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hello

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Stick with us, and we promise to treat you the way you deserve — more than we can say about the last sweettalker that tried to woo you. We're certain that you'll find this to be a mutually beneficial courtship.

In fact, just so you know we're for real, we've already bought you a gift. It's a little book by a fellow named Hal Niedzviecki — he's Canadian. It's called *Hello, I'm Special: How Individuality Became the New Conformity* (City Lights, 2006), and we're pretty sure it will be right up your alley.

So go ahead, subscribe to Clamor, and we'll make good on our promise. Send us \$18 (made payable to "My Love, Clamor Magazine"), and we'll stick by your side for a year (4 issues to be precise) and send you that book we picked out for you.

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(make sure you mention this flirtatious encounter
to receive your book — and no, we're not drunk)



from your editors

Clamor is a quarterly print magazine and online community of radical thought, art, and action. An iconoclast among its peers, Clamor is an unabashed celebration of self-determination, creativity, and shit-stirring. Clamor publishes content of, by, for, and with marginalized communities. From the kitchen table to shop floor, the barrio to the playground, the barbershop to the student center, it's old school meets new school in a battle for a better tomorrow. Clamor is a do-it-yourself guide to everyday revolution.

Sometimes it is really hard to say goodbye to that favorite pair of jeans – and even harder with that pair of underwear that fits you perfectly in all the right places. How can you replace them? They simply don't make underwear like they used to. Even if they did, they would probably cost about four times as much, made in some sweatshop, and be passed off as "retro." Sometimes, though, it's obvious when you've outgrown that old pair and need to look for a sleek pair of sweatshop-free undies – the stylee ones that make you feel real good.

After six years of wearing the same panties, Clamor Magazine has finally gotten a new pair of drawers. Friends who have been with us for years will recognize the increased page count ("New and Improved with MORE PAGES"), the added features (expanded UPROAR section with a photo essay), and the fancy new perfect binding (ensuring Clamor's longevity on your bookshelf, coffee table or bathroom floor). Some you newer readers may have picked Clamor up for all of these reasons and more. Welcome to *your DIY guide to everyday revolution*. Please don't hesitate to ask one of our pleasant staff members for help finding what you need here. We're sure you'll enjoy the experience.

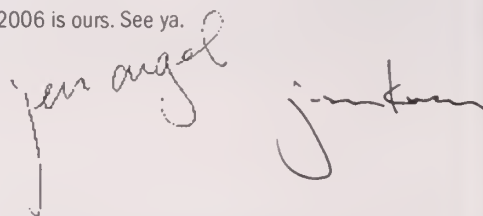
This issue – the first in our new quarterly program for newsstand annihilation – takes a not-so-typical look at a seemingly vanilla topic like "land and geography." Just like when you used to crack open National Geographic as a youngster to sneak peaks at nude photos, this issue will open your eyes in ways you never knew were possible. Check out Trevor Paglen's piece on monitoring the U.S. military at Area 51. Or try on Caitlin Corrigan's piece on gendering natural disaster and the recovery in New Orleans. Maybe the Coney Island Polar Bear Club piece on the last page will spark you to start your own club.

Before we let you get to the good stuff, we'd like to take a moment to welcome some new members of the Clamor fam. Since our last issue, we're pleased to introduce you to Kenyon Farrow, the new Culture section editor. Kenyon is a writer and activist living in Brooklyn, NY. He is the co-editor of *Letters from Young Activists*, and his essays have appeared in *BlackAIDS.org*, *Black Commentator.com*, *Popandpolitics.com*, *Bay Windows*, *City Limits*, *The Objector*, *Between the Lines*, and in the upcoming anthology, *Spinted*.

And as we flipped our calendars over to 2006, we also invited Nomy Lamm and Mandy Van Deven to bring their expertise to our heretofore two-person publishing collective – doubling our numbers and increasing our capabilities exponentially. Nomy Lamm is a writer, performer and musician who has been doing activism around body image, gender and self-actualization for over ten years. She's a self-taught accordion player and a co-founder of Phat Camp, a body-empowerment program for youth. Mandy is the editor and publisher of *Altar Magazine*, a social justice publication focusing on art, music, culture, politics, and activism. She also works as the Director of Community Organizing at Girls for Gender Equity, a grassroots organization in Brooklyn, NY working to create opportunities for girls and women to live self-determined lives.

With these new additions and our seasoned veteran editors and volunteers, we're fortunate to have such an amazing group of people working on Clamor.

2006 is ours. See ya.



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letters

Please address letters to letters@clamormagazine.org or write us at PO Box 20128 Toledo, OH 43610
Letters may be edited for length.
Not all letters will be printed.
Bring it on!

IF IT LOOKS LIKE A DUCK...

In his recent article ("Under Attack: Free Speech on Campus," Sept/Oct 2005) Justin Park describes our academic freedom forum as "a conservative campus watch list" and cites UC-Boulder Professor Ward Churchill and anarchist Yale anthropology Professor David Graeber as victims of academic intolerance for their personal and political views, sparked by organizations including Students for Academic Freedom.

SAF is a non-partisan campaign to restore intellectual diversity, fairness, and respect to the academy. Our academic freedom forum welcomes postings from liberal and conservative students alike.

During the controversy over his remarks about 9/11 victims, David Horowitz in fact defended Ward Churchill's free speech rights (in an op-ed in the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*) and he also recently sent an email to Prof. Graeber offering his assistance.

It is mendacious and inexcusable of Mr. Park to portray our organization as having "an agenda to remove any professor they deem unfit" when we have never called for the removal of any professor and have defended the free speech rights of every professor who has been under attack since the inception of our organization whose case was known to us. A retraction is in order.

Sincerely,
Sara Dogan
National Campus Director
Students for Academic Freedom

PARK RESPONDS

Since Mr. Horowitz is an outspoken conservative and since the SAF website catalogues "abuses" by professors, I think "conservative campus watch list" is accurate enough. I believe the more egregious mischaracterization is Ms. Dogan's laughable description of SAF as a "non-partisan" organization, given the facts laid out in the article about their conservative funding sources. While Mr. Horowitz makes a big show of defending liberals from time to time it is ridiculous for an established right-wing operative such as him to suggest his efforts are apolitical. His ABOR may be sufficiently neutered as to avoid being inherently political, but taken in the context of his funding sources, history of conservative demagoguery and penchant for speaking from both sides of his mouth, the document and the SAF project in general is nothing if not a political play and I think that's laid out in the piece. I find it telling that Ms. Dogan, as proxy for Mr. Horowitz, chose to grouse over perceived connotations rather than address the several substantive criticisms of her organization in the piece.

—Justin Park

LOOKING FOR LOVE...

I've had a hard time finding Clamor at my local chain bookstore. What gives? Are you still out there?

Sincerely,
Kevin
Flint, MI

Thanks for the observation and question. Clamor is alive and kicking, though we're more careful about how many magazines we are sending to certain newsstands. The best way to get your Clamor on is to subscribe. We'll send it to your door four times a year — rain or shine.

Head over to www.clamormagazine.org to subscribe now!

SOMETHING'S HAPPENIN' HERE

Thank you for the Toledo riot coverage (Clamor Blog; www.clamormagazine.org/blog). I did a presentation for a communications class and your articles were my greatest resource. I used Clamor as an example of unbiased journalism next to some other sources that were, well let's just say, subpar. Thank you for including so many direct quotes from Real People who were involved. It means so much that your writers do not insult the readers' intelligence by dictating to them what they should think, or telling them what they are thinking. I love your magazine because you gave me the tools I needed to write my own article and formulate my own ideas.

Thank you,
Natalie Scarlett
Maumee, OH

OUR BAD: CORRECTIONS

The photos that accompanied Tess Lotta's article "Kitchen of Distinction" (Sep/Oct 2005) were mistakenly attributed to Ben Guzman. They were, in fact, taken by Tess.

uproar



Clamor readers have their say on Land & Geography

Monique of the Germantown House (p. 80) heads for a swim. Photo by Ida Benedetto

I'd already crossed the Rockies one, two, three times. Now here they were looming up in front of me again. I was in southern Mexico, a hundred miles or so east of Oaxaca heading north and east toward San Cristobal De La Casas.

I'd just come from over the Rockies earlier that day. I'd planed on turning west but changed my mind on a whim. I'd been on my motorcycle about two months now. Left Michigan in November and made a stop in Colorado that turned longer than I meant it to, due in part to the death of an old family friend.

Now I was climbing the first foot hills, again. Up, up, up I go. I'm surprised to find a newly paved road lacking in traffic. The road is solely mine and for the next twenty miles, I see all of two cars. About half way up I cross into the Mexican State of Chiapas. I stop to smoke a cigarette, looking south now, over the side of the mountain at the expansive valley I just left.

Shortly, I'm going down the other side. The road levels off and fills

with vehicles. It doesn't stay level for long. Pretty soon I'm back going up. This time the road doesn't switch back along the side the mountain. This road goes directly into the mountains. Up and up and now I'm swallowed up by the hills. No longer can I look down at the valleys below. Every cigarette is spent looking off the mountain down at more mountains. And still I go up. I didn't know this then, but San Cristobal De La Casas lies in a valley inside the mountains.

Eventually I do reach the last crest and start heading down, but there's one more surprise waiting up there. On the top of this mountain, on the very top and down throughout the valley are rows and rows of corn.

I'm stunned.

I am from the Midwest. We grow corn there, where it's flat. It's never occurred to me that you could, or would, grow corn on the mountains. It's an entirely new idea to me, an entirely new cultural difference, an entirely new way to use a mountain. But it makes sense right?

If you live in the mountains, you would grow your food there wouldn't you. In the States we leave our mountains for ski slopes and mining sometimes. Other times we just leave them. Of course we have people who live there too; we just have enough flat land that we don't need to grow corn on top of the Rockies.

I actually don't even know if they call these mountains the Rockies in southern Mexico. Whatever the name, it's the same mountain range. I know because I followed it south from Colorado.

Within the next few weeks I would follow the mountain range further south, staying in the mountains until El Salvador. There the range was finally broken.

In my head, just like my idea that corn is grown where it's flat, I've always considered the Rockies a part of the United States. Knowing full well they reach north into Canada all the way to Alaska, I've still always thought of them as the U.S. mountains. It had never occurred to me that they go south. And it'd never occurred to me just how far south

they went. Despite the differences in cultures, despite the different uses, and the histories and meaning each little section of people feel about their part of the mountains, it's still just one mountain range. The same mountains that hold the jungles that the Zapatistas live in, are the same ones that supported the mining town I was born in. At the funeral in Colorado my friend was buried at the foot of the mountains she's lived near her whole life, the same ones indigenous people in Guatemala have lived in for centuries.

The Rockies, or whatever the name is, the mountain range in the middle of the North American continent, has no definitive uses, no ultimate meaning. The mountains know no borders.

josh-redd sanchez
Ann Arbor, MI

+++++

I take drives in the country to clear my head; it gives me time to do my favorite things. For me this ritual requires good music, daylight, and a

camera. The irony is not lost on me that I have to burn a massive amount of fossil fuels to get out of the city to enjoy the rural landscape. The juxtaposition of rolling hills, thick forests, and farm animals with abandoned sites of manufacture, agriculture, and commerce has always been something that captures my attention. I often stop along the route to take photos, from the big cow chewing grass at the fence post to the abandoned two-pump gas station on Hwy 14, each image adds to my collection of photo Americana.

This obsession with driving the county roads outside of every town I've ever lived in began in high school when I was a delivery driver for a travel agency, an odd job for a 16 year old, but it meant the \$4.25 an hour minimum wage plus mileage, a goldmine for this Alabama grrrl. As a delivery driver I got paid to be alone, a valuable asset in a family of five. I would drive all over Lee County, Alabama in my red 1966 VW Beetle delivering travel tickets to executives of all of the various manufacturing plants that occupied the rural Alabama landscape. Many of these plants are now silent ghosts reminding folks in town of the jobs that were shipped to cheaper land and labor. Like the two-pump filling station replaced by a fancy Shell station only a quarter mile up the road, these plants will probably wilt away over time to make beautiful images for my scrapbooks.

I've tried to move my camera's gaze from the romanticism of rural decay to the nauseating shiny newness of box and chain stores. A three-block stretch of 23rd Street in Lawrence is crowded with McDonalds, Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, Duncan Donuts, car dealerships, video rental stores, and Christian-owned crafting stores—as I drive through it I know this is an important part of the landscape to document, but the magnitude of their lit-up signs crowd the frame. I can't get that perfect picture of this new landscape, and I lose the mental calm that I gained on the drive in the country when I drive this thoroughfare of consumer capitalism, the gateway one must pass to get from the rural roads to downtown.

Taking pictures of the American landscape has been both a way for

me to find calm, but it also sends me into a panic attack. Sometimes it's just too much for me. How can 20 miles of land be home to abandoned factories, rolling hills, suburbs, and this consumer corridor? Sometimes I want a contraption like the TV-B-Gone remote to turn off the neon signs when I drive the brightly lit 23rd Street, but it's also an important part of the landscape that, while hardly avoidable, shouldn't be missed.

Ailecia Ruscin
Lawrence, KS

+++++

Half of the forest was gone, the machines sat idle but the grass was awash with snakes. Opportunity was on us but we had no containers. The black pilot snake wrapped and wrapped itself around my wrist. I spied the discarded paint can and thrust it in and pressed the cap down.

A boy ran to me with a garter snake and pushed it into the can. I was in the machine-torn area and the snakes moved over the brown earth looking for what they once knew. Three in the can, four, five now seven.

The men came back to the machines laughing and yelling as the roar of the engines made the dust spray us like rain. The snakes moved over our feet as the dozers razed the ground.

The trees at the edge of the forest came down and the men hollared at us to go. We ran with the paint can of snakes. The field and forest vanished.

A short time later we let the snakes out of the can. They were covered with paint and could not see. Some of them did not move. The others fled blind leaving green lines on the cement.

Marc D Goldfinger
Belmont, MA

+++++

I'm losing my Southern accent... it may be gone already. When I was ten years old my fifth grade teacher, a woman from Massachusetts who used to be a dancer for the Patriots,

told me that if I wanted to succeed in life then my thick drawl had to go. "Go where?" I wondered. Apparently it went, because when I got to Brooklyn and people asked me where I was from, they refused to believe that my tongue could represent the ATL flowing like I was from Boston or Philly or some other Northeastern metropolis. Definitely not from some small-ass town in Georgia where Sundays are reserved for Bulldawg fans only... or those who get down with geezus. I guess it would make my teacher proud to hear such "compliments" from her Yankee kin, but it makes me feel conflicted. I'm proud of where I'm from, even if I'm not proud of its notorious history. And I'm proud that it would give birth to the likes of me: feminist, anti-racist, queer, radical, self-aware, imperfect but fighting for justice nonetheless. More and more I find myself identifying with the saying, "American by birth. Southern by the grace of gawd." So next time I open my mouth and words start pouring out, listen past the shape of stretched out vowels and missing consonants. See if you can hear the land, y'all.

Mandy Van Deven
New York, NY

+++++

I live in Puebladelphia. Philadelphia used to have very few Mexican immigrants, but they've come in droves the last few years. Some are overflow from the old suburban steel mill town of Norristown where they import landscapers. They are almost all from the state of Puebla. Puebla is the rural state just south of Mexico City, just like the rural Garden State that New Jersey was when it grew all the food for New York half a century ago. NAFTA agricultural price dumping has taken its toll. A lot of Puebladelphians do prep work in the high-end restaurants. One of the restaurants is a high-priced parody of Mexico City culture. It is rumored that almost half of the little village of San Mateo De Ozolco is living in South Philly. A committee of community leaders from the town sell tacos at soccer games to raise money to build schools. One day, the development of the whole world will be run by the immigrant communities of Philadelphia.

Chns White
Philadelphia, PA

I moved back to North Central Florida because I missed the landscape. I missed the trees. There were other reasons, of course. Reasons like: my firm conviction that Florida needs sex radical-politico-nonprofit-art-freaks way more than San Francisco, my life being in the toilet bowl after years of suffering from major depression and a seven year love relationship ending during the dot.com boom making it next to impossible to find an affordable flat in the city.

But my most airy-fairy-mystic reason was that I find oak trees dripping in Spanish moss soothing. I may — like today — be having a grumbly, want-to-smash-people-in-the-face sort of day, and I will look up from my work and see the trees through the window. Their green leaves contrasting against a blue January sky calm me. (Sunny winters were another reason I moved back).

I lived in San Francisco for four years and while there is much beauty there — the West is majestic — I missed, I ached for, the shelter of sprawling, twisted oak trees, trees that lose their leaves not in the fall, but in the early spring when new growth pushes the old off. I love Florida trees. They soothe me. They hold my history.

I live in the house I grew up in. Trees surround my house. In my backyard is a gorgeous, huge, hundred-year-old oak. I played outside all day long in its shade and never got sunburned. I remember the day that my uncle scooted across one of its large, thick branches — a good twenty-five feet up — to tie the thick, coarse black rope for a tire swing. I spent hours spinning in that swing; blue sky and leaf-covered branches blurring together as I whipped round and round.

People complain that Florida does not have proper seasons. I prefer the slow, subtle signs that mark time's passage here in North Central Florida. I know it is spring by the piles of brown leaves in my yard and the brilliant, new green color on the trees. As spring shifts into summer, the fresh, young green darkens. During the almost daily afternoon thunderstorms, I can bike down tree-canopied streets and not get quite as soaked. While a very few trees put on a fireworks show of colors

before leaves fall, the leaves of the oak trees cling to their branches and resolutely remain green. And in our very brief winter, the trees that do lose their leaves give the oak trees space to claim the sky.

I plan to spend the next few years traveling and my artistic ambitions may mean I need to leave Gainesville. I delight in discovering new landscapes. I have found beauty in every one I have seen, but I love the scraggly, prickly beauty of North Central Florida best. It is my home. As I roam, I will miss the trees' shelter.

Sheila Bishop
Gainesville, FL

+++++

"When there's no room left in Hell, the dead shall walk the earth." Specifically, they'll make a beeline for the mall. This is the dire land conservation warning/tagline for the 1977 gorefest, Dawn of the Dead, in which legions of the undead waddle, stagger, and crawl inexorably towards the distantly remembered oases of their steadier years, when parking was validated and flesh obeyed the laws of gravity. "It's all they know," one human survivor remarks to another. Indeed.

I came of age when malls were still on training wheels. Their designers must have ridden along on the conviction that if you put up a drab, monolithic structure housing a couple of levels chock full of small businesses in impersonal spaces, bracketed by huge department stores and an acre for parking, you'd have a recipe for success. Drive, park, and shop till you drop (and are then resurrected for a B-movie). The three within a fifteen-mile radius of my home in Woodland Hills seemed interchangeable. Due to the excessive amount of free time on my hands each weekend, a liability of the iso-

lated suburban life, I would bike over to Topanga Plaza on a regular basis, pop-a-wheelie-ing (way back on the banana seat of my decal-covered, orange second-hand bike) every few blocks to keep things interesting. I would ride around, intuiting even at that age (10-13) that there had to be something else out there. Leisure time could not possibly encompass the May Co., the noisy food court, or the indoor ice skating rink on the second level. Or could it? Then one year, I even sensed danger. When Lynn Holly Johnston took that spill in "Ice Castles," leaving her blind and helpless before Scott Baio's ministrations, I resolved to avoid Topanga Plaza and its ice rink for awhile.

Usher in the Sherman Oaks Galleria, the mall with a facelift. Training wheels are off. Brand-new, lots of glass, three levels, Perry's Pizza, and an arcade (Asteroids was ancient history, now it was Zaxxon; soon it would be Time Warp '84 & Pole Position, a provisional license for the uninsured teenager - at some point, those Atari joysticks began to seem like baby rattles). And then there were the theaters. My intrepid friends and I would sneak into the R-rated films, praying an usher's flashlight would not play on our faces. There was something special about having to take two escalators in order to reach the theaters, as if you were leaving behind the crass commercial world of the Galleria, zombies perambulating and plying their plastic, for an enlightened realm. How enlightening "Purple Rain" and "The Last American Virgin" were remain open to debate.

If cancer metastasizes one cell at a time, then malls are a body that should be riddled with maggots. To the contrary, they seem to keep springing up with alarming regularity and with ever more expensive stores/theatres. But is there not something

profoundly alienating about a public gathering space which is only communal in the sense that the climate is controlled? After all, you don't want to shiver while engaging in the chilly business of commerce. Aren't mall shoppers still in the head space of their cars while their feet do the walking? Maybe there's still hope, though - zombies can't drive....yet.

Matt Auerbach
Los Angeles, CA

+++++

Vacant lots and train tracks are where cities go to dream. That's what I always loved the most about Toronto, the way it was a broken-down city. Not busted the way my hometown was, it had bookstores and an economy, but there was enough falling apart to be beautiful to me. I grew up in Worcester, Mass and I have a fetish for railroad tracks and old factory buildings, the ones my grandparents and uncles worked in. This is not me romanticizing poverty, it's me loving where I came from. And knowing that in the edges where cities fall apart, there is room to breathe, urban wilds the powers that be have forgotten about for a minute.

This railway south of the Country Site Café at Queen and Gladstone, with the old trailer graffed with somebody's POOR tag tagged big and the meadow of wild grasses: I made out with my girlfriend there the first winter we were together. I used to walk those tracks all the way to downtown, a secret corridor of wildlife and green, a place to be alone and quiet in the middle of the city.

Now when I walk south on Gladstone to the Price Chopper I see pre-fab townhouses rising from that free space. The factories south of the tracks were transformed into "Liberty Village" a few years ago, condo lofts

replacing the cheap warehouses folks lived in for two decades. The meadows that used to be further east on Queen, the buffer zone created by Queen Street Mental Health that kept yuppies away for years, have been filled with more lofts in the past three years. New names are screwed into telephone poles - this is now "West Queen West, the Art and Design District."

When I moved here in '97, this was Parkdale, North America's biggest psych survivor neighborhood, mixed with Caribbean, Sri Lankan, South Asian, Viet, poor white, a little bit of everybody. It was the Happy Time and the Golden Circle bars, two roti shops, the Tennessee bar and grill, Sri Lankan takeout, and Vietnamese coffee. A thousand psych survivors marching without a permit after a boarding house burned down and killed two. A hood prime for gentrification with its Victorians that could be renovated in between the high rises. Gentrification destroys neighborhoods that are brown but not totally busted: Parkdale has poverty and crack, but it also has a nice community health center, one of the best legal clinics in the city, access to the lake and buildings that were cheap and pleasant to live in.

What's the opposite of gentrification? If we want good stuff in broke neighborhoods, how do we get it without rich people moving in? What are the strategies we can use to hold onto space that doesn't have to make money to survive? I want to learn from the lessons of other neighborhood wars I've witnessed. Be my brown, scholarship college, artist self, as I walk the streets of my neighborhood and work against the condos taking over my wild place.

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha
Toronto, Ontario

make some noise

Deadline	Topic	Publication Date
April 10, 2006	International Issue	June 2006
July 10, 2006	The Body	September 2006
Oct 10, 2006	Food	December 2006
Jan 10, 2007	Fear	March 2007
Apr 10, 2007	Secrets & Conspiracies	June 2006

Each issue, Clamor welcomes stories from readers on the theme. Clamor is about allowing us to connect to each other as individuals, which means we have to work on sharing some of that lived experience out there. We want it all, from stories that will make us laugh to those that will make us cringe, conspiracies theories to your hopes and dreams.

Please email your short piece, personal anecdote, or reflective story, up to 500 words, to uproar@clamormagazine.org with the topic in the subject line. Uproar selections should be non-fiction. Be sure to include your name and address so we can make sure you get a copy if your story appears. We encourage a wide interpretation of the theme.



Mountaintop Removal in West Virginia



From the sky, the coalfields of West Virginia's Cumberland Plateau look like a land under siege. It is. Great swaths of forest scraped from the earth; pits and pools of foul-colored material; plateaus in the middle of a mountain range that look like they are painted with grass, like a golf course.

Mountaintop Removal (MTR) is a method of coal mining commonly used today and it is ravaging West Virginia. Using payloads of explosives comparable to those used in the Oklahoma City bombings, coal companies are blasting off entire mountaintops--the top 500-800 feet-- are blasted off. The objective is to blast through to the rich seams of low-sulfur coal which is so abundant in West Virginia.

George W. Bush has done much to assist the coal industry. Most significantly is the semantic tinkering with words in the Clean Water Act. The detritus from an MTR project used to be called "waste" and had to be carried out of the mining site for disposal. Now the detritus is called "fill," fully enabling coal companies to sweep the tons of topsoil, forest of trees and rock into the valley below. They are decapitating the mountains, which will not recover without its top soil and they are burying the streams and people below.

In the lush valleys, or hollers, between the gently sloping Appalachian Mountains -- covered in a stunning variety of deciduous trees -- is where Appalachians live; generations have kept the land and maintained what they call their "home-places." The forests covering more than 80% of West Virginia are the most diverse in our nation: containing 250 species of birds, 150 species of trees and thousands of species of plants; the Appalachian mountains are the oldest range in our nation.

Community after community in the coalfields have been left in shambles because of the rapacious appetite of the coal industry. Whole mountains are falling down -- they are carved up like swiss cheese from the deep mining of the early days; now they are being blasted off. Soon there will be no mountains left.

continued next page

TEXT & PHOTOS

Antrim Caskey
www.antrimcaskey.com



Maria Gunnoe, 37, Bob White, WV July, 2005

Maria Gunnoe outside of her "home-place." Her family has been here for four generations and cultivated the land for future generations. Her property is surrounded by a 1183-acre mountaintop removal site and 5 massive valley fills. Maria has stayed in Bob White because she loves the land, but in the past five years she's been flooded seven times — the worst flood was in 2003. "There was a 30 foot wall of water washed down from this mine site and destroyed not only our property but our lives. The water took a swath 20 feet deep and 67 feet wide right through the middle of everything we owned. It filled my barn full of rock and debris so much that we can't even open the doors. It washed through

the barn and continued down to where our family dog was tied and npped him right out of his collar as we watched helplessly. Then it took out our only access bridge blocking in the equipment we needed to make our living. After the water took out the bridge it then washed out the septic system, contaminated our ground water, and washed away about 5 acres of our property including our orchard. We were trapped in with no way out and the emergency services could only get within yelling distance. We came back to the house and went inside the water was now about 20 feet from the foundation of our home and it wasn't stopping. I dropped to my knees and begged for God to stop this water. 'Please God don't let this water take our house and our lives, it's already taken our home.'"



Larry Gibson, 59, Kayford Mountain, WV May, 2005 (above)

Gibson in his back yard where the giant MTR site "Kayford South" has been active for years. Massey Energy, who owns the operation, has clear-cut the trees right up to his property line, just as Massey told him they would in a 1993 meeting. Eugene Kidds, a Massey representative, told Gibson, who had made it clear that he would not forfeit his land, "I don't give a damn about nobody or nothing up in that hollow. I only care about coal. You're gonna be one little green island up there." And today, that is the truth.



Carl "Red" Fraker, 77, Kayford Mountain, WV May, 2005 (left)

Carl "Red" Fraker worked for 40 years in mining, 3 of those mining 26-inch coal, which means that he spent all day on his belly. "I carried my lunch bucket in my mouth," says Fraker. "We'd average about 28-29 cuts a day, 'Keep advancing!' is what the coal company said. 'Wasn't no dinner time.'" Working with one other man, the two would handle 126 cars, with each car holding 4-5 tons of coal. "I get along alright. I get out and enjoy myself," says Red, who suffers from black lung, emphysema and skin cancer, "You can't make it around here if you can't joke around."



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14 ACRES

Conversations Across Chasms in South Central Los Angeles

Over the past several months, I've repeatedly encountered, nodded in agreement with, and voiced the arguments for preserving the South Central Farm: it creates social and environmental value; it privileges these and other community values over individual property rights and monetary profits; it is an example of community self-determination; farmers there are cultivating heirloom Mesoamerican plants not found in stores; LA's urban center needs more greenspace, not less.

TEXT

Jessica Hoffmann, Christine Petit, et al.

PHOTOS

Jessica Hoffmann

The plan for these pages was to present a brief history of the farm accompanied by short oral histories of several farmers. But as we¹ tried to make sense of the land's complicated history by talking to stakeholders and following media coverage, we kept encountering the same separate narratives, neatly grouped, and started wondering about the absence of direct critical engagement with any of them. So we went back and did different interviews, asking questions that seemed strangely absent from the conversations we'd heard and participated in — questions about the tensions between reformism and radicalism, about ad hoc organizing strategies and broad social-justice theories, about difficult alliances, and more.²

Too often, people struggling with or against each other engage in parallel but insulated conversations. When we as radicals do that, we're failing to reckon forthrightly with the worldviews we're challenging, and among ourselves we're repeating general ideals rather than interrogating how those ideals do — and don't — inform struggle-specific strategies.

In presenting conversations with various voices here, I'm not aiming for "fair and balanced reporting" but asking you to critically consider several parallel but mostly insular narratives which are each simultaneously about a single plot of land and a way of seeing the whole world — side by side. I want to see what change-making discussions and strategies might emerge from that view.

—Jessica Hoffmann

Ralph Horowitz

Property Owner

What's your version of the story of this land?

From my perspective, the taxpayers of the city of Los Angeles have given this group the privilege of using Los Angeles city land for 12-plus years for free, and the city taxpayers are entitled to a thank-you as opposed to a lawsuit.

What about the argument that the farm is generating social and environmental value?

The city has made the decision that they have other things that they'd rather subsidize that the city deems more important. The city of LA does have a lot of needs and if they've made a decision that there are needs that are much more pressing than people having a weekend vegetable garden, I can understand.

What are your plans for the land?

My plans are market-driven. When we get the property back, we're gonna determine what the viable use is depending on the market conditions and we'll do that. If someone was in need of a manufacturing plant or a warehouse, we'd do that for them.... We'd market the property for lease, and real-estate brokers would bring people who wanted to do something, and then the negotiations would start.

Are there variables other than dollar amounts that would affect your leasing decision?

Quality of the tenant. A quality tenant might be taken at less remuneration versus a lower-quality tenant at higher remuneration.

What about whether the tenant would create jobs? Or environmental impacts?

Environmental impact wouldn't come into play too often because there are such stringent environmental regulations now that almost every industrial tenant puts out a clean workshop.

And jobs?

Obviously on a piece of property that size, in any event, a lot of jobs will be created.... If we develop with a warehouse person or a manufacturing person, anything we do is gonna create a lot of jobs.... [The farmers] are not creating any jobs.

You told me you feel you have no allies, yet it seems to me the decision went your way —

I have yet to interview with one [reporter] that wasn't pro-farmers.

Why do you think that is?

It's obvious in the articles that they put out and it's obvious when they ask questions that their leanings are towards the gardeners.

Do you think that says something about journalists or the people who are interested in this particular story or —

I think, number 1, young people in general are liberal, and number 2, here in LA we have a very liberal press, so it's not a surprise.

So what do you feel is not being drawn out by their — our — questions?

A lot. But just to give you an example. The farmers know that I have agreed with the city of LA that at such time as the farmers leave and the property becomes available for development — I have agreed to give to the city, without charge, a little under a three-acre soccer field, which the city had said it had a real need for in the neighborhood.... And in the articles I've read, I don't think anyone's looked in the file or even questioned me on whether or not I was going to donate a soccer field. And secondly, a soccer field is open to the whole community — anybody in the community can use that. This garden isn't. These little plots are used by them exclusively. If you or I wanted to take our rake or shovel or hoe and do a little gardening there, we can't.



But anyone in the community can apply for a parcel. They just need to meet certain income requirements.

My point is it's not a public use. These gardeners are wanting to use these little plots themselves, indefinitely.... Some of them have been on there 12 or 15 years; they're not forced to rotate every year or two to make room for someone else...

Do you think it's fair — or democratic — that the decision to sell the land to you was made between your attorneys and the city's attorneys, without any input from the people who are using the land?

The city made the decision — our elected City Council made the decision to sell this piece of land, not to me — they put it on the market — they made this decision to sell this piece of land because they in their wisdom probably had determined that there are more pressing social needs for the land. If you're telling me it's more democratic to have these people tell the city that "we've been on here 12 or 14 years and we don't think we should get out," that doesn't sound very democratic.... This is a decision to

be made by our elected representatives, not by the farmers.

Would you say you got a deal?

Somehow the farmers think it sounds good, like I got to steal the property from the city. The city would not honor their agreement to me and sell it to me first. A lawsuit ensued, and as a result of the lawsuit, a purchase price was established.... I didn't even participate in the discussions; it was attorney to attorney. This was a settlement in lieu of litigation. There were no big bargains. There was no corruption. It was as normal a sale as could be. Both sides gave up something and both sides received something. It was a negotiated settlement between the city attorney and my attorney.

But it WAS quite a low price, no?

I don't want to get into all that, but I will tell you that the city put the property on the market at the time and they received numerous written offers [that] all came in sort of bunched around a certain price range. The price I paid was around the high end of that bunching.

So the farmers are being evicted—

The farmers have not been served with any eviction notice at all. If they don't leave the property voluntarily, they will be served with an eviction notice.

What's the timeline for that?

The courts set that.

So you're just waiting...

Until the court issues a writ of possession so you could remove the farmers if they won't do so voluntarily.

Anything you want to add?

There's tons of stuff that I think is relevant, but I'd rather just answer your questions. As I indicated to you before, I think the farmers should be grateful that the city allowed them to stay on the land for free for so long, instead of demanding that the city or I should allow them to stay on forever for free. It's just not a rational request.

Tezozomoc Farmer-Organizer, Spokesperson, South Central Farmers

What's your version of the story of this place?

It's really complicated. It speaks very much to the nature of Los Angeles politics.... We're sitting in the middle of the desert and we've got [millions of] people. Everything that arrives here requires lots and lots of energy. There's something fundamentally wrong [with that], and this situation is a parallel, on the micro level.

In 1992, after the uprising, [then-mayor] Bradley mitigated the slant of the community in a symbolic way by saying, "Yeah, there's a lot of inequities in the community, so let's see what you guys can do with this [land]." That's one part of the story. The other part is what the community did with it. People addressing their own needs in an autonomous way has created a kind of a subversive situation where we are challenging the fundamentals of consumerism.

Can we back up to '92?

The original process [of giving the land to the farmers] was done through the Food Bank. Then in 1994 the Food Bank said, "We can't afford to hire a person [to manage the project]," and they were gonna close this place down. But the community came together and told the Food Bank, "Let us run it. We have an internal government. We have a general assembly and representatives from different sections. It's based on the Mexican *ejido* system, the communal-land structure, where they have a junta and all of the general assembly come for decision-making and all that."

You've got a very strong organization, with a lot of community support—

It's taken us two years to build up to this.... All of a sudden, people feeding themselves has become very political. People didn't set out to become political; what they're doing became political. Those are the best struggles because they're not artificial. People are saying, "I just wanna feed my family. I wanna grow healthy food."

Why would you want to destroy something that is so profitable, but not in a money sense? If a government is supposed to act as the great equalizer, then we really have failed, because we're paying an evolutionary fitness price so that one person can benefit at the expense of 350 families — and the community. Because [Horowitz] is not gonna add any value to this community, and we're adding value. How many jobs can you put in a warehouse? We're not talking about hundreds of people. If it was hundreds of people, I'd be backing him up. I can't argue about that. If he says, "Okay, we're gonna hire 200 people, 300 people—" good. Hire some of these people ... [but] when you're asking one group to pay for the fitness of one individual, that's where we fail in terms of justice.

It's not just that we're yelling and screaming. We're saying, Let's do policy change. Let's dictate that in a lower-income neighborhood like this, if you're gonna build a 20-unit apartment, you have a space that's allocated for people to do some gardening, or to hang out. We want to move away from mitigation — meaning, I destroy your neighborhood, and then lemme just give you a little something to pacify you. We're saying, No, let's start at the beginning. Let's put these things in place.



Tezozomoc (pictured left), cont'd

So how do you organize for radical re-thinkings of the system AND for policy changes within that system?

We're trying to find our way through it. We're working with the Willie C. Velazquez Institute [a non-profit public-policy-analysis organization aimed at improving political and economic participation among Latinos and other underrepresented groups]. They had a conference in November about the — I don't like the word "Latino," but — about Latinos and the environment — how mainstream environmentalists don't get that we've had thousands of years of understanding the land, that we have a different — a land ethic that goes back thousands of years. So we've been working with groups like them and the Los Angeles Working Group on the Environment [a coalition of community-based organizations working with Mayor Villaraigosa on environmental policy], building coalitions and building relationships with policy organizations. Ultimately, this is gonna have to be a policy change. I'm not gonna make it happen. This has to be a policy change ... but that doesn't happen unless we get policy people on top. And the way that we've been working has been through these large organizations.

But this is tricky — take the initial connection between the Food Bank and the farm and the division now between those two parties, which is in part a struggle between radicalism and reformism and the difficulties of some alliances — now you're talking alliances with these policy organizations —

But the thing is, you get to specify how this happens. Because we've got nothing to lose, we can advocate a particular type of policy. Every day that we are here we are winning. We're winning in the policy and we're winning the media war in the sense that we're saying what we want — we're saying what the community wants, this is what all these petitions are saying. I'm not the type of extremist that says the system doesn't work. Whether you like it or not, you are in this system. Do you know the three laws of thermodynamics? You can't stop playing, you have to keep playing, and you will never win.

So sometimes you try and make headway with politicians, sometimes you —

Sometimes you create chaos and sometimes you create distractions. Anything is possible. Remem-

Darren Hoffman

Communications Manager, Los Angeles Regional Food Bank



What's the story from where you're standing?

The garden was established 14 years ago through the Food Bank and the city. The Food Bank got involved just because of proximity — it's right across the street.

The land was originally taken through eminent domain from Ralph Horowitz [et al.] for city use.... We approached the city right after the Rodney King riots to see if we could use it on a temporary basis. They weren't gonna do anything with it for probably two years, and two years is better than nothing. We did soil samples, [got it] approved for urban gardening, sent out a call to residents, set up income requirements and location requirements.... Every farmer that came on, we informed them through a contract that it was a temporary program. We had a one-sided lease granted by the city; it was a revocable permit. They could give us 30 days' notice at any time....

About two years ago, the city, through a legal settlement, returned the land back to Horowitz.... Once the court order went through that the transfer was happening, the city served us with a revoking of permit....

We have a one-sided revocable lease. It's black and white. As soon as we get notice from the courts that we have to depart the property, we'll have to do that. We're just waiting for the court's decision....

