

Neighbors For Peace Times

What Corporate Media Won't tell you

Vol. II

Winter 2008

No. 1

www.NeighborsForPeace.org Formed 9/14/2001, a Chicagoland Peace group centered in Evanston, IL

Support the War Resisters



Pictured: Former army medic Agustin Aguayo went AWOL in the summer of 2006. He was scheduled to return to Iraq for a second deployment. During his year's service in Iraq, he refused to load his gun no matter how dangerous the situation. He had applied for Conscientious Objector status but the Army denied it. He eventually turned himself in and was convicted and jailed for desertion and missing movement. Aguayo and his wife Helga are currently

appealing the Supreme Court for the conscientious objector status denied him by the military. Aguayo is also working with at-risk youth to educate them about the realities of war and life as a soldier.

Aguayo's complete story can be found at aguayodefense.org and at democracynow.org (May 17 2007 news). For more info about conscientious objectors and war resisters, see couragetoresist.org and IVAW.org

INDEX

Editorial	2	Mexico Solidarity Network	10	Book and Film Reviews	14
Commentary	4	The Trillion Dollar Income Shift	11	Events	15
Projects and Actions	5 - 9	Depaul Student Speech	12	The Arts Page	(Back Cover)

Editorial Page

The editorial policy of *Neighbors Times* is based on Neighbors for Peace's mission statement (established in 2001) and printed on the bottom of page 13 and at www.neighborsforpeace.org.

The public is invited to participate at all levels of this newsletter project. To submit articles for consideration and for our newsletter meeting schedule email pallist3-n4ptimes@yahoo.com or snailmail to Neighbors Times, PO Box 215, Evanston, IL 60204-0215

The public is also invited to join in all aspects of Neighbors for Peace (see bottom of p.16 for meeting information)

Beyond Protest: Creating Solutions for our Planet

Anti-war activists frequently complain about the difficulty of creating unity and solidarity within our ranks. We question what positive spin can be placed on the label "anti-war." Because our movement contains an amazing diversity of philosophies and causes, often we agree only on standing for "peace and justice." But how does that ideal translate into real on-the-ground results? What can all progressives agree on and what can they build in solidarity with those values? Beyond the protest signs and marches, past the leafleting and vigils, we need to work to envision and then create that peaceful, just world. Never before has the time been more urgent. Never before has the entire planet been in more danger, both from war and global warming.

Neighbors for Peace calls on all people who care about the future of this planet to look for solutions beyond the tactic of protest. In previous issues we have pointed out this country's systemic problems, which overshadow the present administration's crimes. It won't be enough to point out our excessive consumption and our unhealthy dependence on nonrenewable energy sources. Nor will the climate crisis end simply by shrinking the amount of our consumer waste. We need to create systems that make the ideal of sustainable living a reality. We must begin living in a non-exploitive manner instead of just talking about it. And we must

do it collectively, not simply as individual consumers who think we can shop our way out of this serious problem.

What direction can our new work take? One obvious answer is that we can focus on the reasons for the current and future wars in the Middle East. Since they are largely about the struggle for control over dwindling supplies of oil and gas, it follows that we need to build up alternative energy sources like wind farms, hydrogen fuel cells and solar power. But while worldwide reliance on renewable energy would make future wars for fuel unnecessary, current global warming would not be alleviated, nor would U.S. imperialism end. Our long-term strategy needs a myriad of supplemental steps from diverse sources to achieve clean renewable energy. And those steps must emphasize peaceful tactics with the goal of creating social justice.

People who live in areas that are now hit hard with climate crises are developing effective solutions. There are no immediate resolutions to conflicts in places like the Sudan or the Congo, where dwindling water supplies and the mining of valuable minerals have caused widespread violence and oppression. Yet Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai of Kenya has been working to replenish the deforested areas of her country with trees to retain the health of the water-based ecosystems that remain. Maathai's Green Belt

Neighbors Times, P.O. Box 215, Evanston, IL 60204-0215, is published seasonally
by The Old Corner Press, 2204 Green Bay Road, Evanston, IL 60201 TheOldCornerPress@voyager.net
Managing Editor - Karen Pallist - email; pallist3-n4ptimes@yahoo.com

Contributing Editors and Reporters - M. L. Finn, Terry Pope, Rosalie Riegler, Grace Richardson, Dave Trippel
Arts Page and Reviews Editor - Grace Richardson Graphics and Production Manager - Dave Trippel

Editorial continued...

Movement recently reached its goal of planting one billion trees in one year. In Uruguay, FUCVAM, one of the largest and most successful housing cooperatives in the Americas, has become a major political force. This cooperative association now has a membership of 20,000 in 400 communities. They have built energy efficient housing and provide free services to members such as day care, libraries and even health clinics ⁽¹⁾.

