones con otros estados pero que trabajemos con respeto mutuo. Esta es la propuesta que ofrecemos al gobierno y en la que estamos avanzando y es la base de los 12 puntos

que hemos estado discutiendo con el gobierno durante 3 años.

¿Qué piensa de que el presidente Pastrana dé ordenes de ataque, haga público que hay nuevo armamento militar estadounidense, y movilice las fuerzas armadas aéreas, y anuncie una próxima invasión en 48 horas?

Uno de los mayores problemas de éste gobierno es que ellos piensan que pueden intimidar a las FARC. Eso es lo que siempre han hecho—el uso de terrorismo psicológico para atemorizar a la gente, para que la gente no pida aumentos salariales—muy al contrario, la gente sigue luchando. Si todo el dinero gastado en armamento de guerra hubiera sido utilizado para alimentar a los niños muriendo de hambre o para los que quieren estudiar, o para todos los maestros que tienen que luchar para que les paguen, o para los hospitales que están cerrando porque no hay subsidio del gobierno, las cosas serían distintas... sabemos que hay 30 millones de colombianos que están sufriendo en la pobreza, está gente esperando por alguien que resuelva sus problemas. Los grandes monopolios son los que quieren la guerra.

¿Qué mensaje enviaría a aquellos que trabajan para que se termine el Plan Colombia y buscan paz y justicia social?

Las FARC están en cuerpo y alma por la defensa de los derechos de los pobres en Colombia. Luchamos por paz, peleamos por un nuevo orden económico, contra el neoliberalismo, contra el Plan Colombia—porque está destruyendo no sólo el ambiente social, sino también el ecosistema. El Plan Colombia es un plan pro-guerra y nuestra lucha es por la paz. Y nosotros diríamos a la gente del mundo, especialmente a la de Norteamérica que las FARC no están contra la gente americana, sino contra los que apoyan la política de Estados Unidos contra nuestro país. Tenemos observaciones y críticas hacia el gobierno americano.



'¡Aquí Estamos, y No Nos Vamos!'

L@S TRABAJADOR@S INMIGRANTES CONSTRUYEN DE NUEVO EL MOVIMIENTO PARA LA LEGALIZACIÓN

POR BILL GALLEGOS

Uno de los más críticos asuntos sociales dejados en la sombra por lo del 9 de septiembre ha sido los de los derechos de l@s inmigrantes. Antes de aquel día, la migración ha surgido como el asunto nacional clave en la política de los EE.UU. El movimiento pareció ser preparado para ganar un programa de legalización relativamente amplia del régimen de Bush, cuya política fue de ganar la influencia en el creciente electorado Latino y a reforzar el nuevo gobierno Mexicano de Vicente Fox. Pero la "guerra contra el terrorismo" ha arrestado miles de Arabes, Arabe-American@s, y Musulmanes, deteniéndol@s por períodos indefinidos sin cargos formales o el derecho de representación legal. El régimen de Bush ha revocado su anterior "apoyo" para la legalización de l@s inmigrantes, y entonces tomó la decisión de ampliar la represión contra l@s trabajador@s inmigrantes, tanto el despedir y/o detención de cientos de personas inmigrantes que trabajan en los aeropuertos, y la detención de casi 500 Iranies en Los Angeles que respondían al requisito de los Servicios Migratorios para la "registro." Esta claro que se esta haciendo una guerra de baja intensidad contra l@s inmigrantes, llevado a cabo por el régimen de Bush como un componente de sus esfuerzos para reprimir todos posibles movimientos sociales opositores.