We hate to see this loss, because it's such a great community project. But we don't want any lawsuits to burden us, because we have other programs — this is a small program compared to the big programs we have.

Such as?

Our main business is food distribution to nearly 1,000 charitable agencies throughout LA County. Last year we distributed 45 million pounds of food. That's about 33 million meals.

How do you feel about having been involved in a temporary sort of "gift" to the community, rather than a long-term committed project?

The fact that it was built to be a self-sufficient program and that all these gardeners are uniting to create a core group that's organized is neat to see. We hate to see it go, because it is a green oasis in the middle of an asphalt jungle, but we knew it was temporary going into it.

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CONTESTED LAND, CONTESTABLE HISTORY

The 14-acre plot of land on the corner of Alameda Avenue and 41st Street in South Central has been contested for more than 20 years. This (contestable) timeline is adapted from sources including Indymedia, the *Los Angeles Times*, interviews, and the South Central Farmers website www.southcentralfarmers.com.

1983–87:

- City of Los Angeles approves plans to turn the land into a trash-to-energy incinerator and claims the land through eminent domain, buying it from landowners – of which the Alameda-Barbara Investment Company (Alameda) is the largest stakeholder – for \$4.8 million.
- Citing environmental and health concerns, community residents mount a campaign against the incinerator project.
- Then-mayor Tom Bradley withdraws his support for the incinerator project.
- City retains ownership of the land under the Department of Public Works; it sits unused.

1992:

- In the wake of the Los Angeles uprising, the city, via the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank* (a private, nonprofit food-distribution agency based across the street from the contested land), grants temporary use of the land to establish a community garden for some of the city's poorest residents; gardeners are told that the city may reclaim the land at any time.

* The exact nature of the Food Bank's involvement at this point is hard to determine, as sources contradict each other.

1994:

- The city sells the land to the Los Angeles Harbor Department for \$13.3 million as part of a development project. Only a small portion of the land is used in this development; the garden, now in its second season, remains.
- The Harbor Department contracts the LA Regional Food Bank to manage the garden.

1995–96:

- Libaw-Horowitz Investment Company (LHIC), Alameda's successor company, begins negotiating with the city, claiming that they should have been offered the right of first refusal when the land was sold to the Harbor Department.
- Plans to sell the land to LHIC are made contingent upon City Council approval, which never occurs.

2002–03:

- LHIC sues the city for not executing the purchase agreement.
- Despite initially rejecting the claim, the City Council decides to settle with LHIC in a closed meeting and sells the land to the company for \$5.1 million.
- The Food Bank receives notice that its tenancy will soon end and informs farmers that they will be asked to leave or face eviction.
- Farmers begin organizing to retain usage of the land.
- The land title is transferred to Ralph Horowitz and other invested parties.

2004:

- Horowitz sets February 29, 2004, as the termination day for the garden.
- Farmers obtain legal counsel and file a lawsuit contesting the validity of the sale to Horowitz.
- Farmers are granted a temporary restraining order and injunction by the Los Angeles Superior Court, which allows them to continue to farm the land during the legal proceedings.

2005–2006:

- Appeals court overturns the Superior Court's decision and ends the injunction.
- Farmers make an appeal to the California Supreme Court, but the court refuses to consider the appeal.
- Farmers continue to inch along, court decision by court decision, the most recent one granting them an extension to retain use of the farm until January 4, 2006. Meanwhile, farmers and their supporters take turns camping out at the farm to keep 24-hour watch against lockouts or forceful removal.

-Christine Petit

ber, in 1776 slavery was legal. It was legal to gas the Jews, right? So the law is – it's a living body, it's a reflection of who we are. It's just a matter of how much energy is required to hit critical mass. The universe does not move in linear mode. It moves in ... I'm trying to get you to understand why we're able to move the way we move. A lot of our ideas are coming from *indigenismo* and from our cultural perspective. We've been farming for thousands of years.

This gets back to how different your worldview is from Horowitz's.

My challenge is for people to question these fundamentals, question the worldview. Once you can do that, you have a better chance of struggling. Why is the first question out of a reporter's mouth [about] "property rights"? Why does this make so many people nervous? Particularly on this continent, because of the land struggle. We need to ask those fundamental questions.

Do you think there's a greater role the Food Bank could play in saving the farm?

We're on the outside, kind of a third party to it now. We've facilitated everybody in the city in talking with the farmers. We have no legal right to the land or any say. We've used our influence with the City Council people to find other unused city land. We've done everything we can legally. If we continue to stay on the land after the permit's revoked, [Horowitz] would charge us for occupying the land. That would really destroy the Food Bank. We don't want to have that kind of liability.

We hate to see the garden go, but it's in the court's hands now.

NOTES

¹ In addition to Christine Petit and myself, lots of credit for research (including interviewing) and critical dialogue on this piece is owed to Angela McCracken, David Rothbaum, and Daria Teruko Yudacufski.

² Many more individuals were interviewed for this piece than are represented here. This selection of published interviews reflects many people's meaningful choices about voice and representation – about who speaks for whom. Tezozomoc is an elected spokesperson for the farmer-organizers, Darren Hoffman is the LA Regional Food Bank's communications manager, and Ralph Horowitz is the (presently singular) landowner. Attempts were made to obtain interviews with City Council members, but calls went unreturned.



TEXT
Brad Johnson

Urban Farmer

Michael Ableman is the founder and executive director of the Center for Urban Agriculture at Fairview Gardens, a farm and educational center in Goleta, California, and the author of three books, including *On Good Land: The Autobiography of an Urban Farm* (Chronicle, 1998). I spoke with him at the 2005 Bioneers Conference in San Rafael, California, about his most recent book, *Fields of Plenty: A Farmer's Journey in Search of Real Food and the People Who Grow It* (Chronicle, 2005), which describes a trip he took around the United States visiting small-scale farms.

So, you've moved from the Center for Urban Agriculture in Southern California to a farm on Salt Spring Island in British Columbia...

It's a different life. It's like the volume has been turned down. People have accused me of being some kind of political refugee or having run away from something, but the truth is I was running to something. What we fell in love with up there was the community, the pace, the fact that it's quieter. Fairview Gardens had become so successful that I felt like more of an administrator than a farmer. I needed to get my hands back into it.

In the book you talk about going into a Cracker Barrel restaurant and asking them to cook food that you brought from a farm. Do we all need to ask more questions about where things come from?

Yeah, I think so. Of course my son was halfway under the table from embarrassment and the whole restaurant was watching us. But it brought up a very interesting point... More than being some cheap little event, I think there was a tiny window opened for the people who were serving the food and the manager. They commented on the way the eggs looked, that they were yellow. We have to start asking more questions, like where does this come from, how far has it traveled, whose hands produced it, and what are their lives like?

*You talk about visiting a housing complex in St. Louis that had banned gardens and compost. And in *On Good Land* you wrote about the "rooster wars" at Fairview Gardens, where some neighbors objected to the sound. Is there something bigger going on with these types of rules?*



It's just unbelievable in some ways. Who would live in a community where you can't have compost or a garden? And there are families living in that community with children. Why? I'm assuming it's not so insidious. I'm assuming it's because somehow people have the perception that compost stinks, which it doesn't when it's done right, or that a garden is an ugly thing, which of course it isn't. That the only realities for the spaces around our homes should be lawns and bushes.

You spoke to a farmer who complained about "buy local" campaigns because she felt they were a form of charity.

That's Amy Kenyon, a wonderful free thinker. She and her husband are dairy farmers in New York. She said, "I want to challenge farmers to grow world-class products. This is not charity... I hate the 'buy local' thing. People's perception is that by buying our product they're saving our farm. I want people

to buy our products because they're good." I agree with that to some degree... [But] I got a lot of flak from an LA Times interview where I said that I would rather buy products grown by my neighbor even if they were conventionally grown than organic products shipped halfway around the world. If I'm buying that farmer's food I have a relationship with them. I can have the conversation about maybe you should try this or do something differently. I think the local thing is very important. It's far more important than organic. I'm not interested in organic anymore. I tried very hard not to use the word in the book at all. I believe that by focusing on regional food systems we solve a lot of problems. But I also agree with Amy's perspective. Buy the stuff if it's good. If not, don't.

You spent some time in Chicago visiting an urban farm. Will cities ever view agriculture as more than a novelty?

We're going to be forced to that point. It's really an absurdity to have food coming from far away to the urban dweller, treating them like they're these passive beings, like birds in a nest waiting to be fed. When food travels long distances there's an incredible cost, energy-wise. Then the waste from the food-nutrient cycle is interrupted. There is no way for the waste to return to the land where the food was produced. This is a fundamental principle in growing anything. You've got to return. The things people eat have to be produced closer to where they live. There are social and cultural reasons for this as well. Community gardens are cultural centers. They're as important to our civic life as theaters, museums, or great restaurants. And by the way, urban agriculture is not a new idea, it's an old idea. Agriculture started in cities.

I would rather buy products grown by my neighbor even if they were conventionally grown than organic products shipped halfway around the world. If I'm buying that farmer's food I have a relationship with them. I can have the conversation about maybe you should try this or do something differently. I think the local thing is very important. It's far more important than organic. I'm not interested in organic anymore.

Based on your trip, what is your impression of the state of small-scale sustainable agriculture?

The experience of that trip was extremely hopeful. The book is all about hope, and the pioneers who are at the frontiers of American agriculture right now. And I think we need stories of hope right now. In relation to the industrial food system their efforts may seem fractional or tiny. But I think what they're doing is very powerful, and it's making incredible inroads.

Brad Johnson is a freelance writer and community supported agriculture farm member from Baltimore, Maryland.



TEXT
Elana Bell
PHOTOS
Jessica Azulay

Listen to the People

Kalamu Ya Salaam
Documents the Third Migration

Kalamu Ya Salaam is a New Orleans-born (and, until recently, -based) poet, educator, writer, and community-builder. He has been instrumental in developing communities around writers of color for decades. He leads the Neo-Griot Workshop, which was about to celebrate its 10th anniversary when Katrina hit, and runs the e-drum listserv, which is organized around the interests of African American writers and diverse supporters of their literature worldwide. I recently talked to him about his oral-history project to document displaced New Orleanians and the questions we should really be asking in the aftermath of Katrina.

Tell me about the Listen to the People project.

I left New Orleans the day before the hurricane hit. I ended up in Houston, Texas. And like many people in the world who had access to TV, I watched over the next week almost continuously. By the third day of watching I had made up my mind that this was a defining moment in history, and that I had a responsibility to make sure that the voices of the people, the broadest cross section of New Orleanians possible, that their views and stories would be made available and would be somewhere where they would be accessible a hundred years from now. [So that when] people look back to know what happened, there won't just be the "official" version.

At the same time, I was teaching in a program called Students at the Center, which was a(n independent) writing program within the New Orleans public school system. I was working with high-school students, teaching them writing and digital video. This [had been] my day-to-day work, and I realized that there was no longer any work. So I put the word out on e-drum that I was looking for work and that we were doing this Listen to the People project. And rather than postpone starting until I could get a grant, I sought work. As soon as I would get a gig making presentation, doing poetry readings or workshops, I used money from the gig to support the project.

Listen to the People is ever-evolving, but basically has three phases: to collect existing interviews and stories, archive them, index them, and make them available on the Internet; to encourage people all over the world to do oral histories of relevance to Katrina; and to do the rather in-depth video interviews that our neo-griot crew is doing. Our website will be used as a portal of information that people can access worldwide.

How do you decide whom to interview?

I've developed a grid in my head, a demographic grid of New Orleans. We know that New Orleans was a majority black city, but it was not an exclusively black city. There are aspects of New Orleans that many people were not aware of. For example, in New Orleans East, which is one of the areas that was severely flooded, there was a community of 12,000 Vietnamese. In December we were in New Orleans interviewing Vietnamese residents. We have race, and we take that well beyond black and white, to be inclusive of all the ethnicities that made up New Orleans; we have issues of gender, and want to look specifically at some of the issues as they affected women; we have what we call undocumented workers; we have the lesbian, gay, and transgender community, which was very, very large in New Orleans; we have the incarcerated. When we've finished, the interviews will reflect all of these demographic slices.

And you have the class component also, which many people... unfortunately the television coverage hid as much as it revealed. We don't realize that Katrina severely damaged the upper- and middle-class black community of New Orleans. The week after Katrina, the largest single population of college-educated African Americans in New Orleans, schoolteachers, were laid off. These were primarily homeowners. So now their homes



are flooded, they no longer have a job, and that community is completely decimated... But you didn't see that on television. When we're collecting stories, we present those aspects.

Our focus is not on victimology. We don't just want to relate story after story of "I was on my roof" or "stranded without food or water for four days." Yes, that happened and we will include that, but that doesn't tell you the whole story.

You mentioned some people and situations that weren't necessarily covered in the media.

There was a professor, Niyi Osundare, a Nigerian poet and English professor, who was teaching at the University of New Orleans. He and his wife,

Kemi Osundare, were almost killed by the floodwaters. They were saved when a neighbor came back to check on his house. He heard them in their attic and he was able to save them and brought them in his boat to a nearby church, and from the church they took another boat to a dry area a couple of miles away, and from there a truck took them to the University of New Orleans, and from there a helicopter took them to the expressway, and from there a bus took them to the airport, and from there they were put on a plane and they ended up in Birmingham. All they had was on their backs. They didn't even have shoes because they had to swim out of the house. And when [Osundare] got to Birmingham, he sent a message to a colleague in Nigeria, who in turn sent it out and [eventually] I got it. I have a good

friend in Birmingham and I told [her] that there was a Nigerian poet who was [there], probably in one of the shelters, [and] I needed her to find him. She put together a group of friends and they literally tracked him down. They went to every shelter, they asked in Red Cross, and they finally found him [and] offered him assistance. Because at this point he has no identification, no papers, no money, and he's a foreign national — he and his wife — in the United States.

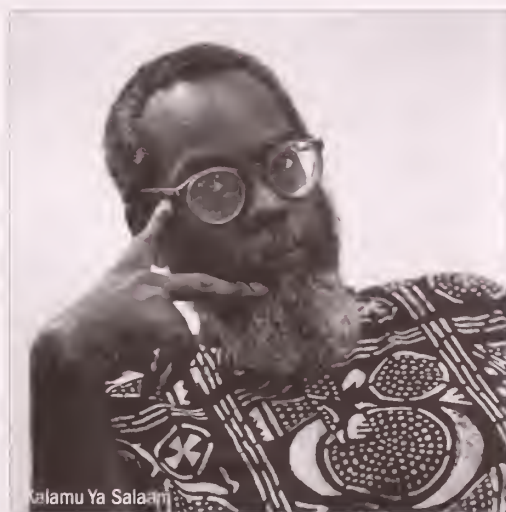
We certainly didn't see the Nigerian professor in the popular media.

At the same time, one of my high-school students who we did a three-hour interview with, she's 16, a senior in high school. She was in the Super Dome.

Whatever New Orleans becomes is going to be very different from what it was. And what I'm trying to do is get the last survivors of the previous era to talk about what it means.

You've said that you don't primarily identify New Orleans with the place, but with the people. With the people so dispersed, and with everybody just struggling to survive, what does that mean for the idea of a New Orleans community and specifically the African American community as you see it?

Well, the community is a community now of shared experience and traditions that are carried on by people. I think what we saw was the end of an era, so that New Orleans as we knew it does not, and probably will not, exist. Whatever New Orleans becomes is going to be very different from what it was. And what I'm trying to do is get the last survivors of the previous era to talk about what it means.



Last night I did an interview with John Scott, a MacArthur Genius awardee, a visual artist. He is literally dying. He has serious respiratory problems and was scheduled for a lung transplant and had to evacuate. Now he's in Houston, and he said he has to go back. In New Orleans there's what's

called a Katrina cough — not just germs, but airborne viruses. He said, "I know I'm gonna die, but if I'm gonna die, I want to die in New Orleans."

So for some people the physical place is...

It's critical. And I don't necessarily share that view, but it's a real view, and he is one of the jewels of New Orleans.

Can there be a community without a physical space to sustain it?

There are different kinds of community. I think a city, and the culture of a city, requires a place. And that's why I think that New Orleans as we know it is gone. And all I'm trying to do is document that which is, you know, which we saw die on television. The people are still alive. Some of them, many of them, in different places.

What happens to the displaced people?

Some of us adapt to other things. Some of us don't adapt and just try to hold on. Some of us die, and that's it. We move on. That's life.

They're talking in terms of the rebuilding...

I think that's romantic, to talk about that. You know, when the Native Americans were dispersed and sent to these little reservations, their cultures went with them... Most of the history is written about them. My goal is to make sure we actually have some history of the people and not just about the people of New Orleans.

The government is talking about pushing out the very people who created and sustained the culture of New Orleans.

You've gotta understand, they're not talking about doing that, that's already done. First off there was a mandatory evacuation, and everybody that could get out for the most part — unless they were just stubborn and decided they weren't going — everybody that could, left. And once they left, for many of them, there was nothing for them to come back to. Those who could not get out were eventually evacuated at gunpoint and put on vehicles, not told where they were going, sent somewhere. And once they were sent somewhere, they didn't have a way back. That's done. That's a fait accompli.

You had a city of over a half a million people, 70 percent of them black, and you emptied that city out. New Orleans today is divided by wet and dry. What areas were wet, what areas were dry. And overwhelmingly, the areas that were wet were black folk. The city as the city, for the power structure, doesn't have to be rebuilt. The French Quarter is there, dry. The [Central Business District], relatively dry; within three, four months it'll be completely functional again. The port is open; it's not completely functional, but it's open and running.

The Garden District on up to the University District, Tulane, Loyola, functioning... So the power structure has what they want as far as the city of New Orleans goes.

Do you think there's something that can be done to get the people that have been pushed out back to participate in the conversations about rebuilding?

I don't think that's going to happen, that there will be any kind of democracy in New Orleans, and that people who were there previously will participate fully in a democracy; no.

So the people you know that are going back there...

People are going back to make a last stab, but you know, the history of this country tells me it's not gonna happen. Once they move you out, you gone, forget it.

You've referred to this as the "Third Migration." Can you speak to that?

The First Migration for African Americans being the Middle Passage and the development of chattel slavery; the Second Migration happening at the beginning of the twentieth century, starting with World War I and culminating with the Depression; and this Third Migration, which is very specific and also symbolic. The emptying out, not just of a majority black city, but of the only city in the United States in which the dominant culture was black. Detroit has a larger black population, both in actual numbers and percentage-wise, but nobody thinks of Detroit culture as overwhelmingly black. When you go to New Orleans, you're going to enjoy a black culture. At least that's the way it was.

I'm curious to see how people are going to push to make sure that their voices are heard.

I don't think people are going to do it at all. You've gotta understand, there's a war going on in Iraq. And the same kind of fucked-up nation-building the government is doing in Iraq is gonna be done in New Orleans. It's the same people in charge. I mean, we shouldn't kid ourselves about what we're facing. The people who are in charge of Iraq, right now, are the same people who are in charge of rebuilding New Orleans. And if you like what they're doing in Iraq, you'll love New Orleans. You understand? Let's not sugar coat. Let's not make like it's something else.

Do you know that they have mercenaries patrolling the streets of New Orleans? Blackwater Security. Where did Blackwater Security make their mark? In Iraq. Those same people, patrolling the streets of New Orleans. How is it that the "greatest democracy" in the world is relying on mercenaries? And [with] allegedly the strongest armed forces in the world? I have no illusions about what we're

facing. And people who want to talk about democracy and voting and "the people have a voice," they are under some serious illusions that border on delusions. Let's look at what's going on. Let's look at who's in charge. Let's look at what those people do.

One of the things you're talking about is the connection between our misuse of the environment...

The two major questions raised by Katrina for anybody in the United States are: What is the nature of governance; what is the nature of your local, federal, and state government? And, what is our relationship to the environment? When people ask, "What can I do?" I say you can elect environmentally conscious leaders. Whether it's the minister of your church or the head of your local Girl Scout group, the dog catcher, the mayor, senator ... not just the people that you vote for formally, but the people you associate with informally. Who's the leader of our group that we go to football games with? That person ought to be pointing out, "Why don't we start carpooling to the games?"

Just begin to think about it. The environmental issue is very important and I see mass transportation as number one. We need to understand there is no mass transportation in the United States. I ask people all the time: "If you had 24 hours to get out of this city, could you?"

You saw what happened in Texas right after Katrina, when Hurricane Rita was heading that way. People were stuck on the road in traffic for 30, 40 hours.

People died trying to escape, literally. So these are the questions I raise. And I think it takes a lot of people by surprise because I think they expect to hear stories about poor black people who need coats, a place to stay, food, whatever. And I'm saying, "Hey, why don't you elect some environmentally conscious leaders? Why don't you begin to question what's the nature of governance? Why don't you look at the environment and what's being done? That's what you can do to help." ①

Listen to the People: www.kalamu.com.

Elana Bell is a poet, performer, and educator living in Brooklyn, New York.



enter the cipher

TEXT
Dan Barry
PHOTO
Dwayne Robertson

Most "progressive" musicians today are penning self-congratulatory, Bush-bashing screeds that are almost as predictable as the president himself. Then there's Cipher. The Long Island hardcore powerhouse's latest release, *Children of God's Fire (Uprising)*, rings out like a cry in the wilderness, with lyrics like "Erase racist Hegelian dialectics / Pure rebellion's diametric to a higher ethic." I recently chatted with vocalist Moe Mitchell about hardcore, consumerism, racism, and hope.

What do you see as the biggest problems facing the hardcore scene?

As more people buy hardcore records and there's more money in hardcore, more people simply want to profit off the culture and community. Money is not bad. There's nothing wrong with bands being able to eat on the road or pay their rent off of their music. That's a beautiful thing. What's really wrong is marketing people, executives, PR folks, and others that never went to a show dictating how our culture and community will be depicted and how our stories are going to be told. So now people think that they can buy a few records and some clothes and be part of some "underground scene." The superficial elements — the fashion, the romance, and the glamour — have taken such a front seat, it's like the music is simply a vehicle for everything else. People forget that punk and hardcore is rebel music.

Can you talk about racism in the scene?

The other day at a show in Syracuse some kid confronted me and said, "Dude, you look exactly like Darryl from the Bad Brains." I look nothing like Darryl Jennifer or the dude from Stuck Mojo or the dude from Sevendust or Howard Jones and we sound absolutely nothing like any of those bands, yet we always get comparisons. That type of not-quite-overt racism is stuff we need to deal with every day.

I could go on and on. Every day we encounter some form of it — these "tough guy" idiots who refer to themselves as "nigga." It's the most insane thing to hear a white kid refer to himself like that. It's tiring calling these kids out. Every single one, every time they say something? After a while I think, "You know, it's not my job to play racism police to white kids in the hardcore scene." It's a tiring and

unrewarding profession. These kids don't feel comfortable in living out their own identity and culture so they appropriate other cultures in a really superficial way.

A lot of hardcore groups say they have a positive message, but their lyrics are depressed and hopeless. There is actually hope and humanity in your lyrics. What gives you the energy to keep resisting?

We played Victoria, Texas, and to see the heart of those kids was amazing. They really loved music and they dedicated their lives to the hardcore community. Mostly Mexican kids, all working class. These kids were not caught up on the hype, fashion, and crap that's been attaching itself to hardcore. We met a lot of bands and kids that were tired of the soap-opera-core. And these kids were putting on shows, playing in bands, making zines. The DIY underground is still alive.

Globally, we need to recognize when revolution is taking place right before us. "The revolution" is a concept that is unhealthy to presume will happen in the future. Not only can it be a very real and palpable thing in our lives, it is really happening outside the context of North America.

Look at the Zapatista movement in Mexico and the very real democratic alternatives to capitalism they're creating. Look at what's going on in Argentina with the autonomous movements, Venezuela and the Bolivarian revolution, and even the movements in Brazil. Look what's happening across the world. The world is shifting from structural-adjustment programs and globalized capitalism and looking for alternatives. These are exciting times. ☪

www.cipheronline.com

Dan Barry is a Connecticut-based music critic, freelance writer, and metal enthusiast.

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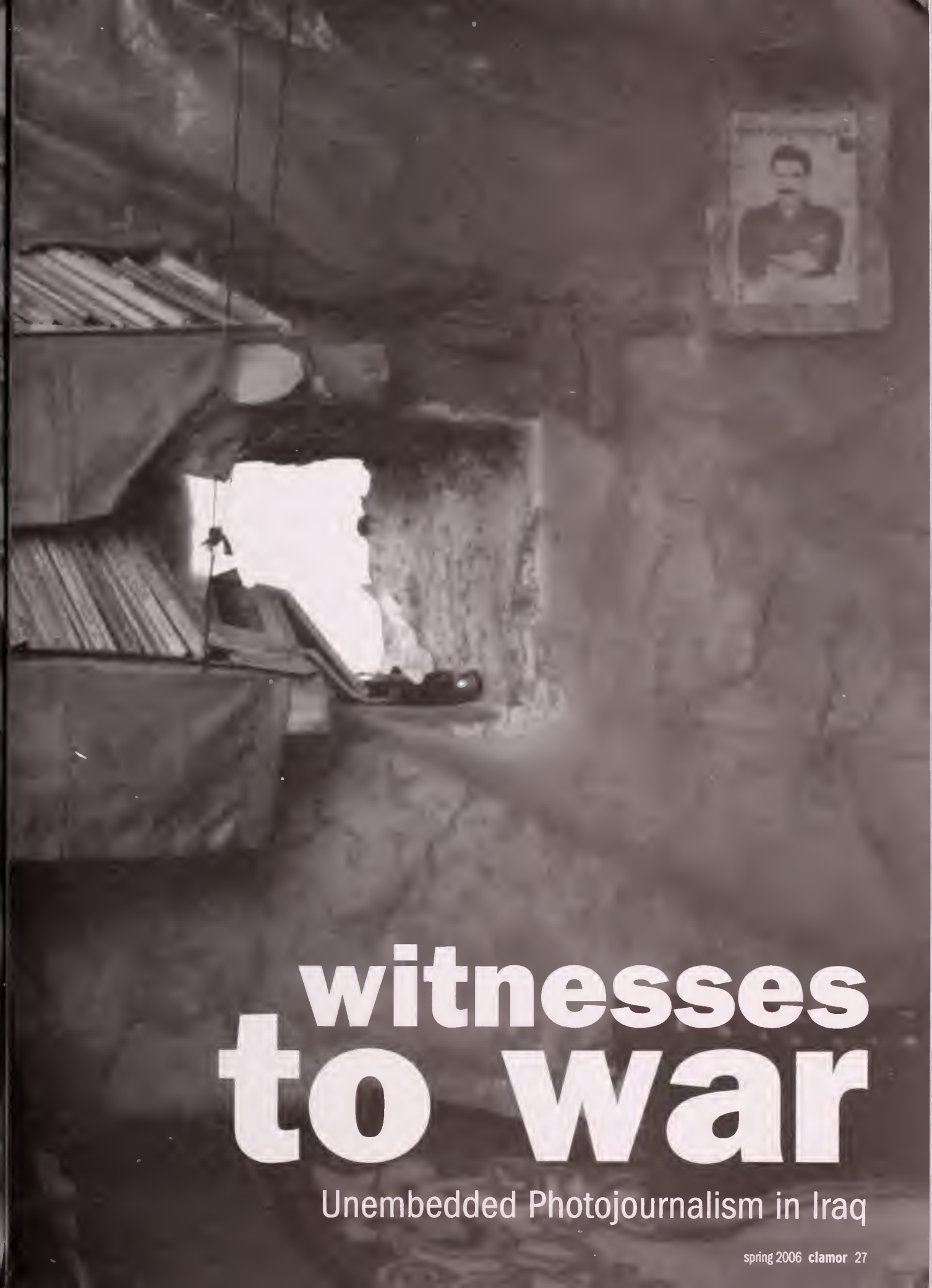
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KURDISTAN, APRIL 3, 2004
The Iranian-Kurdish wife of Osman Ocalan, a leader of the PKK Kurdish separatist group, lives simply at a camp hidden in the mountains of northern Iraq. Outlawed in Turkey, the PKK advocates an independent Kurdish homeland. Photo by Rita Leistner.



witnesses to war

Unembedded Photojournalism in Iraq

As we reach the third anniversary of the US-led “shock and awe” bombing of Iraq and subsequent occupation, there is still no clear indication of when the devastation will end. A land that many historians called the birthplace of civilization has been reduced to smoldering buildings, burned-out cars, broken glass, and deserted streets.

Unsanitized images of this shattered landscape are often hard to come by, especially those that expose the daily realities of living amongst the chaos — people’s pain, anger, and fear along with their strength, determination, and hope. But there are a number of unembedded journalists who continue to work in Iraq, leaving the security of the green zone and armed guards, to live amongst Iraqis and capture what American photographer Kael Alford describes as the “horror and beauty of Iraq.”

Alford, along with three other independent photographers, American Thorne Anderson, Canadian Rita Leistner, and Iraqi Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, have collaborated on *Unembedded*, a book and traveling exhibit of their photographs and essays. Clamor recently had the chance to ask Leistner and Anderson about their work.

-Catherine Komp

What stories do your photos tell about the changes to Iraq’s people and cities that weren’t being told by other photojournalists?

Leistner: The work of embedded photojournalists is certainly important in showing the changes going on in Iraq (I was embedded myself for four months in the spring and summer of 2003). But when I was embedded, my story was about the soldiers. This was simple access and location: you report on where you are. Being unembedded meant spending time with Iraqis and so we were able to record the effects of the war on their lives. What our work and experience shows is that things are getting worse by far for the Iraqi people. You can’t show this so well if you are living on a military base with American soldiers.

As an unembedded photojournalist in Iraq, how did you perceive your role in recording the destruction of war and the impact of the US occupation?

Below:

SADR CITY, BAGHDAD, JUNE 5, 2004

A fighter loyal to Muqtada al-Sadr fires a mortar round at a U.S. Army position. Photo by Ghaith Abdul-Ahad



Anderson: I think news media, particularly American and particularly television, where most Americans get their information, relies too heavily on the reports of journalists embedded with American and coalition troops in Iraq. I feel that our role as journalists and the goal of this book is to provide balance to that coverage.

I'm glad the embed program exists and I would like to see it continue. Some journalists have done great work while embedded, but the perspective of embedded journalists is very limited. They only see what the troops see, and they only get to meet ordinary Iraqis on rare occasions and always sur-

rounded by soldiers, guns, and heavy armor. It's impossible to see Iraq from a more local perspective under those circumstances. Embedding with the military is a great way to do a story about the soldiers and the effect the war has on them, but it's not the best way to report on what this war has done to Iraq.

America has suffered a lot in this war. I feel very strongly about the sacrifices that the U.S. military has made in Iraq. I don't begrudge the heroism of American soldiers and it breaks my heart to consider the tragedies that many American families have suffered as a result of the disruption of their

family lives, the life-altering physical and emotional injuries of tens of thousands of American soldiers, and the loss of more than 2000 American soldiers' lives. But it is important to remember that the Iraqi people themselves bear the brunt of the tragedies of this war. And it is not possible to get a clear picture of the Iraqi perspective while working as an embedded journalist.

I have worked for a brief period embedded with American forces and I felt like I was trapped in a heavily armored plastic bubble. I could see Iraq from the back seat of those humvees, but I couldn't touch it or feel it or interact with it. And



Left:
BAGHDAD, JULY 18, 2004
Young men and women venture out for the evening in Zowra Park. Socializing after dark in Baghdad ceases during periods of heavy fighting or suicide bombings, but rebounds as soon as there is a perceived lull. Still, mixed-gendered public outings are increasingly discouraged by religious conservatives' censure. Photo by Thorne Anderson.

Below:
SADR CITY, BAGHDAD, AUGUST 7, 2004
Members of Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army take to the streets in rebellion against the interim Iraqi government and American military occupation. Photo by Rita Leistner.





NAJAF, AUGUST 27, 2004. A lone man walks through a devastated business and residential street west of the Imam Ali shrine. The street was a front line fighting position for the American Army and Mahdi Army fighters during a nearly three-week battle that left much of the old city and surrounding neighborhoods in ruins. A peace deal, brokered by Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani with the militant cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, allowed residents to emerge from refuge outside the city or hiding within it to survey their homes and businesses in the battleground.

it was impossible to have any kind of meaningful contact with Iraqi people while wearing body armor and surrounded by American soldiers. I first traveled to Iraq in 2002, before the most recent U.S. and coalition invasion and I already had all the local contacts I needed to report without the support of the U.S. military, so I felt a responsibility to do my part to balance what is reported by embedded journalists.

Has embedded journalism irrevocably changed war reporting?

Leistner: This embedded issue is the most important one facing journalism in Iraq. Today in Iraq, it is impossible to work as an unembedded journalist without it being a near suicidal act. It is a very bad thing indeed to think that the only view of the ongoing conflict in Iraq will be from inside a military unit, but I'm not sure if we can blame the embed process itself for that. I would, however, argue that the impression embedded journalism early in the war gave to the Iraqis was that the media and the military worked as a team. I don't think we can easily measure the influence this has had on how journalists are viewed and treated in Iraq, but I am certain it has had a negative effect and has contributed to the loss of security for journalists as perceived as any kind of neutral party.

What stories do your photos tell about the real costs of war?

Leistner. The obvious costs of war are perhaps the ones we see on TV: soldier casualties, Iraqi "enemy" casualties. Some destruction of buildings. The real cost of course is much wider than that. There are uncountable civilian casualties. There are the wounded and maimed. There are

orphaned children. Schooling is disrupted. Entire cities are leveled by bombs (this is never shown in the mainstream media). Children become soldiers willing to die fighting. Security erodes to the point that everyone is afraid — of attacks, of kidnappings, of robbery, of assassination. Amenities in general suffer with direct results on the population: No electricity means no water, no sanitation, no added security of lights at night. The rights of women are deteriorating in Iraq as religious fundamentalist gain power. This doesn't just mean being forced to wear covers, but beatings and the legal murder of women (called honor killing) is finding renewed popularity.

How do civilians adapt to the destruction of war that is all around them?

Leistner: Most who can leave the country do rather than having to live in a war zone. Others live in fear and feel helpless. I'm not sure if that is "adapting." One can adapt to anything, I suppose. I would say all people can adapt as is human nature to do so, out of necessity or having no other option. Maybe "put up with" is a better term for it. Some choose to take up arms. That makes me think of the use of the word "adapt" as it's used to describe the militant Borg in the Star Trek series. It's all about survival.

Anderson: War brings out extremes in people. On the one hand we do see the best of humanity: generosity, warmth, and kindness offered up in the worst circumstances. But war brings out the worst in us as well. The value of life is cheapened each time one witnesses a senseless violent death.

When working in conflict zones, when should a reporter put down the camera and try to help injured people?

Leistner: When they think they are realistically in a position to be able to help.

Anderson: Whenever we can be more helpful than others in the vicinity. But it is important to remember that we as photographers are almost always the outsiders and usually have less to offer than the local people in the vicinity of traumatic events. In those cases, the best we can do is continue to do our jobs, documenting important events with integrity.

How do you maintain honesty and truth in your photos?

Anderson: We chose to work unembedded so that we might provide another perspective on this war. And I mean that literally: we sought out a specific physical perspective — not a specific political perspective — outside the American bases and armored vehicles. That is, we chose to see what the war looks like from a more Iraqi point of view. That was our only agenda. What you see in the book is what we saw from there. It's not the only perspective, but it is an important one — perhaps the most important one.

We get the occasional internet flamer who claims that by working unembedded, particularly by working occasionally behind the insurgent lines, we are somehow "aiding and abetting the enemy." The other phrase we sometimes see is "giving aid and comfort to the enemy." I'm really not sure how people come to that conclusion because I see the work we do as a service to the American public. The U.S. is involved in an unprecedented manner in a massive military project in Iraq and the U.S. public should really know what that looks like from all angles. Anyway, those responses are few. The vast majority of responses we get to the book are very positive. People are often even grateful. It's clear that there is a hunger out there for coverage of Iraq that goes beyond what people normally see on their television screens.

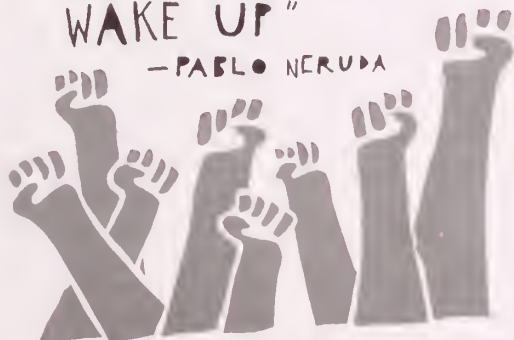
Leistner: I think that the greatest truth and honesty in my photographs comes from the subjects I photograph. This is especially true of the portraits. I want the world to look into their faces as I did and see the humanity and the honesty in them. I don't want to just have compassion or pity for them, but some kind of empathy too — of being able to put yourself in someone else's shoes and think, "I can see some of myself in this person's face. Does this person deserve to live in terror any more than I do?" ①

Unembedded: Four Independent Photojournalists on the War in Iraq
Chelsea Green, 2005
www.chelseagreen.com

I MET BOLIVAR ON A
LONG MORNING...
"FATHER," I SAID, "ARE YOU,
OR ARE YOU NOT, OR
WHO ARE YOU?"
AND HE SAID:

"I RISE EVERY
HUNDRED YEARS
WHEN THE PEOPLE
WAKE UP"

—PABLO NERUDA



THE AWAKENED COMMUNITY
WILL SEE ITS DEMANDS
REALIZED; THE STRIKE
WILL CONTINUE.

Created and produced by striking students of Harvard University's Graduate School of Design.

TEXT
Emma Tramposch

battle emblems

Contemporary urban environments often resemble an overwhelming, large-scale media collage. Carefully placed visual landmarks, in the form of advertising and logos, make up an unalterable aspect of negotiating daily life in these settings. Ads vie for our attention, covering the surfaces of buses and buildings. People appear as walking ads through the logos depicted on clothing. Large corporations have even used "guerrilla" marketing schemes, with Microsoft, Nike, and IBM using decals, chalk, and spray paint to surreptitiously plant brands and products in our minds as we navigate our city streets.

Popular culture is also full of symbols that are plucked from the past and remixed into the present. Images from social movements of the 1960s are frequently inserted into the urban landscape in various ways--in movies, clothing, and music. The solidarity fist and the infamous photograph taken by Korda in 1960 of Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara are two popular examples, typical features on posters and t-shirts -- far removed from their original contexts. Through their popular use it is easy for these icons to appear saturated or refilled with contrasting meanings. While certain images and symbols are designed specifically to encourage us to buy more, the symbols of social movements are made to unite a group under a common concern or cause.