How can these examples influence U.S. citizens? Our movement here can focus on protecting our remaining forests and parks while creating more green spaces in urban areas. While shopping for fair trade and local products is essential, we must also examine and change the way we create our communities. In the Chicago area, we can join and support green organizations such as the Center for Neighborhood Technology and I-Go car sharing. Instead of buying new overpriced homes, we can build more housing cooperatives using recycled construction materials. Or we can renovate abandoned buildings. Recycling building materials reduces the stress on forests decimated by timber and logging industries and can provide affordable housing for many. These kinds of activities build cohesive social connections that last far longer than a march or conference. They unite people in work that empowers and give concrete expression to a progressive value system.



We need to hold government officials' feet to the fire about expanding our public transportation system, especially in light of Springfield's playing political games over the funding of the CTA and RTA. Increased use of public transportation means fewer cars on the road, less congestion and pollution, and less repair and maintenance work on roads and highways. We may pay increased taxes for public transportation, but we would have to pay still higher taxes for continuous road repair. Our gas and car maintenance costs also increase when we are forced to drive everywhere. Finally, we create an incalculable cost for us now and in the future if we continue to drive gas-guzzling cars.

The federal government has a role to play as well: not only should it fund local public transportation, it should support Amtrak and begin the nation's transition to high-speed rail. High-speed rail is a long overdue travel alternative that produces less pollution than airplanes or buses. In Europe and many East Asian countries, high-speed rail has become a common travel option, and countries such as Germany and Holland actively sponsor biking throughout their cities.

We have the people power to make these changes. Besides convincing young people not to join the military, we need to build training and educational systems that will give them viable alternatives to military service. While counter-recruitment is a necessary tactic for ending U.S. wars, teaching practical trades and funding enterprises with a focus on ecological solutions can give a generation of U.S. citizens a vision of serving their country without using weapons.

However, focusing solely on these kinds of actions will not stop global warming. Most of our CO₂ production, pollution and waste comes from the machinery of industry and production. As long as we allow industrial waste and pollution to go unchecked, we harm the planet. As long as our cities and communities need food and fuel shipped in, we take needed resources from others. Most importantly, we need to figure out the least destructive means of dismantling our industrialized systems of production

(continued on page 8)

A Group to Know

The Talking Farm

Germinated in Evanston's backyard

The Talking Farm is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization seeking to establish a local urban farm and environmental learning center that grows organic produce for local distribution, teaches agriculture, food production and beneficial entrepreneurship, and through a working model, fosters conversations about how we can create a healthier and sustainable food system.

The Talking Farm encourages people all over the country to recognize the potential of urban agriculture. [Visit www.thetalkingfarm.org](http://www.thetalkingfarm.org)



Commentary

Why Does It Matter if Food is Locally Grown?

(Following is an excerpt from an article in the *Farm Fresh Atlas of Southeastern Wisconsin 2007/2008*) By Lori Horbas

As a consumer you have the power to choose to purchase food grown, produced and processed locally. Why might you, the consumer, choose local food?

- **You help to create a sustainable local society.** Your choice prevents the degrading of the ecological integrity of the earth, right in your own backyard.
- **You restore integrity to the food system.** You and the farmer/producer you purchase from enter into a mutual relationship of caring and responsibility toward each other and toward the earth.
- **You reconnect with where your food is grown and how it is produced.** Understanding where and how food is produced, one begins to develop a deep understanding of our dependence on the earth and each other.
- **You preserve farmland.** Millions of acres of farmland are being lost each year to residential and commercial development. Since we are dependent on the land for our very survival, the local purchase creates economic opportunities for farmers in your local community, so that they might continue to care for the land close to you while providing food that not only sustains us, but also the land we depend on.
- **You contribute to your local economy.** The farmer you purchase from receives the full retail value of each dollar you spend. Rather than being eaten up by processing, transportation and packing costs, that dollar tends to stay in the community in which the farmer lives.
- **You prevent the extinction of a vast variety of food.** The choices available at a supermarket are often limited, featuring mass-produced, industrial grown foods selected for their ability to withstand transportation, and longevity on the shelf.
- **You are more apt to encounter foods that are authentically different in physical qualities, such as appearance, taste, and color.**
- **You get food that tastes good naturally.** Local foods are fresher, more flavorful and hold more nutrients than counterparts that have been shipped from other more distant locales.
- **You save money and preserve tradition.** Compared to convenience foods, a local food purchase makes good food affordable. Since most locally grown food is raw or slightly processed, preparing locally grown can require extra time and effort. But, preparing and eating foods at home can provide families with time together creating memories and family traditions while focused on a creative and rewarding experience.
- **You reduce our dependence on non-renewable energy sources and contribute to cleaner air.** The average distance that fresh food travels from production to final destination is 1500 miles. This transportation not only requires the use of non-renewable fossil fuels which is a major source of air pollution, but also the use of publicly funded infrastructure, which supports the continued need for these services and expenditures.
- **You eliminate the middleman.** In addition to transportation, there are costs associated with energy, packing, and advertising. In industrial grown food, these services are often delegated to middlemen and can increase the total cost of food to you. Local farmers, for the most part, cannot afford to operate on a small margin of return to their land, labor and management, so local foods may not be less expensive, but by purchasing local, you reduce the negative social and ecological consequences of your food choices.