Un Milagro en el Día de l@s Trabajador@s—El Primer de Mayo

En el Día de l@s Trabajador@s del año pasado se hizo un "milagro" en Los

Angeles. En un día típico para el sur de California en una acción no típica se arrasó las calles en el centro de la ciudad. Doce mil trabajador@s inmigrantes y sus apoyadores tomaron las calles para celebrar su día y demandar la legalización y otros derechos para l@s inmigrantes. "¡Que queremos!?" gritaron l@s líderes y organizador@s por sus micrófonos. "¡Legalización y justi-

ciente y sistemática represión, detención, y deportación de personas de las comunidades inmigrantes. Aún l@s organizador@s de la Red Organizadora Multiétnica Pro-Trabajador@s Inmigrantes fueron sorprendid@s por la enorme cantidad de personas que participaron. Esta cantidad tan grande (mucho más que la marcha del año anterior) indica que l@s trabajador@s

Como siempre, raza y clase están en el centro de los nuevos ataques anti-inmigrante, así que son primeramente l@s trabajador@s moren@s del Tercer Mundo los que se encuentran en el blanco. Tradicionalmente, son l@s Mexican@s y Centroamerican@s que se han encontrado en primer lugar de estos ataques, pero desde el 11 de septiembre son l@s Arabes, Arabe-American@s, y Musulmanes que son los blancos principales de la nueva histeria anti-inmigrante.

cia!" respondieron con furia l@s militantes de la marcha. "¡Cuando lo queremos!?" "¡AHORA!" ell@s desafiaban mientras gritando "¡Aquí estamos, y no nos vamos!"

El "milagro" fue las proporciones, la composición, y la militancia de la marcha. Ocurrió detrás de la ola de la histeria anti-inmigrante ("terrorista") después del 11 de septiembre y el cre-

imigrantes no serán intimidad@s por el nuevo ambiente político anti-inmigrante.

Este evento fue una afirmación política de su determinación y además una victoria psicológica colectiva para las comunidades sufriendo por los enormes "daños paralelos" causados por la Guerra Contra el Terror de Bush. Esto no significa que los ataques contra

Una nueva red, MIWON, ha jugado un papel clave en el proceso de unir diferentes grupos inmigrantes.

l@s inmigrantes es cosa sólo de los republicanos. Después del 11 de septiembre, el Partido Demócrata dejó sus esfuerzos para la legalización como si fueran dirigidos directamente por Osama Bin Laden. La disminución de los Demócratas en este asunto es una pérdida significativa porque, antes del 11 de septiembre ell@s habían empezado a promover el concepto de una plataforma amplia sobre la legalización. Este cambio fue el resultado, sobre todo, por la presión de las comunidades Latinas y la AFL-CIO, que consideraron l@s trabajador@s como la mejor esperanza para el crecimiento, y por eso un movimiento laborista más pertinente.

L@s Arabes y Musulmanes en el Centro de la Histeria Anti-Inmigrante

Como siempre, raza y clase están en el centro de los nuevos ataques anti-inmigrante, así que son primeramente l@s trabajador@s moren@s del Tercer Mundo los que se encuentran en el blanco. Tradicionalmente, son l@s Mexican@s y Centroamerican@s que se han encontrado en primer lugar de estos ataques, pero desde el 11 de septiembre son l@s Arabes, Arabe-American@s, y Musulmanes que son los blancos principales de la nueva histeria anti-inmigrante. Como mencionado arriba, son miles que sido arrestad@ por las autoridades federales como terroristas potenciales, o apoyadores de terroristas. Pero a pesar de estos pogromos altamente publicados, *solo una persona* ha sido arrestado por cualquier crimen relacionado a las actividades de terrorismo. Las mezquitas Islámicas y agencias de caridad también han sido acosadas, atacadas, o cerradas por el Fiscal General Ashcroft. En una perversa ilustración del nexo entre la política doméstica y la del mundo, las violaciones de los derechos civiles contra las poblaciones de Arabes en los Estados Unidos también han llameado desde que Israel ha intensificado su destrucción de los territorios ocupados en el West Bank y Gaza.

L@s Arabes de los Estados Unidos no

son l@s únic@s víctimas de la política anti-inmigrante. Por ejemplo, la Migra ha puesto en marcha una nueva campaña en la frontera con México. Gracias al nuevo “Muro de Tijuana,” los entrecruzamientos de México han disminuido dramáticamente. Mientras tanto, las incursiones en las fábricas y sitios de empleo han aumentado bastante, creando un ambiente de terrorismo, y much@s han sido corridos de sus trabajos, o detenid@s y deportad@s. Los tribunales de los EE.UU. también han unido al arrebato anti-inmigrante. El Tribunal Supremo de los EE.UU. declaró en abril del año pasado que l@s trabajador@s no-documentad@s que fueron despedid@s de sus trabajos por sus actividades sindicalistas no tienen el derecho de recibir sus sueldos anteriores ¡aun cuando los patrones violaron la ley por haberl@s despedido!