What is at the heart of semiotics and visual information? How can symbols evolve to encapsulate diverse meanings? *Battle Emblems*, a new exhibit at San Francisco's Intersection for the Arts (February 1-March 25, 2006), aims to provoke discussion around these questions. The exhibit looks at the history of graphic arts through the symbols used in various social movements of the past forty years. Through new work created by Bay Area artists and designers, the exhibit inspires conversation about the role of art and design in our urban landscapes and how this art can prompt action and progressive social change.

A central concern behind *Battle Emblems* is the feeling that today there is less of a clear, unified visual presence in social movements and political campaigning. Comparatively, in the 1960s, symbols like the Black Panther, the United Farm Worker's bird and the Ecology symbol represented signs that reached prominence through visibility and usage. The peace sign is a fitting example of this: a simple collection of lines and curves that when combined represented a potent image containing the concerns of many in the anti-war movement.

For the exhibit, *Intersection* curators worked with artists to create pieces that engage complex issues of symbolism and social life. Mark Pearsall created a large mixed media piece using layers of wood, paper, and block prints to compare the goals and visions across various social movements. The piece portrays a collage of seemingly disparate movements to show how each shares common qualities, despite having differing goals.

Inspired by the large graphite drawings of the late artist Mark Lombardi, students from the California College of the Arts designed a graphic representation tracing social movements from the 1960s to the present. The illustration shows movements ranging from anti-GM campaigns, HIV and AIDS, liveable wage, feminism, and affirmative action in a form that suggests that separate groups can be related through struggle. Other contributing artists created entirely new symbols for the exhibit. Choppy Oshiro designed a fake line of clothing in response to the lack of clear symbolism to signify "sweat shop-free".

Battle Emblems provides a commentary on the very nature of symbols in a way that challenges us to reflect on where we have been in order to

creatively affect the present moment. The efforts of past movements have helped to pave the way for our current context. As emphasized by the *Battle Emblems* exhibit, the successes of New Left progressives in the 1960s have helped shape the setting we find ourselves in today, leaving their mark in the form of multiple social justice organizations nationwide. Whether in the form of non-profits, symbols on clothing, or the subject matter of movies, the afterlife of past social movements provides commentary on the complex, changing character of symbolic meaning. The show challenges the viewer to critically reflect on the symbols they engage with, put forward, or create. The role of the artist and designer is crucial in this exchange, as the maker of symbols and potentially revolutionary change. ①

Battle Emblems Exhibit:
www.theintersection.org

Emma Tramposch is a writer based in San Francisco and Wellington, New Zealand.

Not a day had passed after hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast, when images and descriptions of New Orleans' victims, left behind in the flooded city, poured out of television sets, radios, and newspaper front pages. Racism, despite some attempts at colorblind reporting, was brutally visible and impossible to dismiss.

But hasn't this happened before? Media coverage of disasters often shines a light on class and race disparities in a country where many continue to pretend that we transcended inequality in the 1960s. After Rodney King beating in 1991, racism dropped its mediated mask in a spectacle of police violence followed by furious rebellion. In 1985, Philadelphia cops, in complicity with all levels of government, carried out a massacre against the black radicals of the MOVE organization. Both instances brought racism into a national focus as something that is unavoidable to look at — tactical mistakes of a system which attempts to normalize the repressive conditions under which many people of color in the US live on a daily basis.

In a media environment where the majority of editors, reporters, and news directors are white, how are communities of color portrayed during these times of crisis? What stories are not being told? And were the few journalists of color who covered these events able to bring a different perspective?

Using the MOVE bombing and Katrina as benchmarks to discuss the problems with media coverage of black communities in times of crisis, journalists and media diversity advocates gathered last December in Philadelphia at a panel discussion sponsored by Temple University and the grassroots organization Media Tank.

All panelists were black journalists who had covered MOVE as reporters for various papers. Throughout the night, they expressed a tangible and fresh rage seemingly undiluted in the 20 years since the MOVE bombing.

Philadelphia Daily News editor Michael Days began the discussion by asking, "Is there a time when communities of color are not in crisis?" From diabetes to poverty to everyday institutional racism, the ongoing crisis is only compounded by disasters like the post-Katrina negligence of government agencies, and the police bombing of the MOVE organization's residence. With Katrina, many blacks had class to compound the racism they experienced, Days said, in addition to the lies and abandonment of public officials.

From MOVE to Katrina

How the Media Covers Communities of Color During Times of Crisis

TEXT
Dave Onion



history **MOVE**

Black rebels who were known around the city for their relentless protests, MOVE demonstrated against animal enslavement at the zoo, police violence, prisons, pollution, and against the politicians behind it all. They were loud, profane, and confrontational. Police frequently assaulted MOVE members, physically and verbally. Often ruthlessly. Former Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo took personal stake in MOVE's repression, as he had years earlier as police commissioner, taking part in regular attacks on civil rights protests, Black Panthers, local radical newspapers, and anti-war protesters.

Though MOVE never relented, not many people knew anything about them. Few reporters would cover their protests. Maida Odom, a former reporter for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, recalled that at one point someone suggested: "Why don't you call Maida Odom at *the Inquirer*? She cares about Black people." So Odom, one of two Black reporters at the paper, was assigned to the MOVE beat. There had already been rumors of a near shoot-out with Philly cops the year before. And before that, in 1978, a full-scale assault on a different MOVE house left a cop dead (evidence now suggests he was killed by friendly fire). Nine MOVE members were found guilty of the killing and are all serving life sentences. By 1985, Wilson Goode had become Philly's first Black mayor and presided over a historically racist and reckless police department.

The Philly Police Department's clash with MOVE was now coming to a head. In protest of the incarceration and in-prison abuse of the MOVE 9, MOVE had barricaded themselves into their house on Osage Avenue and set up a loudspeaker system, which was pushing neighbors to their limits. Odom was assigned to cover a press conference the neighbors were holding because, according to her editorial board, "no white reporter could do it." She had become uncomfortable with the assignment, which had now become remarkably more dangerous.

Osage Avenue residents had grown beyond impatient, complaining about the noise as well as sanitary conditions at the MOVE house. Cops were beginning to arrive in significant numbers with gear that included machine guns and sniper rifles. Odom decided to hole up in a house across the street from MOVE with some other journalists who turned over furniture as protection from the seemingly impending barrage of machine gun fire.

At 5:35 A.M. police began firing. After 12 hours and thousands of rounds of ammunition later, without allowing MOVE members to leave, police descended in a helicopter and dropped an FBI-supplied incendiary bomb onto the roof. A fire started and quickly spread, eventually burning down the MOVE house and the entire block, while fire officials and police watched. Eleven MOVE members, including five children, died during the attack, either burned alive or shot by police snipers as they tried to escape. Only two MOVE members survived: Ramona Africa and 13-year-old Birdie Africa.

"Do they remember they dropped a bomb?" Kimmika Williams-Witherspoon thundered in the first line of a poem on the MOVE disaster. Poet, playwright, and professor of theater at Temple, Williams-Witherspoon also covered MOVE for the *Philadelphia Tribune*. But few in the audience did remember the event. So Maida Odom, a former reporter for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, recounted the history of MOVE, from her perspective as a reporter covering the story (see sidebar).

Panelists expressed their frustration with trying to get the basic story out at the height of the MOVE crisis, as editors focused on criticism of city officials. The board of *The Inquirer* was interested in attacking then-Mayor W. Wilson Goode, the city's first black mayor, who was under considerable attack by an establishment that considered a black mayor a threat. "Those were his people, and he fucked 'em," Odom recalled an editorial board member saying. Odom said she had to find allies in high places in order to back her positions and publish even-handed articles as she continued to report on MOVE and the survivors' trial.

Even when disasters like the MOVE massacre and Katrina expose the institutional setbacks that many people of color know as daily realities, corporate media outlets consistently reported on these events as isolated incidents — a viewpoint that many reporters could easily refute.

Linn Washington, now teaching journalism at Temple, contrasted incidents of harassment and violence against blacks involved in petty crimes or even zoning violations to media coverage of mass corporate theft or murder on an institutional scale — incidents that are consistently overlooked or forgiven. The MOVE bombing was just another example of this, panelists said. Ramona Africa spent years in prison after the bombing, while not one cop or city official spent a minute behind bars.

"The problem with covering race in America is that the media approaches it as isolated incidents, instead of an institutional attitude," said Washington.

Panelists pointed out that even though the police department's repression of MOVE was severe and blatant, spending more than \$100 million between 1978 and 1985 to stop MOVE, the news media consistently turned their backs on reporting

police brutality. In 1974 alone, cops shot and wounded 148 people in Philadelphia, which at the time was twice that of New York — a city four times larger than Philly. Reporting for the *Tribune*, Washington talked to scores of black victims of police violence. "In 1976 people were coming in every day beaten bloody by Philly cops," said Washington. "At the *Inquirer*, the *Bulletin*, [and] the *Daily News*, no one would listen."

Williams-Witherspoon said she felt constrained by the limits of reporting in styles that were always subject to editorial influence. These often had nothing to do with supposed journalistic values of fairness, she explained. Though the *Tribune* is a black paper, even the editorial board had to answer to powers that be. Her opinion column gave her an outlet that was more flexible, a space where reporters' supposed "objectivity" wasn't as strictly enforced by editors. And when the constraints of journalism put on limits on her writing, Witherspoon said she would use poetry to express the stories of the black community.

Though panelists agreed that Katrina demonstrated the shortcomings of covering communities of color in crisis, they did see hope for the future, albeit outside of the corporate media. Most panelists saw some hope in the increasing access to technology and the internet. Blogs were cited as a key way to reach a considerable audience and challenge dominant corporate voices. But the panelists had less to say about media strategizing than they did about the general crisis that people of color face in this country.

Williams-Witherspoon expressed it most urgently: "After MOVE, why didn't Philly go up in arms? The Coverage of Katrina was so racist, why didn't we do anything about it?"

Odom agreed on the need to develop an activist populace. Social responsibility after all, doesn't fall on journalists alone, said Odom. And as journalists, she asked, can we even talk about society without talking about racial issues? Odom said we all need to face these issues head on. "Time won't solve racism's problems, we have to really deal with it." ①

Currently living in Philadelphia, onion has recently been spending most of his time working with the defenestrator collective and the Lancaster Avenue Autonomous space while making a living repairing broken houses and web sites. you can connect with him via onion@defenestrator.org

Opposite from left to right: Linn Washington, a columnist for *The Philadelphia Tribune*; Maida Odom, Professor of Journalism at Temple University; Kimmika Williams-Witherspoon, Temple University Dept. of Theater and former reporter for *The Philadelphia Tribune*; Michael Days, editor of the *Philadelphia Daily News*. Photo by Faye Murman

leave no trace

TEXT

Patrick Angstrom Poore



we need an activist travel guide

As a white journalist from the United States investigating the effects of U.S. policy and culture on the gigantic region referred to as "Latin America" — a project which I have come to believe is intrinsically neo-colonial itself, but still important for North Americans — I have been spending a lot of time with my *Lonely Planet* guidebook, a critical source of information for exploring and surviving unfamiliar terrain. Travellers' guidebooks belong to a narrow genre of media, which might be called "tactical media." This genre includes cookbooks, how-to guides, perhaps even relationship manuals and anything by Martha Stewart. A book for the planning and execution of missions, *Lonely Planet* is not meant to be read, or even browsed. It is designed to be consulted, and the editorial decisions made can have significant effects on travellers' experiences, and even on their lives.

While the users of *Lonely Planet* books are typified as more socially aware and economically mindful than, say, users of Fodor's (a series that specifically caters to the global elite), they are still among the top 15 percent of the world's wealthy, and use this privilege to deploy the resources needed to make such journeys. *Lonely Planet* stands out among travel books because of its popularity, its broad range of titles (600 of them), its shoestring budget guides, and its extensive historical and geographical notes.

But, as essential as these books can be for the traveller, their impact on communities can be devastating — even from a publication like *Lonely Planet* that pledges to promote tourism with "awareness, respect, and care." Travel guides create and destroy micro-economies, cultures, and subcultures just by making recommendations.

These books often summarize and dismiss entire communities with a paragraph explaining how to get to an ancient sacred site. Even *Lonely Planet* acknowledges that "sometimes it is simply inappropriate to encourage an influx of travellers to a particular area."

The activist world needs an alternative travel guide, starting from principles of self-determination, cultural self-expression, and extreme respect and understanding of fragile global structures. It would demonstrate how travelling cheaply can be much more respectful than travelling expensively. It would establish volunteer programs in towns and villages in which travellers would work on community projects, bringing both money and resources into those communities in addition to a more meaningful cultural exchange.

It would steer people away from big tourist money-catchers that siphon off money from small, local businesses. But it would also oppose the neo-colonial, romantic thrill of "avoiding tourist centers," which can promote an influx of tourism in out-of-the-way places that had previously been spared loud, ignorant strangers. Many destinations that are common in other guidebooks would be mentioned along with the reasons why a social justice community should avoid it.

The Activist's Travel guide — let's call it "Leave No Trace" — would focus heavily on recent social events, government and private corruption, and interference by foreign governments. It would explain the social problems experienced by various marginalized groups, and how to bring one's privilege and money to bear on these issues. It would direct travellers toward sites of extreme political

and social importance, even if they appear to be uninteresting travel destinations. It would focus on sustainable agriculture and ecotourism, and develop global awareness of disreputable companies and the locations of their factories. It would particularly point enlightened sojourners towards groups working for social change in a particular area, the kind of work they are doing, and how to get involved.

The communities and businesses featured in the book would be key contributors, writing their own recommendations. When feasible, or with particularly vulnerable communities, the development and maintenance of community contacts would preserve the integrity and local focus of the project, providing an appropriate community-based defense against some of the more damaging aspects of tourism.

In short, "Leave No Trace" would redirect the goals of travel away from getting the most out of one's travel experience, to making the most of one's privilege while in another country. Ecotourism is not enough. Tourism can be a force for social change, while simultaneously providing a most visceral cultural and political education. Like *Lonely Planet*, there would be an online discussion board constantly providing updates about conditions in particular areas. Unlike *Lonely Planet*, a core value would be to consistently evaluate, self-critique, and re-evaluate whether the Travelling Activist's guidebook successfully avoids the problems of other travel guides, or simply creates new ones. ✪

Patrick Angstrom Poore is working on an independent radio documentary with the help of KBOO community radio in Portland Oregon and Funding Exchange.

Photo: Stefan Feiler



slaying giants

filmmaker Robert Greenwald and crew take on the ubiquitous retail monster

TEXT
John Esther

With the exception of Michael Moore, there is probably no documentarian in the world right now as widely revered and reviled as Robert Greenwald. The man behind such groundbreaking documentaries as *Unprecedented: The 2000 Presidential Election* (2002), *Uncovered: The Whole Truth About the Iraq War* (2003), *Unconstitutional: The War on Our Civil Liberties* (2004), and *Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism* (2004), Greenwald has been instrumental in keeping America informed in areas where the corporate-controlled media has failed. For his efforts, the award-winning Greenwald has become a darling of liberals and progressives while irritating and scaring reactionaries and neo-fascists.

A director and producer whose career stretches back 30 years in television and film, the 62-year-old Greenwald started his career working in theater at the Mark Taper Forum in downtown Los Angeles. After quickly realizing that working for others was not his best skill, he established Robert Greenwald Productions (RGP) to create theatrical films, television movies, and miniseries that deal with political issues. He has produced nearly 70 and directed nearly 20 works for film and television, including the early directorial work *The Burning Bed* (1984) with Farrah Fawcett and *Hiroshima: Out of the Ashes* (1990).

Greenwald's work has earned a slew of awards including the Peabody Award, the Robert Johnson Award, two NAACP Awards, and AFI Producer of the Year. He has also won awards from the Liberty Hill Foundation, the ACLU, and others for his commitment to a better world. Along with actor Michael Farrell, Greenwald is the co-founder of Artists United, a group of actors and others opposing the war on Iraq.

For his latest documentary, *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*, Greenwald takes on the biggest corporate empire in the world. Using the Internet in new and exciting ways to oversee an apparatus of field producers, editors, and researchers, Greenwald covers an international threat called Wal-Mart. He meticulously shows an empire known for its illegal and unethical business practices devouring small businesses, labor, consumers, and taxpayers of America and beyond in what the Rev. James Lawson calls Wal-Mart's "plantation capitalism."

Not only does Wal-Mart and its "sucking-down standards" have a bad effect on people, but Wal-Mart is no friend to land either. Since 2001, Wal-Mart has been fined over \$5 million for Clean Water Act violations in several states. Wal-Mart's sprawling urban plans to bring those big boxes to town has caused dozens of cities across the nation — from

Inglewood, Calif. to Chicago, Illinois to Cobb County, Pennsylvania — to adamantly and sometimes successfully campaign against Wal-Mart's presence in their area.

In order to spread word of Wal-Mart's misanthropic deeds to the widest audience possible, Greenwald created a model of alternative distribution, which has widespread grassroots information dissemination at its center, using the Internet plus limited theatrical and high-profile media screenings. Moreover, the DVD for Wal-Mart was available 10 days after its limited theatrical release. As a result, it lost out on optimal profits vis-à-vis traditional distribution patterns, but getting the word out before the holiday season was more important to Greenwald.

From his office in Culver City, Calif., Greenwald was interviewed by phone last November about his politically active filmmaking.

Do you remember when you first started to build a political consciousness or was there a particular moment in your life that led to a transformation?

I think I had good parental upbringing. I was always aware of the larger world around me. So I think it's been a natural evolution rather than one moment of change.

Do you remember any powerful political films that influenced you?

The Thin Blue Line [1988] is one that just stands out — *The Battle of Algiers* [1966], *Reds* [1981], *Serpico* [1973], and *Dog Day Afternoon* [1975].

Who do you think is the best political filmmaker?

There are different people who do it in different ways. Certainly the periods of time we live in create different storytellers who function in very different ways. If you have a script and you give it to five directors, you'll definitely get some variation. But if you have a documentary, and you have five directors, it would be radically different.

Why did you want to go into filmmaking?

I started a company because no one would hire me. I started as a producer because anyone can be a producer. All you have to do is say, "I'm a producer." But what I always wanted to do was direct film, although I had been directing in the theater, and that was my real love.

What provoked you into looking at Wal-Mart in the first place?

It was a neighbor talking to me about the health-care issue — the healthcare issue in combination with the fact that they are so incredibly profitable: the Walton family is worth \$100 billion. It raised the basic issues about greed and corporate responsibility and what kind of country we want to have.

Are you now or have you ever been a Wal-Mart shopper?

No [laughs].

In the beginning of the film you talk to conservative, die-hard Republicans like the Hunter family. Was it deliberate to find people who might normally support free enterprise until confronted with its ramifications?

Yes. I felt as I got into the research that this issue of Wal-Mart and corporation was one that cut across typical political classifications. Because of Wal-Mart's destruction of jobs and community, there were a huge potential number of allies that we ordinarily might not have, people who would disagree with me on most other issues. But Wal-Mart is an equal-opportunity abuser: black or white, Republican or Democrat, rural or urban, Wal-Mart was going in and destroying jobs, family businesses, and community. With that in mind, I very much wanted to create the broadest canvas, and I saw this in many ways as a film about America and American values, hopes, and

dreams. I wanted to make sure that I had the right "cast" to deliver that story.

You and others traveled extensively around the country and abroad. How did you work out the logistics for this film?

The Internet. We created a Wiki, which is an online encyclopedia [www.wikipedia.org]. Everybody that was reading or making notes put all the research up so I could get to it at any day or time. Then Jim Gilliam, one of the producers, created this amazing system where footage was literally posted as people shot it so I could look at it anytime, no matter where I was. Then when we had editors working around the clock, and when we were cutting, they would post sequences and pieces of it so I could look at it and respond. We would not have been able to do this film without using the Wiki every step of the way.

You used a lot of interns as part of your film crew. How is using the free labor of interns different than some of the practices Wal-Mart implements with regard to their associates?

[Laughs]. Well, we have people who volunteered because they very much wanted to do something meaningful to them. We had people from all over the country and all over the world do that. It was one of the most thrilling aspects of working on the film. The fact that they could be part of a project where they could be affecting what's going on in our country I think spoke to a kind of true patriotism.



What if a Wal-Mart Associate felt a kind of loyalty in that same way and worked for poor wages? There must be a difference between what you are doing and what Wal-Mart is doing with regard to "cheap" labor.

If someone is working for a living and someone is volunteering for something, their belief in it is just totally different. It's not the same universe. It's one thing when you're working and paying your bills and your employer is exploiting you; it's a totally different thing if you've got some time and would like to help out by volunteering, whether it be in a soup kitchen or a church or working on a film.

What are your political intentions with this film?

I want to really affect Wal-Mart, and I think we have a shot to do just that.

How did you avoid making a documentary where you would just be preaching to the converted?

Well that's the beauty of alternative distribution. It's the only distribution system that guarantees reaching people who are unconverted or disagree with you.

Could you elaborate?

If you put the film in movie theaters, and it's \$10, you're going to get people who want to see that movie and who are willing to pay. You're not going to get people who disagree with you politically. I love the movies; I love going to the theater, but if you are trying to reach a diverse group, it's very different. If you have a DVD, and your neighbor invites you over, you're going to get a more diverse group. If it's playing at your church, or in your dorm room, or at a bowling alley, that is truly a way that allows you to reach all kinds of people. You can show it to the relative who you are always fighting with about politics. It's not possible to get those same people to pay \$10 and go to the movie theater with you.

But you put a lot of your money into it. What about recouping your costs? You lose a lot of ticket sales under this distribution system.

Yes, but I'm not doing this for the money. I don't even take a salary on these films because I'm happy to have the Bush Administration, Fox News, and Wal-Mart attack me for my policy. I do not want them to attack me some simple-minded way by saying I'm doing this to make money. I'm fortunate to be able to volunteer for this work. Yes, we have a significant debt, but I think at the end of the day if the goal is to reach hearts and change minds, this is the way to do it.

What did you see as the biggest threat to this endeavor while making the film?



Photo: Charlotte Tourney

Getting it done well creatively and politically. If there's going to be only one major documentary made about Wal-Mart, I didn't want to screw it up. I wanted to make an emotional, complex film that went into human behavior that would tell a political story. I focused on the specifics. I kept telling my crew, "Arthur Miller rather than Bertolt Brecht."

*Similar to *Outfoxed*, the talking heads from Wal-Mart are absent from your documentary.*

I asked Wal-Mart CEO Lee Scott twice to be in the movie. I told him I would even post his whole transcript on our website if he agreed to be in the film. I very much wanted him. He not only refused, Wal-Mart attacked the movie as one-sided propaganda after he refused and before they'd seen the film. It's classic.

Fox accused you of not giving them a chance to respond, which you did not out of fear of a lawsuit. What do you say to that?

First, Fox News is on the air 24 hours a day, seven days a week, telling their story. They do not need my little film to tell their story. Second, they well know they would have sued my ass if they had a

chance in advance, before the film was finished. They would have done everything under the sun to stop it from getting out.

*How successful do you think *Outfoxed*, *Uncovered*, and your other films have been toward influencing public opinion?*

You never know, but if you Google "Rupert Murdoch," *Outfoxed* is the first reference [Ed. note: It is now behind wikipedia.org and Time.com]. We've got a huge number of hits, and we've reached millions of people, and sold 200,000 DVDs. Wal-Mart's response has already indicated that success. ①

www.walmartmovie.com

John Esther is a film and culture writer based in Los Angeles.

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In spite of hunger and poverty,
African nations are leading
the resistance to genetically
modified crops

Our Food. Our Future.

TEXT Domenica Settle

Our Fight.

May 2002. The Zambian president, Levy Mwanawasa, appears on flickering television sets glowing brightly in shanty town shacks, balanced on boxes at market stalls, and sitting sleekly in expensive houses across his southern African country. He announces a national disaster: the food supply is running out. Within a week the United Nation's World Food Programme delivers emergency relief, and it looks like the story may end there. Then the Zambian government finds out the food is genetically modified (GM) and stops distribution while they investigate the implications. Controversy erupts around the world. Millions of people face hunger.

Mariam Mayet is well educated, polite, and deadly with a briefing document, report, or presentation on biotechnology. She cut her teeth as a young lawyer in the anti-apartheid struggle, fighting for equality for all as one of the million South Africans of Indian descent. Now she works from a small, busy office in Johannesburg, the African Centre for Biosafety. She was there when Zambia grounded aid distribution to a halt. She believes it was the right decision.

The Zambian government argued there is not enough evidence that GM food is safe to eat, a hotly debated topic around the globe. Mike Huggins, spokesperson for the World Food Programme in South Africa, answers his phone in a jovial, relaxed voice. Then eating GM food comes up, and mild exasperation creeps in, "There's certainly no evidence to suggest that GM food is harmful...You can basically say that 99.9 percent of everyone who lives in the West is eating GM food on a daily basis, whether they realise it or not."

The debate rages on: Friends of the Earth argues that changing the chemical composition of a food can cause it to become toxic, and that food can cause allergic reactions for those with an allergy to the inserted gene. The British Media Association says that GM food could increase our resistance to antibiotics. European consumers have overwhelmingly rejected GM food. Americans eat it all the time. Few dispute that too much of the "evidence" on the safety of particular GM foods comes directly from the companies profiting from the food. This lack of reliable evidence was exactly the Zambian government's point.

A Genetically Modified Trojan Horse

In her office in Johannesburg, Mayet finds one of many papers she's co-written and fires it to me across cyberspace. It quotes World Food Programme director James Morris in August 2002, "There is no way that the WFP can provide the resources to save these starving people without using food that has some biotech content."

In 2002 drought and hunger were sweeping across most of southern Africa. Squeezed between a raging GM debate and a hungry population, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique decided they had to accept GM aid. Health risks mean less when you face malnutrition. But they insisted that the grain donated be milled so it could only be eaten and not planted as seed. Lesotho and Swaziland accepted non-milled GM food, but warned their citizens not to plant it.

The U.S. government's aid agency, USAID, pointed out the extra cost of milling, but the African nations stuck to their guns. They argued that planting can create a whole range of problems, the most obvious being that genetically engineered traits can jump to neighbouring species. This risks damaging wild species and non-GM crops alike, which could damage ecosystems and, perhaps more importantly, export markets to Europe, something Africa can afford even less than it can afford to refuse aid.

But economics aside, GM opponents in Zambia were worried that GM food aid could lead to a much greater change. African farmers have been working the land for millennia, each year collecting seeds to replant the next season. Ancient traditions and seed varieties now risk being lost to dependence on GM seeds, which come with contracts forcing farmers to buy new seeds every season or end up in court. Much of the GM seed market is controlled by Monsanto, and Monsanto's history of good will is not as shiny as its advertising. In the '40s they were involved in producing DDT (now banned in many countries), during the Vietnam War they profited from Agent Orange, and in the '90s they were involved in a growth hormone for cows that is now banned in Europe and Canada.

Nigerian non-government organization Environmental Rights Action sees seed saving as not just a tradition but also a right. "Monsanto is radically changing the way agriculture practices are done," they wrote in a 2005 report, "and is suing and harassing farmers for doing what they have been doing for centuries." The organization's director, Nnimmo Bassey, argues that buying seeds is "contrary to the culture," and that many farmers "can't afford it." With small scale farms

being swallowed by large farms all over the world, increased costs could force impoverished farmers off the land and into city slums or underpaid work as landless peasants.

From the point of view of agribusiness, seed contracts are marketing genius - they attract less bad PR than their sterile "terminator" seed forerunners but allow companies to profit from poor farmers, again and again. From the point of view of impoverished farmers, something which belonged to their community is coming under the control of large corporations and along the way farmers are not only losing their land but also a way of living. What was once about food is now about profits.

"I think we have an alternative vision of the world," says Mayet, her voice tired, quiet, determined. "And we definitely don't believe our future should be in the hands of multinational corporations".

The Value of Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth

While the GM aid sat waiting in storehouses across Zambia, international pressure to shut up

and accept the aid was growing. Rather than give in, the Zambian government organised a national consultation. Community, religious and non-government organisations, scientists, traditional leaders, and political leaders debated the issue.

Besides the potential health risk and environmental problems associated with planting the seeds, participants in the consultation pointed out that the aid would force local farmers to compete with free food, possibly bankrupting them and doing long-term damage to the economy and Zambia's ability to feed itself. The World Food Programme encourages donor countries to send cash instead of food, as it gets there faster and allows food to be bought from neighbouring areas, supporting local farmers and supplying appropriate food. "The US gives, I have to say, primarily food aid in a commodity form," says Mike Huggins, "whereas the EU in general gives cash." In a 2003 press release the European Union stated, "[S]ome WTO members have used food aid donations more as a production and commercial tool to dispose of surpluses and promote sales in foreign markets than as a development tool tailored to the needs of the recipient countries."

Below: Participants in Friends of the Earth Nigena's workshop on the country's proposed biosafety law, with Bassey in the center. Photos courtesy Environmental Rights Action



Food has, for a very long period of time, been used as a political weapon.

For these many reasons Zambia's consultation ended up rejecting the aid, and the issue almost looked as if it were resolved. But the uproar continued and in a soup of conflicting information, the Zambian government decided to send six senior scientists and a senior economist on a fact-finding mission to South Africa, Europe, and the U.S. to talk with experts on both sides of the GM debate. They came to the same conclusion: Agriculture minister Mundia Sikatana announced that Zambia was firm in its decision to not accept GM aid, and that they would be seeking non-GM aid to solve the crisis.

In December of that year the World Food Programme and USAID finally complied with Zambia's GM restrictions. "We appealed to the international community for other kinds of food assistance, primarily of course non-GM," explains Mike Huggins, "and that was forthcoming. So we averted a humanitarian disaster." Despite refusing even milled GM food, Zambia survived the crisis. In 2003 they had a bumper harvest.

Using Starvation to Break into New Markets

Several years after the initial crisis, Mayet answers my question about aid and poverty with words that are cautiously chosen but firmly believed. "Food," she says, "has for a very long period of time been used as a political weapon." Mayet doesn't think that USAID or the World Food Programme, which relies heavily on U.S. donations, were acting out of good will, and she believes that food aid is used to buy allegiances, subsidise first world corporations, and in this case, deliberately get GM into Africa. She argues that most of the benefit from aid goes to the donor, and USAID seems to agree. Until a few years ago their website read: "The principal beneficiary of American foreign assistance programs has always been the United States. Close to 80% of the USAID contracts and grants go directly to American firms. Foreign assistance programs have helped create major markets for agricultural goods."

The story of biotechnology in Africa is far from over. "Africa has consistently taken extremely good positions," Mayet says. This explains why many saw it as no coincidence when Africa's chief negotiator during the UN's Biosafety Protocol negotiations, Ethiopian Dr. Tewolde Berhan Gebre Egziabher, was initially denied a visa to

the meeting in Canada last June. Meanwhile, USAID has been helping African countries draft and implement biosafety policies. Ironic, Mayet points out, as the U.S. government has been pushing for minimal control of GM and won't join the Biosafety Protocol itself. "The battleground at this point in time is over how stringent or how weak biosafety laws will be," says Mayet, and the African Centre for Biosafety, the Zambian government, and USAID are in the thick of it.

Between UN negotiations there is also more subtle pressure. "USAID or the biotech industry will pump a lot of money into public research institutions to conduct research in agricultural biotechnology," says Mayet, "and very little [government] funds at the national level go towards research in Africa. So once you utilise the scientific institutions they become very active promoters of the technology." Money is also pouring into scholarships in the U.S. for African scientists, and into pro-GM lobby groups and organisations. The African Agricultural Technology Foundation, for example, is supported by USAID, along with such upstanding corporate citizens as Monsanto, Dow Chemicals, DuPont, and Syngenta. "The primary role of the AATF," wrote Mayet in a briefing paper, "is to use poverty and the urgent need for food security strategies in Africa to push for the opening of markets...This initiative is aimed at ensuring the firm control of African research institutions by enabling corporate monopoly of agricultural research in Africa."

Planting Seeds

The resistance continues through what Nnimmo Bassey describes a "groundswell" of activities against GM in Africa. He is involved in organising national workshops in Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, and Togo. He is also bringing out international speakers and conducting case studies on Monsanto, to be released internationally in English, French, and Spanish. In November 2004 Environmental Rights Action brought together scientists, government agencies, farmers, academics, non-government organisations, lawyers, and students for grassroots input into Nigeria's proposed biosafety law. "We're doing all we can," Bassey says, "to make sure we have very strict laws."

A few months earlier, in May 2004, Angola and Sudan themselves put restrictions on GM food aid, and when the World Food Programme criti-

cised the decision, 60 organisations from 15 African countries got together to write an open letter in protest. In July 2005 farmers and activists in Mali bound together to voice their objection to GM cotton. It is the type of work that has occurred for years. When Monsanto asked African leaders to endorse a statement titled "Let the Harvest Begin" in 1998, they responded with a statement called "Let Nature's Harvest Continue", asserting that they "strongly object that the image of poor and hungry from our countries is being used by giant multinational corporations to push a technology that is neither safe, environmentally friendly, nor economically beneficial to us...We think it will destroy the diversity, the local knowledge and the sustainable agricultural systems that our farmers have developed for millennia, and that it will thus undermine our capacity to feed ourselves."

As of March 2006, there are still no clear winners in the battle over biotechnology in Africa and who controls the continent's seeds and land. But for all the first world's portrayal of Africans as passive victims, Africans are leading the way in resisting GM technology.

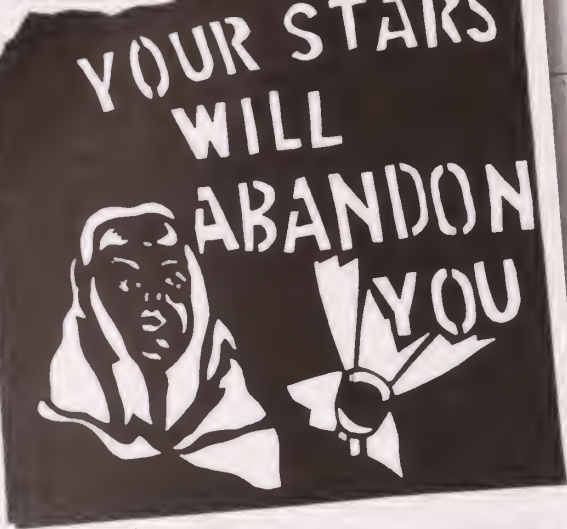
"Africa is saying no to GMOs," declares Bassey, in his deep, resonant voice. "If anyone says Africa is saying yes to GMOs, it must be someone in the corridors of multinational companies."

Mayet, meanwhile, is busy writing another briefing paper and answering another phone call. When I ask her the answer to it all, the solution to hunger in Africa, she doesn't come up with one easy answer. "Look, the politics of hunger and poverty are very, very complicated. You know very well, and so do our politicians, that it's not going to be a simple solution. The solution starts, I think, with the fundamentals. Always. It's always going to be about equity, about equitable access to resources... It's never going to be about production of food, because if people can't access their food, it's just not going to matter how much food you produce in a country." ①

Environmental Rights Action:
www.eraction.org

Friends of the Earth International:
www.foei.org

Domenica Settle is a freelance writer from Australia.



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have completed college, and the
rest of you will be going
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• US Census Bureau, 2000 Census - 90027 zcta
• Economic Policy Institute, Michael Bernstein & David 2005



An Interview with Fortune-Telling
Poster Maker Marc Herbst

Your stars will abandon you

Walk around the Silverlake and Hancock Park communities of Los Angeles and you may be confronted with some seriously disillusioning news: posters proclaiming that "Your Stars Will Abandon You" predict the dismal future facing you and your neighbors. Clamor Economics Editor Arthur Stamoulis talked with fortuneteller Marc Herbst about this unusual new postering project.

WHAT IS THE POINT OF THESE POSTERS?

"Your Stars Will Abandon You" aims to directly counter the myth of the "American Dream" while also subtly undermining the notion of the Hollywood happy-ending. By partnering photographs of neighborhood homes with information on what is known about the community's well-being as reflected through census data, policy studies and economic projections, this project directly addresses the economic realities facing specific residents.

BUT WHY FOCUS ON THE BAD NEWS? I MEAN, SHIT, MY STARS ARE GOING TO ABANDON ME?

Realizing that the current system creeps along because individuals believe that their lot will eventually improve, this project aimed to cast doubt. Hegemonic hope is maintained through an educational and entertainment environment that says the only thing between you and success is yourself and time. These posters look confront their readers with the data that suggests otherwise.

I am using the voice of a fortuneteller for theatrical and mnemonic effect. I am also exploring the idea that many people in this country don't read straight data well, but are educated to understand veiled language and myth.

WHAT COMMUNITIES ARE YOU TARGETING WITH THIS PROJECT?

Realizing that many poor residents of LA already know the system doesn't work for them, I decided to focus on a more clueless class. I have been

postering in neighborhoods where I know people who are college educated and that work in one of the "creative industries" live. I have been focusing on the Hancock Park and Silverlake neighborhoods where the data seems most interesting — relatively high education levels with lower than average income. These are people who might understand that there is injustice in the system but still dream that they will be able to make it somehow. This project aims to cast doubt.

It also hopes to show these folks that they are a part of a class of people who share similar, generalizable characteristics, that they are not just lone geniuses. With the presentation of publicly available federal and local government documents about the economic and cultural realities of specific streets, people may be challenged to wonder in different ways about who their neighbors are. They may also be called to wonder why, in an era when governments publicly claim to have little role in financially improving communities' well being, the government gathers such data. ①

one neighborhood at a time

Anti-gentrification and the fight for
affordable housing in Jamaica Plain, MA

TEXT & PHOTOS

Susan A. Rowher

In the heart of the Jamaica Plain neighborhood of Boston lies Hyde Square, a historically working-class Latino community. The neighborhood has recently been a center of anti-gentrification struggle in Boston. The dispute is centered on the Blessed Sacrament Church, a 3.5-acre property in the middle of Hyde Square, recently put up for sale by the Catholic Archdiocese of Boston. The debate has drawn a stark line between matters of race and class. On one side, a select group of homeowners and developers are pushing for luxury condos on the site. On the other side are community groups and long-time residents fighting for much-needed community control over the development process.