The Iraqi Student Project

5

By Rosalie Riegle

For seven thousand years or more, the people in the area now known as Iraq have been a learned people. The fertile crescent bounded by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers was home to the world's first known civilization, the Sumerians. Because its peoples produced the earliest writing and some of the first mathematics, science, laws, and philosophies of the Western world, this land has been called the "Cradle of Civilization." During the Ottoman Empire, the people who lived in this region enjoyed a rich culture full of universities, libraries and museums. Even after the League of Nations created Iraq and during the punitive U.N. sanctions begun under the Clinton Administration, colleges and universities in Iraq continued to operate and struggled to maintain their famed excellence.

Now, however, after the U.S. invasion, occupation, and continuing violence, studies at the undergraduate and graduate level in Iraq have become nearly impossible. Of the millions of Iraqi refugees, the vast majority have little or no access to higher education.

The Iraqi Student Project (ISP), founded by Gabe Huck and Theresa Kubasak, is designed to address this tragedy. Gabe and Theresa are founding members of Neighbors for Peace who now live in Damascus, Syria. There they came to know many Iraqi refugees and last spring began to look for ways to help some of the young people eager for a college education. The result is the ISP.

Modeled after the successful Bosnian Student Project in the 1990s, the Iraqi Student Project is seeking tuition waivers from U.S. colleges and universities and establishing support groups in local communities to facilitate the students' success while in our country. Currently, the Project has two hard-working staff: Tara Monthir Hasan works from Amman with potential Iraqi students, facilitating their college applications and the necessary language tests, and helping with Visa applications. Natalie Baker Merrill works with the institutions and support groups in the U.S.

Over twenty-six colleges have expressed interest. Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan and Holy Cross College in Indiana have already officially signified their acceptance of Iraqi students for Fall, 2008, and several other institutions are in the negotiating stage.

Members of Neighbors for Peace hope that several Chicago colleges will take advantage of this opportunity to serve Iraq's future. Gabe and Theresa report that the Project is looking for more contacts at Chicago universities and also for funds to pay for language testing and student visa applications. Tax-exempt contributions can be sent to:

Iraqi Student Project
c/o Clinical Program
Villanova University School of Law
299 North Spring Mill Road
Villanova, PA 19085

With Iraq's higher education system in ruins, with more than four million Iraqis displaced inside and outside Iraq, with occupation and sectarian strife continuing, and an estimated death toll of more than a million Iraqis, ISP offers a small but significant effort toward reconciliation and restitution. For more information, see www.iraqistudentproject.org, or write Gabe and Theresa at gabeandtheresa@gmail.com. If you have contacts for area colleges, call Rosalie Riegle at (847) 644-2281.

Theresa Kubasak is teaching writing and literature to young refugee Iraqis in Jordan. In one of her sessions, Ali wrote this "Who am I" poem:

I am Ali
I am dark blue the color of deep oceans
I am like an ant that does its job every day
without getting bored
I feel happy when I see a hope in the horizon
I love to have something to do that moves me a step forward
But I hate to waste my time on unuseful things.
The sound of duty towards myself and my family calls me
I am Ali.



Nonviolent Demonstrations Stop Shipment of Supplies to Iraq

By Rosalie Riegler

Since 2004, military equipment bound for Iraq has been shipped out of the Port of Olympia in Washington. The Olympia Port Militarization Resistance group used “a broad spectrum of democracy’s tools”—including letter-writing, open forums, and petitions – to oppose the shipments. In the spring of 2006, the group moved to nonviolent direct action. Human blockades forced a convey of Stryker combat vehicles to find an alternate route to the port. Thirty-seven people were arrested in these actions, and the police violence was minimal.

The resistance continued, and in November, 2007, the group began a nonviolent blockade of Stryker vehicles which lasted for thirteen days. Sandy Mayes reported in *Works in Progress* that “Day after day, and night after night, people put their lives on hold and their bodies on the line to prevent movement of military equipment from the Port of Olympia.”

The group’s blockading statement read, “We oppose Olympia’s complicity in a war whose disastrous effects have been felt worldwide and we will actively resist the use of Olympia’s port to further that war... Through nonviolent actions we intend to stop the Port of Olympia from becoming a revolving door of military machinery furthering illegal war.” As they prepared for the blockade, participants reaffirmed their commitment to nonviolence with a pledge to refrain from physical assaults, verbal harassment, and malicious sabotage. The group preceded its civil disobedience with a candlelight vigil and a “family friendly” march and rally.