Mientras que la decisión no elimina los derechos de l@s trabajador@s de organizarse e ingresar en los sindicatos, está claro que la intención es tratar de debilitar sus esfuerzos. Mientras, los Republicanos derechistas (la gente de “valores familiares”) han presentado una legislación que haría más difícil el intento de l@s inmigrantes de traer a sus familias, y limitaría severamente las visas estudiantiles. Tanto es la histeria que la Senadora Dianne Feinstein sugirió la idea de que EE.UU. deje de conceder *todas* las visas para l@s estudiantes por un período temporal.

Estos ataques políticos han creado un ambiente de miedo en las comunidades de inmigrantes. En respuesta, miles de hogares de inmigrantes ahora se ven con la bandera de los EE.UU. como un intento de cambiar las imágenes racistas de que l@s inmigrantes moren@s estén pasando bombas por las fronteras. El abandono virtual del asunto de



migración por parte del Partido Demócrata también ha causado much@s defensor@s de l@s inmigrantes a ser más caut@s en cuanto su agenda amplia de los derechos humanos para l@s inmigrantes. Su prudencia fue influida también por el apoyo inicial de las políticas extranjeras y domésticas de Bush por parte de la dirección de la AFL-CIO.

¿Cuál Es El Camino Hacia Adelante?

La Marcha en el Primer de Mayo en Los Angeles subrayó algunos de los asuntos complicados enfrentando el movimiento mientras que luchemos para determinar el mejor sendero hacia adelante. Tan magnífico que fue la marcha, hubo una ausencia muy obvia desde adentro de los trabajador@s inmigrantes y sus apoyador@s. Habían vari@s apoyador@s de la lucha de l@s Palestin@s, no habían casi nadie de inmigrantes Arabe-American@s ni Musulmanes marchando con los grandes contingents de Latin@s, Korean@s, y Filipin@s. Si la decisión de no invitar l@s Arabes y Musulmanes a participar en la marcha fue tomada a base de que su participación pudiera aislar el apoyo potencial de l@s Demócratas, o de la labor organizada,



Mientras que los políticos van para atrás, l@s jóvenes inmigrantes siguen adelante.

pues la decisión estuvo mal.

El hecho de no invitar a l@s Arabes y Musulmanes en la Marcha del Primer de Mayo muestra que el movimiento pro-inmigrante no ha reconocido los potencialmente importantes aliad@s en la comunidades Arabe y Musulman, y la necesidad de enfrentar el temor y oportunismo político de sus aliados en el Partido Demócrata y la dirección de los sindicatos. Esto es sólo uno de las importantes cuestiones enfrentando el movimiento si el intento es de resistir el asalto de Bush-Ashcroft y ganar cualquier aumento serio en cuanto los derechos de l@s inmigrantes.

Primero, el movimiento debe estar firmemente para los derechos de l@s Musulmanes, Arabes, y Arabe American@s. Los ataques contra estas comunidades y la situación en Palestina l@s ha propulsado a la acción política, desafiando las políticas represivas en la nación, y las políticas de Guerra en el exterior. Si el movimiento pro-inmigrante significa algo, debe ser un

campamentos de concentración de los EE.UU. durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial—ha sido destacada en su apoyo político y su solidaridad con l@s Arabes y Musulmanes. Como sugieren las experiencias del pasado, es dudoso que el excluir l@s Arabes y Musulmanes de la lucha de l@s inmigrantes convencerá a los políticos Demócratas a promover la causa de la legalización de todas formas.