The effects of gentrification in Jamaica Plain (JP) have resulted in the displacement of the very people who made it so attractive to affluent newcomers. Jamaica Plain wasn't always the "hip hot spot" that it was described as by the UTNE Reader in 1997. Gang violence and drug dealing were rampant in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The JP Latino community came together in response to the violence and organized to make the neighborhood safer. Hyde Square Task Force, a Latino community organization, helped empower teens to organize themselves to stop the violence, and gave the youth an opportunity to "build positive relationships with the community they lived in."

The same families that worked hard over the years to make their neighborhoods safe are now being slapped in the face with displacement. Upon the lifting of rent control in 1994, Jamaica Plain and other predominantly work-





ing class neighborhoods in Boston have become more attractive to affluent whites. Jamaica Plain's white population has historically been located in the southern parts of JP, with a heavier concentration of Latinos in the streets around Hyde, Jackson, and Egleston Squares. Within the past decade, however, rising rents have pushed out the area's long-term residents in favor of young professionals drawn to the area's "hip, ethnic flavor." Kathy Brown, of the Boston Tenant Coalition, notes: "Property value has increased because of all this community investment, but the entire community needs to benefit, not just a few lucky homeowners who happened to buy when it was cheap or that can afford today's prices."

The Blessed Sacrament Church, smack in the middle of Hyde Square, saw what was once a large and thriving congregation reduced dramatically, as local residents were priced out of their neighborhood. The streets surrounding the church experienced a surge in properties being bought up and converted into overpriced luxury condos ranging from \$300,000 to \$500,000.

Since 2003, and in the wake of the multi-million dollar settlements from the clergy sex-abuse scandals, the Archdiocese of Boston has been closing churches and selling off the properties. The Blessed Sacrament Church, closed in 2004, was considered to be the "crown jewel" of the many properties the Archdiocese has put on the

auction block. The main contenders for the property were several private developers, who sought to build luxury condos on the site, and the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (JPND), a progressive, community-based organization, which looked to create permanently affordable housing.

In recent years, Hyde Square has been a sort of border for Jamaica Plain, with the white/wealthier residents on one side and the working class Latino population on the other. The fate of the Blessed Sacrament property became a sort of barometer for the future of Jamaica Plain: either luxury condos and continued yuppification, or community control and sustainable affordability for the people who made the neighborhood what it is. Community activists on both sides immediately sprang into action.

Groups like Hyde Square Task Force and City Life/Vida Urbana, who have been doing community organizing work for decades, immediately began building public support for the JPND bid. They were joined by Jamaica Plain Neighbors Against Gentrification (JPNAG), which was formed in response to the sale of the Blessed Sacrament. An opposition group of local homeowners, calling itself Blessed Sacrament Neighbors, argued that affordable housing would bring "drugs and prostitution" into the area.

The pro-affordable housing groups spent months working to pressure the Archdiocese into accepting the JPND bid, building public awareness around gentrification issues, and asking the Church to abide by its stated mission of working for the benefit of the poor. Community activists had reason to be worried: parents at a Brighton Catholic school had pooled their money and offered the Archdiocese market rate for the soon to be closed-down school, in order for them to keep it running, but the Archdiocese turned the proposal down. Local organizing and the controversies surrounding the Archdiocese helped make the selling of the Blessed Sacrament a city-wide issue. As Peter Gelzinis wrote in an opinion piece for the Boston Herald: "Will the Archdiocese allow Blessed Sacrament to be flattened for an elite village of 23 homes and a Starbucks?"

The opposition to the affordable housing from the Blessed Sacrament Neighbors was small but persistent and not at all bashful about its agenda. A group of homeowners toured the neighborhood with Power Point presentations on the evils of affordable housing; their talking points included the potential "exclusion of higher income individuals" and the desirability of "legitimate" businesses like a Starbucks or a Bank of America. One affordable housing opponent stated at a Neighborhood Council meeting that any rental housing placed on the site would make the neighborhood a "toilet." As Roxan McKinnon of the Boston Tenant Coalition states: "Yuppies happened to Jamaica Plain. Yuppies

tend to 'tour' whatever communities of color are around, but they do not integrate well." At a rally in front of the church in the spring of 2005, Juan Leyton, director of City Life/Vida Urbana, said: "All those people who say we're breeding crime, where are they? We made the community nice for them, and now they're trying to kick us out of here."

Pro-affordable housing activists held organizing meetings, worked to bring community members to Neighborhood Council hearings, and collected 1,400 petition signatures from area residents to present to the Archdiocese. Public education events were held to battle the myths around affordable-housing. The organizing work drew a crowd representative of the diversity within Jamaica Plain. During the Neighborhood Council hearings in February and March, twenty-somethings as well as older long-time community members spoke as a united front in favor of affordable housing. At a spring 2005 rally that despite a late season snowstorm brought out over 200 affordable housing supporters, Jesús Gerena, of Hyde Square Task Force, stated: "We have drawn the battle line, and we stand on it today."

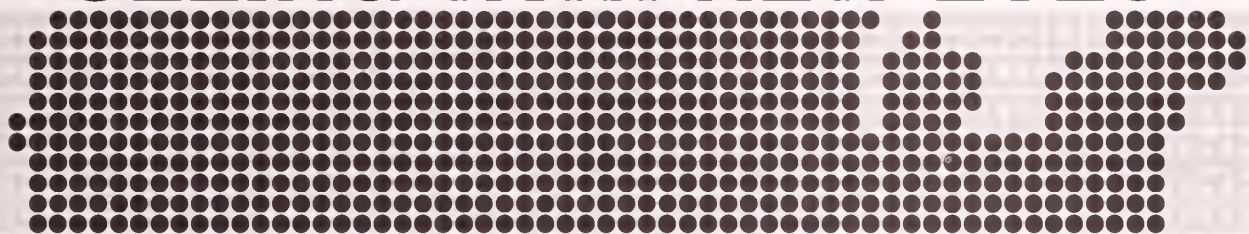
The Jamaica Plain community's resistance to luxury condos has been loud and clear, and this fall the Hyde Square Task Force and other pro-affordable housing groups won their initial battle when the Archdiocese agreed to sell the site to the JPND. Still, the ultimate fight for affordable housing and community control over local development continues. Gentrification remains a daunting problem in Boston and throughout the country, destroying communities for the sake of profit. In Jamaica Plain, battles over zoning issues and the continued resistance by some homeowners to affordable housing units prove that this local fight will continue to rage until the last brick is laid.

Nevertheless, the victory of the JPND'S bid for the Blessed Sacrament is an empowering boost. The Blessed Sacrament campaign has helped galvanize the community and strengthen the connections for a broader anti-gentrification struggle. Although there is a great deal to be done, local residents know that wealthy developers do not always win and that people can have a say in the development of their community. Tenant organizing, legislation guaranteeing rent control, and the building of permanently affordable housing are all actions that are necessary in the future fight against displacement.

Xerxes Aggassi, a luxury housing developer who put in a bid for the Blessed Sacrament property, was quoted in the Jamaica Plain Gazette as saying: "Gentrification is happening across the country. Are you going to address it in one neighborhood or one property?" In case he hasn't noticed, that is exactly what we intend to do. ①

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation: www.jpndc.org

SEEING WITH NEW EYES



Mapping Justice with Eric Cadora

As with so many other social justice issues, the prison reform movement has become steeped in mind-numbing jargon: Rockefeller Laws, recidivism, privatization. Candidates running for government offices throw around buzz words like “tough on crime” — appealing to the fear in their paradoxically uninformed and information-exhausted constituents in hopes to rack up votes. The media sensationalizes crime through dramatic nightly news coverage of another white girl missing in the burbs and another black boy shot in the hood. Even well-intentioned advocates of reform offer little but soporific propaganda about “the prison industrial complex.”

There is no question that sentencing policies across the country are flawed. There is no question that prisons are both killing human potential and misusing \$54 billion in American’s tax dollars a year. The question is: how do you break open this seemingly intractable debate and re-envision the possibilities?

Eric Cadora, a social entrepreneur and self-taught criminal justice expert, has a powerful answer. Along with his partner, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) researcher Charles Schwartz, Cadora created a mapping system that allows researchers, government officials, and laypeople alike to actually see the prison problem from a new vantage point.

TEXT

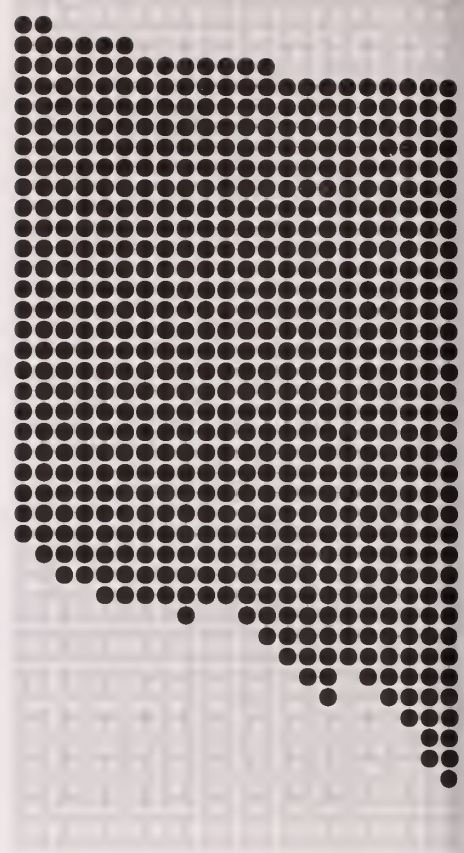
Courtney E. Martin

The Maps

And what a problem it is. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, between 1973 and 2000 the rate of incarceration in the United States more than quadrupled. There are now more than 2 million Americans behind bars. Add to that another 4.5 million on probation or parole and three million ex-convicts. Nearly 70 percent of all released prisoners will be rearrested within three years. The Bureau has projected that if current trends continue, one out of every three African American men born in 2001 will go to prison at some point during their lifetime.

Spending on incarceration is out of control. According to the Federal Prison System, it spent \$25,327 per inmate/per year in 2003, the last year for which data is available. According to the American Correction Association, five states have a corrections budget of over one billion dollars. California, which has the largest prison system of any state, spends \$3.6 billion per year on prison operations and another \$500 million per year on new prison construction.

Cadora and Schwartz’ innovation has been to map the amount of money being spent on individual prisoners according to their home addresses. In doing so, they create a visual representation not just of the overwhelming dollar amounts being pumped into prisons to house people concentrated in very few neighborhoods, but to compare this picture with another one: the lack of funds available for social programming.



“It just started to hit me that we all knew this anecdotal truth that people in jail or prison are coming from particular neighborhoods but no one had empirically confirmed it.”

Their first map, created in 1998 of Brooklyn, demonstrated that a shocking 35 blocks were what has become known in the criminal justice field as “million dollar blocks” — blocks whose previous residents are now costing taxpayers over a million dollars in imprisonment expenditures (one block even surpassed \$5 million). Not surprisingly, most of the 35 are found in Brooklyn’s poorest neighborhoods — East New York, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Brownsville — where unemployment is high and public schools and after-school programs under funded.

The maps are now being used in ten states and counting, including Kansas, Arizona, Connecticut, Kentucky, Louisiana, New York, New Jersey, California, New Mexico, and Illinois. Cadora hopes that the visual impact will push local and state governments to create programs for “justice reinvestment,” his term for the effort “to invest in public safety by reallocating justice dollars to refinance education, housing, healthcare, and jobs.”

The Genesis

Cadora knew about crime mapping, used by police. He had also heard about activists using maps in the area of predatory lending — showing the impact of check-cashing places that exploit poor people of color — and also by indigenous people using GPS to map territory that they aimed to reclaim. A visual person by nature, these efforts intrigued him. As the Research and Policy Director at the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES), New York State’s

largest alternative to incarceration program, he was steeped in the microcosm of statistics and knew how ineffective they were as motivators when offered up out of context. He felt that he and his colleagues at CASES had “hit a wall with sentencing reform” that they didn’t seem to be able to get past.

He decided that one way to break through that wall would be to create a visual representation of a seemingly mundane and widely-accepted premise of the argument for prison reform. “It just started to hit me,” Cadora remembers, “that we all knew this anecdotal truth that people in jail or prison are coming from particular neighborhoods but no one had empirically confirmed it.”

Cadora hired Schwartz and together they gathered the data and designed the maps for their pilot project of Brooklyn. In his role at CASES, Cadora was already in touch with the directors of New York-area prisons. The result of this vision and access has resulted in the reinvestment of millions of dollars and, along with it, the potential to transform the way government officials think about justice.

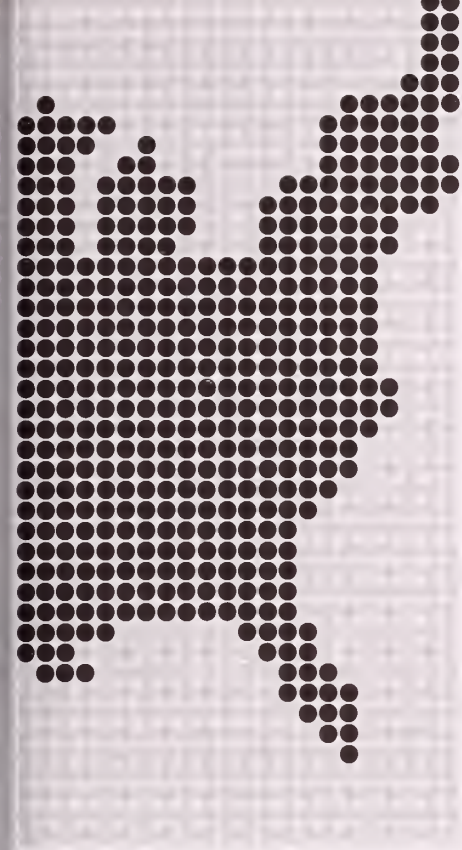
The Results

After realizing that the maps’ impact could be national, Cadora left CASES after 14 years, and began working as the Program Officer at the Open Society Institute’s Criminal Justice Initiative, also in New York City. It was there that he was best able to realize the fruits of his mapping labor.

The first massive redistribution of funds as a result of his maps, and their coinciding concepts, was in Connecticut in 2003. The reforms came about, in large part, because of the visual jolt that Cadora gave State Representative Michael P. Lawlor, a Democrat from East Haven. Cadora’s maps of prison spending in the state were part of a larger report given by the Council of State Governments on justice reinvestment.

Lawlor told The Village Voice’s Jennifer Gonnerman: “A picture is worth a thousand words. I think Eric is able to graphically depict the insanity of our current system for preventing crimes in certain neighborhoods. We’re spending all of this money and not getting very good results. I think when you look at it the way Eric is able to depict it in those neighborhood graphs, you can see how crazy this all is.”

Lawlor, along with fellow legislators, passed a bill that lowered the inmate population — by reducing probation violation sentencing among other strategies — and redirected the saved money into social programming, like mental health care and drug treatment in high-incarceration neighborhoods.



“Safe neighborhoods aren’t safe because of a lot of cops and a lot of people in prison. They are safe because they have these strong civil institutions.

As of last year, Cadora reports, Connecticut has shifted from being the fastest rising prison population in the country to the fastest dropping. On the basis of that trend, he says, the local government has set aside \$16 million from the prison budget for further reinvestment. Most of that money will go into reentry programming, an often neglected and necessary stage, like probation and transitional housing. Another portion, not yet finalized but estimated at a million or more, will go to a community foundation in New Haven working on social infrastructure — believed, by Cadora, to be the heart of prevention — like afterschool care, job counseling, and addiction recovery programs.

The results of the mapping project have been impressive, but does this reinvestment really work? Cadora is careful to assert that, “The message has always been that spending a million dollars a block is not too much money, but what is the return on that investment?”

New Haven is trying to answer just that. They are now putting together a reinvestment commission that will start to develop performance measures asking questions like: how is the community changing? Are the different government agencies working together?

Michael Jacobson, former commissioner of the New York City Department of Correction, who also worked as consultant to the Connecticut legislature, told the Village Voice: “It’s the first state that through legislation has simultaneously done a bunch of things that will intelligently lower its prison population, and then reinvest a significant portion of that savings in the kind of things that keep lowering its prison population. No other state has done anything like that.”

The Possibilities

Cadora’s new work revolves around creating comparative maps of government spending in social infrastructure. He started asking himself: “If criminal justice resources aren’t tailored to these places, what about all of those resources like TANF [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families] and foster care? Essentially I wanted to do an audit of all the resources associated with the neighborhood and help governments coordinate those resources.”

His focus on social welfare spending ties in well with his larger theory about the “delicate relationships between civil institutions and criminal justice institutions.” He points out that safe neighborhoods aren’t safe “because of a lot of cops and a lot of people in prison. They are safe because they have these strong civil institutions. Jobs, families, and schools keep you behaving in a certain way; they are the ones who push a norm of behavior. When those things are broken down, you’ve got problems.”

On his never-ending succession of new horizons is a project at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture to get this work, and the concepts that go along with it, out to the public. Large segments of the American populace are still naively responsive to government officials’ “tough on crime” platforms, leading them to misconstrue higher incarceration with increased safety — even though the most conservative of criminologists agree that the relationship between locking people up and making communities safe is not that simple. “Incarceration only works as an exceptional measure,” Cadora explains. “When it becomes a normative measure, it has no effect on public safety.”

In Columbia’s Spatial Information Design Lab, Cadora is brainstorming ways to educate the public on the truth about safety and social spending. His team there is currently developing public service announcements and downloadable PDF documents. Cadora is hopeful that the visual medium will get the message out even more effectively: “It strikes me that maps are universal. Everyone likes maps in some way. To me, in all honesty, they are like art.” Art, that Cadora humbly doesn’t assert, is infused with the imagination necessary to move money and change lives. ①

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JELLO BIAFRA WITH THE MELVINS

SIEG HOWDY!

For those of you still reeling in the wake of *Never Breathe What You Can't See*, here's some more! Further off the deep end and more Melvinoïd this time, Jello and the Melvins serve up six more studio tracks (including a cover of Alice Cooper's "Halo of Flies"), remixed by Al Jourgensen, Dälek, and the Dear Nephews, and to top it off: an all-new live version of the DKlassic "Kali-fornia Über Alles" - this time about the gubernator, Schwarzenegger himself! - and not a moment too soon! Say it loud, say it proud - "Sieg Howdy!"

The Essential PANSY DIVISION

All the Pansy Division you need on one CD. Includes all the hits from their out-of-print Lookout! releases as well as your favorites from Total Entertainment! (Virus 304). Celebrate 15 fun and naughty years of queer punk! Bonus DVD features all their music videos and some live footage.

AKIMBO

FORGING STEEL AND LAYING STONE
 Throughout their eight-year existence, AKIMBO has built layers upon layers to their fortress of Rock, buttressed by a string of releases culminating in their fourth album and Alternative Tentacles debut. Featuring members of Tight Bros from Way Back When and Homo Erectus.

16 HORSEPOWER

Hoarse
 We're gushing at the addition of the now defunct 16 HORSEPOWER to our growing stable of Denver-based Americana acts. *Hoarse* (previously on Checkered Past) is a live recording from 1998 including eight original songs and covers of JOY DIVISION, CREEDENCE, and the GUN CLUB.

NARD WAAR

Doot Doola Doot Doo... Doot Doo!
 Long before Ali G and the Daily Show, Nardwaar the Human Serviette's confusing yet brilliant questions hurled at A-list celebrities, rock stars, and world leaders often revealed the kernel of truth that couldn't be fessed out by Barbara Walters or Oprah. Features interviews with Snoop Dogg, Jello Biafra, Michael Moore, Mikhail Gorbachev, etc. never before aired in the USA. Available on Mint Records in Canada. (Does not include music by artists interviewed)

MICHAEL PARENTI RULERS OF THE PLANET

MICHAEL PARENTI is an award-winning historian with some 250 articles and 19 books in print. This DVD/CD set includes his on-target observations, based on historical facts, of the U.S.'s tendencies toward creating a world empire as well as a fascinating, intimate look at how he became one of the most well-known academic troublemakers of the Vietnam War era. Out February 28, 2006.

Also available from Alternative Tentacles Records
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 Norman Finkelstein *An Issue Of Justice* CD
 Report Suspiculous Activity s/1 CD
 F-Minus *Won't Bleed Me / Failed Society* CD
 Nausea *The Punk Terrorist Anthology, Vol. 1 & 2* CDs
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SEX &
GENDER



RITA & KATRINA

AFTER THE STORM

The Gender of Disaster and Recovery in New Orleans

In the weeks and months following the devastating Gulf Coast storms of 2005, privileged America slowly stumbled upon the realization that those affected were overwhelmingly poor, black, and until this disaster, largely invisible to the white elite.

That moment has yet to come for women.

Before the levees failed New Orleans, 54 percent of the near 500,000 residents were women. That slight majority does not account for the disproportionately gendered images from Katrina's aftermath: women alone, women with babies, women with family members, women crying, women standing in lines, women yelling, women sleeping, women sick, and women dying. Poor preparedness and response hurt those with the least resources, and while the broken system that allowed such human error and loss has been called a kind of modern day ethnic cleansing, little dialogue has begun on the gender-specific failings that continue to undermine women today.

As Joni Seager wrote in an early analysis of Katrina's effect on women for *Geoforum*, "disaster is seldom gender neutral." She cites the huge disparities in the casualties of recent natural disasters — one and a half times as many women as men died in the 1995 Kobe, Japan earthquake; five times as many in the 1991 floods of Bangladesh; three to four times as many in the 2004 South Asian tsunami. With this kind of precedent, and the cogent research available from groups like the Gender and Disaster Network, who published their report, "Six Principles for Engendered Relief and Reconstruction," in January 2005, the failure to account for gender specific needs was as avoidable — and devastating — as ignoring the needs of poor, car-less New Orleanians left to linger on rooftops for days.

TEXT

Caitlin Corrigan

PHOTO

Brad Ellis

This is not to say that gender exists separate from race or class; the factors deciding who bore the brunt of this storm are undoubtedly linked. But why has no national discourse

— however brief or superficial — addressed the very real and visible gender of this disaster? Maybe because the t-shirts are doing it for us. A longtime New Orleans tradition, the titillatingly profane tourist t-shirt (“I got Bourbon Faced on Shit Street”) is back, revamped for Post-K yucks. One of the most popular features pictures the two swirling storms side-by-side, proclaiming hurricanes Katrina and Rita “Girls Gone Wild!” Gendering Katrina — a highly unpredictable, powerful, damaging storm — as female is dangerous, but not surprising, and would be all the more tolerable if those in charge of rebuilding were at least half as aware of gender as these vendors in the French Quarter.

Pinpointing those in charge of reconstruction is difficult — Mayor Ray Nagin’s economic development committee has been criticized for favoring tourist-fueled businesses, and a comprehensive alternative plan has yet to be voiced. Real leadership and structure is needed for all New Orleans residents, including specific provisions and plans for fulfilling gender specific needs of reproductive health, safety and security, and child care instigated by the storm and its aftermath. Quoted in an article for *Left Turn Magazine*, an unidentified activist from the New Orleans chapter of INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence puts it thus: “We have to have some form of community accountability for the sexual and physical violence women and children have endured. I’m not interested in developing an action plan to rebuild or organize a people’s agenda in New Orleans without a gender analysis.”

But Louisiana was hardly leading the way for women pre-Katrina. A 2004 report by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research ranks the state in the bottom 10 “among all the states in the nation on many of the indicators of women’s status calculated by the [IWPR].” Women, especially poor African-American women, were already a marginalized group in the Crescent City. The 2004 U.S. Census shows that 41 percent of all female-headed households with children in New Orleans were living below the poverty line. These were the people without the ability to evacuate, their situation made more precarious by the children in their care. After a disaster of this magnitude, the tight-knit social communities and social services that held many of these families’ lives together have been, literally, blown apart.

Christina Kucera, formerly of Planned Parenthood New Orleans, has underscored the vulnerability women face when support systems break down, “It’s the collapse of community. We’ve lost neighbors and systems within our communities that helped keep us safe.” This issue of physical safety, which had been all but ignored in the months following Katrina, began to get some exposure at the end of 2005, when reports of what really went on in the Superdome started to roll in. A December 21st story on NPR’s “Morning Edition” noted the large number of unreported rapes and physical assaults that occurred not only in the Superdome, but citywide in the days following the storm. At the time the story aired, the official number of reported rapes was only four — a staggeringly underwhelming number considering the notorious crime index of New Orleans City prior to Katrina. But non-profit victim advocacy groups are working to get assault cases brought to light — the National Sexual Violence Resource Center created a national database to document post-Katrina sexual assaults, and Maryland based Witness Justice has received hundreds of Katrina related reports. More and more survivors of sexual assault will step forward in the months, and even years, to come. Will New Orleans have the tools necessary to deal with victims and aggressors alike? Or what about the cases that go unreported — how can affected

women find resources to deal with their trauma, especially when prosecution seems unlikely in unstable post-storm New Orleans?

The landscape of recovery simply does not address women’s needs, or even begin to acknowledge the far-reaching gender gap that’s become the norm in the months since the storm. Construction workers, security guards, inspectors — these are the new jobs in town, and all but a very few are held by men. Camouflaged Humvees — and the M-16 wielding men inside them — still growl down side streets regularly. The face of “new” New Orleans is male to the point of archetype, while the image of the “victims” are poor, needy women.

Any power in numbers that New Orleans women may have had remains compromised as the parade of Post-K problems that compromise women’s return continues. For one, public schools have been slow to open, keeping away families with children who cannot afford the tuition of a private school. The teachers and staff — many women among them — are now scattered and have been told they must re-apply for their former jobs. NORTA, the area’s public transportation system whose buses and streetcar fleets suffered significant flooding, has restored service slowly, with limited lines and hours, hindering access to available job sites in the near-restored French Quarter and Central Business District.

Without women returning (and damn sure they won’t return without schools for their children, jobs that will pay better than whatever work they’ve found in Houston, Atlanta, or Des Moines, and transportation to those jobs, let alone access to health care, condoms, abortion, food stamps, and the like), New Orleans’ ability to repair fragile social networks and communities is in real danger. Without communities, there can be no real progressive development, only bulldozers and condos where the Ninth Ward used to stand, or a squat subdivision hovering over Louis Armstrong Park. As more time passes in the wake of this disaster, resident fears have a greater basis in reality — recent recommendations from the Nagin appointed Urban Land Institute schedule the most affected areas — Gentilly, New Orleans East, and the Lower Ninth Ward — for the last tier of reconstruction triage.

New Orleans needs its women. New Orleans needs people discussing how the infrastructure and support systems failed women in this storm, and how the failing represents a larger ignorance of gender specific needs in times of crisis. And we need to start redefining what “crisis” means, broadening our terms to include more than hurricane or flood, but also the day-to-day existence of poor women nationwide with limited access to resources and recourses.

We need adequate, comprehensive recovery plans with a forward-thinking vision for how to prepare all vulnerable residents for the next inevitable storm. Instead of writing the city off as an uninhabitable danger zone, we need to be proactive, thinking creatively about how to better protect women — and men and children — from the natural and unnatural hazards bred by New Orleans’ unique physical (and political) geography.

San Francisco is leading the way in preparatory thinking with a free program in disaster training skills that would have truly made a difference for many of the women in New Orleans. The course sessions include basic information

New Orleans needs its women. New Orleans needs people discussing how the infrastructure and support systems failed women in this storm, and how the failing represents a larger ignorance of gender specific needs in times of crisis.

on identifying hazardous materials and more advanced matters of search and rescue and damaged building identification. With this kind of preparedness, we would surely have heard fewer stories like the one remembered by a Louisiana police detective in a November 2005 Mike Davis article in *The Nation*. "Vincent" describes a grueling search process for the dead in the murky floodwaters, which revealed many women and children, all of whom had "fought like hell" but clearly, lost. "We found the corpse of a woman clutching a young baby. Mother or sister, I don't know. I couldn't pry the infant out of the woman's grasp without breaking her fingers. After finally separating them, the baby left a perfect outline imprinted across the lady's chest."

Images like these will (and should) haunt America's history and psyche for generations.

Though a December feature in the local alternative paper *Gambit Weekly* completely skirted any discussion of gender-specific plans in their rundown of local grassroots rebuilding efforts, there are organizations offering services and a voice to area women. One women's center in the Bywater/Ninth Ward area, run by the Common Ground Collective, has been operating since shortly after the storm, offering services to women even before their power

was restored. The center offers a same sex shelter for those uncomfortable with the co-habitation of other shelters and "tent cities" across the city. The Association of Community Organizations for Reform (ACORN), whose national headquarters are in New Orleans, has been active in forming the ACORN Katrina Survivors Association (AKSA), whose predominately female members and spokespersons give a real face and voice to the countless women who are trying to rebuild their lives and unite their families.

Learning the lessons of Katrina and continuing the conversation about disaster preparedness, response, and recovery for women in vulnerable areas is absolutely vital. Women in potentially disastrous areas must identify their risks, form solid evacuation plans (and back up plans), and demand training of the sort offered in San Francisco for themselves and their neighbors. If women are to bear the burden of reconstructing culture and community following disaster, they need the tools necessary to survive the event, and the government and grassroots support to flourish in the aftermath and rebuild. ①

As part of our ongoing desire to spread the word, each issue the sex and gender section profiles nationally and internationally recognized sex and gender resources. This issue is all about the Third Wave Foundation and their advocacy, reproductive justice, and scholarship funding.

In 1992, Rebecca Walker published a clarion call in *Ms. Magazine* to a new generation of people outraged by gender inequality. During a year of public events that illustrated on-going social injustice on many fronts but particularly the indifference to young women's real experiences, insights, and voices, she wrote, "turn that outrage into political power. Do not vote for them unless they work for us. Do not have sex with them, do not break bread with them, do not nurture them if they don't prioritize our freedom to control our bodies and our lives. I am not a post-feminist feminist. I am the Third Wave." Later that year, Walker and Shannon Liss started the Third Wave Direct Action Corporation, the forerunner of today's Third Wave Foundation.

The original mission was to fill a void in young women's leadership and to mobilize young people to become more involved socially and politically in their communities. The organization has since expanded, running campaigns and providing grants that address a wide-range of inter-related issues, while still striving "to be the thread that connects young women [ages 15-30] to the resources necessary to counter attacks on their freedoms." The work of Third Wave is rooted in a social justice perspective in which the voices and experiences of those affected by the issues or problems are leading the analysis, solutions, and organizations. The organization strives to operate on principles of feminism explicitly connected to issues of race, class, gender identity, heterosexism, and other justice movements, and recognizes a spectrum of gender identities and experiences.

The organization funds three streams of grants. Through its Organizing and Advocacy Fund, Third Wave supports efforts to challenge sexism, racism, homophobia, economic injustice, and other forms of oppression. The

Reproductive Health and Justice Fund supports efforts to expand access to essential healthcare services, including the training of new abortion providers and increasing access to reproductive healthcare services in underserved areas as well as providing emergency grants for abortion procedures. Finally, the Scholarship Fund is available to full or part time women students thirty and under who are activists, artists, or cultural workers engaged in dismantling racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of inequality.

In addition to directly funding the work of young women activists, Third Wave runs public education campaigns and movement building projects. Third Wave also works to build and sustain young women's capacity to be effective leaders and advocates.

—Vanessa Brocato

If you would like to profile a sex and gender resource, library, or museum in your area, please email Brian Bergen-Aurand, Sex and Gender editor, at brian@clamormagazine.org.

resource

Third Wave Foundation

511 W. 25th St., Ste. 301
New York, NY 10001
web: www.thirdwavefoundation.org
email: info@thirdwavefoundation.org
telephone: 212.675.0700
fax: 212.255.6653

GENDER, SEXUALITY, & GEOGRAPHY 101

Clamor University
Happening all around you all the time

Contact Information:

This is a DIY course, so get going...now...with your sisters, brother, neighbors, lovers, friends, allies, collaborators, colleagues, and maybe even your greatest nemesis.

Course Description:

This syllabus is an introduction to gender, sexuality, and geography studies. It examines the role of gender and sexuality in the study of geography and is concerned with places, networks, patterns of flow, locations, landscape, the social/political/economic production of space, and all forms of spatial and temporal relationships. As a point of entry to discussion of the spatial politics of gendered and sexual difference, this course explores the diverse ways in which space is central to both masculine and feminine hegemony and resistance. Although the study of gender and sexuality has only been included within geographic discourse in the last two decades, there has been a significant amount of research focusing on the intersection of gender, sexuality, and socio-spatial practices in the last ten years. For this reason, this course focuses on themes that have received a notable degree of attention within geography and other social sciences more recently. Until the 1970s women remained invisible in the analyses of social space, and non-Western feminists have only recently been able to more fully grapple with these issues. The objectives of this course are to introduce a spatial perspective to gendered inquiry and to introduce a gendered aspect to geographic studies.

This course introduces discussions of:

Geographies of Women—spatial patterns in literacy, spatial divisions of labor, other patterns of inequity. It theorizes gender inequality, gender divisions in the new economy, gender and formal or informal work, gender in reformed societies like industrialized China or in the expanded European Union, gender and safety in urban and rural spaces.

Gendered Geographies—gender as a set of power relations that influence the production and use of space, place, and landscape.

Feminist Geography—feminist conceptualizations of space and multiple axes of oppression: gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and class, among others.

Comparative Gender Assessments—assessments of gender and the “status of women,” fertility and reproductive rights, households and family structures, housing, health and urban services, gender-selective migration, and gender and development policy.

Required Reading:

Rose, Gillian. 1993. Feminism and Geography. London: Polity Press.

Jones, John Paul III, Heidi J. Nast and Susan M. Roberts (eds.) 1997. Thresholds of Feminist Geography: Difference, Methodology, Representation. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Women and Geography Study Group. 1997. Feminist Geographies: Explorations in Diversity and Difference. Essex, UK: Longman.

McDowell, Linda. 1999. Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Domosh, Mona and Joni Seager. 2001. Putting Women in Place: Feminist Geographers Make Sense of the World. New York and London: The Guildford Press.

Recommended Reading:

Seager, Joni. 1997. The State of Women in the World Atlas. New rev. 2nd ed. New York: Penguin.

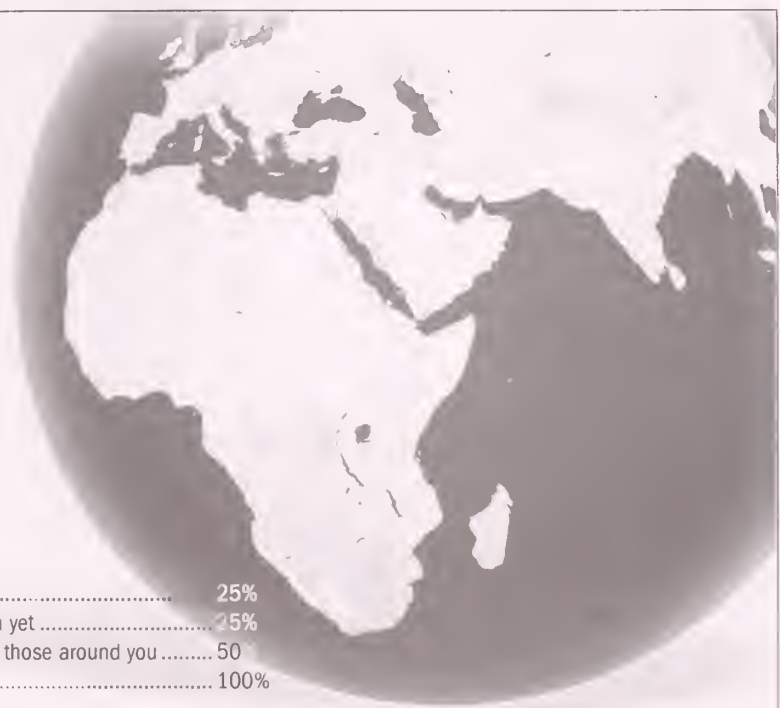
Fincher, Ruth and J Jacobs. 1998. Cities of Difference. The Guilford Press.

McDowell, Linda and Joann P. Sharp (eds.) 1999. A Feminist Glossary of Human Geography. London: Hodder Headline Group.

Altman, Dennis. 2001. Global Sex. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Course Expectations:

The course includes a combination of readings and real-life experiences. Evaluation is based on spreading the word in written and verbal forms on radio, in print, and at social forums. Students are expected to be engaged with the readings, with other students, and with the classroom of life to become a community of learners. Each student is expected to contribute to the class from his/her unique background of experiences while also considering a wide array of perspectives, theory, and research approaches.



Evaluation:

Daily tests from just about everyone around you	25%
Midterm self-examination to see if you're paying attention yet	25%
Final project in which you share what you've learned with those around you	50
TOTAL.....	100%

Selected Discussion Topics:

- How's your historical perspective?
- Where did you get that methodology
- Gendered Places, Smiling Faces
- Gender Representation and Power
- Where have all the men gone?
- What's the difference?
- The Power of Scale
- What Time is it over THERE?
- Household / Housework / Fieldwork
- Autobiography versus Ethnography
- What's the division of labor got to do with it?
- "Honey, I'm Home!"
- Did you see "Sex and the City" last night?
- Gender, Space and Politics
- Does the Diaspora Count?
- Stay tuned for further developments
- What's wrong with saving the virgin forests?
- Look at all the tiny people down there
- Why doctors don't make house calls anymore
- Green acres is the place for me...New York is where I'd rather be: Urban/Rural debates
- Industrialization, business, and commerce
- Wanted: A few good women geographers
- They just don't do feminism like we do feminism
- The status of women and reproductive rights as they vary around the world
- Trading sex / trading places
- "Male and female did he create them."
- Do you know the way to boy's town?
- Does the Internet have a gender?
- Women in Everyday Spaces
- Landscape and Gender
- What's the third person singular feminine form of that verb?
- Why do they spell Latin@ that way?
- The motherland/the fatherland: National Bodies
- What's love got to do with it?

[This syllabus was compiled from a large pool of online and in print university syllabi focusing on gender, sexuality, and geography.]



A 19-year-old college student takes a pregnancy test and sees the little pink line. A 36-year-old mother of three wakes up one day and recognizes the feeling of morning sickness. A mom takes her 15-year-old daughter to the doctor after a week of nausea, and the doctor drops the bomb.

You're pregnant.

When an unplanned pregnancy becomes a desperate emergency, many women — seek advice, support, and information. In more than 2,000 U.S. cities and towns, "crisis pregnancy centers" masquerade as resources of objective information for women facing an unplanned pregnancy. They offer free pregnancy tests, options counseling, and emotional support — but in truth, they are in no way objective. The trick is that most of these centers are run by right-wing Christian organizations with a distinct anti-abortion agenda and no qualms about deceiving or manipulating the women they see.