Then the blockade began: linking arms across the road, those engaged in direct action attempted to stop the vehicles. Large contingents of police in full riot gear arrived and brutally removed the protesters, using pepper spray and police batons. On November 9, sixty people blocked the entrance gate to the Port and the trucks were unable to leave. The next day, police first sprayed and then arrested “hard blockers” who were linked together with PVC pipe.

On November 12, women attempted to put flowers on the road in memory of the 48 area soldiers killed in Iraq; they, too, were shoved back by police in riot gear. An Olympia City Council community forum on the police violence garnered national attention; and the next day saw so many people supporting the protesters and so much media presence that at first the police ceased their violent tactics.



Later, however, the police again became violent and the Strykers got through, despite efforts of blockaders and bystanders to stop them with physical and human barricades. On November 16, two hundred students walked out of classes to protest the war and on the concluding day of the protest, four hundred people marched through town in the rain, carrying banners which said, “Not in Our Port.” One woman said it felt like a victory march because the community had stood behind the protesters, despite reports of two isolated acts of property violence, one to a police car window.

Council member TJ Johnson, who himself had been pepper sprayed, testified to the violence he had witnessed at the Port. He summarized, “This war is so incredibly unpopular that the only way they can continue to wage it is with a significant crackdown on dissent here in this country... So we’re going to see more of this; that’s the short term. The long term is we’re gonna win. Because we’ve got truth, we’ve got commitment, and we’ve got power and solidarity on our side and they can’t beat that.”



Breaking the Siege on Gaza!

www.freegaza.org

The Chicago chapter of the International Solidarity Movement (see page 8) and the American Friends Service Committee are seeking venues for the "Float the Boat-Break the Siege on Gaza" speaking tour in Chicago from January 18-21. We need your assistance in securing speaking venues for participants in Breaking the Siege on Gaza boat trip that is planned for May of 2008. If you can provide a speaking venue between January 18-21, please contact ISM-Chicago as soon as possible at: ISMinChicago@aol.com or 773-267-5198.

2008 — Sixty Years On

May 2008 marks the 60-year anniversary of the Nakba, "the catastrophe", when the overwhelming majority of Palestinians were forcibly evicted from their ancestral homeland to create the state of Israel. In contravention of International law, human rights, and basic principles of morality, Israel continues to deny these refugees and their descendants their right to return home. Israel has neither acknowledged nor attempted to amend this historic injustice that gave birth to the Jewish state. Instead, more than 5 million Palestinian refugees languish in refugee camps, while their homes, farms, and properties are inhabited by Jewish immigrants who arrived in Palestine from around the globe.

The historic illegal appropriation of Palestinian land, home and heritage is at the heart of the Middle East conflict. It has given rise to the largest ongoing refugee population in the world. It paved the way for subsequent land theft in 1967, and the ongoing ethnic cleansing that has squeezed Palestinians in the West Bank into ghettos and bantustans surrounded by 27-foot walls, sniper towers, and military guards. It has created the open-air prison of Gaza with an impoverished and overcrowded population of 1.4 million inhabitants.

This tragic event has dispossessed and disinherited Palestinians all over the world; and a destitute population of refugees with only their memories of Palestine, crumbling property deeds, and an undaunted will to return.

Mission Statement

The Free Gaza Movement wants to break the siege of Gaza. It wants to raise international awareness about the prison-like closure of the Gaza Strip and pressure the international community to review its sanctions policy and end its support for continued Israeli occupation. It wants to uphold Palestine's right to welcome internationals as visitors, human rights observers, humanitarian aid workers, journalists, or



Children play in Israeli bombed Gaza - photo © Joe Carr

The Free Gaza Movement is made up of these human rights observers, aid workers, and journalists who have years of experience volunteering in Gaza and the West Bank at the invitation of Palestinians. But now, because of the increasing stranglehold of Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine, many of them find it almost impossible to enter Gaza, and an increasing number have been refused entry to Israel and the West Bank as well. Despite the great need for our work, the Israeli Government will not allow them in to do it.

They are of all ages and backgrounds. Back home, they are teachers, medics, musicians, secretaries, parents, grandparents, lawyers, students, activists, actors, play writes, politicians, singer-songwriters, web designers, international training consultants, and even a former Hollywood film industry worker and an aviator. We are South African, Australian, American, English, Israeli, Palestinian, and more.

What Free Gaza Is Going To Do

They have tried to enter Palestine by land. They have tried to arrive by air. Now they are getting serious. They are taking a ship.

- Spring 2008:
- Ship departs Alexandria
 - Ship picks up at Cyprus

Editorial continued from page 3

and consumption. Otherwise, the resource wars and the wealth disparities will not only continue, but increase. As the disparities between the rich and poor in the U.S. become more unbearable, this country could easily turn into a violent battlefield: a private war would be waged on people without food or shelter as was done during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The wealthy will build more private fortresses and the government will become more militarized. Weapons dealers, private prisons, and security firms are already the hot money-makers of the twenty-first century.