Segundo, las demandas del movimiento deben llegar más allá de la legalización para abarcar a los nuevos asuntos pos-11 de septiembre. Sin un desafío serio de los ataques contra l@s trabajador@s, inmigrantes, *la lucha para la legalización sería debilitada*, mientras que miles de inmigrantes sean despedid@s de sus trabajos, acosad@s en sus comunidades, y encarcelad@s por períodos indefinidos sin cargos. En fin de cuentas, el hecho de no enfrentar ésta represión se desmoralizaría las meras fuerzas que se necesita movilizar para ganar un programa de legalización. Por éstas razones, el movimiento debe exigir un alto a los arrestos y detenciones de l@s Arabes, Arabe American@s, y Musulmanes; un alto al acoso y despidos de l@s trabajador@s de los aeropuertos; un alto de los ataques de la migra en los sitios de empleo y en las comunidades; y la oposición a todas las leyes que hacen más difíciles la inmigración y unificación de las familias.

Este movimiento también necesita enfrentar a los esfuerzos de Bush a dividir el INS en dos departamentos: uno que sea un “servicio” que procesa la naturalización, y uno de “acción coerciva” que trabaja sobre la frontera y en las comunidades de inmigrantes. Esta iniciativa da una oportunidad de exigir que se desmantele el “Border Patrol,” con todos recursos dirigidos a ayudar a l@s trabajador@s a procesar sus documentos para la legalización, la



residencia, y la ciudadanía. Por lo menos, el movimiento debe exigir que la mayoría de los recursos de la migra sean dirigidos al componente de “servicio,” y que el Border Patrol sea sujeto al control de l@s civiles.

Tercero, el movimiento pro-inmigrante debe hacer esfuerzos especiales a unirse con la comunidad Afro-Americana. No se ningún secreto las divisiones serias que existen entre l@s Afro-American@s por un lado, y las comunidades Latinas y Asiáticas por el otro, y que estas divisiones debilitan a nuestras luchas. Estas divisiones son debidas, sobre todo, a la competencia para los trabajos escasos, los recursos educativos, y los servicios de salud y sociales, así como el nacionalismo cerrado de much@s de l@s líderes convencionales en estas comunidades.

El movimiento pro-inmigrante puede ayudar a superar éstas divisiones por el hecho de apoyar los asuntos importantes en la comunidad Negra. El movimiento debe de, por ejemplo, presionar los sindicatos a organizar los trabajador@s Negr@s aún cuando este dirigiendo mayores esfuerzos con l@s trabajador@s inmigrantes. En particular, el movimiento debe desafiar al AFL-CIO a quedarse con la promesa sumamente demorada a organizar al Sur, especialmente a l@s trabajador@s Afro-American@s y Latin@s. La solidaridad también debe incluir el apoyo para las demandas Afro-Americanas a parar con el detenciones por color (raza) y la brutalidad policíaca que tan horriblemente parece el mismo terror que l@s inmigrantes enfrentan con el Border Patrol.

Otro asunto muy importante que el movimiento enfrenta es su relación con



Tener labor con nosotr@s nos ha dado un mayor empujón al movimiento pro-derechos de l@s inmigrantes.

espíritu consecuente de internacionalismo y solidaridad. Además, las políticas represivas usadas contra l@s Arabes y Musulmanes pueden ser utilizadas contra cualquier de las comunidades de inmigrantes (y comunidades no-inmigrante) que luego pudieran ser consideradas un riesgo a la “seguridad nacional.” A su enorme crédito, la comunidad Japonés-Americana —por su experiencia de ser internad@s en los

la labor organizada y el Partido Demócrata. Es crítico ahora formar un movimiento independiente de trabajador@s inmigrantes que se une solo estratégicamente (en lugar de generalmente) con el AFL-CIO y los Demócratas, tomando en cuenta siempre que tan fácilmente estas dos fuerzas puedan aprovechar al movimiento y/o venderlo a través de movidas con el régimen de Bush. Un tal modelo es el Multiethnic Immigrant Workers Organizing Network (MIWON) en Los Angeles, una coalición dirigida por la Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates, el Garment Workers Center, el Centro de l@s Trabajador@s Pilipino, y la Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights de Los Angeles. Cada una de las organizaciones de MIWON esta haciendo creando una base con l@s trabajador@s inmigrantes a través de los asuntos en sus sitios de trabajo tanto los asuntos comunitarios, como lo de las viviendas, acceso a los servicios de salud, y los derechos a la educación. Es solo por la formación de estos tipos de organizaciones independientes de trabajador@s que el movimiento pueda desafiar las movidas de entregar el movimiento a la dirección del Partido Demócrata.