I started a journey into the community that identifies as "pro-life" but has no regard for the lives of abortion doctors and no respect for the autonomy of pregnant women. I was neither pregnant, nor in crisis, but I was enraged by the idea that anyone would counsel someone out of an abortion. I made appointments at several crisis pregnancy centers and presented myself as an unmarried college student facing an unplanned pregnancy.

The two pregnancy centers I visited were in Northampton, Massachusetts, and Grand Junction, Colorado — two starkly contrasting communities, nearly 2,200 miles apart. The Northampton area is the notoriously liberal and diverse home to more than 20,000 college students and a comfortably upper-middle class intellectual community. In contrast, Grand Junction is a dusty desert town of about 40,000 people, with a desperate economy and far fewer jobs than people seeking them. Would the options counseling offered at these two pregnancy centers reflect the demographic and cultural differences of the regions?

I stepped inside the office, and it was like stepping into a womb. Everything a different shade of pink, with pink floral wallpaper and pink lace curtains, and the image of motherhood and womanhood as ideally feminine and inherently inaccessible to me. "My name is Kate, are you Laurel?" a middle-aged woman asked. "Yes...I...I need to talk to someone. I don't know what to do. I'm pregnant."

the crisis of
Crisis
Pregnancy
Centers

TEXT

Laurel Hara

PHOTO

Amanda Rohde

Alternatives Pregnancy Counseling Center in Northampton advertises in the local college phone directories under "Pregnancy Alternatives," implying that they offer counseling on alternatives to continuing a pregnancy. In truth, they present women in crisis with alternatives to abortion, not to pregnancy or motherhood. With a carefully constructed image as an objective source of information and an understanding of the vulnerability of a woman in crisis, Alternatives is able to coerce up to 75% of their clients into continuing their pregnancies or placing their children for adoption. "Some women come in and they've already made a choice for themselves, and they can't always work past that," stated Alternatives representative Joanne Dowdy.

From the stack of brochures in front of her, my counselor Kate chose one titled 'The First Nine Months.' She narrated the first 35 days of fetal development to me, gesturing at photos in the brochure. Then she pointed to a photo of a fetus with defined fingers, toes, and facial features, and said, "This is what your baby looks like right now, Laurel."

Through the strategic manipulation of the language surrounding abortion, crisis pregnancy counselors effectively turn a pregnant woman into a "mother," turn a fetus and its potential for life into her "child," and turn a low-risk surgical procedure into a brutal "murder." Alternatives and other pregnancy counseling centers may very well be the only source of medical information on abortion that a pregnant woman receives — and the graphic images of "babies being torn apart and their remains scraped away" that my counselor Kate described can hardly be seen as objective medical fact. Many of the resources distributed by crisis pregnancy centers are published by Focus on the Family and the National Right to Life Committee.

As she fingered the gold crucifix hanging from her necklace, Kate lovingly laid out for me a framework of reasons why her Lord would not want me to abandon my child's chance at life, and ways that her Lord would support my parents and me as we endured my pregnancy and prepared to part with the newborn. Kate spoke as if she and I had already come to an agreement, though without any input from me, that adoption was indeed my best option.

As an independent non-profit group, Alternatives "identifies as a Christian organization," according to Dowdy, but doesn't reveal their bias to potential clients until the woman has invested herself emotionally in their "objective" counseling and support. Listening to Kate, I was overwhelmed by imagining the feelings of so many other women who had sat in the exact same chair, being taken advantage of and steered away from the right to choose.

I left Alternatives disappointed in the fact that, had I been desperate enough, I believe that Kate's words may have held enough power to guide me

away from considering all of my options for an unplanned pregnancy. I left as a woman disappointed with another woman's perception of motherhood and her role within the politics of reproduction. I left hoping that my upcoming visit to the Pregnancy Center in Grand Junction would be less frustrating — but realizing that if the counseling available in liberal Northampton was so caustically narrow, then there was little hope for women facing crisis in conservative Grand Junction.

No one took notice when I walked in to Grand Junction's Pregnancy Center, as if I was just one of a hundred shaken young women walking through that door each day. In actuality, the Pregnancy Center serves approximately 400 clients per month, and maintains a satellite office across the street from the local college. Like Alternatives, they don't advertise a religious affiliation, but identify as a Christian organization offering "counsel on the emotional, spiritual and physical aspects of pregnancy and information concerning available options." Their materials also advertise that they "will help you locate the needed medical, legal, or social service agencies" to assist in your decision.

At the Pregnancy Center, when my counselor Roz slipped the words "and we don't refer for abortions" into a sentence, I stopped her abruptly. "What do you mean?" I asked. "Does that mean that if I decide after all that the right choice for me is to have an abortion, you wouldn't help me find one?" She responded softly, "No, we don't feel that's something we can do."

The city of Grand Junction — Western Colorado's major metropolis — is home to one abortion provider. According to Roz, the Pregnancy Center is in contact with Grand Junction's only abortionist and has confidence in his abilities as a physician, but refuses to be responsible for any woman's access to his services. Women unable to find an abortion referral within Grand Junction are forced to do one of two things: either travel more than 240 miles to the nearest publicly known abortion provider, if they have the resources to make the trip, or resign themselves to the biased counsel of the Pregnancy Center.

"If you've known girls who've made different choices about pregnancy, then you've already seen the effects that a termination can have on a woman." Roz continued, matter-of-factly, "Truly, Laurel, it's like an animal in a trap gnawing off its own leg."

Roz must not have read the pamphlet that explains how the Pregnancy Center provides "information to enable you to make a choice based on knowledge rather than fear or pressure." At the same time as she represented an organization purporting to foster women's awareness of their options about an unplanned pregnancy, Roz exercised manipulative and coercive counseling techniques that severely limited those options.

There's no doubt that the pregnancy center model is effective. Many centers boast about the number of women whose decisions they've affected. Cindy Boston of the Springfield Pregnancy Care Center recently raved, "We've saved 146 lives this year alone!" She explains that between two and four "choices for life" are made daily at the Springfield Pregnancy Care Center, "and over 850 babies have been saved in less than five years."

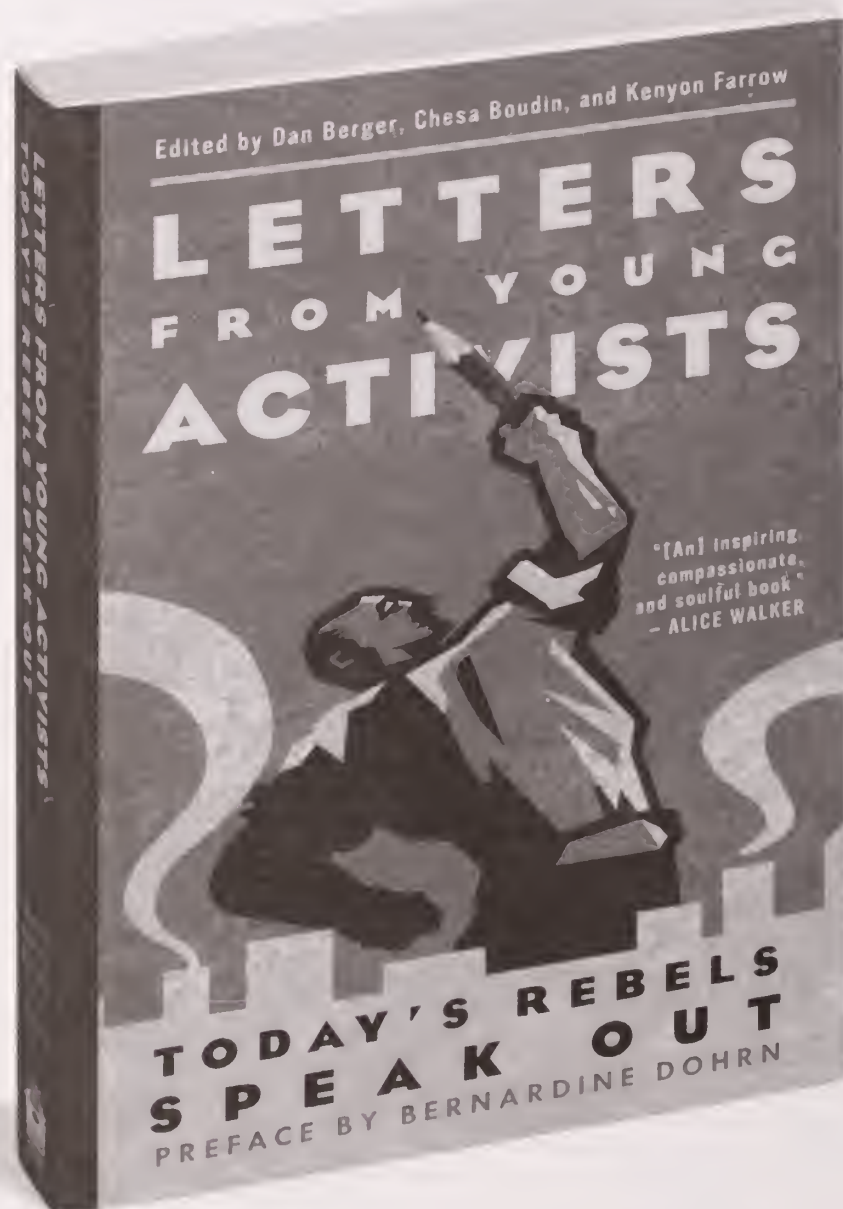
National networks of pregnancy counseling centers have appeared in recent years, broadening the reach of their anti-choice doctrine. Care Net, a network of more than 970 pregnancy centers in the U.S. and Canada, continues to grow "in the hopes of strengthening and expanding the national pregnancy center movement." Care Net also operates OptionLine, a toll-free hotline where women can be connected with one of more than 2,000 pregnancy centers across the U.S. 24 hours a day. Another organization, Heartbeat International, prides itself on "starting and strengthening over 1,000 pregnancy centers to provide alternatives to abortion."

What these organizations are so proud to have accomplished, it is our job to undo. While crisis pregnancy counseling centers play a significant role in the limitation of women's reproductive freedom, groups like Planned Parenthood and NARAL play an equally significant role in restoring women's power over their reproductive decisions. These pro-choice groups embrace abortion as a lawful, ethical, and human right, and serve as a true resource of objective information for women in crisis.

Choosing to raise a child, put a child up for adoption, or abort a fetus are all equally valid options for pregnant women. The tragedy is when a woman is denied the opportunity to choose for herself. There was no clear distinction between the options counseling I received in Northampton and Grand Junction. The fact that continued to make itself increasingly clear, though, is the severe lack of access to abortion many U.S. women continue to face today, more than 30 years after *Roe v. Wade*. Many of the women who visit crisis pregnancy centers lack accurate information, physical access, or financial ability to obtain an abortion. When coupled with the emotional manipulation of crisis pregnancy counseling, little meaning is left in the idea of the right to an abortion. ①

Laurel Hara is an activist based at The Confluence Collective in Grand Junction, Colorado. Her work explores feminist perspectives on abortion, birth control, and childbirth. Reach her at laurelhara@riseup.net, or for a list of feminist health clinics and abortion services, visit: www.doulahara.com.

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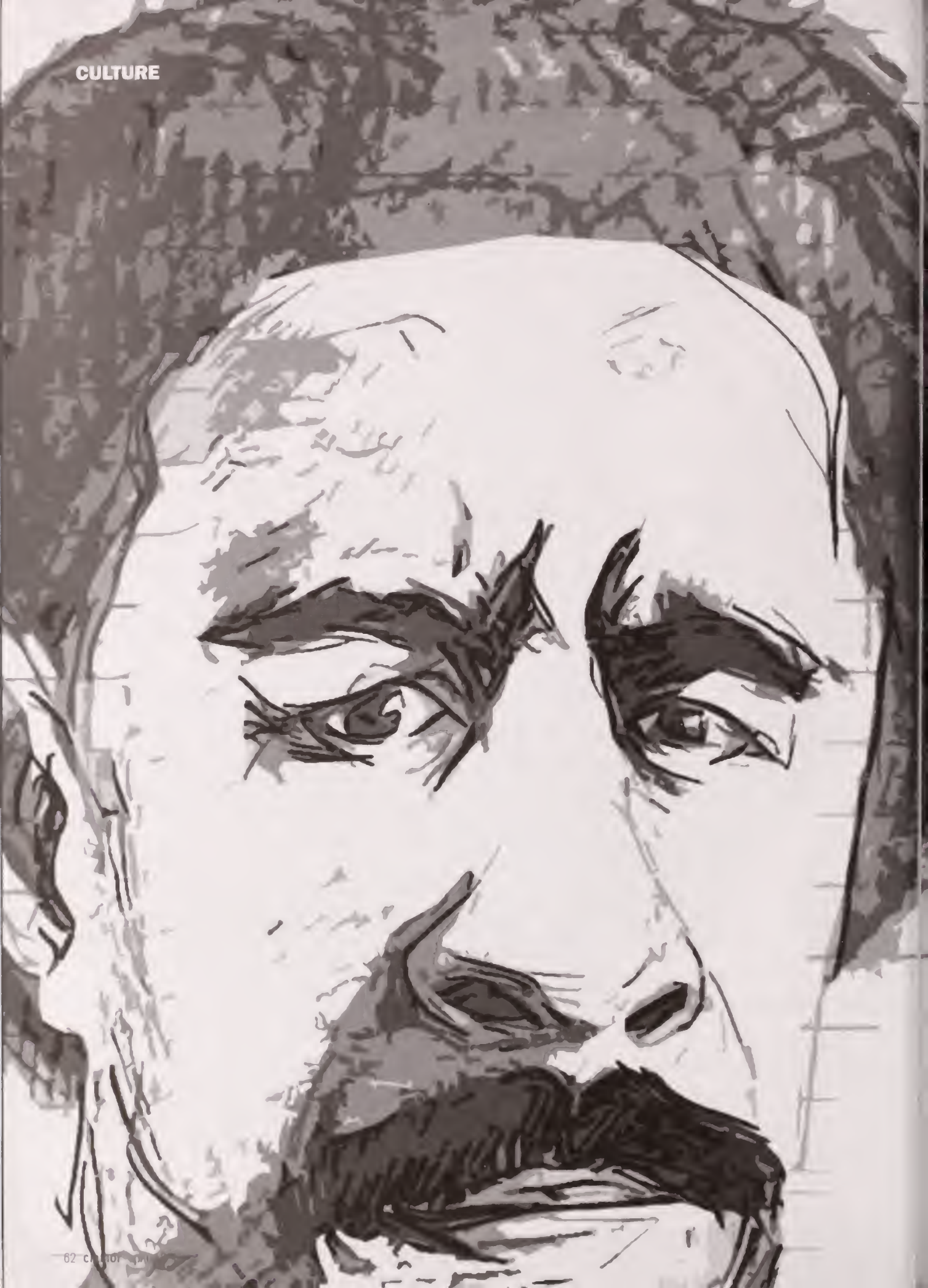
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Richard Pryor

an iconoclast remembered

Redd Foxx used to say that Richard Pryor would have been banned from every nightclub in the country had he performed his act before the Black Revolution of the 1960s. Foxx, a friend and admirer of Malcolm X since his youth, was speaking from long and bitter experience. Years before he played Fred Sanford in the hit 1970s television program *Sanford & Son*, Foxx was a “blue” comedian known to Black audiences throughout the Midwestern Chitlin’ Circuit of the ‘40s and ‘50s for his sexually and politically explicit humor. He catered his act to the sensibility of Black underclass audiences, which embarrassed many integration-minded Blacks and missed white audiences almost entirely.

TEXT

Jason McGahan

ILLUSTRATION

Imani Lateef

Foxx’s black-or-white dilemma illustrates what historian Mel Watkins, borrowing from W.E.B. DuBois, called the “twoness” of African-American humor. Slavery created for Blacks the necessity to manage both how they were perceived by whites and how they perceived themselves. A laugh from the master could mean averting punishment, while satire, mimicry, and mockery of the master in the company of slaves could help alleviate the pain and misery of bondage. To justify slavery to themselves, the slavers rewarded foolish joviality and naïveté, while no overt act of intelligence or irony went unpunished. The richness of Black humor was secluded from the view of whites for centuries. The gulf between authentic Black ethnic humor and crude racist representations persisted unabated for more than a century.

Richard Pryor wasn’t the first Black comedian to draw humor from the bitterness of racism. He wasn’t the first to substitute dazzling wit and intelligence in place of “acting the fool” for white audiences. And his mordant political satire informed by racial otherness had long since become a staple of the Chitlin’ Circuit. What first and foremost made Richard Pryor a transcendent American comedian was that he removed the racial barrier separating working-class Black ethnic humor from the predominantly white mainstream of American culture.

Jim Crow segregation after the Civil War had the effect of providing Blacks with clubs and cabarets in which to develop the humor denied them in the whites-only theater and mass media. Richard Pryor, like Redd Foxx before him, began his career performing before almost exclusively Black audiences. And like Foxx, the

divergence between the types of humor suited to Black as opposed to white audiences became a defining source of conflict in Pryor's development as a comedian. He was born into the racially segregated Black underclass of Peoria, Illinois. His father was a teenage boxing champ turned pimp and bar manager. His mother was a prostitute. He grew up in one of his grandmother's brothels. His earliest memories were peopled with the winos, addicts, con-men, prostitutes, and gangsters occupying the lowest rung of Black society in Peoria. Nowhere is this fact more evident than in his best known stand-up comedy of the '70s and '80s. But earlier in his career, Pryor suppressed his vivid remembrances of the past, believing them a hindrance to his pursuit of the financial rewards of white mainstream approval.

Fans who discovered Richard Pryor in the 1970s may be surprised to learn that he was a famous comedian as early as 1964. Pryor belonged to the coterie of Black comics that included Bill Cosby, Nipsey Russell, and Dick Gregory who had achieved a measure of fame by traversing the narrow, often shaky ground between Black ethnic humor and acting the fool. As tame as the humor of Cosby and the pre-1970 Pryor was by modern standards, when they told jokes on Merv Griffin and Ed Sullivan in the mid-1960s they were pioneering comedians.

In the mid to late-1960s, Pryor was imitating Cosby "so much so that I should

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have informed people," he wrote in his autobiography, *Pryor Convictions*. His performances during this period were heavily rendered, derivative, anxious, and painstakingly suited to the tastes of mainstream white audiences. "I had a wild neighborhood, I gotta tell you," began one such bit. "Because my mother's Puerto Rican, my father's Negro, and we lived in a big Jewish tenement building — — in an Italian neighborhood. So every time I went outside, they'd yell, 'Get him! He's all of them!'"

But Pryor could never become Cosby, whose college education and middle-class background were a far-cry from Pryor's and imparted to Cosby a natural polish and subtlety that endeared him to the mostly white audiences. The pressure on Pryor to be someone he wasn't gradually summoned his personal demons to the fore, and his drug use and erratic behavior increased. One night at the Aladdin Hotel in Las Vegas in 1969, Pryor gaped at the VIP crowd and reportedly muttered, "What the fuck am I doing here?" before wandering off the stage.

Numerous obituaries have made passing mention of Pryor's sojourn in Berkeley in 1969-70 that coincided with his studying the speeches of Malcolm X and familiarizing himself with the political philosophy of Black Nationalism. But this period is of considerable interest for the artistic metamorphosis it resulted in. Malcolm X's posthumous influence on Pryor, reaching him as it did at the peak of the Black Power Movement and in its epicenter in Berkeley, is palpable. "Strangely, I hadn't been affected by Malcolm X's death when it occurred," Pryor wrote in his autobiography. "However, after Redd introduced me to him as a person and what he stood for, I missed him terribly." Malcolm X distinguished himself from Black leaders of the Civil Rights movement by opposing racial integration on the grounds that it reinforced the false notion of white supremacy in the minds of oppressor and oppressed. Most Blacks in

the U.S., not to mention in the smoldering ruins of colonial Africa, were fighting for racial equality and self-determination, not mere acceptance by whites. Black people, he said, would have to liberate themselves.

The uncompromising ethos of Black Power was born out of the flames of urban race rebellion and urgently called into question modes of practicality and patience that had marked Black behavior for centuries through the Civil Rights Era. Disagreeable though terms like "house negro" and "field negro" may sound, to many Black youths of Pryor's generation they served to distinguish the old integrationist mindset from the new militancy. Black Power was like a giant breach opened in the historical enclosure of Black racial consciousness and pride. And Pryor was absorbing it all, having befriended leading revolutionary Black intellectuals of the period like Ishmael Reed, Angela Davis and Cecil Brown — — not to mention members of the Black Panther Party of Self-Defense. Imbued with the excitement of that historic moment, he began to reevaluate his art and his politics, and, most importantly to analyze the conditions of his life in Peoria in light of everything he had learned.

The genius of Richard Pryor, more evident with each successive white mainstream publication that feels compelled to praise him in death, is that he perfected the comedy of the Black American underclass and injected it into the predominantly white mainstream — permanently redefining the art of stand-up comedy. Pryor was a man of enormous talent and subversive predilections who revealed to the public to an extent never before seen the rich tradition of Black ethnic comedy in a manner that, if he didn't exactly smash the racist idols of minstrelsy, at least replaced them with something less vulgar. Pryor repudiated punch lines for comic and often poignant impersonations of Black ghetto archetypes like the Big Liar, the Wino, the Junky, the Religious Fraud, the Prostitute, the Neighborhood Tough. His superb gift for mimicry, poetic use of street vernacular, and broad acting range had the unprecedented effect of producing pathos in Black and white viewers alike. "I think there's a thin line between being a Tom on them people and seeing them as human beings," he told author James McPherson. "When I do the people, I have to do it true. If I can't do it, I'll stop right in the middle rather than pervert it and turn it into Tomism. There's a thin line between to laugh with and to laugh at." Pryor exercised no such caution when the subject turned to the obnoxiousness of white America. The nasal voice that he used to impersonate the overly inhibited, cowardly unassertive, and naively cruel "average white male" has become part of the standard repertoire of any number of contemporary Black comedians. For all the myriad Black characters that Pryor developed into marvels of idiosyncrasy, that white voice never underwent so much as a change of inflection whether it was meant to be a cop, a neighbor, or a tounst on African safari. It is emblematic of his profoundly funny satire, which pilloried the racist double-standards, the cultural insensitivity, the victimization, the degradation, and the fear that Blacks living in the U.S confront every day. Racism made up the very fabric of his work.

But Pryor was, after all, a comedian and he spent plenty of time joking about how Blacks and whites behaved differently at funerals, at the dinner table, and when reaching orgasm. At the height of his powers, when he was both Black rebel and Hollywood box office king, Pryor flaunted his greatest vulnerabilities onstage to daring comic effect. He challenged delicate themes of Black masculinity by regaling audiences with tales of his transvestite love affair and confessions of his own sexual performance anxieties. He described shooting up his own car with his wife and her friends inside. He recounted his abyss of freebase cocaine addiction, his pipe personified into a bully with a voice like Jim Brown's. He famously narrated the story of his self-immolation. It was beyond uncharted territory; it was an undiscovered planet. No comedian since has ever sought to duplicate Pryor's ultimate highwire act, the fascinating way he turned the most intimate details of his personal torment into breathless laughter. ①



one band's quest to take back punk from the whiners

What does it mean when your favorite genre of music is "discovered" by the Sunday arts section of the New York Times and is called "art-metal"? That is what Jon Caramanica's article "Heavy Metal Gets an M.F.A." called the work of bands in a distinctive vein of loud and experimental music that runs between the genres of hardcore-punk and metal.

This New York Times discovery is like Columbus' discovery of America. For many years a community of musicians has been making loud and independent music and the band Made Out Of Babies (MOOB), although relatively new, is part of this movement. In 2005, the New York based band released *Trophy*, its debut album with Neurot Recordings.

The closest I can get to describe MOOB's sound is to imagine what it would be like if the tortured brush of Edward Munch had painted the music for Annie with Linda Blair as the protagonist. As Cooper the bass player said in this interview, this is just another degree of punk. And if punk is really dead then its tormented soul is lingering in the sound of bands like MOOB to remind us that subversive art defies all labels.

Where does the name Made Out Of Babies come from?

Matthew: My sister and I were hanging out one day after I went to the beach and I was sunburned and I was bitching about it to her and she said so why don't you use sun block. I said you know that shit is made with all this horrible ingredients. And she said "yeah I think they test it on babies" and I said no I think is made out of babies. It was kind of funny and I thought it would be a good name for a band.

Cooper: Now all we hear is: "good band, crappy name."

I have noticed that Julie gets a lot of attention. The reviews I have read almost exclusively focus on her. Does that bother the rest of you?

Cooper: No — they are always going to talk about Julie and that's fine.

Made Out of Babies is:
Brendan Tobin: Guitar
Cooper: Bass
Julie Christmas: Vocals
Matthew Egan: Drums

TEXT
Artemio Guerra

Brendan: It is definitely true that our sound would not stand out as much if we had a male singer. The guitars are dissonant, the bass is heavier and the drums are spastic. And Julie's vocals are very different. I think it's all equal parts but she stands out because her vocals are up front and she is up front and that's what gets people to the rest of the music.

Matthew: Plus I think she is doing, vocally, very different stuff than a lot of other female-fronted bands.

Do things happening around you impact your music. For instance the gentrification of Park Slope, people being pushed out of the neighborhood because they can't afford the high rents. And to speak globally for a moment of what is happening in the world. Innocent people are dying everyday in Iraq because of US policies. Does that come through in your music in any way?

Brendan: When we wrote "Loosey Goosey," a song that is on this record when Julie sings "Fire in Brooklyn" over and over, that is actually about the gentrification of Park Slope.

Julie: I have been in Park Slope since the beginning, since the time people getting shot in the block to what it is now...

Brendan: Strollerville.

Julie: Yes, strollerville. But 7th Avenue was always that. The one thing I can say is that it is an exchange of negative and positive things. On of the negatives is that there is much less sense of community, like there are very few block parties and I remember that being a huge part of my childhood. On the other hand it is much safer. It goes both ways.

Brendan: But I think it is less overt than we are trying to be a political band, but there are things

we are all influenced by. I think is more powerful to think of it metaphorically than literally. This is not to say that I don't appreciate bands that are staunch activists. I think Fugazi is an incredibly important band.

Cooper: Public Enemy for me.

Matthew: Who knows? We are not pushing a political agenda. But I was thinking about this very same subject and I am sure that everything that is happening factors into what comes out of you artistically.

Cooper: It all really factors into my personality and I am sure it comes out when we are playing

Matthew: We just want to tell people we are mad about a lot of stuff.

Isn't Neurot extremely independent and militant about the integrity of the music they put out? Wouldn't you say that is an overt political statement against mass produced music in a way?

Brendan: Extremely so. And they are very open about it. Since we've been with them we know they are extremely homegrown. They do everything themselves and it is like being part of a community where we all get to work on different aspects of it. For instances Mat is currently doing some graphic designs for Neurot. It really is a community. They obviously love what they are doing because they don't make any money on the stuff.

Cooper: Neurot is all self-supporting. I mean some of the old vinyl that was on Alternative Tentacles and some of the old stuff they have been putting out recently, that is all funding the Grail's record and our record. They probably could make a profit but they make a choice to put it back to put out other bands.

Brendan: And in a sense that is our goal. To one day be self-supporting.

Can you talk more about being associated with Neurosis. How does that impact the way you are perceived?

Brendan: When you bring out Neurosis is interesting because being associated with them people think we are a metal band because Neurosis has been classified as that but I don't even know what they are. They are a heavy entity. They are just Neurosis.

Cooper: I don't get that. What happened to punk? Would you call the Jesus Lizard metal? And not that we are necessarily that much like them but to me that is were it comes from that kind of stuff is just another degree of punk. I don't dislike metal as mater of fact I really do like metal and we are certainly influenced by it. I think all the Southern California fucking "I kissed a girl" boy bands...

Julie: "My dad is mad at me..."

Cooper: ...I think they stole punk. They stole the name. You've got to have major cords, guitar shifts, jump up and down or something

Brendan: It just seems like everything as soon as it is somewhat heavier and there are distorted guitars involved is lumped into a metal category. Unless it is some kind of formulaic major chords and then it is punk. It seems all a little ridiculous.

Cooper: If Black Flag was around today they will be called metal. That is the problem. ①

Made Out Of Babies on tour this spring:
www.madeoutofbabies.com.

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embracing

TEXT

Cole Krawitz

doikayt

When it comes to the question of Jewish folks and land, today we don't get much further than the historical formation of the state of Israel and the current political Zionism. While the majority of Jews today live in the diaspora with no intention of living in Israel, what we hear and see through mainstream Jewish organizations and media is that the core of Jewish identity is a diasporic bond with the state of Israel. Yet for centuries, Jewish communities have been vast, multi-national, multi-racial and beyond borders. And for centuries, the forced migration and killing of Jewish people is quickly hushed. Yet this silencing does little to help our understanding of this current political moment. We need to extract this history to help demonstrate why and how Zionism was born, and is perpetuated today. One example of this is the legend of the "Wandering Jew."

Having recently learned the origin of the legend of the "Wandering Jew," I was surprised to find that not only is it a modern construct, but it is also a metaphorical justification for the Jewish Diaspora from a Christian standpoint. Appearing in over 120 oral legends and scores of literary novels, poems, plays, and films, the legend of the "Wandering Jew" originated with a 1602 German booklet (Volksbuch) which was only eight pages. The legend tells the story of Ahasuerus, a Jewish shoemaker who offended Jesus when he was on his way to crucifixion. As punishment, Ahasuerus was cursed to wander the earth for the rest of his days until the second coming of Jesus. The figure of the doomed sinner, forced to wander without the hope of rest in death till the millennium, impressed itself upon the popular imagination, and became a metaphor for the Jewish diaspora as a whole.

Explanations for the proliferation of this Christian legend in Europe vary

in nature. Some reference the expectation of an imminent end of the world, predicted for the year 1666 with the awaited return of Jesus. The alleged arrival in Europe of the "eternally wandering Jew" was read as an omen that confirmed anxieties about the imminent coming. Others reference the legend was an explanation for how in the 14th-16th centuries, the Jews from Western Europe were being driven in successive waves towards the center of the continent, then further east: in 1290 the Jews were driven out of England, in between 1306 and 1394 from France, in 1400 from Prague, between 1420 and 1493 from Austria, in 1492 from Spain (Spanish Inquisition), in 1497 from Portugal, between 1498 and 1506 from Provence, between 1424 and 1519 from German territories, and the list goes on and on to the present including the last few decades from countries such as Russia, Iran and Iraq.

According to Mark Michael Epstein in his lecture entitled "The Wandering Jew," in Christian eyes, the Jew was seen as a "paragon of wretchedness ... the Jews, especially since the Emancipation which severed their ties with their own traditions, are destined to exist forever as parasites who feed off other national bodies. Their only hope of salvation lies in attaining what Ahasuerus most desired — extinction." This story has become a fixture, not only in a plethora of European literature, but is documented in Jewish texts as evidence of the necessity of the foundation of a Jewish state and the formation of fundamentalist Zionism.

Understanding modern political Zionism requires an integrated understanding of Jewish history, which has yet to be well articulated and included within most discussions of Palestinian liberation. Without understanding, for example, how Jews were banned from owning land in Europe until Jewish emancipation began, first in 1791 in France, and later spread in the 19th century, we fail to adequately address the fears and realities that drive support for the state of Israel.

Jewish communities of varied descent grapple with the complexities of Jewish history, of movement and migration but we have not done enough to dispel the myth that we are a wandering people. Rather some have attempted to dispel the idea that we are tragic, weak, and parasitic by participating in, and taking on imperialist, white supremacist, and patriarchal models. We need to reclaim Diaspora not as a place of loss, punishment, or exile, but rather as an example and celebration of our difference, strength, beauty, vitality, and complexity.

There are Jewish perspectives on the narrative of the wandering Jew, including many stories from both Biblical and secular texts that speak to *tfuzot*, or diaspora, not as punishment but rather as a journey. The stories of the Exodus, Cain, Babel, Abraham, Jacob, Hagar, Esther, and Mordecai all exemplify this theme and also include a core component of Jewish life, which is that of *tikkun*, or repair. Each of these stories are examples of incredibly flawed characters who were challenged in

one way or another to attain spiritual repair in order to heal not only themselves, but also their families and larger communities. There is also the Bundist (transnational Jewish socialist) tradition of *doikayt* or "here-ness," a Yiddish political philosophy for social justice that grew as a response to the increase of Zionism and exemplified the belief that the future of Jewish people rested in where they are. These stories and philosophies speak to how Jewish people build, grow, love, fuck, fight for justice, and cry out from where they are. They are heard and embraced in community, and they change where they are. These very stories are a smack in the face of dominant mainstream Jewish organizations' media campaigns that try to make us feel that we are in *galut* (in exile), at loss, and alone.

It is no surprise in looking at many social movements in the 20th century that possession of land and property lie at the heart of these struggles. We must go inside our family relationships, support networks, and communities to respond in a way that addresses these concerns, that looks at restorative justice for all parties, and that challenges the idealized notion that there is a place of "return," or safety, embedded within land. ①

Cole Krawitz is a writer and poet living in Brooklyn, NY. Cole works in Communications and Events at Demos, and is a member of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice. Cole also currently serves on the Board of Advisors of the National Center for Transgender Equality. Reach Cole at: colekrawitz23@yahoo.com



Monitoring the Military in the Nation's Other Heartland

I'm freezing. The rocky ground digs through my sleeping bag and into my body. When I finally get up, I put on some clothes and walk a few yards down the ridge to check on my companion, a man who has asked me to use his pseudonym, "Lobo Solo." We're on a remote mountaintop in the middle of Nevada; it's dark outside, and dawn is coming soon.

Solo is one of a small handful of people who spend countless hours monitoring the secret military exercises that take place here in the Nevada desert. Like several others with the same "hobby," Solo tries to publicize the information he finds without himself becoming a public figure. He has an extensive website, but does not include his name or contact information on it. When he's asked to appear on television, he always declines. As I approach his tent, Solo is already packing the cameras, telescopes, and other hardware that we'll need when we hike up to the next ridge as the sun rises. On this chilly September morning, we'll be photographing Area 51 - a military base famous for the fact that it "does not exist."

A few minutes later, we're carrying out 50-pound packs over boulders and loose rocks, hurrying to reach the summit before the sun rises. There's only

a small window at dawn when it is possible to get a clear view of the base. From this mountaintop, 26 miles away, you need enough light to expose the film, which means that you have to shoot during the day. But you need to get a shot before the sun heats the atmosphere - creating the convection waves and atmospheric distortions that blur the base beyond recognition. When we reach the peak after a brisk climb, we hurriedly set up tripods, telescopes, and cameras. In the sky above us, a group of F-16s line up to get fuel from a tanker. To our south, an F-22 Raptor gyrates and rolls through the Coyote Bravo range, thundering towards an unseen bombing target.

As the day breaks and the sun creeps down the side of Papoose Mountain, the secret base in the distance jumps out from the dark. Through binoculars, Solo and I watch unmarked 737s land and takeoff again, delivering thousands of people to their jobs at the military's "remote location." Trucks and buses roll from building to building. We are watching a secret city come to life: Area 51 not only exists - it is thriving.

As we monitor the base through powerful radio scanners and telescopes, we hear ominous countdowns at the Nevada Test Site, and witness unidentified aircraft using the call sign "Eagle"

practicing simulated-flame-outs over Groom Lake. We see a constant stream of cars and trucks going in and out of Area 51 on a dirt road in the valley below. The unmarked planes land and take off with such regularity that the base at resembles a major airport.

According to people who monitor Area 51, the base is one of those places where you tend to "see what you want to see" when you look at the nondescript hangars, buildings, and runways in the far distance. Many see captured alien spacecraft - such stories first made the base famous. But when I look beyond its restricted borders, I don't see anything exotic or otherworldly - I see something that has become terrifyingly ordinary. To me, the base is characteristic of the amorphous and indefinable permutations of warfare and secrecy that have become so central to the workings of the United States Government. At this secret base, I see a prototype for secret CIA prisons around the world, and when I look at the unmarked planes bringing Area 51 workers to their jobs, I see a reflection of the unmarked "torture planes" that the CIA uses to kidnap and transport prisoners to other "undisclosed locations" around the world. I see a vast, invisible war that stretches from these remote valleys to the distant corners of the world. The desert hides

SECRET WARS



TEXT
Trevor Paglen
PHOTOS
Cobo Solo

a history of domination – a foundational violence that continues uninterrupted through the present and into the future.

Some two hundred miles north of Area 51, near the Humboldt River in the vast and sparsely populated Crescent Valley sits another clandestine base. This valley is home to the Western Shoshone Defense Project, a site that is only slightly harder to find than the secret base to the south. The scrap of paper with my directions reads “white, single wide trailer – first trailer facing the road across the street from the old baseball diamond.” When I arrive at a cluster of trailers about a mile past the convenience store, I realize that I have no idea what the directions mean, so I just knock on the first door. I get lucky.

A young woman named Okaadaka answers the door and invites me into the aging structure. Unpacked suitcases sit in the corner – fresh baggage tags are marked “ELY,” the closest airport to the Crescent Valley (several hours away). Files, papers, and pamphlets are piled on every horizontal surface. Flyers, maps, and pictures plaster the far wall. Near a doorway to the backroom hangs a document bound with a red ribbon and a title written in calligraphy: the Treaty of Ruby Valley.

From this remote location, an elderly Native American woman named Carrie Dann and her staff of two full-time and two part-time employees are taking on the military, the Bureau of Land Management, mining and defense contractors, and the U.S. government itself. Dann says that the U.S. has been illegally occupying Western Shoshone land for 150 years, and that she has the paperwork to prove it.

The Western Shoshone Defense Project (WSDP) started in 1992 to defend native lands from an increasingly aggressive Federal Government, which had started to harass the Shoshone with accusations that they were “trespassing” by grazing cattle in and around the Crescent Valley. The most recent clash between the Federal Government and the Western Shoshone Nations started in 1972, when the Bureau of Land Management ordered the Dann Ranch to start paying grazing fees for their livestock. Dann refused: “I’ve never seen any documentation that says the Western Shoshone ever gave their land to the United States.” In Dann’s view, the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley says that the Western Shoshone Nations control this land, and she sees no reason to pay the U.S. a dime to use what rightfully belongs to her people.