We need enough people who are committed to peace and justice to confront and challenge the policy makers and companies who exploit the planet and profit from environmental disasters. With the inevitability of climate change, the profits stand to be astronomical. Only after we neutralize these destructive forces can we realize the ideal of equitable and sustainable living for everyone.

We need enough people who are committed to peace and justice to confront and challenge the policy makers and companies who exploit the planet and profit from environmental disasters. With the inevitability of climate change, the profits stand to be astronomical. Only after we neutralize these destructive forces can we realize the ideal of equitable and sustainable living for everyone.

We invite our readers to offer us their own suggestions and ideas. You can write us at PO Box 215 Evanston IL 60204. Attn Karen Pallist. Or email us at pallist3-n4ptimes@yahoo.com.

¹The Uruguayan Federation of Housing for Mutual Support Cooperatives (FUCVAM) led demonstrations against George W. Bush during his visit to their country last year. The group remains one of the most active social movements in Uruguay. See "Yes!" Magazine Winter 2008.

A Group to Know



The International Solidarity Movement (ISM) is a Palestinian-led movement committed to resisting the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land using nonviolent, direct-action methods and principles. Founded in August, 2001, ISM aims to support and strengthen the Palestinian popular resistance by providing the Palestinian people with two resources, international protection and a voice with which to nonviolently resist an overwhelming military occupation force.

The ISM is not an organization, but rather a movement which all organizations, groups and/or individuals who agree with our principles can join. The ISM is based in Palestine and is led by Palestinians on the

ground. Many ISM support groups around the world assist the ISM by disseminating information, recruiting and training individuals to join us.

ISM offers many ways for you to get involved in the struggle for Palestinian freedom. Whether you're thinking of traveling to Palestine to work with us, or you'd like to work to educate your community about the reality in Palestine, we welcome your involvement. Please visit the websites of the support group nearest to you. Links to our international support groups are found at www.palsolidarity.org or email ISMinChicago@aol.com

Ohio Secretary of State confirms 2004 election could have been stolen

by Bob Fittrakis & Harvey Wasserman

December 14, 2007 — From TheFreePress.org

Ohio's Secretary of State announced this morning that a \$1.9 million official study shows that "critical security failures" are embedded throughout the voting systems in the state that decided the 2004 election. Those failures, she says, "could impact the integrity of elections in the Buckeye State." They have rendered Ohio's vote counts "vulnerable" to manipulation and theft by "fairly simple techniques."

Indeed, she says, "the tools needed to compromise an accurate vote count could be as simple as tampering with the paper audit trail connector or using a magnet and a personal digital assistant."

In other words, Ohio's top election official has finally confirmed that the 2004 election could have been easily stolen.

Brunner's stunning findings apply to electronic voting machines used in 58 of Ohio's 88 counties, in addition to scanning devices and central tabulators used on paper ballots in much of the rest of the state.

Brunner is calling for widespread changes to the way Ohio casts and counts its ballots. Her announcement follows moves by California Secretary of State Deborah Bowen to disqualify electronic voting machines in the nation's biggest state.

In tandem, these two reports add a critical state-based dimension to the growing mountain of evidence that the US electoral system is rife with insecurities. Reports from the Brennan Center, the Carter-Baker Commission, the Government Accountability Office, the Conyers Committee Task Force Report, Princeton University and others have offered differing perspectives that add up to the same conclusion.

In a series of investigative reports dating to well before the 2004 election, the Columbus Free Press and Freepress.org have documented several dozen different means used by the Bush-Cheney re-election campaign to steal the official 2004 vote count.

The final official tally for Bush---less than 119,000 votes out of 5.4 million cast---varied by 6.7% from exit poll results, which showed a Kerry victory. Exit polls in 2004 were designed to have a margin of error of about 1%.

In various polling stations in Democrat-rich inner city precincts in Youngstown and Columbus, voters who pushed touch screens for Kerry saw Bush's name light up. A wide range of discrepancies on both electronic and paper balloting systems leaned almost uniformly toward the Bush camp. Voting procedures regularly broke down in inner city and campus areas known to be heavily Democratic.

(Continued on other side)



During the official count 11/23/04 in Cincinnati, Ohio
AP Photo/Al Behrman

In various polling stations in Democrat-rich inner city precincts in Youngstown and Columbus, voters who pushed touch screens for Kerry saw Bush's name light up. A wide range of discrepancies on both electronic and paper balloting systems leaned almost uniformly toward the Bush camp. Voting procedures regularly broke down in inner city and campus areas known to be heavily Democratic.