Mientras guardando su independencia, el movimiento pro-derechos de l@s inmigrantes debe intentar a formar la unidad con particulares sindicatos, tanto el Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE), la United Farm Workers Union (UFW), y la Service Employees International Union (SEIU). HERE y SEIU tienen miles de miembros inmigrantes y están enfocados en organizar muchos miles más en campañas como la "Justice for Janitors." Fue principalmente estos sindicatos que forzaron al AFL-CIO a abandonar su política de apoyo para las sanciones del patrón (por contratar a l@s inmigrantes) ya apoyar la demanda para un programa amplia para la legalización. Hace poco, estos sindicatos unieron con una coalición de defensores para los derechos de l@s

inmigrantes para lanzar de Nuevo un esfuerzo nacional para ganar la legalización, comenzando con una campaña de mandar un millón de tarjetas postales al Congreso pidiendo que ellos apoyaran a la legalización. Es importante que el movimiento pro-derechos de l@s inmigrantes se una con tales esfuerzos.

Obviamente, un frente unido con la labor organizada significa muchos desafíos, tanto el asegurar que la burocracia de el AFL-CIO no logre la fuerza de aprovechar a sus miembros, sus recursos, y sus conexiones políticas. Sin embargo, el movimiento pro-derechos de l@s inmigrantes debe buscar la forma para poder trabajar con estos sindicatos, y animarlos a usar su influencia dentro del Partido Demócrata a frenar las movidas para vender los derechos de l@s inmigrantes a las fuerzas de Bush-Ashcroft—y a movilizar l@s miembros de l@s sindicatos en una campaña nacional dirigida a parar los ataques contra l@s inmigrantes y exigiendo una genuina legalización.

Finalmente, mientras que el enfoque del movimiento es (correctamente) de parar a los ataques y ganar la legalización, es importante mantener en mente la agenda mas grande para los derechos humanos de l@s inmigrantes. Esto incluye las demandas para la inmediata residencia incondicional para tod@s inmigrantes, derechos completos de idiomas, derechos para votar, y el derecho para la educación, salud, y servicios sociales.

Estos son tiempos difíciles para el movimiento pro-inmigrantes. Pero como mostró la marcha en el Primer de Mayo en Los Angeles, l@s trabajador@s inmigrantes son preparados para quedarse firmes y a resistir. T su mensaje para Bush, Ashcroft, y la Migra quedó fuerte y claro: "¡Aquí estamos! ¡Y no nos vamos!"

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9/11 Continuo

venta de armamento que se revela, veo la Zona Cero. En cada masacre "accidental" como ocurrió en una boda en Afganistán , o en una "desafortunada" destrucción en Palestina de un edificio lleno de niños y niñas, veo la Zona Cero.

Septiembre 11 nos enseñó varias lecciones, y la lucha para discernir cuáles son esas lecciones y como llevarlas a cabo continuará. Pero yo puedo hablar con toda honestidad de mi propia experiencia cuando veo reportajes en t.v. sobre la muerte de gente inocente. En una hora vi tres mil personas morir. Y ese día juré: Ya no quiero ver más muertes. Ya sea aquí o en cualquier otro país.

Este es el momento para redoblar nuestros esfuerzos contra la "Guerra contra el Terror." Debemos juntar a todos aquellos que creen que es posible otro mundo. Debemos continuar presionando a aquellos en el gobierno que están impulsando esta guerra, y debemos usar todos los medios posibles para cambiar su rumbo.

Un año después, guardaré un momento de silencio para recordar a los miles de inocentes que murieron aquél día, y para los que han muerto desde entonces. Y luego me uniré a los millones de gente alrededor del mundo que orgullosamente gritan "Este silencio es nuestro, y lo terminamos tal como lo iniciamos, con el compromiso de luchar por la paz y la justicia global."

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