The Treaty of Ruby Valley was designed to end an undeclared war between the whites and the

Shoshone that had begun when thousands of settlers arrived in present-day Nevada in the 1840s and ‘50s. As waves of immigrants destroyed local food sources and indiscriminately killed indigenous peoples, violence spiraled out of control. It came to a head in the early 1860s when a colonel named Patrick E. Connor set up a fort in the Ruby Valley. Charged with protecting the mail routes from periodic Shoshone raids, Connor ordered his California Volunteers to “destroy every male Indian whom you may encounter” and to “leave their bodies thus exposed as an example of what evildoers may expect.” In January of 1863, Connor ambushed a Shoshone village along the Bear River in present-day Utah. His troops raped and massacred approximately 250 Shoshone, a third of which were women and children. The event became known as the Bear River Massacre. Later that year, the Western Shoshone were compelled at gunpoint to sign the Treaty of Ruby Valley.

The treaty declares “peace and friendship” between the two nations and outlines a working relationship to the lands that the Western Shoshone call “Newe Sogobia.” In addition to granting the U.S. certain rights-of-passage and mining claims in Western Shoshone territory, the treaty charges the Western Shoshone with ensuring that “hostilities and all depredations upon the emigrant trains, the mail

and telegraph lines, and upon the citizens of the United States within their country shall cease." The treaty also grants the Western Shoshone sovereignty over the land. And according to Carrie Dann and other traditional Western Shoshone, the treaty remains the singular legal basis for the relationship between the indigenous nations and the U.S. Although the U.S. cannot provide any documentation showing that the Treaty has been extinguished, the government operates as though it is, and its actions are anything but consistent with "peace and friendship."

In September of 2002, the U.S. launched its latest campaign against the Western Shoshone. At 4a.m. one morning, close to 50 armed federal agents, a helicopter, an airplane, and a fleet of ATVs descended on Pine Valley and other places where the Dann herd was grazing. Mary Gibson, a Shoshone woman, was camping in one of the canyons with a group of 11 people, waiting for the raid (the Shoshone had been tipped off). "We saw a convoy of 20 vehicles with flashing lights roaring up the valley," she later said. "I could not help but think of how this is how our ancestors felt when they saw the cavalry coming. So many of my people were killed on this land and now it's happening again." The feds rounded up Dann's cattle and loaded them into trucks to be sold at auction. The ranch was ruined.

In July of 2004, George W. Bush signed the Western Shoshone Distribution bill, which put \$145 million in a Department of the Interior account for the Shoshone. The bill was designed

to declare the legally Shoshone "paid off" for their traditional territory. But Carrie Dann and others at the WSDP call the bill a "massive land fraud." The U.S. essentially took money from one agency, put it in the account of another, and declared the whole matter settled. The Western Shoshone Nations were never given a voice in the deliberations, which they opposed at every turn. WSDP member Julie Fishel describes the bill as "a total lack of due process. The only way they could get away with it was because it was against a bunch of Indians."

I ask Dann what would happen if the U.S. government reversed itself and put the Western Shoshone in charge of the territory they call Newe Sogobia. What would change?

"I think about that a lot," says Dann, "I couldn't give you an answer, but my personal opinion is that we're willing to sit down with anyone, with the feds, or whomever. When you sit down and talk, you can work out pretty much any problem. The problem right now is that they're not even willing to sit at the same table with us. I'm sure that there are ways that things could be figured out for the best of everyone who's here."

Fishel adds: "There are a couple of things that you can be sure about. If the Shoshone won this tomorrow, there'd be no more testing at the nuclear test site, there'd be no nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain, and there'd be some kind of compensation for the things that are going on now in terms of mining. The Western Shoshone would

start thinking about how to repair the land and figuring out how to clean this mess up."

"What's happening right now is a spiritual holocaust," says Dann, "I don't know what they call it, but that's what's happening."

"When you allow this kind of corruption to fester in a government and you allow it to spread, it legitimizes everything," says Fishel. The U.S. starts to think "we killed a bunch of people to get this land in the first place, and it worked then and we didn't get in trouble for it, so let's do it some more. Let's do it in Iraq, let's do it somewhere else, too."

On my way out the door, I chat with Okaadaka. "You're interested in all of this military testing," she says. "All of the things that go on at the Nevada Test Site and at Area 51 and those kinds of places don't happen in a vacuum. We are a part of their testing program. They test all those weapons and all those legal approaches out on us. Before they have wars overseas, they have them here. We are the casualties." ①

Trevor Paglen is an artist, writer, and experimental geographer working out of the Department of Geography at the University of California, Berkeley, where he is working a book about the spatial aspects of military secrecy. More information about his work can be found at www.paglen.com

What's happening right now is a spiritual holocaust. I don't know what they call it, but that's what's happening





three cities against the wall

TEXT & PHOTO
Irene Tejaratchi

The Israeli government's "separation wall" extends through over 425 miles of Palestinian land and rises 25 feet. Bucking the official borders of the occupied territories, it weaves throughout Palestinian land, greatly reducing it and annexing valuable water resources. The wall dissects neighborhoods, separates families, and strangles commerce and access to health care, work, and education. Outraged by its construction a group of international artists decided to organize an exhibit featuring artwork confronting the wall and challenging the necessity of its presence. Two years in the making, the artists realized their vision in 2005, albeit with some setbacks.

Scheduled to open on November 9th, 2005, in Ramallah, New York City, and Tel Aviv, Three Cities Against the Wall never opened in Ramallah. For weeks, Israeli customs held on to the American artwork sent to Palestine. "The customs process in Israel

is very difficult for everyone," said Seth Tobocman, artist and organizer of the exhibit, "but in the case of the Israelis, it was possible for them to go to the town where the artwork was held and speed up the paperwork. But restrictions on Palestinian movement made it impossible for them to do this."

In New York, Three Cities Against the Wall successfully opened at ABC No Rio and the Sixth Street Community Center. Both venues were packed with artwork whose approaches varied greatly, from absurdist, comical approaches to brutal and blunt.

Emanuel Faychevitz's impressionistic, vivid watercolors initially seemed inviting but a closer look reveals children with colorful bodies and blackened heads, blood red trails dripping from a hospital patient's heart, and a man on fire. "During the second Intifada I was influenced by the constant streams of images that were

projected insistently throughout the media," said Faychevitz. "I felt distanced from the images so I started painting them while adding an inner narrative of relationships among the characters. The images created hurt the eye visually, but also try to create empathy." Monstrous and child-like, the extremely unsettling images are compelling, as are the eyes of the elderly woman in Joe Sacco's drawing "Sabha abu Mousa Searching for Her Daughter-in-Law's Two Gold Bracelets." Here a Palestinian woman kneels in a mass of rubble, searching. Behind her are bombed-out buildings; the devastation and the caption, raising more questions than answers.

Suleiman Mansour, artist and one of the exhibit's organizers based in Ramallah, contributed a computerized image of the wall on which the hands of Michelangelo's Creation of Adam are painted. "I used an image that's known all over the World to make my

message more effective and easier to relate to," said Mansour. "I also made the distance between the hands greater than it is actually in the Michelangelo painting, because I believe that the more time the wall is there the more difficult it will be to communicate, as was the case between east and west Germany."

Three Cities Against the Wall also featured videos, sculptures, and interactive pieces, such as a book in which viewers were invited to draw on page after page of the same image of the wall, resulting in elaborate drawings, doodles, and slogans.

Interactive art and the subversion of public space were also featured in the video "April 1st." The video documented an installation by Artists Without Walls which positioned two video cameras at the same spot on opposite sides of the wall in the town of Abu Dis. Each camera recorded the view facing away from

the wall, and two video projectors projected the image on the opposite side, creating a virtual window that allowed people on both sides to see each other in real time.

To describe all the artwork featured in Three Cities Against the Wall could fill pages. Even before entering ABC No Rio, visitors were greeted with a striking mural by Seth Tobocman and two large drawings by Christopher Cardinale that adorn the building's exterior; a worthy move on the organizers' part, as it will undoubtedly engage passersby on the street level. So dense, taking in the exhibit in one viewing was overwhelming, particularly because of the intense subject matter. And even more artwork had originally been planned for the exhibits but some Palestinian artists chose not to participate. For some, it seemed contradictory to have their art-

work shown in Tel Aviv or New York where they are not allowed to go. Also, some believe that participating in an exhibit with Israelis would flagrantly ignore the imbalance of power between the two. The organizers of Three Cities addressed this issue in the press for the exhibit stating, "While American, Palestinian, and Israeli artists are showing their work together in this exhibition, we understand that their relationship is not one of equality. The relationship between Palestinians and Israelis is like that between prisoners and guards, with U.S. citizens as the prison's patrons."

Despite setbacks the exhibit was opened on December 22, 2005 in Hebron, a particularly significant location, as for years Israeli settlers have attempted dislodging Palestinian residents there, often resorting to violence.

"Holding an extended leg of the show in Palestine is a vital part of this project," said Seth Tobocman. "What better place to do it than Hebron, where an international presence is one of the few things helping to protect the people from settler violence?"

And although the exhibits in New York and Tel Aviv ended in mid-December 2005, they will most likely move to other cities such as Montreal, Rome, and Paris. "The show was very popular in Tel-Aviv, with favorable reviews in the Hebrew version of Ha'aretz and large crowds at the opening and in the days that followed," said Tobocman. "Also, we have gotten very positive responses from people here in the Lower East Side. Many people view the show as a hopeful sign. The degree of community and support was heartwarming."

A beautifully rendered catalog of the Three Cities Against the Wall exhibit has just been released by VoxPop Press, featuring the artwork, essays by several participants, an article on why the United States supports Israel by Stephen Zunes, and a short story by Grace Paley. ①

Three Cities:
www.3citiesagainstthewall.net

Stop the Wall:
The Grassroots Palestinian
Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign
www.stophthewall.org

Palestinian Children's
Welfare Fund:
www.pcwf.org

Irene Tejaratchi is a Producer at the PBS series Nature, and a freelance reporter. Her journalism credits include New York Newsday, PBS Online, Clamor, Newtopia, and others.

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The Grey
Asleep At The Wheel CD

The Grey is a melodic rock quartet from Canada featuring ex-members of Shotmaker and Three Penny Opera. With influences ranging from Fugazi and Seaweed to Nick Cave and Neil Young, their new full-length, *Asleep at the Wheel*, casts a wide net. Listeners can be assured that powerfully charged hints of styles, new and established, can be found in their post-rock approach.



Haram
S/T LP/CD

Haram's spectacular debut full-length cobbles together disparate aspects of punk and noise to conjure something wholly cohesive and engaging. Unrelenting and forward, the group's new record possesses a mature, tempered confidence that only comes with experience and do-it-yourself resolve. Haram features former members of Majority Rule, Pg. 99, and City of Caterpillar, among others.

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environmental justice
as a global necessity

TEXT

Mariana Ruiz and Chad Jones

PHOTOS

Matthew Dula



The struggle for environmental justice embodies Do It Yourself; as Angelo Logan of East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice says, "Part of Environmental Justice is self determination and being able to speak for ourselves." In this struggle, the Do it Yourself ethos is a necessity - not a choice.

After years of localized environmental justice organizing, leaders from community groups around the nation expressed interest in meeting together. Foundation allies who had long been supporters of the groups provided financial support which enabled the first national People of Color Environmental Justice Leadership Summit. The summit, held in October of 1991 in Washington D.C. resulted in the drafting and adoption of the 17 Principles of Environmental Justice. This convention also provided the opportunity for organizations to build regional networks that set the stage for a decade of building the national environmental justice movement.

The four groups profiled in this issue talk about the real impact to their communities, the lack of access to a safe and healthy wellbeing, loss of sustainable jobs and resources, and systemic loss of life. Their work and energy involve keen organizing strategies, real democratic practice and a commitment to members. And these groups are winning, having impacted legislation on a statewide and national level.

SouthWest Organizing Project Albuquerque, NM. founded 1980

The following answers are from Executive Director Robby Rodriguez.

How do you define environmental justice?

The right for people to live in a clean and healthy environment where they live work and play. Environmental Racism is the deliberate siting of toxic facilities in communities of color or the lack of enforcement in those same communities.

There is a lot of argument out there criticizing the work of the mainstream environmental groups (Sierra Club etc.) How do you see their role in the larger struggle for environmental justice?

Their definition of environment is too narrow. They don't really understand the concept of movement building and how really a lot of the issues they care about are connected as social justice or EJ issues. I don't think they understand how to build power, it isn't just about lobbying in D.C.

Who is your constituency and do you feel that elected officials meet the needs of your constituencies. If not, is there a way that you see your work as part of that process? Have you been able to engage electoral work as part of your organizing?

We define our base as low income and communities of color. We organize families. We don't have power currently and are trying to figure out different and new strate-

gies that will help us seize power. That does include engaging in the electoral process.

[In] '83-84 SWOP did a huge voter registration drive like nothing anybody had seen in the state and registered 20,000 people to vote in some of the poorest Latino communities in and around Albuquerque.... It was about demonstrating in a concrete way the capacity of the organization.

Community organizing is about power. We feel also that we're fighting with one hand tied behind our back if we're not also engaging in the electoral system.

Electoral organizing is a way to engage for us that broader base of people who are not necessarily working on a neighborhood organizing campaign or anything community specific. We see the election day as a mobilization, it could be seen as a form of direct action or protest but it's a point of mobilization that's all it is. What's really important is how do we continue to work with those folks throughout the year. We don't have all those answers yet.

Identify two of your principal campaigns and why they are significant?

Intel, taking on big corporate power, a classic David vs. Goliath story. Super profits, super pollution. They use over a billion gallons of water a year in this water scarce state, they pollute nearly 100 tons of super toxic stuff; they've received over a billion

dollars in public subsidies over the last 10-15 years in one of the poorest states, and everybody said we couldn't take them on.

Pajarito Mesa: A colonia located 250-miles from the border in the largest metro area in the state; largely immigrant community, very young and very poor; the very existence of this community speaks to the real effect of trade agreements like NAFTA and the very real situation of a lack of affordable housing and good paying jobs; government has ignored the fact the over 400 families lack access to potable water! We've been organizing in that community since 1997 to achieve basic services for that community starting with water. They have formed their own alternative institutions like a quasi-governmental entity called a Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association; three of our full-time staff have come out of that organizing effort and they are amazing women, strong leaders.

What is the most pressing land use issue in your region?

Water. We can't keep building houses if we don't know where the water is going to come from to support that type of growth. New Mexico is a desert state, right, and 90% of the people rely on ground water as their source of drinking water, a lot different than other places. And in Albuquerque which is the big city, if we continue to pump the aquifer at the rate we are pumping we are going to deplete it in 10-25 years.

[A City plan] is based on 145 gallons per day. Is that sustainable? Is the goal to supply 200 gallons per person per day? [We need to] promote harvesting of water and use of gray water, recruit or grow industry that don't use a lot of water.

Intel uses over one billion gallons of water per year. We gotta think about limits. The point is that we have to think about living within our limits. We have to take into consideration population, we gotta be saving now for future generations. That's the situation.

What do you think is at the core of land use struggles?

Big money developers and the politicians beholden to them versus smart long term planning that values our history, culture and tradition.

And what is one thing you would want people to know about the work that SWOP does?

We organize people, not problems or issues. We believe people are our greatest resource. We believe there is genius in the 'hood. That everything we need to change in our communities for the better is at our fingertips. We believe organizing is a transformative process. People transform themselves as they transform their community. It is a beautiful thing to be a part of.

ME (For Love Of Mother Earth) Foundation, Inc. Quezon City, Phillipines. *founded 1998*

The following answers are from Sonia Mendoza, President (via email).

How do you define environmental justice?

It is preserving the environment as nature has made it to provide people and other living beings clean air, clean water, food produced from clean and fertile soil free from toxic chemicals, and be able to pass on to the next generation.

Tell me why your group formed, what was going on in your region/country at the time. Was there an issue you were facing or struggling with?

Our group started in the place where I live, at Blue Ridge, Quezon City. It was registered at the Securities and Exchange Commission in Sept 1998 with a 15-member Board of Trustees. Most of us were members of the Concerned Citizens Against Pollution (COCAP) up to 1997 and our main activity then was to lobby for the passage of the Philippines' Clean Air Act with a ban on solid waste incinerators, [which] was passed in 1999.

Garbage was a serious problem and was getting worse. Garbage trucks failed to come for three weeks in our place and trash was piling up on the streets, plastic bags full of mixed waste were hung on trees to prevent dogs and cats from tearing the plastic bags. It was stinking all over our subdivisions and flies gathered on these plastic bags and on the uncollected garbage. There was corruption in the garbage hauling and disposal [agency]. Hundreds of millions of pesos per year was budgeted for garbage hauling alone for each of the cities in Metro Manila.

The Payatas garbage slide tragedy happened in July 2000 where more than 300 people were

buried alive in garbage. Thus the passing of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 or Republic Act 9003 (RA 9003), signed into law in January 2001.

Who is your constituency and do you feel that elected officials meet the needs of your constituencies.

We do not really have a formal constituency but our target participants in our workshops on eco-waste are local communities that will be taught eco-waste management and in the process will practice organic farming, have livelihood programs and live in a healthy environment.

Identify two of your principal campaigns and why they are significant.

[An] ecological waste management [campaign] which includes a campaign against incinerators and landfills. This campaigns for waste prevention, no toxic waste generation, conservation of resources for future generations, nourishing and healing of Mother Earth. [A] tree planting [campaign] to reduce pollution, water conservation and establish balance in the ecosystem

Tell me a little bit about your organizing strategies. Are you a membership or base building organization?

We have community organizing activities that support the implementation of RA 9003. We have established about 389 Materials Recovery Facilities [where organic matter is composted and recyclable materials are re-used and recycled] (MRFs) nationwide since 2002. The Department of Environment & Natural Resources (DENR) told me that there are about 980 MRFs established. This

means that about 40% of MRFs established nationwide were done by Mother Earth Foundation! Maybe it is unique in a sense because we are able to convince communities to put up MRFs instead of just dumping their waste in open dumpsites and landfills.

We have not built a core base of membership but we will start next year getting members from the secondary schools. Although we have a diverse membership (students, teachers, local government officials, civic leaders) but they have not been mobilized.

How does your organizing work affect regional/statewide policies?

We have not affected regional/statewide policies yet but we are working on one of the heavily populated cities in Metro Manila (3 million population) to make this a model in eco-waste management. The DENR is now looking into this model and maybe this would affect a statewide policy on waste management.

What is the most pressing land use issue in your region?

Agricultural land being converted into housing subdivisions, industrial estates, etc.

What do you think is at the core of land use struggles?

Mono-cropping [by] big corporations and big landowners, industrialization and mining (land-grabbing).

Garbage was a serious problem and was getting worse. Garbage trucks failed to come for three weeks in our place and trash was piling up on the streets, plastic bags full of mixed waste were hung on trees to prevent dogs and cats from tearing the plastic bags.



EastYard Communities for Environmental Justice City of Commerce, CA. founded 2002

This interview was done with the East Yard collective (via email).

How do you define environmental justice?

All people have a basic right to a safe, clean and healthy environment. Communities impacted must have direct democracy and a mechanism for meaningful involvement in decision-making where we live, work, learn and play.

There is a lot of argument out there criticizing the work of the mainstream environmental groups (Sierra Club etc.) How do you see their role in the larger struggle for environmental justice?

Angelo Logan: In Los Angeles there has been a bit of a tension between Mainstream Environmental Organizations (MEO) and EJ groups for a number of reasons. The biggest reason in my opinion lies in the contradiction in supporting EJ principles and acting on them, specifically self-determination and directly impacted communities to be able to speak for themselves. Most MEOs are staff lead and are not accountable to their membership, making it hard to be consistent with principles that call for the right of directly impacted people to be able to speak for themselves.

It is ironic that all public and written comments from MEOs ask for meaningful public participation, even though they are very limited in their attempt to reach real democracy in their work. Part of EJ is self determination and being able to speak for ourselves; MEOs' role in this is to respect EJ communities' call for direct democracy, support the goals local communities have determined for themselves, and share leadership roles and/or taking a backseat in areas related to local impacts.

Tell me why your group formed, what was going on in your region/country at the time. Was there an issue you were facing or struggling with?

East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice developed out of a handful of community members that neighbor the Union Pacific (UP) Railroad-East Los Angeles Intermodal Facility, otherwise known as the EastYard. The community was dealing [daily] with two intermodal facilities in our backyard, extreme amounts of truck traffic in our front yard, and the surrounding heavy industrial environment. Community members noticed the amount of illnesses and health concerns -- elders were terminally ill with lung and throat cancer, children and adults with severe bronchitis and asthma. [Also] due to the noise, vibration, and industrial lighting, large amounts of people were suffering from sleep deprivation and hypertension.

Our neighborhood, includes 3 parks, 2 elementary schools, 2 pre-schools, multiple day care centers, and a juvenile detention center. The East Yard Communities are at the north end of the Alameda Corridor in the midst of the Union Pacific Railroad-East Los Angeles Intermodal Facility, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Intermodal Facility, and the I-5 and I-710 freeways. The I-710 corridor brings 47,000 truck trips per day into our neighborhoods from the Los Angeles port complex, expected to triple in approximately ten years.

Our community endures the following: extremely high levels of diesel pollution, with [particulate matter] levels that put the cancer risk factor at 1,700 per million; in addition, we have a trash-burning power plant that emits just about every type of toxin, including fugitive ash that contains high levels of lead and mercury - all of which come from the incineration of the rubbish from 150 trash trucks a day; lead battery

manufacturing plants, which require Proposition 65 warnings; 18 ground and groundwater contaminated sites - just to name a few.

Identify two of your principal campaigns and why they are significant?

The campaign to address international trade and its local impacts is a multi-faceted approach. The statewide Goods Movement Action Plan proposed by Governor Schwarzenegger is intended to increase transportation capacity at the ports, freeways, at rail intermodal facilities & railways, as well as cargo airports. The I-710 and I-5 Freeway expansion projects are part of the governor's Plan to facilitate the transport of goods from international trade at the expense of working class, working poor, communities of color. [With] a base of support, we have helped to delay the expansion of the I-710 freeway.

Together, we, and the South Coast Air Quality Management District, co-sponsor statewide legislation that targets diesel emissions from railroad operations in Southern California. Due to community pressure and Toxic Tours for environmental and regulatory agency staff [resulted in] the City of Commerce's [selection] as one of three cities participating in the California Air Resources Board's pilot project to reduce emissions.

Tell me a little bit about your organizing strategies. Do you rely heavily on support from elected officials? Do you work on building a core base of membership?

East Yard Communities operates as a community member driven organization, and uses a modified consensus decision-making model. Our goal is to conduct quarterly community meetings. Every household is invited via door knocking and flyer-



Environmental Health Coalition

San Diego, CA & Colonia Chilpancingo, Mexico in Tijuana founded 1980

ing by block captains, as well as mailings and an outreach plan by the Staff and Steering Committee members. At these meetings, time and space is provided for dialog across the board. This time is used to reassure that the work plan and direction that the organization is moving in is truly community driven.

What do you think of the Sierra Club's stance that the depletion of resources is the result of relaxed immigration policies in this country?

As an organization we have not taken a position on Sierra Club's stance. Our mission is that all people have the right to a safe and clean environment, where we work, live, learn and play. We find that new immigrant communities (as well as other communities of color) tend to be targets of toxic assault by corporations, such as oil refineries, transportation industries, and chemical manufacturers, depleting natural resources, straining our natural environment, and risking human lives. Basing the role one plays in consumption of resources on whether or not you crossed an artificial border, with or without documentation, is problematic and shifts the blame onto the most vulnerable.

The following answers are from Maria Moya, promotora & organizer with the Toxics Free Neighborhood Campaign.

How would you define environmental justice?

Environmental justice is where everyone can live work and play in a safe environment. Just because you are poor you [don't] need to [live] in a place where you are being impacted by pollution.

Tell me why your group formed, what was going on in your region/country at the time. Was there an issue you were facing or struggling with?

An incident [happened] where kids walking to school were getting sick and residents started wondering what was going on and it turned out to be that the kids walking to school were walking through a [toxic] field. Workers started to dig to see what was buried underneath, [which] was a toxic waste disposal right next to the school. And that's how interested citizens got together in 1980 and formed the Environmental Health Coalition.

Identify two of your principal campaigns and why they are significant

The campaign that I work in is the Toxics Free Neighborhood campaign. We work mainly in Barrio Logan where you have mixed zoning, you have industries and homes right next to one another.

Also, the border environmental justice campaign that is working out of Tijuana because we are very close to the border, [on maquiladora issues], American-owned industry that goes to Mexico to avoid U.S. laws. They've been polluting this com-

munity, where you have high incidences of illnesses caused by pollution. We formed a group that is working in Tijuana [Colectivo Chilpancingo] doing a great job trying to get the American owners to clean up the sites and we have had some victories. An old lead smelting plant in Tijuana that was abandoned by an American owner after 15 years is getting cleaned up because the community got involved with the governments of Mexico and the U.S. to bring that about.

Tell me a little bit about your organizing strategies. Do you rely heavily on support from elected officials? Do you work on building a core base of membership etc.

The *promotora* model is something that has worked to educate [Latinos] one-on-one and we took it a different route not just to educate the communities but to spread the word. We call it SALTA, Salud Ambiental Latinas Tomando Accion (Latinas Taking Action for Environmental Justice). Through this we were able to get to know the problems and the illnesses in the community and then develop a curriculum to educate the community and for years we've done it over and over on different issues.

We started with a two-hour course over 10 weeks where we discussed issues in the community and organizing ...and from all of that we developed a total of 20 women who then went out to the community and formed community groups with their neighbors and families and instructed the same curriculum that they had learned from us. It really helped to start the activism within the community.

It is ironic that all public and written comments from Mainstream Environmental Organizations ask for meaningful public participation, even though they are very limited in their attempt to reach real democracy in their work.

How does your organizing work affect regional/statewide policies?

The Right to Know law started here in San Diego and then went statewide and now is national. People have the right to know what industries — what chemicals — are doing. And when we first developed SALTA we had a problem in Barrio Logan [from] fumigating with Methyl Bromide. After a five year battle, the port district, who was fumigating with Methyl Bromide, passed an ordinance that they would not import any fruit that needed fumigation to come through the San Diego port.

What is the most pressing land use issue in your region?

Barrio Logan is one of the oldest Latino communities in San Diego and has been neglected by officials. Two years ago the Padres built a baseball stadium [within] walking distance of Barrio Logan, starting a gentrification issue. The area was mostly occupied by artists and low income

people [earning between \$17,000-\$20,000 per year] [in] single room occupancy [housing]. People from downtown started invading Barrio Logan, and within a year rents tripled. The rents have tripled and families have to triple up. We go to houses and now in a four bedroom house there is one family in each bedroom and they are sharing a restroom, sharing a kitchen. Every investor you can think of is coming to Barrio Logan and buying up property.

We started working with the residents about three years ago to develop a community plan to stop the development and, with residents, developed a new vision for Barrio Logan that we are pushing the City Council to pass.

This vision has a set of principles that the community developed saying that they want to ensure a healthy community where residents and industry are separated, [with] housing that's affordable to the community Residents in Barrio Logan. [Instead of] those housing projects for people who make between \$60K-\$80K.

What do you think of the Sierra Club's stance that the depletion of resources is the result of relaxed immigration policies in this country?

Everything that happens here in San Diego is "the illegals" and they don't see the benefits that they bring. They work for next to nothing with no benefits, but you know they are here to work. Now they are building a triple fence right here on the border and the Minutemen are planning to come here. People in our communities are targeted. When 187 passed it gave way for any redneck to stop you and say "Oh you go back to Mexico you don't belong here." We need to have someone to blame [for environmental problems], illegal immigrants are the easiest target to blame. ①



TEXT & PHOTO
Ida Benedetto

There is a phenomenon in upstate New York that is drawing young anarchists out of the grunge of the urban to the dirty farm work of the rural. The 65-acre collective farm in Germantown walks the line between the cultivated and the wild as they attempt to connect with and support their community through concrete projects based on sustainability and creativity. The house has been a functioning collective for a year. With the help of The Bob, another collective farm down the road, they are putting in simpler, more sustainable systems that are easier to maintain, such as gray water reuse and a composting toilet. There are plans to build a greenhouse, prune the orchard, and put out a publication by the spring, and to become economically self-sustaining

over the next year. More and more city kids are learning about the project and travel north for extended weekends to help out and hang out. The local community is also influenced as the core collective members regularly weigh in at town meetings, inspiring teenagers to rethink the stereotypes of rural living. Kaya, who has been involved in sustainable farming projects in the area for three years, says "We all find meaning in working with the land, but we want our work to engage and serve the community on a broader scale in addition to nourishing ourselves."

Contact the collective: germantownhouse@yahoo.com



From Massacre to Militia

The Case Against Palestinian Disarmament in Lebanon

TEXT
Marwan Kanafani
& Elizabeth Schiffrin

Walking through the unpaved streets of Ain el-Helweh, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon with approximately 50,000 inhabitants, I am surrounded by concrete and garbage. Each breath I take is an inhalation of either sewage or gasoline fumes from diesel engines of cars squeezing through the narrow roadways. Old men scatter along the roads selling anything they can: tomatoes, car parts, batteries. There is no coherence among the items they sell, but this is the order they make for themselves in a place defined by chaos. Located on the outskirts of Sidon in South Lebanon, across the street from an amusement park called "Funny World," this camp has existed since 1948, when the creation of the state of Israel pushed 700,000 Palestinians off of their native land. Hoards of children carry play guns so closely resembling authentic weapons that they would be banned in the United States. These are the children of the Palestinian militia in Lebanon. When they grow strong enough, many of them will join the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command (PFLP GC), graduating from pellet gun to Kalashnikov.

To understand the origins of a group like the PFLP GC and why the U.S. is trying to disarm it, we have to refer to 1964 when the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was created by a group of Palestinian intellectuals in the Diaspora. With a priority placed on liberating Palestine through armed struggle, the PLO became the official representative of the Palestinian people. Between 1964 and 1967, the PLO was plugged into a broader, nationalist struggle with the ideology that Palestinian liberation was inextricably linked to the liberation of all Arabs.

This nationalist cause was forever altered in 1967 following the Six-Day War. Egypt, Jordan, and Syria were mobilizing their forces along their strategic borders. However, pre-empting any Arab attack, Israel launched an offensive that destroyed the Arab armies in a mere six days. Having seen that the rest of

the Arab world could not successfully come to the aid of the Palestinian cause, many Palestinians took this defeat as motivation to take up their own armed struggle. That is when groups such as the PFLP GC, founded by Ahmed Jibril, a Palestinian refugee living in Syria, began to splinter off from the more political factions of the PLO in order to make armed resistance their primary objective.

The PFLP GC has now developed into the most significant Palestinian militia group in Lebanon. However, the U.S.-sponsored United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 (2004), which "calls for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias," is challenging its existence. Today, the number of Palestinian refugees who live in Lebanon has reached approximately 350,000, according to the United Nations Relief Works Agency. Hamzi Bishtawi, a Palestinian refugee who was displaced with his family to the Shatila camp in 1948 following the creation of Israel, is the central committee spokesman for the PFLP GC. According to Bishtawi, until the Palestinian refugees currently living in Lebanon are allowed to return to a Palestinian state, the PFLP GC will remain armed. "We know what wealth of weaponry the enemy possesses," says Bishtawi. "And we know that mostly because of our casualties. At this point in history we have attempted to acquire whatever we can put our hands on to fight the enemy."

Salah Mohammad Salah, chairman of the Palestinian Refugees Standing Committee, a department of the PLO in Lebanon, believes that the U.S. focus on Palestinian disarmament at this time is a political tactic and not an attempt to address a real threat. In his opinion, the PFLP GC is ready to take up arms in defense of their people, not as an active provocation against Lebanese security forces. "Many would like to say that Palestinians are still used by the Syrians and that they are very dangerous to the internal situation," he says, "(This is) to avoid dealing with the real issue: the right of return." Mr. Salah asserts that the United States would like to bundle the PFLP GC and the Syrians together, thereby making an easier-to-swallow case for disarmament.

Since Ahmed Jibril founded the PFLP GC with a background as a captain in the Syrian Army, he garnered support from forces within Syria, ensuring a steady supply of Kalashnikovs, Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs), explosives, mines, hand grenades, and other light- to medium-grade weaponry. These weapons, hidden underground inside refugee camps such as Ain el-Helweh as well as in various caves in the Bekaa Valley, have not been subject to regular inspection or maintenance. In addition, training on the use of these weapons has been sparse. Despite these disadvantages, many young Palestinians continue to gravitate toward armed resistance. The daily realities of rampant unemployment, substandard living conditions, and little access to education push them to take up arms. However, beyond their modern-day struggles lies a history that quickly unveils why these young people feel that their survival depends on their ability to defend themselves.

In 1982, the Israelis invaded Lebanon and pushed their way up to Beirut under the pretext of rooting out the PLO. After a massive Israeli bombing effort against Palestinian camps and neighborhoods in Beirut, a deal was finally struck allowing for safe passage of the PLO out of Lebanon. Two days after the PLO fighters were evacuated, Israel deployed its armed forces around the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila in breach of the cease-fire agreement. However, Israel was not asked to withdraw by the supervising international forces. On the evening of Sept. 16, 1982, current Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon, then defense minister, reportedly invited Lebanese Phalangist militia units to enter the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. For the next 36 to 48 hours, they massacred 3,000 to 3,500 unarmed Palestinian refugees.

Three years later, as the survivors of Sabra and Shatila were still recovering from what the United Nations General Assembly called an "act of genocide," another attack from a different foe occurred. At this time, Syria was seeking to assert its own dominance over the PLO's growing control of South Lebanon through the creation of Amal, a militia comprised of Lebanese Shiite Muslims. Attacks were launched by Amal against the Palestin-

ian camps of Sabra, Shatila, and Burj el-Brajneh in Beirut, and the Rushdiyye camp of Tyre in South Lebanon. Between 1985 and 1988, the Amal War of the Camps claimed the lives of 3,781 people and injured close to 7,000.

In 1989, the Taif Accords were signed in Saudi Arabia, ending the Lebanese civil war. Taking into account the Sabra and Shatila massacres and the Amal War, Palestinians were allowed under Taif to retain "light weaponry." The Accords assigned Syria to be the main security force in Lebanon while various militias, Lebanese and Palestinian, remained armed.

Over the next 16 years, tensions brewed between Syrian forces and armed Lebanese nationalists struggling for control of the country. This tension culminated on Feb. 14, 2005 when a massive bomb exploded in a truck parked along the seaside Corniche in Beirut, killing former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri. Immediately rumors circulated that the operation was a Syrian assassination plot to rid Lebanon of one of its most ardent and popular anti-Syrian leaders. Buoyed by a universal outcry at the loss of such a revered leader, the Hariri assassination was just what the U.S. needed to shift attention away from its unpopular war in Iraq and to rally support for the disarmament of anti-Israeli armed militia groups. It was a perfect time to push for implementing 1559.

Drafted in 2004, UN Security Council Resolution 1559 laid out three main points: immediate withdrawal of Syrian forces and intelligence, free Lebanese elections, and the disarmament of all militia. Within six months of Hariri's assassination, Syria's last soldier made his way back to Damascus. With Syria out, Lebanon lacked any legitimate security apparatus that could combat Israeli aggression in the south. Filling that void was Hezbollah.

Hezbollah, the most popular armed militia in Lebanon for Palestinians and Lebanese alike, can briefly be described as an Iranian-backed Shiite-Muslim resistance organization, dedicated to defending Lebanon from invasion and occupation by Israeli forces. Since the end of the Lebanese civil

We know what wealth of weaponry the enemy possesses. And we know that mostly because of our casualties. At this point in history we have attempted to acquire whatever we can put our hands on to fight the enemy.

It's the ambitions of the Palestinian people and their vision and their faith that you cannot restrict us by Oslo or by the road map. There is another road map that the Palestinians have chosen: the resistance and the intifada.

war in 1989, U.S. policy toward Lebanon has increasingly focused on security for its biggest ally in the region: Israel. However, the U.S. knows it cannot achieve this aim as long as there are armed militia groups controlling certain areas, such as Hezbollah in South Lebanon and the PFLP GC in the refugee camps.

Speaking with *Al-Ahram*, a Cairo-based Arabic newspaper, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said, "Of course, in the long run you can't have a democratic society and a society based on rule of law where you have groups or organizations that are committed to violence outside of that framework."

According to Rami Khoury, a Jordanian-Palestinian freelance journalist for the *Daily Star* in Lebanon, the discussion of the disarmament of Palestinian militia must take into account Hezbollah. Khoury says, "Palestinian arms are coupled with Hezbollah arms. The Palestinians defend themselves against any threat of Israeli aggression, Lebanese aggression, and internal feuds. The fact is, though, the Palestinians aren't a danger to the security of Lebanon, and Hezbollah is the only group able to fight the Israelis. The Lebanese are intent on incorporating Hezbollah into the security force. At this point, disarmament is a waiting game." Under 1559 the Palestinian refugees cannot be forced to give up their weapons without the concurrent disarmament of Hezbollah. But Hezbollah has become a vital element of Lebanese security. Therefore, the question becomes, as Khalid Ayid from the Institute of Palestine Studies in Lebanon asks, "With public support for the U.S. war in Iraq withering away in the sun and a weak Lebanese security apparatus, who is up for the mighty task of disarming Hezbollah?"

With their outdated weapons hidden in caves and an untrained youth militia patrolling the cramped streets of some 12 refugee camps, the Palestinians in Lebanon do not characterize a ma-


nor military threat. However, they are being backed into a corner with Resolution 1559. According to Khoury, all the Palestinians have left is light weaponry to continue their struggle, trifles with which to negotiate. Now the U.S. wants them to give that up. Furthermore, the plight of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is exacerbated by the lack of coherence among Palestinian leaders. Hamzi Bishtawi feels that Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas is limited by his attempts to meet the demands of the U.S. administration. "Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) is imprisoned by the road map and by Oslo and whatever the American administration is able to hand out to them. We're always asking him to leave this prison," he says. "It's the ambitions of the Palestinian people and their vision and their faith that you cannot restrict us by Oslo or by the road map. There is another road map that the Palestinians have chosen: the resistance and the intifada."