In direct violation of standing federal election law, 56 of Ohio's 88 counties have since destroyed all or part of their 2004 election data. The materials were additionally protected by a federal court injunction in the King-Lincoln-Bronzeville federal civil rights lawsuit (in which we are attorney and plaintiff). To date, no state or federal prosecutions have resulted from this wholesale destruction of presidential election records, including 1.6 million ballots, cast and uncast, needed for definitive auditing procedures. However, two Cuyahoga County (Cleveland) election officials have been convicted of felony manipulation of an official recount. The Cleveland Plain-Dealer, the state's largest newspaper, recently editorialized that there is "no evidence" the 2004 election was stolen, but omitted mention of the destruction of the electoral records by more than half the counties in the state. The Plain-Dealer and other mainstream media have consistently ignored findings by the Free Press and others indicating widespread manipulation and theft of the kind Brunner has now confirmed was eminently do-able within the Ohio system.

Brunner says "the results underscore the need for a fundamental change in the structure of Ohio's election system to ensure ballot and voting system security while still making voting convenient and accessible to all Ohio voters." Among other things, she advocates replacing touch-screen machines with optical-scan units that include a paper balloting system.



Brunner is the Democratic successor to Republican J. Kenneth Blackwell, who administered the 2004 election as Secretary of State while also serving as state co-chair of the Bush-Cheney campaign. The report comes as part of her pledge to guarantee a fair and reliable vote count in the upcoming 2008 presidential election.

Under Blackwell, Ohio spent some \$100 million installing electronic voting machines as part of the Help America Vote Act, passed by Congress in the wake of the scandals surrounding the 2000 election. Former Ohio Congressman Bob Ney, HAVA's principle author, now resides in a federal prison, in part for illegalities surrounding his dealings with voting machine companies.

Blackwell, who was defeated in a 2006 race for the Ohio governorship, outsourced web hosting responsibilities for the 2004 vote count to a programming firm that also programmed the web site for the 2000 Bush-Cheney campaign. Blackwell's chosen host site for the state's vote count was in the basement of the Old Pioneer Bank Building in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where the servers for the Republican National Committee, and the Bush White House, were also located.

Brunner has now recommended that all Ohio's voting be done on optical scan ballots, with reliance on central tabulation. Voters with disabilities could use AutoMark touchscreen machines with built in audio systems that allow the marking of ballots with little or no additional assistance.

"It's a testament to our state's boards of elections officials that elections on the new (federally) mandated voting systems have gone as smoothly as they have in light of these findings," Brunner said.

Conversely, it is also a testament to the ease with which the 2004 election was stolen by election officials who had clear conflicts of interest aimed at keeping George W. Bush in the White House.

Bob Fittrakis and Harvey Wasserman are co-authors of HOW THE GOP STOLE AMERICA'S 2004 ELECTION & IS RIGGING 2008 (www.freepress.org) and of WHAT HAPPENED IN OHIO? (The New Press) with Steve Rosenfeld. THE FITRAKIS FILES are available at www.freepress.org, where this article first appeared. Wasserman's SOLARTOPIA! OUR GREEN-POWERED EARTH, A.D. 2030, is at www.solartopia.org.

Editor's note: Article updated December 18, 2007 - AutoMark machines have audio systems, not bar code systems.

Seasons of Discontent: A Presidential Occupation Project

Voices for Creative Nonviolence (VCNV) and its allies in Iowa are organizing a campaign of nonviolent civil resistance focused upon those who would be President.

SODaPOP has asked all presidential candidates to agree to:

- Complete withdrawal of the U.S. military forces from Iraq and Afghanistan within 100 days of assuming the office of President of the United States.
- Complete halt to any and all military actions—including ground, air and naval—against Iraq and Iran.
- Full funding for the reconstruction of Iraq to repair the damage caused over these past 17 years of economic and military warfare that the U.S. and its allies waged against Iraq.
- Full funding for the Common Good in the U.S.—to rebuild our education and health care systems; to create jobs training programs for jobs that pay a living wage; to provide universal health care for all; to rebuild our country’s inner cities and rural communities; and to initiate a campaign on the scale of a new Tennessee Valley Authority and Rural Electrification Project of the Great Depression era to create affordable, safe and sustainable alternative

forms of energy and energy consumption; and for other vital social programs.

- Full funding for the highest quality health care, education and jobs training benefits for veterans of our country’s Armed Services.

For those Presidential candidates who currently hold a seat in the House or Senate, we set forth the following additional demands:

- Vote against any additional funding for the Iraq war other than those funds that are essential to fund the complete and immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq.
- Publicly commit to oppose the use of U.S. military forces against Iran, Pakistan or any other opening front in the “war on terror.”

Following the Iowa caucus, SODaPOP will go to the campaign headquarters of candidates in their respective home states, with the next critical days of nonviolent resistance to take place on February 5 (Super Duper Tuesday, when 20 states hold presidential primaries and caucuses).

To contact VCNV about joining this campaign of nonviolent direct action, civil resistance and civil disobedience, you may call 773-878-3815 or email at info@vcnv.org. Additional information and resources will also be available on the Voices website: www.vcnv.org.