Recent talks between the PA and the Lebanese have not dealt directly with the disarmament issue. Talking to Agency French Press, Prime Minister Abbas said, "The Palestinians are being hosted temporarily by Lebanon, and the law of this country must apply to us as it applies to others. This resolution (1559) concerns the Lebanese government, which is free to apply it as it wants." Essentially, Abbas and the Palestinian Authority have relinquished the responsibility of disarmament to the Lebanese, raising the question, who is going to advocate on behalf of the Palestinian refugees? Abbas is the democratically elected leader of the Palestinian people and has been chosen as their representative regardless of what camp they reside in or what faction they belong to. A disregard for the plight of the refugees could further fracture an already-tenuous alliance. With only 47 percent of Palestinians in camps favoring disarmament and an overwhelming fear among Palestinians of another massacre, Abbas will have to alter his approach if he is to show the refugees in Lebanon that they will not be forgotten.

In the wake of Hariri's assassination and renewed efforts to implement Resolution 1559, the U.S. faces the challenge of finding a way to negotiate between Israel, Lebanon, and the Palestinian refugees around the issue of disarmament. Israel cannot continue flying over Lebanese airspace, bombing South Lebanon, and threatening its neighbor's sovereignty while expecting normalized relations. Hezbollah, the PFLP GC, and other armed militia groups cannot realistically be asked to disarm while Israel still poses a threat of occupation in the region. Palestinian refugees will not be willing to give up their limited means of defending themselves without their own free state through which they may redefine their autonomy and power. The United States cannot successfully negotiate without holding Israel responsible for its growing number of settlements, expansion of its wall, and its unwillingness to allow Palestinian refugees to return to the West Bank and Gaza.

In the end, it is the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon who pay the highest price. With promises of security having collapsed into bloody massacres and the constant fear of attack looming over their day-to-day lives, Palestinians in Lebanon will not disarm. "These fears [will not] be easily forgotten by the Palestinian refugees in the camps," comments Khalil Ayid. "Because they paid dearly for it, and I don't think they can afford to pay for it once more."

The U.S. must acknowledge this reality. The armed refugees in the camp of Ain el-Helweh hold onto their weapons the same way the old men hold onto anything they can find to sell on the street. Such resources may be outdated and worn, but they are the last means of survival for an abandoned people. ①



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what we're talking about

P.O.S

Askeleton

Happy

Goodnight Records

www.goodnightrecords.com

The third part in a trilogy of sorts, "Happy" seems anything but. Coming off the heels of 2002's *Sad*, and 2004's *Angry*, *sad* is the final piece to the puzzle. While its somber songs really don't fit the name of the album, there are still some terrific moments to be found amongst the layers of melancholy.

It's not all of the depressed persuasion, however, it only seems like that makes up the bulk of things. "Some People" is a rather bouncy, upbeat track with some great vocal harmonies sprinkled throughout the jagged chord progressions. Askeleton's brand of lofi-indie pop, no matter the type of song, is pretty dependant on the use of keyboards. Since it's a versatile instrument, it works well in upbeat songs like that, as well as the more low key, morose tunes such as "Anti-Saints With Words In The Mouths," which relies almost solely on some subdued, sporadic keyboard strokes and the mellow sounds of Knol Tate's voice.

The flow of the album is what's most engaging, with every song's passing it's like another page of this brilliantly laid out story being told. And through all the ups and downs, after you do complete the album, you're no doubt a better person for it.

-Jordan Rogowski

Bear Proof Suit

Demo CDr

2779 N. Humboldt. Blvd, Milwaukee, WI 53212

rebelsound72@hotmail.com

Alright, I know the band's name is horrible but bear with me on this (get it?). This is raging dual guitar hardcore straight outta Wisco that is amazingly inventive. Start with a solid Negative Approach influence and tweak it with some end period Black Flag minor key fuckery, then add some burly 1970's hard rock and you've about got it nailed. The way these guys manage to mix it up this much and still be nothing but total unhinged classic hardcore is awe inspiring in much of the same way mid period Poison Idea was. Ginn inspired guitar leads pop up out of nowhere and warrant more than a few what-the-fuck-was-that's. Every single breakdown is fucked in one manner or another, and the Residents cover is one of the most demented things this chump has ever heard. The best demo I've come across in quite some time. Bongs up.

-Chad Kelsey

Norman Finkelstein

An Issue of Justice:

Origins of the Israeli/Palestine Conflict

AK Press, 2005

www.akpress.org

This CD is essentially an 80-minute overview of the Palestinian side of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, from the inception of Israel to the present day. The CD touches on some of the arguments Finkelstein raised in his 2003 book *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*

as well as the recently released *Beyond Chutzpah*. Finkelstein lays out the basic injustice of Israeli's position in a clear, rational manner, interjected with bits of dry humor. He points out Israel's many human rights violations, and the fact that the basis for the Palestinian's contention is not anti-Semitism but the desire for self-determination. Finkelstein avoids poisoning the argument with Holocaust comparisons, and instead uses the Apartheid system to describe Israel's position.

Finkelstein's major contribution to the Israeli debate is to create a space to criticize Israel and the Jewish establishment without being anti-Jewish. He points out how the specters of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust are used by Israeli politicians to manipulate public opinion, and excuse and justify repressive policies. This is a very touchy subject, and Finkelstein's position as a son of Holocaust survivors adds legitimacy and context to his criticisms. Finkelstein is able to present the argument in terms of just versus unjust, without involving race.

Finkelstein's argument is very one-sided, making almost no mention to the Palestinians' use of violence, or how that affects their cause in this age of the War on Terrorism. However, the point of this CD is not to be fair-minded; rather, it is an attempt to counter-weight the overwhelming pro-Israel bias in the American media. While Finkelstein is clearly trying to be polemic and controversial, he never presents information as the unquestionable Gospel truth. He uses facts to back up all of his points, and throughout the presentation, he asks listeners to research the facts on their own and not take his word for it.

The most remarkable thing about this disc is that it instills the listener with hope; hope of a pro-Jewish, anti-Israeli movement; hope of a peaceable solution to the conflict; and hope that this solution can come soon. As Finkelstein points out, the Palestinians have truth and justice on their side. Let's hope his optimism is not unfounded.

-Patrick Sean Taylor

Insect Warfare

At War With Gnndcore 7"

Six Two Five, 2005

www.625thrash.com

Man, nothing this gnarly has come down the pike in a long time, maybe since 324's *Customized Circle LP*. And like that record, this is full on Terrorizer worshipping punishment. These Texans kill with incredibly over the top grind-massive blast beats, gigantic blurred yet tech guitars, trad. gargled grind vocals, and artwork that needs to be seen to be fully appreciated. And they don't fuck it up by adding any 'new' elements to this classic formula- it's all Terrorizer, all the time. Really the best release of it's kind in many years. Hail Satan.

-Chad Kelsey

Japanther

Yer Living Grave

Menlo Park Recordings

www.menloparkrecordings.com

Japanther don't leave themselves with a whole lot of time to make a solid impression. Delivering all eight songs of *Yer Living Grave* in meager fifteen minutes, the punk rock outfit presents a solid, albeit somewhat lazy level of effort.

The muddled guitars and vocals that seem to be in the background immediately hamper the recordings, but somehow, they're able to overcome this as the album moves forward. The grooves are infectious and the rhythms tight, while the heavily distorted guitars of tracks like "Dragon Rider" are at the forefront of the music, even more so than the vocals. The tight, snappy drumming serves only to anchor the band, not be anything special on its own right. While the upbeat instrumentation shows the band in a very positive light, there are more low-key tracks to speak of, and the haunting vocals of "The Boss" are an instantly memorable representation of this.

In an album that's seemingly all over the place, the cen-

tral rhythms and flow are tight throughout, and everything else just falls into place.

-Jordan Rogowski

The Kings of New England

On the Cusp

Robot Lake, 2005

www.kingsofnewengland.com

The Kings of New England are here to present you with a new version of musical passion with their album *On the Cusp*. "Our stars are eavesdropping," says Roger Barret in the album's last track, "The Future Minus". Barret doesn't sing. Nor does he scream like a punk vocalist or bellow heavy metal. The cadence of the lyrics is nothing like a spoken word piece. They are just spoken. But every word hits home. The five members of this band are pouring out their music for you without tricks or hooks or overdubbing. Many of the songs begin with just a guitar tripping over an idea unaccompanied. One standout track, "Space is the New Seattle" touches on the post punk scene, reminiscent of the Pixies. Later on the guitar and bass slam on what would seem to be an early heavy metal influence. The lyrics are pure poetry. Basically, the nature of *On the Cusp* eludes categorization, and therein lies their appeal. Not slaves to production or genre, the Kings of New England march to the sound of their own whip cracking.

-Stella Meredith

Matthew Shipp

One

Thirsty Ear, 2005

www.thirstyear.com

Matthew Shipp is famous for playing in a number of different groups in a number of drastically different settings, working towards different goals. While recording for Thirsty Ear, he's participated in acoustic jazz groups, hip-hop and jazz cross-breedings and a little funk. On "One", Ship is the only performer; expressing himself through the notes on an acoustic piano. There is no production trickery. There are no effects. Just Ship's talent and creativity. The music isn't all pretty, some of it's disturbing, but it's mostly inventive. This player has a style, his own, and in a solo setting, Matthew Ship displays why he's been invited by these many groups and recording companies to participate in the vast number of records he has played on over the years.

-Dave Cantor

Meth And Goats

Attack From Meth And Goats Mountain

Electric Human Project, 2005

www.electrnhumanproject.com

What do you get when you combine the bombast of the Blood Brothers with the off kilter, frantic instrumentation of Transistor Transistor? Forty minutes of wonderfully chaotic and cacophonous music, that's what

Meth And Goats have a lot to offer, and they do so combining a myriad of tempos, chord progressions, and vocal inflections that just leave your head spinning. Instantly, a listener will remark at just how loud the album is, without being too overbearingly powerful. The fuzz-laden guitars have a real ebb and flow to them that helps each song move under the howling screams of singer Joe Burns. Burns' style is a hard one to describe accurately, as it changes so much from song to song. Varying between an almost spoken style and an all out shriek, he's able to make every word drip with an intensity that's simply remarkable. Meth And Goats do know how to scale back, though, as the eighth track on *Attack From Meth And Goats Mountain* so surely displays. The instrumental "How Does He Get to The Sun?" offers minimal, but haunting instrumentation that lulls the listener into a false sense of security, before "Psychic Car Crashes" nips them directly out.

After a few extremely strong tracks follow that up, the eight minute instrumental closer, "Moon Repense" ends the album in devastating fashion. Not sounding far off from Isis, the droning, pounding metal is so meticulous, and so rhythmic that you can't help but be entranced. There's a ton to like on this effort from Meth And Goats, all they'll need is your time.

-Jordan Rogowski

The New Pornographers

(w/Gerudo, Immaculate Machine, Destroyer)

Live in Kalamazoo, Michigan

I have a friend who hates the Beatles. "The Beatles suck. They are too pop," he will say. This is a common sentiment among many of the aging punk rockers I've spent time with over the years. Having been a lover of punk music myself, I have always been confounded by such statements. What are the Ramones, other than an amped up Ronettes, anyway? What's the matter, you don't like melody? To say one hates the Beatles, or pop in general is, in my mind, akin to saying, "I really hate this air I breathe." or "You know, I have no use for this water I drink." In short, absurd.

Due to this prevailing notion among many of my peers, I will insert a disclaimer right here. For anyone who has not yet heard the band, or hasn't read any of the loads of favorable press that's been lavished upon them, The New Pornographers are a pop band. A really great pop band. Bandleader A.C. Newman writes the type of songs Brian Wilson or Lennon and McCartney would have been proud to call their own. Each of their three albums is full of the catchiest melodies and two and three part harmonies you'll hear this decade. They do this without sounding retro. Being on Matador records, the production and arrangements remain firmly contemporary, very indie. Oh, and alt-country singer Neko Case provides powerful, heart melting vocals, which certainly doesn't hurt.

I rolled into Kalamazoo on October 8th. After having a beer at the regionally famous Bell's Brewery, I headed over to Club Soda, a tiny gmy bar in Kalamazoo's entertainment district. By the time the first band, local heroes Gerudo, went on, Club Soda was packed with people of all ages.



Gerudo's sound employed the stop start dynamics of many mid nineties bands. Their music was competent, and the crowd enthusiastically welcomed them. They may have been more at home opening for Helmet or Three Days Grace than for the New Pornographers, however. Their presence brought to mind Sesame Street's "Which One of These Things is Not Like the Other".

Next up was Immaculate Machine, a melodic rock outfit not unlike Blondie or a more sophisticated Soviettes. A three piece fronted by A.C. Newman's niece, Kathryn Calder, Immaculate Machine made music that was full of hooks, setting the stage for what was to come. Fans of clever indie pop, take notice. Around the time Kathryn and company finished up their set, the bar got so crowded that I recognized that in order to be able to see any of the action for the remaining two acts, I was going to have to act immediately.

By the time Destroyer took the stage, I had pushed my way to the front third of the venue. Destroyer's Dan Bejar is quite an enigmatic performer. Inverting standard rock and pop to fit a more modern aesthetic, he writes lyrically opaque songs. He's a bit like an everyman David Bowie. Taking the more complex components of the rock of the early 70's and giving it a less flamboyant sheen, Destroyer's set was the most challenging act (yet quite enjoyable) of the evening.

Anticipation for the New Pornographers swelled to such levels that, in the minutes before they took the stage, the crowd engulfed me, pushing me even closer to the stage. No matter. I could get a better look at the band this way. The New Pornographers took the stage, beginning with the title track from their latest album, *Twin Cinema*. A muscular rock song with a melody that begs to be hummed by all that hear it, the audience expressed its gratitude with a roar of delight. From this point A.C., Neko, sometime member Dan Bejar, and the tight rhythm section tore through a set of tunes, represented on each of their three albums. Among the highlights were, "All For Swinging You Round", "Sing Me Spanish Techno", and "My Slow Descent Into Alcoholism". Each of these songs rolled along with a zip that infected each listener with an ear to ear smile, all the while, building layer upon layer of vocal harmony that penetrated the hearts of even the most jaded among us.

So, my cynical hipster friend, open your heart (and wallet) to the joys of pop music. You know you want to. The roots of our beloved indie rock lie in these styles, anyway. Wouldn't it be easier to hum a few bars of the sunny tunes of the New Pornographers than walk around with a scowl on your face?

-Chad Olson

P.O.S.

Audition

Rhymesayers, 2006
www.rhymesayers.com

There are many commonalities between punk and hip hop. Both are fueled with adolescent aggression, a deep sense of injustice, and resentment of the general fucked-upness of the world. Both represent the archetypes of youthful rebellion. Both rely heavily on street cred and being true to the scene. Both have been largely co-opted by the mainstream, had most of the fire drained out of them, and been turned into marketing tools to sell everything from energy drinks to video games.

Public Enemy, Ice Cube, NWA, Nas, and the Wu Tang are examples of rap artists who made records that are more punk than half the shit cluttering up the stages

of the Warp Tour. Still, there aren't a lot of examples of explicit links between the hip hop and punk, or at least examples that aren't just lame attempts at appropriation. When hip hop does embrace rock, it is generally the kind of pea-brained, macho bullshit that was supposed to have become extinct in the early nineties.

Enter P.O.S., an African-American punk kid from Minnesota who decided to drop rhymes rather than form a hardcore band. On *Audition*, his sophomore release, he name drops the Nation of Ulysses, Charles Bronson, and the Dillinger Escape Plan, and his aggro flow and righteous anger owe as much to Black Flag as Ice Cube. Songs like "Half Cocked Concepts" incorporate grinding guitars and screamed choruses, and offer the same kind of cathartic release as the best hardcore records. The production is solid throughout, and there isn't a single boring beat on the disc.

Even more impressive are P.O.S.'s more introspective moments. He is brutally honest, laying out all of his faults, mistakes, and problems in lines like "I got skills to pay the bills, but that's about it" and "I'm here to make tapes off the land corporations rape...but I guess I'm dreaming

but nothing is definite. That's part of the problem with *The Standard*. Relating each track metaphorically and literally to working at a gas station, which I can tell you is less than glamorous, works without question on occasion and then not so much at other times. The greatest achievement of this album is without question the production, which is interesting and thought provoking most of the way through. Upon first listen, the beats sound like anything from the J5/Dilated Peoples axis of hip hop, with a bit more atmospheric noise thrown in. If nothing else there are a good number of actual musicians playing distinct parts throughout the release. Unfortunately, on repeated listening, the drums (sampled or otherwise) don't always gel with the live instrumentation. It's still above par production. Lyrically, there seems to be no new place to go. Just a different setting. That's not to say that I don't agree with what the album's saying about crass consumerism, but each of us have heard it before. Maybe I missed the whole point, seeing as I'm just a critic. But the deciding factor on whether or not this is a good album is figuring out if Psyche Origami is creative enough to be cocky. I can't say, but where are the modest rappers at?

-Dave Cantor



because my rent is always a month late." Later in the album he declares "We throw our hands up like we just don't care, cuz we don't, and how could we?" I'd almost call it emo, only it's far too honest and self-assured. P.O.S. doesn't whine or indulge in self-pity; he just tells it like it is, warts and all.

Audition is further proof that most of the interesting music being created today is coming out of hip hop. This is an impressive second effort from a rapper who is mature beyond his years, and is hopefully the beginning of a long and prolific career.

-Patrick Sean Taylor

Psyche Origami

The Standard

Arc the Finger, 2005
www.arcthefinger.com

Concept albums are always difficult to grasp fully. Or any album actually, because you as the listener have no idea what exactly the artist/group is trying to say. There can be approximations, there can be guesses,

Screaming Weasel

Weaselmania

Fat Wreck Chords, 2005
www.fatwreck.com

If you listen to punk and you don't listen to Screaming Weasel, you may want to re-evaluate your life. Thanks to Fat Wreck Chords, instead of wallowing in the mire of your sorry punk record collection and missing all those classics from the late '80s and early '90s, you can pick up this compilation of 34 tracks. There's a bit from each of their albums. All the dumb-fuck-punk you could possibly ever want is here, including the ridiculous and harrowing, "I Wanna Be a Homosexual". Other Lookout!-era hits are on here as well. And if nothing else Mike Dirnt from Green Day fills in on bass for a few tracks. Shock the middle class. Take it up your punk rock ass. Don't sleep, consumerize.

-Dave Cantor

Sunn O)))
Black One
Southern Lord Records, 2005
www.southernlord.com

Black One is the latest, most innovative, and most triumphant opus by drone doom visionaries Sunn O))). This is a titanic, crushing leviathan of a record. It produces an absolutely totalizing soundscape from which the willing listener will have little recourse (or desire) of escape. Sunn O))) creates a sound so awesome as to transform, open up and explode space itself. What is manifest is a dynamic terrain that is at times colossally wide, a great, windswept landscape—and in other moments, horrifically, dreadfully claustrophobic. On the latter point, I am speaking both figuratively and literally—Malefic's desperate, careening vocals on the song "Báthory Erzsébet" were recorded as he was dressed as a corpse, locked in a microphone-laden coffin and placed in a hearse.

But while *Black One* is at times gripped by claustrophobic angst, the pervading sentiment of this album is one of vastness. Sound waves create topology. Great frost-covered deserts spread out to blanket the landscape and towering black mountains rise to dot the horizon. And the earth is one great, humming, rattling, living, breathing subwoofer.

To construct such a landscape, Sunn O))) had to level all structures that had before existed. The music of Sunn

O))) deconstructs—nay, bulldozes—the musical architecture of the past. It is with a perverse pleasure that we are able to experience this critical demolition. As the past is transformed to ash, a black phoenix arises. In this ecstatic explosion of sonic possibility, we might fear ever being able to return to that which has come before.
-Mike Medow

The Thin Man
Greasy Heart
Contraphonic Music, 2005
www.contraphonic.com

I imagine the singer, Kennedy Greenrod, to be the toast of the underground town in Chicago. Wherever indie-party-goers go, Mr. Greenrod is there with an amusing quip. He has stories from having lived in England, in California and no doubt now has stories from living in Chicago and touring with his band The Thin Man. Notorious, I'm sure they are, Greenrod mixes in his tales ideas from the far off land of his birth and tired rock cliché bar and travel conventions. Intrepid a character and as nice as he well may be, I don't know, but I do know his music is better left to the imagination of a publicity company. While, Greenrod and his band of veteran Chicago musicians are without question adept at their style and probably do listen to a considerable amount of R&B. That relation should not be made in a press release or elsewhere. Each track stomps along at a small club, updated Stones/indie style. A few times the group

showcases their ability to play in more than one tempo, but not often enough. Our friend Greenrod too plays the accordion, but not confidently enough apparently to showcase it on the record more than a few times. The charm and goodness of this record flows down to you as a result of the band being loose. They're comfortable doing what they do and Greenrod's accent is charming enough to affect listeners. Interesting accents and my incapability to not think of Tom Waits as I listen to this does not make it worth my time, nor yours.
-Dave Cantor

Tokyo Electron
s/t
Empty Records, 2005
www.emptyrecords.com

I'm beginning to really enjoy Empty Records. Partially because of The Reatards. And oddly enough, Jay Reatard happens to produce this slab of punk. That being said, I don't ever understand an entire verse of this yelling. Occasionally, it sounds like coherent, useful punk rock. And other times it seems like the guys in Tokyo Electron just happened to know the right people to get a chance at putting a record out. A prime example of the bands inadequacies comes on "I'm Worthy", with the un-needed addition of an organ not even being able to help out the band. The following track, with sloppy tempo changes, again gives me some inking into the politics that could have potentially played a role in this release coming about. I suppose though, the adage about who you know comes into play in every sphere of life and punk is certainly no different. Now that punk is pretty much thirty, we can look at how production and distribution has so drastically changed over that time. A decade ago, a label like Empty Records probably wouldn't have had the financial ability to produce and package a disc that they didn't have the utmost faith in. Now, with everyone knowing a guy who has some special power, whether it's recording cheaply, doing the artwork (which is a bit tacky on this one, but not in a good way) or whatever, everyone can have a slab of their very own. Is that good or not? I can't really say yet. Gimme another thirty years.
-Dave Cantor

Various Artists
I Like It (Vol. 2)
Compost, 2005
www.compsot-records.com

I like it Vol. 2 is a compilation from Compost Records that's organized and compiled in an interesting fashion. From each of four different producers or groups comes a selection of any favorite songs each might have. The genres touched upon hit upon everything but country and gospel pretty much. The first gentlemen up, Trevor Jackson, gives us a cover of an Augustus Pablo track, which ends up sounding a bit too cheesy for good tastes, and a few electro songs. A name named Pole serves up a solo Dave Thomas (Pere Ubu) track, an extremely solid hip-hop track from The Goats and a good electro hip-hop track from Headset (Plug Research). A track from Can apparently off a single of theirs, along with some jazz and funk come from the collection of Dorfmeister (K&D). For some reason the folks that compiled this saved the most singular of visions, and least interesting to me, series of selections for the end of the record. The group Trockski some more electro along with a P-Funk jam of inferior quality. These tracks serve as an interesting way to compile a record, insight for fans of each of these artists, but also serve to form a very spotty album. I sold it.
-Dave Cantor



Various Artists

Jazz Toys

Perfect Toy Records, 2005

www.perfecttoy.de

Europeans have a very fickle sense of cool. Some things simply work there that don't work here. And some things are cool across the Atlantic that are just cliché and cheese filled here. Case in point: the majority of the tracks on Jazz Toys. Beyond the disco and uncomfortable sounding funk of this compilation there are a number of tracks that can actually be translated into American Cool. The Earth Quakers do "Soul Samba" and while there's a bit too much orchestration, which plagues other funk tracks on here, the acoustic guitar works well together with the rest of the group. Fusion classic, "Chameleon", gets re-done by Kaatee Frits Quartet. Interesting choice of covers. But frankly, no one's going to be able to pull off a cover of this tune that touches the original; close, but not quite there. Additionally, there are a number of more traditional jazz tracks. Chet Baker, who apparently recorded one off dates with European groups during tours, here gives us a track with a French group that sounds too Latin style to hail from the interior of the continent. The other more traditional sounding jazz track comes from a group called Hipnosis. Most of their albums are instrumental, but for this compilation, they choose to include a vocal number. And I can't say that it works out in their favor. Not bad, but the female vocals just aren't all that pleasing. In its totality, this compilation isn't really all that pleasing either. Some artifacts of music gone by are lost for a reason. Here, sometimes unfortunately, they find the light of day.

-Dave Cantor

The Winterpills

s/t

Signature Sounds, 2005

www.signaturesounds.com

Listening to the Winterpills, it continues to amaze me how an artist like Elliot Smith could so completely patent a sound, that you can hear his songs still resonating through the work of new artists. However, while the Winterpills tip their collective hats to predecessors like Smith, and a current crop of musicians playing the folk music of the 21st century - Iron and Wine, the Shins - the quartet is pushing past these examples into less definable territory, into their own sound. This is the first release for the Massachusetts group. On their website the bio reads: "They are a band playing you songs of pretty losses and hollow hopefulness," a statement that makés sense judging from the strange antique nostalgia of their songs. In fact of the ten songs on their album, eight seem to be pretty clearly about heartache, loss and sadness - the other two being too hard to tell. In this way, they too are like Smith. To contrast this heavy theme, the songs on their self-titled album add graceful melodies, sweeping harmonies between singers Philip Price and Flora Reed and the sort of wry lyricism that puts a strong face on a painful subject.

-Erik Neumann

The American Conservative

Scott McConnell, editor and publisher

www.amconmag.com

It's no joke being a leftist these days. Transnational liberal capitalism seems to be expanding all around the world, nations that have other priorities are being threatened and attacked, and wealth continues to travel upward to the detriment of those of us who don't own capital, from the shrinking American middle class to the ever-expanding global poor. As an activist and *Clamor* editor, I have to remind myself that all is not lost and they we need to keep fighting. Or else it soon will be.

So it may come as a surprise that my favorite (well, second favorite) magazine is the *American Conservative*. Every fourteen days, the opinion journal founded by Pat Buchanan lands on my desk to the confusion (and sometimes consternation) of my co-workers and to the delight of your humble reviews editor. Cover stories in 2005 included "Torture on the Farm: Why Conservatives Should Care about Animal Cruelty" (5/23), "End of the Binge: What Happens When Cheap Oil Runs Out" by James Howard Kunstler (9/12), "Money for Nothing: The Cost of Corruption in Iraq" (10/ 24), and my favorite "We don't need an exit strategy...we need an EXIT" (8/1). While Democrats and many lefty mags have struggled to elucidate a cogent critique of the war, these right-wingers have been angrily poking the fascist Bush administration with a sharp stick to the eye.

And why are the folks at the *American Conservative* just so damn mad, what with a GOP president, congress, and supreme court, you ask? Because, as Buchanan and publisher Scott McConnell relentlessly point out, there is nothing even remotely conservative about the current administration. Conservatism, as understood by philosophers like Edmund Burke and Michael Oakeshott, is a method of expanding democracy to enfranchise the dead by preserving traditions. While I don't agree with this philosophy, it does have much to recommend it - preservation of natural environments, the defense of existing communities, and the protection of historical architecture, to name a few. What Bush and Co. are peddling, on the other hand, conserves nothing; it consumes. Nothing is worth anything beyond bare exchange value, no community can choose any value over efficiency, and all human desires (because they are ultimately fungible into money) demand the consumption of everything in the blast furnace of hypercapitalism. Conservatism was once the protection of the status quo, the defense of small towns against big cities, the protection of local communities against the social engineering

of Washington liberals - in short, the belief that people as individuals and organized as communities were able to make their own decisions about how best to live. To Bush & Company, these ideas are Potemkin villages erected to distract the church-going rubes, transparent cons designed to hustle votes by mouthing pieties about local control while passing No Child Left Behind and defending freedom with a USA PATRIOT act-designed surveillance state. Honest conservatives have as much reason to hate the Bush crowd as we do.

In 2006, the *American Conservative* continues along its anti-war, anti-global, anti-neocon way with an ease that brings to mind the baseball admonition that one should make the hard stuff look easy and the easy stuff look hard. The people at the *American Conservative* are creating a conservative critical theory that outsmarts many of *Clamor's* enemies with a frustrating clarity and conducting the most interesting ideological experiment in years - 24 times a year. With an anti-global left desperately in need of allies, the *American Conservative* offers insight, debate, and ideas that we on the left should examine. And take seriously.

-Keith McCrea

Bananas:

Women Transforming the Banana Unions of Latin America

Dana Frank

South End Press, 2005

www.southeastendpress.org

In the 1980's women working on banana plantations in Honduras organized and successfully pushed their union, the Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Tela Railroad Company, (SITRATERCO) to accept women in positions of union leadership, and to better represent their interests as women workers. They also began to educate themselves and train other women represented by SITRATERCO to understand and fight oppression based on sex and gender, and to carry out union leadership functions like negotiating and strategizing. The Latin American banana industry had been highly organized since the 1950's, and SITRATERCO had a particularly democratic decision-making structure, but its male-dominated leadership often ignored issues women faced such as access to reproductive healthcare, discrimination based on pregnancy and age, and the pay and working conditions in plantation packing houses where most women employed in the banana sector work.

Women active in SITRATERCO have also educated banana workers outside of the union and brought an un-



derstanding of gender into organizing with federations of banana unions in Honduras and Latin America.

For this study Dana Frank, a professor of history at the University of California - Santa Cruz who is also active with the labor solidarity organization US LEAP (US Labor Education in the Americas Project) traveled to Honduras where she met with women involved in the banana unions and observed their work as they met with other union leaders, carried out day to day organizing and led trainings designed for women workers and organizers. Setting out the theoretical framework of the book, Frank talks about the multi-dimensional identity the women have constructed for themselves as both women and as part of the working class. She also emphasizes their movement's autonomous growth, development and leadership; too often, she says, even progressive labor solidarity work in the US tends to cast the women it assists with as passive recipients of aid, as if they were unable to organize themselves.

But she explicitly analyzes less than she describes, often through the women's own words, their development of radical consciousness, dynamics between them and male union members, and their experiences related to sexual and gender identity. The study also looks at developments like changes in the banana industry and labor conditions under new neo-liberal trade regimes, analyzing their impact on the women's work. Its endnotes, which list hundreds of sources of further information on issues it touches on, are also a good resource.

Some readers might find the background and discussion a little dry; it can take some concentration to keep track of labor organizations mentioned, their internal organization and their relationships to each other, but it's hard to avoid that in a serious discussion of complex institutions. Another small inconvenience is that most of the discussion of methodology and sources used is done in the endnotes rather than in the text itself so that you have to follow the notes closely if you want to keep track of sources for particular passages in the text. Overall, though, this book is informative and accessible, and should be useful to anyone interested in examples of grassroots organizing in the labor movement internationally.

-Patricia Lietz

Better To Reign In Hell: Inside The Raiders Fan Empire

Jim Miller and Kelly Mayhew
The New Press, 2005
www.thenewpress.com

I suspect that, like myself, a large number of *Clamor* readers are not intimately familiar with professional sports, with football probably being near the top of the list of them. But Jim Miller and Kelly Mayhew have managed to produce a book about the subject that's fascinating, disturbing, and uplifting all at once.

Better To Reign In Hell is an in-depth look at the Oakland Raiders almost religious fan base and the bizarre culture it has created. Devotion to the team is key, as is drinking and, to a lesser extent, fighting, but there is also a level of camaraderie that is unsurpassed as far as sports fandom goes. Miller and Mayhew infiltrated the "Black Hole", or "Raider Nation" for an entire season and emerged with an awesome story to tell. While I believe Miller sort of misses the mark in comparing these fans to Deadheads, a group that I am kind of familiar with (ed. note: kind of!?!), one cannot escape the fact that these people truly exist in their own universe, at least on weekends. From rich suburbanites to jobless gang members, the Oakland Raiders supercede everything. Once it's game day, all social barriers are broken, as long as those involved are Raiders fans. The violence begins with those who are not fans. But I'll leave that side of the issue to the book itself, as it is less of a key factor than the title of the book would lead one to believe.

Mayhew and Miller's exploration of the Raider Nation explores a topography both unique and fascinating. Superbly illustrated, *Better To Reign in Hell* is a book about sports for just about anyone.

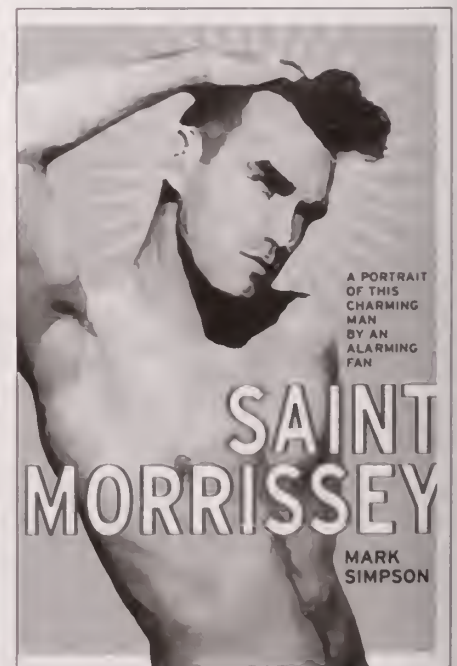
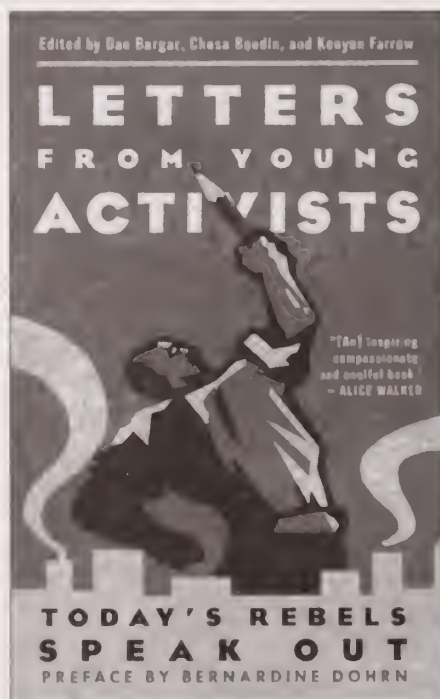
-Chad Kelsey

Letters from Young Activists: Today's Rebels Speak Out

Dan Berger, Chesa Boudin, and Kenyon Farrow, editors
Nationbooks, 2005
www.lettersfromyoungactivists.org.

The genesis for this book was Todd Gitlin's predictable and irritating hoo-boy-you-kids-need-to-sit-down-and-listen-to-me book *Letters to Young Activists*, so it seems only fair that this book would ignite debate about exactly how inspired/inspiring young people are or are not—check out the commentary about the book online if you think that I'm joking. The book is a wide-ranging set of letters (unfortunately, nothing to Todd Gitlin directly—because that guy needs a talking to, for sure) to older activists, parents, the movement, authorities, tomorrow's activists, and to people's future selves. Of course, with such a broad range of topics, there's no way to address all of the parts and aspects of global social justice activism—a point the editors are clear about. The collection is heavy on US based activists, no surprise really—the authors are from the US. Readers in search of the definitive voice of global justice activism will be disappointed—thankfully, the editors make no claims of being the voice of a generation—they're honest about the fact that there's never a movement, that now and in the past, activists have always been a part of intersecting and associated movements, each with their own analysis, critique, and focus. Readers of *Clamor* will probably be pleased with this collection—it feels a lot like what this magazine aims to share—a broad tapestry of many voices, many struggles. It's interesting to think about the connections between the different letters, and to think about what it will be like to read the collection twenty years from now. I immediately wanted to give the collection to my favorite ten-year-old revolutionary, and it might be a nice thing to read if you don't know many other activists, feel isolated in your activism, are new to activist work, or are the parent of a young activist. After I read it, I regretted not responding to the call for letters, and maybe letter writing is one of the ways we can be more intentional in talking to each other about our work—the editors have a snazzy looking website where interested people can do just this—www.lettersfromyoungactivists.org.

-Laura Mintz



Recipes For Disaster
An anarchist cookbook

By Crimethinc. Agents Provocateurs, 2004
www.crimethinc.com

[1]

Blasting the axiom that you can't blow up a social relationship, Crimethinc's latest lexicon delivers way more fireworks than the dubious incendiaries of the original *Anarchist Cookbook*. Where the latter was an unreliable, DIY guide to explosives and firearms, *Recipes for Disaster* gathers a polymorphous introduction to the direct-action heart of anarchism. It deserves to be read far beyond the circular networks of true believers, for in the grace of its plain-spoken sedition it succeeds not just as provocation, but as a masterpiece of radical propaganda.

The black bloc is here, alongside dozens of anonymously penned chapters on everything from forming affinity groups to helping survivors of sexual violence heal. Making the best of unemployment doesn't compete with building independent media and dealing with government repression – every recipe is given the dignity of its own moment, held together by the demand that what we dream of be what we are. Liberation is not a zero-sum game, it's a "movable feast."

Direct action is cast by its detractors as little more than a code word for smashing windows, but rebellion in the streets is only the most confrontational aspect of a philosophy that seeks life in hand, not the pie in the sky of religion or the crapshoot of organizing for political change. Each recipe is a viral revolt that tries to show how easy it is to live, to skip off the well-traveled and desiccated roads of pre-digested food and pre-determined elections. It's the common-sense of utopian longing, beautifully laid-out over 600 pages.

[2]

Direct action is a healthy ethic to live by, but for all their ecstatic immediacy Crimethinc seems to honestly believe that liberation is a simple choice each individual gets to make. Obviously defensive over their well-earned reputation as the self-satisfied bards of the crusty aristocracy, the authors insist that "anyone can do it" over and over again. From *Days of War/Nights of Love* to *Evasion*, each Crimethinc book re-affirms their dogmatic rejection of the social. Why everyone doesn't just get free seems utterly lost on them.

It's easy to hit the road when you know you have a home to return to, to refuse basic hygiene (as bourgeois) when you only associate with the equally dirty (and

bourgeois). In place of vanguards that organize people to fight for systematic change, Crimethinc admits only the possibility of avant-gardes, who, through the beauty of their dance will somehow show the rest of us the way. It's a propaganda of the deed more concerned with dinner parties than assassinations, but the underlying misanthropy remains the same. Fight for social change beyond the bounds of affinity and you're just a new boss in the making. In this age of war and the serious danger of Christian fascism sweeping the country – how's that working out? From what I can see, not too well at all. For every anarchist unconcerned with power, there's another Pat Robertson (or liberal demagogue) eager to play.

Capitalism doesn't just thrive through some puritanical suppression of Eros. It replicates itself through the commodification of stimulated desire. In our pornographic dystopia, billboards display flesh more than the product they sell and Nike tells us to "Just Do It." In the 1960s, Jerry Rubin was the proto-Crimethinc prophet, and he "just did it" right onto Wall Street, where he traded rebellion in for a career in finance.

Instead of learning from the limitations of the narcissistic side of the 1960s, Crimethinc has fetishized it and defined it as the limit. The Crimethinc ideology is effectively that beyond personal choice lies tyranny. Ronald Reagan couldn't have said it better himself.

If the Situationist author Raoul Vaneigem was right that those who speak of revolution without mentioning everyday life "have a corpse in their mouth," then maybe its fair to say that those who equate revolution with the lifestyle choices of well-read drop-outs confuse making love with jerking off.

[3]

It's a whole lot easier to like Crimethinc when you don't take them too seriously. Like *Adbusters* in a ski mask, they confuse the very real oppression of a working class (they pretend doesn't exist) with the terminal boredom of consumer culture. Decades ago, the German writer Gunter Grass said of the beatific hippies singing peace and love that they were "powerless with a guitar."

In other words, George Bush is real and we can't shoplift regime change. Political change requires politics. Mao was right. Revolution really isn't a dinner party, even if Crimethinc is a tasty dish.

-Jed Brandt

Saint Morrissey:
A Portrait of This Charming Man
by an Alarming Fan

Mark Simpson
Touchstone Books, 2005
www.marksimpson.com/pages/saint_morrissey.html

Feted by some as a love letter, Simpson's book – psycho-biography according to him – claims that all we need to know about Morrissey can be found in his lyrics and interviews. It's a worthy exercise because the literature on Morrissey is so scant.

With a fan biography – 'psycho' or otherwise – it's okay that the subject is mythologized and their every action and pronouncement declared a work of historic genius. If you feel this way about Morrissey and are the sort of fan who still listens to *Kill Uncle* all the way through then *Saint Morrissey* will thrill and entertain you.

In fact, somewhere hidden inside its 200 pages is an hugely informative 50 page study of Morrissey's very specific influences and cultural inspirations that will provide excellent context for his devotees, especially his American audience who may not have grown up with Coronation Street, Carry On films, Shelagh Delaney and The Moors Murders.

However, to get to the interesting stuff means wading through a fetid swamp of tiresome pseudo intellectual stylistic exercises that include mock -psychoanalysis, sham cultural history, superficial linguistic analysis, junior philosophy, guileless politics and forced humor. Simpson spins off lines and phrases of Morrissey lyrics into pompous undergraduate-style mini essays on such topics as the male Oedipus complex, feminism and gender politics, the psychology of crime and the socioeconomic history of the North of England and 21st Century America. In parts it reads like the most impenetrable academic nonsense, like a freshman trying to imitate a clever professor. In other parts – often in the same page – it tries to be whimsical and evocative, or riffs on the ribald punnery of British music hall comedy. Many paragraphs appear to exist only in order to include knowing quotes from Morrissey's lyrics and titles (e.g. 'Steven's identification with Jimmy [Dean] was...certainly sick and ill'). This could be a clever attempt to heroically imitate the styles of its subject, except it comes over as neither big nor clever.

My problem is that Morrissey is so damn arch that it is hard to believe a thing he says, or to read him as anything other than a witty and clever lyricist who spends his time courting controversy and using every avenue possible to cultivate his outsider status. Personally I don't buy the beatification of the Mozster. His political statements extend to the easy wishing violent death on politicians, his gender stance is to declare that he is a representative of the empty-sounding fourth sex, and some of his subject choices appear without any agenda apart from revelling in the publicity they generate. Child murder, paedophilia, racism, fascist symbolism, violence and disability are all raised or referenced in Morrissey's work but only as touchstones of controversy or off-the-shelf outsider symbolism. There are fascinating things to be said about the way Morrissey deals with his own apparent hypocrisy and ultimate political emptiness. However, they are not said here.

The main weakness in Simpson's book is that he simply lets Morrissey off on every count. His hero is allowed to be greedy, foolish, hypocritical, vacuous and vicious. He is allowed to undermine his own pronouncements and release increasingly dull and irrelevant albums. It is



all forgiven and feted. In Simpson's view, a kid holding up a Denver radio station to force them to play Smiths songs is of more historical import than Columbine, and Morrissey's adoption of skinhead culture and racist imagery is nothing to do with the fractured and dangerous Europe of the early nineties, but simply a brave two-fingered salute to the music press. In Simpson's world Morrissey operates without context. In fact, everything else exists in the context of Morrissey. This is a patently ridiculous stance that, perhaps in an attempt to imitate the wittily barbed, self-centred and jealous belligerence of his hero, frequently becomes petty. When, viciously attacking his work with Johnny Marr, Simpson refers to The Pet Shop Boys singer Neil Tennant as 'Nil Talent', my sides split with the sheer hilarity of it all.

-Saltydog

The Sorcerer's Trick: A Weapon of Mass Deception

By Morgan Two Fires Kazembe, PhD
Crying Lion Corporation
www.cryinglion.com/home.html

Using ironic, radical and humorous analysis in the tradition of Michael Moore, author/psychologist Morgan Two Fires Kazembe takes the reader on a no holds barred journey through class and race in America - past, present and future. Combining in-depth scholarship, free verse and satirical vignettes *The Sorcerer's Trick* demonstrates how age-old power relations, self - deception and hidden everyday contradictions keep social control alive and well in our society. Kazembe invites the reader to look at power struggle from a new perspective, one that is both spiritual as well as critical, in order to challenge the so-called "the Sorcerer's Trick."

Kazembe's style is highly reminiscent of the politically charged, subversive comic books of famed Mexican author, Rius ("AB Che", "Imperialism for Beginners", etc).

My Latin American soul brothers and sisters have been using gallows humor (literally) for decades to reach out to the masses about some very unpleasant political, economic and human rights truths. American Scholars, on the other hand, including African American scholars, tend to be more up tight and earnest when addressing social ills. This is why *The Sorcerer's Trick* is so refreshing. Kazembe looks at topics such as police brutality and the widening rich-poor divide in ways that are compelling as well as wacky and entertaining. Like Rius, he irreverently uses cut and paste pictures from a wide variety of unexpected sources ranging actual slave sales announcements from the early 1800's to "buppy" oriented business journals. My favorite is Kazembe's use of an old sepia photograph of a white missionary reading to a group of ragged black children to introduce his critique of Bush's "No Child Left Behind" public education policy. As an educator, I highly recommend *The Sorcerer's Trick: A Weapon of Mass Deception* as an introductory book for undergraduate African-American, political, and cultural studies courses. It is a creative alternative to the stuffy, verbose, ethnic studies literature that's out there today.

My eighteen-year-old students may, unfortunately, nod out when reading intellectual giants such as Cornell West. In contrast, *The Sorcerer's Trick* is, by far, a better attention-grabber and discussion starter for the hip-hop, MTV crowd.

Morgan Two Fires Kazembe hails from a small farming town in Alabama. A Viet-Nam era veteran, Dr. Kazembe has tapped into the relationship that violence and power have in impeding human potential. He has been a community psychologist and cultural/youth services leader in some of the nation's most volatile communities for nearly three decades. He's also a performance artist and his stage work (songs, spoken word, etc.) combine the poignant with the zany, just like his book. I caught one of his shows recently at a Salsa joint in Oakland. Donned in

a Moorish costume, surrounded by Congolese drummers and fire-twirling Algerian belly dancers, Kazembe's spoken word performance was truly unique. I would describe it as Pan-African Dadaism with plenty of meaning and depth. The same characteristics that I found when reading *The Sorcerer's Trick: A Weapon of Mass Deception*.
-A.C. Del Zotto y Soler

The Truth (with Jokes)

Al Franken
Dutton Adult, 2005

First of all let me say that I'm a big fan of the AL Franken Show on Air America radio. It has definitely been a challenge to find a progressive alternative to right wing talk radio. But I really see Air America evolving and improving in its effort to find a format that is palatable to the left. So I was definitely interested in reading Mr. Franken's latest book *The Truth (with jokes)*, which he has been unabashedly promoting on his radio show.

Unfortunately in the vast majority of *The Truth* Franken has chosen to dissect and relive the 2004 Presidential election a subject that many people might prefer to forget. Its not that this is the first critique of the election to come from the left. George Lakoff's Don't Think of an Elephant received widespread acclaim for dissecting the way language has been exploited by Republicans and neglected by Democrats. And Alter-net's anthology *Start Making Sense* presented a wide-ranging critique of the Democratic Party's failure to remain viable. The problem with *The Truth* is that it too often seems to be simply rehashing old events from the campaign whether they are the anti-Kerry swift boat ads or charges that Kerry was a "flip-flopper".

The other problem with *The Truth* is that Franken was never really part of the 2004 campaign so his insights



Reverend Billy

are mostly from the point of view of an outside observer. As a result the Truth ends up lacking an insiders perspective on what was driving the key issues that Franken brings up. That presents a sharp contrast to Franken's previous book on right wing media: Lies and the Lying Liars... which included hilarious anecdotes such as the one about his face to face encounter with Bill O'Reilly.

The Truth does occasionally hit the mark. For example Franken's discussion about whether Republicans tried to sabotage the Kerry campaign by having Republican operatives disguise themselves as pro-Kerry gay marriage supporters is at least thought provoking. Franken also seems on firmer footing when he talks about sweatshops on the U.S island of Saipan, an issue which he has frequently raised on his radio show.

Perhaps the most effective narrative however is his tale of Republican lobbyist Jack Abramoff's work in the field of Indian "gaming" ("gaming" is another word for gambling as Franken points out in the book). Abramoff earned 82 million dollars from Indian tribes, at times working for competing tribes without their knowledge. The section that includes unflattering email messages between Abramoff and his partner just reinforces the fact that Franken can be a compelling storyteller when he has the right material. Did you know for instance that Abramoff produced the movies *Red Scorpion 1* and *2*, before becoming a Washington lobbyist?

The Truth is a nice effort and has some interesting moments but Franken might have done better by devoting more of the book to the development of Air America radio. After all one of the best things about his show is that he has managed to go "outside of the beltway" by taking his show on the road and talking to people outside of New York and Washington. He is even moving the show's headquarters to Minneapolis this winter. Unfortunately in *The Truth*, Franken to some degree ignored that positive trend that his own show has been displaying by focusing on Washington politics. I can't say that *The Truth* is a complete success, but the jokes are not bad, and I expect more good things from Mr. Franken in the future.
-Brad Johnson

Tragedy and Farce: How the American Media Sell Wars, Spin Elections and Destroy Democracy

John Nichols and Robert W. McChesney
The New Press, 2005
www.thenewpress.com

In June 2004, when European journalist Carole Coleman interviewed George W. Bush for an Irish television network, she failed to receive a memo from the White House that apparently requested the President be handled with kid gloves. Consequently, Coleman treated Bush the way serious journalists in democracies treat all world leaders: she held him accountable. Bush responded to questions about the death toll in Iraq and the lack of world support for the war with statements as "My job is to do my job," and "Please, please, please...a minute, OK?" After the session, the station was notified of Mr. Bush's profound dissatisfaction with Coleman, and an upcoming interview with the First Lady was canceled - a sort of punishment for not playing along with the political obsequiousness that's run amok in the US media world.

Such a scenario sounds like James Madison's worst nightmare. Madison understood, perhaps better than his country-founding colleagues, that in a government of checks and balances, the press would be the most crucial factor in nurturing the fundamental discourse

between a government and its citizens. Authors John Nichols (of *The Nation*) and Robert W. McChesney (of the University of Illinois) attempt to resurrect the spirit of Madison as they define the current crisis in media - a press that is no longer nurturing democratic discourse, but is instead having a corporate love affair with itself.

Media, according to Nichols and McChesney, treats Americans as consumers, not citizens. And the theory in upstairs offices is that consumers want entertainment, not facts. This is a trend born in the 19th-century heyday of the press, when newspapering became an exercise in blatant commercialism. The goal: to attract as many readers as possible, leading to the rise of sensationalized stories and the rampant bribing of reporters. At the same time, newspapers became much more monopolistic than other growing industries. As owners were wealthy, news was ultimately pro-business. Fast-forward some hundred years and owners are still asking first and foremost about the bottom line: Why should they financially indulge their news divisions when those branches produce red ink? The shrinking budget for journalism has been well documented in recent years and it means fewer and fewer resources for, among other things, international coverage and investigative reporting.

Which leads the authors to examine certain myths upheld by the current news system: that capitalism, for example, equals a democratic state, and that corporate power is essentially a benign force (themes that are paneled in Tom Tomorrow's comic strip "The Modern World," which is featured in brilliant snarkiness throughout the book). While capitalism on a good day dovetails nicely with democratic principals, the reality in the equation leads to the convenient underreporting of corporate misdeeds. Couple this with the fact there's a democracy-exporting Administration in the White House working its own behavior-modification plan: whereas pro-Bush reporters are rewarded and embraced, those of other political mindsets are flat out ignored.

After touring us through the indiscretions of modern media that readers may already know by heart (everything from the inherent problems of bias of the "embedded war correspondent," to the media manipulation of the political process, to the deregulation of broadcasting that beefs up corporate might), the authors offer a blueprint of reform, with tried-and-true solutions (grassroots movements, education programs) and more adventurous thinking (such as economist Dean Baker's proposal to grant citizens tax credits with which they may fund the independent media outlets of their choice). The denouement presents viable strategies, culminating with the current work of *Free Press*, the activist organization partly founded by the authors, permitting the reader a hopeful notion that the media, clobbered mind that it is, may soon start to regain consciousness.
-Michelle Humphrey

Wal-Mart: The Face of Twenty-First-Century Capitalism

Nelson Lichtenstein, ed.
The New Press, 2006
www.thenewpress.com

Wal-Mart: The Face of Twenty-First-Century Capitalism shakes down the discount retailer like *Fast Food Nation* shook down McDonalds: simply by analyzing the business's impact on communities, the labor force, the environment and globalization to paint a nightmarish picture of the post-Fordist world. Instead of muckraking, Nelson Lichtenstein has compiled a series of essays by various historians, sociologists, union organizers and economists. Their opinions of Wal-Mart range from

slightly uneasy to downright horrified as they examine the sordid facts behind "every day low prices."

The book begins with a section on the history of chain stores and Wal-Mart itself. Surprisingly, the very "red states" which comprise Wal-Mart's base today were virulently anti-chain back in the 1930's; thus the success of Wal-Mart in the rural South is something of a paradox which Bethany Moreton examines in her stand-out essay "It Came From Bentonville." Moreton also scrutinizes the legendary background of Wal-Mart's founder Sam Walton. True, Walton grew up during the Depression; however, his is hardly a rags-to-riches story, and thrift alone does not account for his family's success. The government granted the Waltons homesteading land in the Sunbelt after forcing the Native Americans out. Walton's father owned a mortgage company which repossessed the farms of busted Dust Bowl farmers. Thus Sam Walton inherited much of his early capital and is not quite the self-made man his mythologizers make him out to be.

In academic fashion, other essays focus on "the Wal-Mart effect": how the retailing giant is re-shaping the structure of the economy and how this new model has affected communities around the globe. Currently Wal-Mart reigns as the world's largest corporation. It dictates profit margins to manufacturers, contributes to sweat shop conditions in the Third World, discriminates against female employees and drives Mom and Pop into bankruptcy. These are obvious trends, and fortunately this book does more than simply acknowledge them. Instead it collects a million bloodcurdling details which may confirm what you already realized but will also arm you with new information. Did you know that "female managers have been required to visit Hooters restaurants and strip clubs in the course of business events"? Or that after Wal-Mart blitzed Iowa with almost 100 new centers, 1,845 smaller stores in that state went out of business? And despite its questionable "benefit" to the economy, Wal-Mart continues to receive a bounty of corporate welfare. The state of Ohio granted Wal-Mart \$10 million in tax breaks as an incentive to build new stores--after the company had decided to open more stores there and had already begun construction.

The book suffers from occasional dry lapses, but these economic and logistical breakdowns are worth reading for the solid facts they expound upon.

If we are to anticipate the path Big Business will take in the coming decades, we must study Wal-Mart. As Lichtenstein writes,

[Wal-Mart] embodies so much of what we fear about a system of production and distribution that has an utterly pervasive impact, but whose control lies so far beyond our grasp. But knowledge is power, so if we understand the nature of this retail phenomenon, perhaps we can learn to master it.

Quite right, and *Wal-Mart: The Face of Twenty-First-Century Capitalism* is an essential primer.

-Kate Duffy

What Should I Do If Reverend Billy is in My Store?

Bill Talen
The New Press, 2005
www.thenewpress.com, www.revilly.com

Bill Talen is a performance artist and community activist from New York City. He is best known as Reverend Billy, leader of the Church of Stop Shopping and the arch-

nemesis of Starbucks and Disney Corporations. When he announced his intention to stage events (he calls them "interruptions") at every Starbucks in New York City, corporate headquarters issued a memorandum to store managers—hence, the title of this book, a manifesto of sorts for his ministry.

Rev. Billy has taken this show on the road, including a memorable performance last December by his Church of Stop Shopping Gospel Choir at the Mall of America in Minnesota. Their playlist reportedly included "O, Little Town of Bentonville," an ode to the home of Wal-Mart Corporation. They were finally ordered to leave after security guards figured out this was no ordinary church choir singing Christmas carols.

What next for Reverend Billy? It's simple, really. This book has convinced me that he should seek the Democratic nomination for president in 2008.

The Wall Street Journal has already described him as "a classic American type, a self-inventing huckster, Elmer Gantry cross with Michael Moore." In other words, a Bill Clinton.

Except Reverend Billy has a real pompadour and real principles.

In fact, Reverend Billy figured out the importance of faith and values long before pollsters told Democratic candidates they needed to start sprinkling buzzwords from the Gospels into their rhetoric. He was on message long before Bob Shrum lost his 1,000th consecutive campaign. "Social change," says Reverend Billy, "will come when we value our own stories more than the media's special effects." Repent, Democrats, repent.

While the Democratic front-runner, Hillary Bomb'Em Clinton, leads the cheers for Bush's war against Iraq, Reverend Billy prays, "Dear Lord, we can't believe that bombing is called security. We can't believe that monopoly is called democracy. We can't believe that gasoline prices are called foreign policy."

Who, pray tell, is better suited to take down Senator Clinton, who once served as a member of the board of directors of the real Evil Empire, Wal-Mart Corporation, than a guy with a five-dollar priest's collar who has actually performed exorcisms on consumers to rid them of demonic lusts for Sunbeam deluxe toasters and Lion King DVDs?

On international trade issues, Reverend Billy would outshine his Democratic opponents. This book and the accompanying DVD explain that the Church of Stop Shopping "dates more or less from the Seattle-WTO winter of '99-'00, when public-space bravery became inspiring again ... These anti-globalization theatrics created an expectation that we would return to our neighborhoods with a new readiness to defend community gardens and local businesses against transnational capital." Trust me, you will never hear that level of discourse from John Kerry, Joe Biden, or Mark Warner.

Reverend Billy already has two biodiesel buses, a full-blown gospel choir, an independent filmmaker to act as his media guru, and a legion of committed followers. That's more than you can say for these other poseurs who would be president.

He should point those buses for Iowa and New Hampshire and see what happens.

-Steve Fought

A Hundred Dollars and a T-Shirt: A Documentary about Zines in the Northwest (Version 2.0)

Produced by Joe Biel

Directed by Rev. Phil and Joe Biel

Microcosm Publishing, 2005

www.microcosmpublishing.com

Though zines have been published since at least the 1920s when sci-fi fans began producing their self-issued writings devoted to the genre, there have been few attempts to document the history and culture of zine making in a narrative form. *A Hundred Dollars and a T-Shirt* is perhaps the first documentary to provide a comprehensive overview of zines and zine makers and is a welcome document on this facet of underground art and media.

A Hundred Dollars principally focuses on zines and zine makers in the Northwest (with a particular emphasis on Portland, Oregon), but most of the topics covered are relevant to zines produced throughout the world. The documentary is divided into sections that each explore different aspects of zines: what they are and what their history is; how and why they are made; whether a zine community exists; and what the future of zines may be. Though the documentary consists mostly of talking heads (along with a few silly recreations and dramatizations), the pace is engaging and entertaining throughout its 71 minutes.

The directors do a good job of culling from the over 70 interviews they conducted to include a variety of perspectives on each of the topics covered. Some of the most interesting points in the documentary occur when there is a divergence of opinions on topics, such as the discussions on pricing and profit,

selling out, and making a living from zines. The makers cover a significant amount of ground and they largely succeed in creating a work that informs and entertains both those with only a minimal knowledge of zines as well as those immersed in the culture. Anyone involved in zines is likely to enjoy hearing the thoughts and perspectives from other zine makers (and might also appreciate seeing some of their favorite zinesters being interviewed). Also, the documentary provides an excellent introduction (and perhaps source of inspiration) to someone new to zines.

Though *A Hundred Dollars* focuses on a wide range of topics, there are areas that one might wish were explored in greater depth. The documentary seems to take a puritanical view towards webzines, which are only mentioned (quite critically) in passing. It may have been interesting to better juxtapose these and print zines and, perhaps, even to hear from some webzine defenders (many of whom are former print zinesters). Also, while the documentary features zine makers of different perspectives, genders, and ages, it makes only passing reference to the fact that most of makers featured are white and of similar economic backgrounds. Finally, it was surprising that there was such little emphasis on non-personal zines, like those that focus on music and, particularly, politics. Zines have a significant history as political catalysts, from highlighting issues such as nuclear power and US involvement in Central America in the 1980s to many riot grrrl zines in the early 1990s providing critical information about women's health and encouraging participation in clinic defense, women's rights groups, and boycotts. It may have been worthwhile to more explicitly discuss the important political role zines can play.

That said, *A Hundred Dollars and a T-Shirt* is a valuable and much needed documentary on zines and zine culture. It features music from punk favorites J Church and Defiance, Ohio as well as beautiful cover and chapter artwork from Cristy Road. Anyone with an interest in alternative media and publishing is likely to enjoy this excellent documentary

-Ben Holtzman

Looking for the Lost Voice (Be'ikvot Ha'kol Ha'avood)

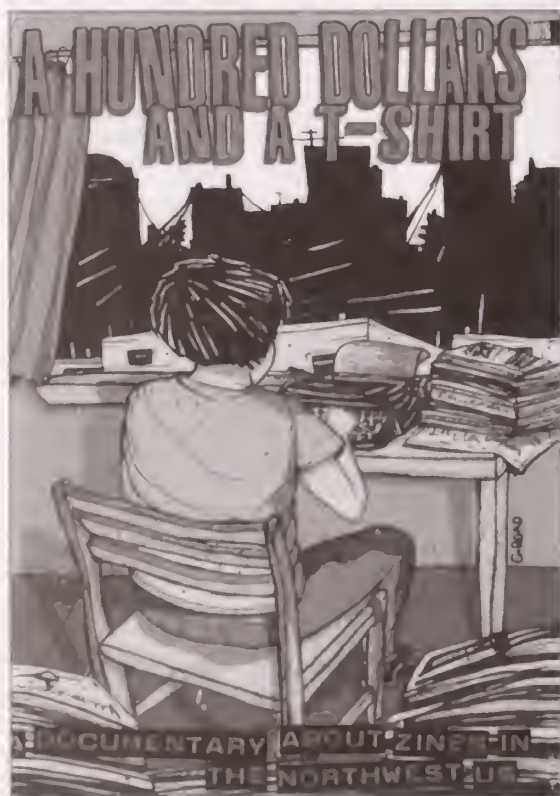
Tzipi Trope, Director

Maya Films, 2005

www.mayavisionint.com

In *Looking For the Lost Voice*, director Tzipi Trope counters dualistic propaganda about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by documenting a Jewish family's struggle to end the occupation of Palestine while mourning their son, Omri Goldin, killed by a suicide bomber, while riding a bus. The film focuses on the power of dialogue between unlikely allies: Palestinians and Israelis, punk youth and a business man, the family of suicide bombers and the parents of the victim. Trope depicts the quest for hard peace - reconciliation in the face of terror and death. Instead of rallying for war, she tells a story of grieving people struggling to bring harmony between Israelis and Arabs through conversations with religious leaders, mourning families, and written pleas to Israel's Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon.

Searching for humanity in Israel, she follows Amiram Goldin. Omri's father Wrestling with loss and political urgency to end the occupation, he consoles and organizes his son's friends, visits the site of the suicide bombing, gently confronts the parents of the young man who collaborated with his son's killer and shares grief and joy with his wife as they bring a new boy into the world. Amiram is the quintessential pacifist, toiling



for a peaceful solution, crossing borders, and embracing compassionate discourse, not violent politics. He deftly defies the cultural norm, climbs over fences of generation, nationality, and subculture, passionately debates a screaming Israeli settler and diplomatically organizes with Palestinians and punks alike. Through listening and honesty, his actions model the spirit of reconciliation peace demands.

Trope portrays the bittersweet labor of understanding. Amiram and his friend Mohammed, both members of the Israeli-Palestinian Bereaved Families Forum, endure military checkpoints to spend a day remembering each of their children killed in the conflict. Standing at the construction site of the so-called "apartheid wall," designed to separate Palestinians and Israelis, first Mohammed and then Amiram, both middle-aged parents, graffiti the edifice in their respective languages: "Yes to peace. No to the fence of hate." The romantic image of two unlikely vandals expressing their frustration with concrete animosity shows the materiality of the state's oppression and the possibility of democratic solutions. This gentle moment evokes another shot, in which band mates of the son write "End the Occupation" on a militaristic bumper sticker. Both scenes suggest that people are penning a peaceful future on top of the dead symbols of Israeli nationalism.

Challenging authority and demanding peace, the dead son's punk band, "Lucy's Pussy," functions like a Greek chorus. The screaming anthems of conscripted youth condemn Israel's violence. The band promotes pacifist anarchism and wields an uncompromising argument against government, violence and alienation. The driving rhythms of the songs contrast the contemplative pace of Gili Gaon's editing, infusing embryonic fury into Amiram's reflective journey. Ironically, the band members' fathers are senior Israeli army officials.

Looking for the Lost Voice is a movie of layers. Cinematographer Tali Goder photographs images with multiple planes to create spaces as deep and layered as the story itself. The artfully composed images demonstrate careful craft unusual in political documentaries. Contrasting the frenetic aesthetics of corporate media, the meditative pace models pensive consideration, the tool of the pacifist. Refusing superficial singularity, Trope weaves together a complicated and nuanced portrait of individuals working for peace within impossible circumstances.

As the movie concludes, Amiram and his wife Tilda celebrate their infant's circumcision. A Palestinian friend from the peace movement blesses the baby, hugs the father and kisses Tilda. The saccharine conclusion nearly degrades the complexity of the film.

Refusing to sugarcoat heroic pacifism, Trope undermines this false ending; suddenly, the events turn. An intertitle appears reading "Three Hours Later." The dumbfounded family and members of the band sit on the couch, watching a newscast announce that a suicide bomber destroyed another Israeli bus. In the foreground, we see the newborn baby sucking a pacifier, resting in his mother's arms. In the background, members of the band gaze, exhausted and sad. In between, the father wryly bemoans: "It's the dance of death." The hope of new life complicates the weary struggle for peace. On one side of the room, the family and friends stare, on the other, the television flickers. Adroitly, Trope leaves the devastated viewer to choose between heroic practices of reconciliation or a rattling monologue agitating on the evening news.

-Kyle Harris

This Divided State

Stephen Greenstreet
Disinformation Company, 2005
www.disinfo.com

In the Fiftieth Anniversary edition of William F. Buckley's premier conservative magazine, the *National Review*, Robert Bork writes, "Liberty in America can be enhanced by reinstating, legislatively, restraints upon the direction of our culture and morality." The byline reads: "A Just Censorship."

Throughout the country, conservative radicals regularly exercise this totalitarian impulse towards higher education, strong-arming campuses into forsaking the spirit of the first amendment. In *This Divided State*, Stephen Greenstreet documents the controversy that ensued when student council leaders invited Michael Moore to speak at the predominantly conservative (and Mormon) Utah Valley State College. This microcosmic tale about contradictions within America, a country dedicated to freedom and cultural conservatism, takes place in Orem, Utah, proudly known as Family City USA.

On the surface, this fast-paced documentary shows a clear conflict between hard-line conservatives versus inquisitive conservatives who want to "hear the other side." Slyly, it demonstrates the pernicious way mainstream media and the academy have neatly structured debate into two camps, using polarity to damage clarity.

The movie introduces remarkable and ridiculous characters. With a putrid grin, the maleficent Kay Anderson, a rabid community activist, resorts to name-calling, bribes, and a law suite to stop the event. Ignorant students jabber jaw about "both sides of the issues." One Republican student earns his fifteen minutes of fame by resembling Michael Moore.

Almost all the characters are white. Almost all are Mormon.

Greenstreet weaves a delicate web of irony. In a desperate attempt to resolve the conflict, the campus invites conservative radio talk show host Sean Hannity to offer "the other side." While he waives his speaker's fee, to outdo Moore's \$40,000 earnings, he requires that the school pay for his private jet, costing

an equivalent amount. At his speech, a communication professor, inarticulately counters the ugly jabs of the slick Hannity. As the enthusiastic audience - a screeching mob - drowns out the professor's questions about the 9-11 reports, he stares hopelessly about, showing how easily brutish thugs can overwhelm intellectuals.

Greenstreet's portrayal of Hannity and Moore's respective lectures subtly references Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*, the masterpiece of totalitarian cinema. Through his cinematography, he demonstrates how each speaker creates a cult of personality and uses emotionalism to sway the audience.

In one brilliant scene, Hannity stands on stage, looking like a removed fascist dictator isolating and ridiculing the few liberal students in the crowd in order to "Hannatize them" or to get them to vote for Bush. Through dialectical editing worthy of Eisenstein, shots of the dark mahogany background, enormous American flag, and massive monitor showing Hannity, larger than life, contrast claustrophobic, slow motion, grainy close-ups of liberal professors being jeered at by the speaker and the audience. The overblown video images of the spectators create a disconcerting tension against the clean images of the right-wing superstar. The editing brilliantly portrays conservative America's grotesque lack of civility, its thuggish mob mentality.

This satisfying narrative about freedom of speech and campus political life, takes the viewer on a thrilling race through empty conflicts of meaningless debate structured around principles of persuasion over clear thought. This microcosmic depiction of American democracy is grim. The idealism of voting contrasts the lack of sophisticated civil discourse begging pertinent questions. Can democracy function as long as the country is under the sway of conservative brutes hell-bent on shutting down the opposition? Can Americans listen and speak without the toxic intrigue of sweeping emotionalism? Are the American people forever doomed to the sway of propaganda over reasoned discourse, of mobs and chants over civil debate?

-Kyle Harris



The Divided State director
Stephen Greenstreet

here



TEXT

Eric Weiss

PHOTO

Gordon Gattsek

The Coney Island Polar Bear Club. Brooklyn, NY

The first time I swam with the Coney Island Polar Bear Club I knew I needed to become a member.

When I woke up that December morning in 2003, I looked out my frost covered window and I was greeted by a solid six inches of snow. Every instinct I had told me to stay in bed. Begrudgingly, I got up and left my toasty apartment to go buy a bagel. It was cold outside. Really fucking cold.

"Yes", I thought to myself, "if there ever was a day I am going to try this, today is the day."

I'm still not sure exactly what brought me to the beach that frigid day; perhaps it was insanity, or as I like to call it, my sense of adventure.

When I arrived at the boardwalk on Coney Island, I was immediately welcomed by a veteran Polar Bear...

"First time here?"

"Yeah... I decided to give it a try."

"Ok, here's the deal. It's not a competition. We do this for fun, not to prove anything. Don't stay in too long at first. Run in, go up to your neck, and when you start to get cold, get out."

It sounded like good advice, but I wasn't quite sure what he meant by, "when you start to get cold, get out." Hell, I was still fully dressed and I was already freezing. Regardless, I gave him a knowing nod, trying to act like throwing myself into the icy waters of the Atlantic in the middle of December was a perfectly normal Sunday afternoon activity for me.

As we head out to the beach, I was nervous. Everything my mom had lovingly pounded into my head as a little kid came flooding back to me, "Don't go out in the cold with a wet head, you'll get sick! Don't go swimming right after you eat! (Damn that bagel.) And, most importantly, "Don't do stupid things." (Sorry mom.)

As I ran into the water with the Polar Bears it was... well, it was really cold.

And at first, that was all I could think about, "Wow, this water is really, really damn cold." But then, after a short time, I got over the frigid temperature, embraced it even, and soon enough I realized I was having fun. I looked around. Everyone in the water had huge smiles on their faces. Surprisingly, the swim felt less like self-imposed torture and more like a celebration. People were laughing, jumping, splashing and singing. At some point, I realized I was too.

After I got out, I spent the rest of the day on a natural high. I felt invigorated. I knew I would be back.

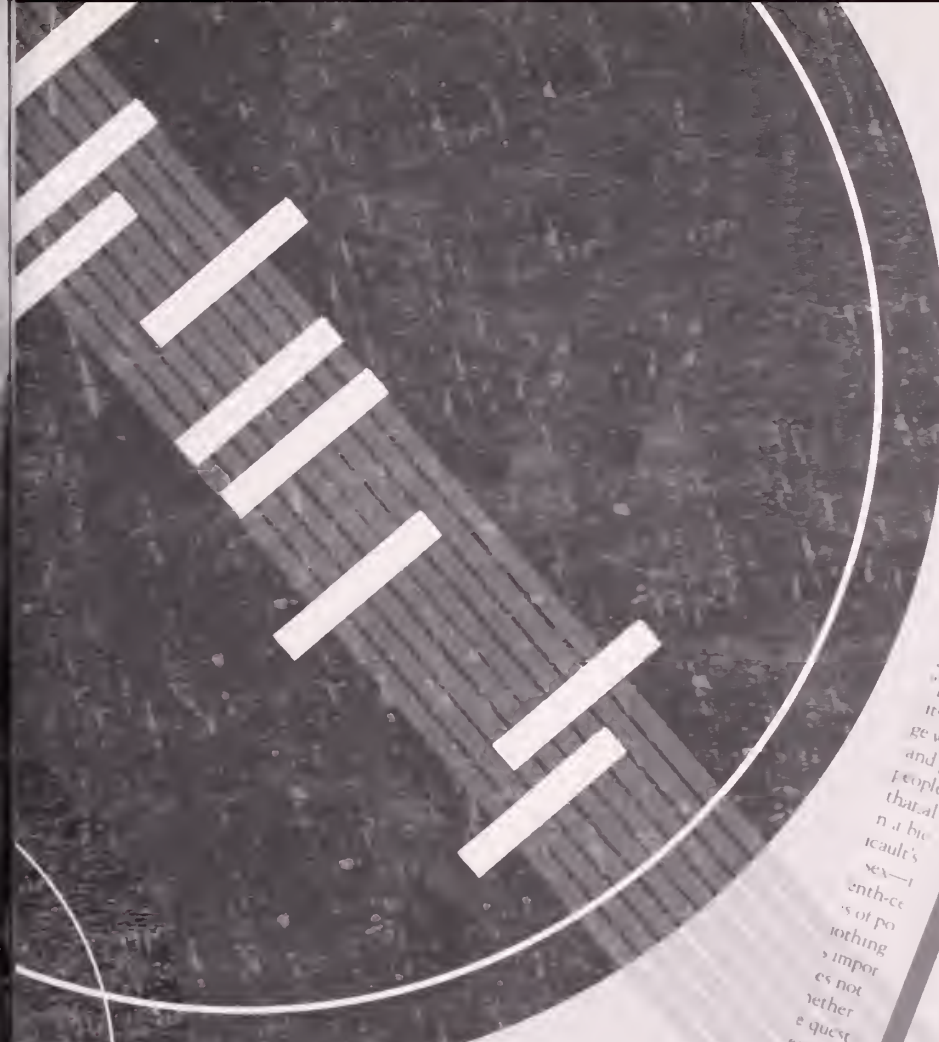
Twelve swims later, I was officially inducted as a member of the Coney Island Polar Bear Club. At 103 years old, it is the oldest winter bathing organization in the US, and I can see why the club has lasted so long. It's addictive! Three swimming seasons later, (the season runs from October thru April) I still look forward to each Sunday like a little kid waiting impatiently for birthday presents.

For me, as I'm sure it is for many others, the club is about much more than just swimming in the cold. Sure, I have come to love the feeling of the cold water enveloping my body and waking up all my senses. Plus, I have come to rely upon the cold water recharging my batteries for the week to come. And, I can't overlook the fact that running into the freezing water with a bunch of other screaming Polar Bears is a hell of a good time.

But, most of all, these swims remind me of the simple fact that I am alive, and that life is for living. Each swim, as the cold water takes over my bones, I smile, and I am reminded of just that.

www.polarbearclub.org

What's happening where you are? Drop us a line at here@clamormagazine.org and tell us about the people, places, struggles, celebrations, projects, or ideas from the places you literally and metaphorically call "here."



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"Nicely balances tactics for empire-smashing with ones for community-building. This book will become a classic." —*Fifth Estate*

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"This is a great resource book with a great attitude—positive and d.i.y. all the way. Pick it up." —*Profane Existence*

- Affinity Groups
- Antifascist Action
- Asphalt Mosaics
- Banner Drops
- Banner Hoists
- Behavioral Cut-ups
- Bicycle Collectives
- Bicycle Parades
- Pointing by Bicycle
- How to Make a Bicycle into a Record Player
- Billboard Improvement
- Blocs, Block and Otherwise
- Blockades and Lockdowns
- Classroom Takeover
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- Disruption, Tabling, and Infoshops
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- Evasion
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- Surviving a Felony Trial
- Thinktanks
- Torches
- Undermining Oppression
- Unemployment
- Utilities
- Wheatpasting

Three years in the making, *Recipes for Disaster* is the long-awaited follow-up to the CrimethInc. collective's notorious first book, *Days of War, Nights of Love*. This 624-page manual complements the romance and idealism of that earlier work with practical information and instruction. Over thirty collectives collaborated on testing, composing, and editing the book's 62 sections, which range from *Affinity Groups*, *Coalition Building*, and *Mental Health* to *Sabotage*, *Squatting*, and *Wheatpasting*. These are illustrated with extensive technical diagrams and first-hand accounts, and prefaced with a thorough discussion of the diverse roles direct action can play in social transformation. If you're looking for a tactical handbook for revolutionary action, look no further. Perfect-bound with strong and flexible PUR glue for greater durability and printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper with two colors throughout, including 82 custom illustrations and 75 photos.

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