Mexico Solidarity Network Weekly News and Analysis December 10-16, 2007

Four OPDDIC Leaders Charged With Attempted Murder

Four leaders of OPDDIC (Organization for Defense of Campesino and Indigenous Rights) were charged this week with attempted murder for an attack against two Zapatista supporters on August 10 in the municipality of Chilon. OPDDIC is a paramilitary group affiliated with local and state PRI leaders. The organization has been active for at least the past four years, working closely with state PRI authorities, particularly from the office of Agrarian Reform, to remove Zapatista communities from lands liberated during the 1994 uprising. In this case, OPDDIC members severely wounded two Zapatista supporters, using firearms prohibited for private use and machetes, in an effort to take over their lands. The Chiapas State government recently requested assistance from the Federal Attorney General and the National Human Rights Commission to carry out an exhaustive investigation of OPDDIC.

Marcos Criticizes Ebrard for “Bread and Circus”

Subcomandante Marcos criticized Mexico City Mayor Marcel Ebrard this week for offering “bread and circus” to residents of the capitol. Ebrard spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to build an ice skating rink in the Zocalo that will be open throughout the holiday season. Marcos accused the Mayor of, “claiming to be from the left, but governing from the right” and noted that Ebrard’s wife, Mariagna Prats, feels like “Mrs. Kirchner,” a reference to the newly elected president of Argentina who is the wife of the outgoing president. Ebrard refused comment.

Zapatista Communities Under Attack

Marcos spoke during a three-day homage to recently deceased historian Andres Aubry, a long time friend of the Zapatista movement who died unexpectedly in a September car accident near Tuxtla Gutierrez. Marcos announced the Zapatistas will not be participating in public events for some time to come due to increased military and paramilitary threats to their communities in Chiapas. This represents an adjustment in strategies to build the Other Campaign, and an increasing appreciation that the security situation in Zapatista communities is under threat.

NAFTA Takes Full Effect In 2008

Provisions in the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that will remove tariff protections for corn, beans, sugar and powdered milk are scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2008. The Calderon administration claims agricultural producers are well prepared for the tariff reductions. The administration added US\$2.5 billion to the agricultural budget for 2008, a 13% increase, and instituted a special program designed to cut government red tape. Calderon assured, “campesinos are prepared to confront the imminent opening for the importation” of agricultural products. “This is a process in which they have counted on and they will continue to count on the support of my government.”

But most campesinos are terrified of competing with US corporate producers who utilize high levels of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. US agriculture is the single largest pollution source in the country, yet the sustainable agricultural practices of Mexico’s campesinos cannot compete in the international market. The dramatic NAFTA changes are expected to increase undocumented migration from rural areas to the US and increase rural poverty.

Study Abroad Programs Available for 2008

Alternative Economy Internships:

Develop markets for artisanry produced by women's cooperatives in Chiapas and make public presentations on the struggle for justice and dignity in Zapatista communities.

Contact MSN@MexicoSolidarity.org for more information.

Participate in Neighbors for Peace by joining in our activities - see top of page 2 and bottom of page 20. You may also help by mailing a donation made out to “Neighbors for Peace” to: Neighbors for Peace, PO Box 215, Evanston, IL 60204-0215

By Jack Rasmus

Z Magazine, April 2007

Part I of this three-part article described the increasing income inequality that evolved in the U.S. between 1980 and 2006. 1942-1976 saw a considerable leveling of income. Today, by contrast, differences have reached levels not seen since the 1920's. Part II analyzed the precise character of this change. Since 1980, the richest one per cent of the population have been the only real beneficiaries of economic growth. The following facts were cited:

- ▶ the wholesale dismantling and offshore migration of the U.S. manufacturing base
- ▶ free-trade-driven job loss and wage reduction
- ▶ massive tax evasion, offshore tax sheltering, fraud, and fundamental tax shifting
- ▶ restructuring of job markets in the United States: demise of unions and collective bargaining, replacement of full-time jobs with lower paying part-time, temporary, and contract work
- ▶ dismantling of pension and healthcare benefits
- ▶ gutting minimum wage, overtime, and disability pay

Now, Part III examines the arguments provided by today's corporate and government policy makers to account for the phenomenon.

Even George W. Bush has acknowledged its existence. In January 2007, he was provoked by journalists to admit that "income inequality is real. It has been rising for more than 25 years." This inequality is said to be the fault of the very people who are harmed by it. In corporate-speak, the victim is the cause. The 90 million working and middle-class households that have experienced a loss of income are described as directly responsible for their stagnation and decline. They lack the necessary skills and education to ensure adequate income growth in the new, fiercely competitive global economy.

This is the official explanation. The core message of Bush and company is that skilled and educated workers are, by definition, the most productive, and therefore the most worthy of a growing share of national income.

The argument has its roots in nineteenth century economic ideology. If you got rich, it was because you contributed more—i.e. were more productive. If you weren't rich, it was because you didn't. But this was just an identity statement wrapped in circular reasoning—not scientifically proven fact or theory. However, this notion eventually made its way to neoconservative think tanks in the U.S. during the late 1970's and early 1980's. The old ideology was polished and refined for a new era of global capitalism.

Some representatives of the far right have provided other explanations. Outright denial is the most blatant. Another strategy is to cite, selectively, the most conservative government data to lower the magnitude of the income gap. Yet another explanation is the notion of some mysterious global-market forces beyond anyone's control.

The arguments provided by the more moderate voices in the media are less evasive. However, David Brooks, business columnist for the New York Times, actually claims that education is, in fact, reducing inequality; the problem is just that there isn't enough education going on. Paul Krugman, also of the New York Times, is far more accurate. He rejects the "insufficient education and skills" argument altogether. He notes that being highly educated is no guarantee of sharing in the benefits of economic growth. He further states that it's not a broad class of well-educated, skilled workers who are responsible for the rising inequality, but the rise of an oligarchy—a tiny elite who are driving incomes in their direction as a result of their preferential position of power in the current system. Unfortunately, he does not take the next step in his argument of making the fundamental connection between income inequality and government policy.

These different perspectives have been presented here not simply to show what others think on the subject. The purpose is also to show how discussion in the media is aimed at deflecting debate to politically neutral, safe subjects—education, skills, training—instead of addressing the root causes of inequality that lie in the policies promoted by corporate America and its government allies.

For the whole of this article, see Z Magazine, Feb, April & May, 2007 (www.zmag.org)

The Crises of Amnesia

A Speech given at the first meeting of the No War on Iran Coalition in Chicago - October 2007

Hello, comrades and friends. I am Samuel A. Dreessen, and I am an incoming freshman at DePaul university. Unfortunately, a major reason I wanted to go to DePaul was because I had studied and admired the work of Norman Finkelstein, and hoped to be taught and be enriched by such a prolific scholar and thinker. Instead there I was, my first day at DePaul, watching his resignation speech. I have been politically aware for many years, but it was then and there I was reminded, very painfully, that there is something very fundamentally wrong with our society. There is something wrong when a man like Norman Finkelstein, with a Masters and a PhD from Princeton, a world-class scholar whose work has been critically acclaimed and praised in every corner of the world, including by the founder of Holocaust studies Raul Hillberg, has had the doors of university after university shut in his face, has been derided and scorned and smeared by the press, the politicians and the punditocracy. There is something wrong when a truth-teller like him is an outcast, while there are buffoons, frauds, liars, gangsters and criminals in charge of our press, our courts, our government-and even our nuclear arsenal.

Men like David Horowitz, Daniel Pipes, Alberto Gonzalez, Dick Cheney and George W. Bush can terrorize our universities, rape the environment, invade other sovereign countries, torture-but they are NOT ostracized. They rule through lies, deception, bullying, and intimidation — so it is natural that they and their followers despise nothing more than a truth-teller, someone who challenges the official version of the past, as well as the present. That is why someone like Finkelstein, or Ward Churchill, or a Florida student who asks uncomfortable questions cannot be tolerated

because they seek to challenge the official self-serving narrative of our society's elites, and therefore they must be silenced.

Nowhere is this more apparent than the increasingly deafening drumbeat for a war with Iran. The bellicose rhetoric is everywhere—from the U.S. government designating part of the Iranian military a “terrorist organization”, to John McCain singing “Bomb bomb Iran”, to a blockbuster movie depicting the Iranian's ancestors as sexual perverts and hideous orcs, the campaign of defaming Iran is in full swing. As we all know, dehumanizing a people is necessary before you start killing them.

These are not isolated incidents or idle threats. As of now, Iran is surrounded by U.S. troops on all sides — in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Turkmenistan. The U.S. navy patrols the Persian Gulf, and Iranian diplomats are being kidnapped, and as the brilliant journalist Seymour Hersch has revealed, there is already a plan in place for a massive air attack on Iran, and there may be special forces already operating clandestinely within Iranian borders.

So in order for this war to go forward, for the public to stand behind this ensuing bloodbath, it is necessary for the American public to believe that we are in a fight against totalitarianism and terrorism, and to never remember. We must never remember that when the Iranians tried to democratically elect a leader, Mossadegh, in 1953, that the CIA helped overthrow him and installed the shah in his place — because a democratic Iran would decide to nationalize their oil fields, and thus be detrimental to U.S. and British business interests. We must never remember that for 26 years, our government backed the shah and his brutal secret police the Savak, while they tortured, murdered, and incarcerated tens of thousands of their own people.

(Continued on next page)



Former DePaul professor Norman Finkelstein speaks at conference on academic freedom on Oct. 12, 2007. The gathering at the University of Chicago was sponsored by DePaul University's Academic Freedom Committee. For more information see: www.academicfreedomchicago.org

We must never remember that when the Iranians overthrew the shah, our government, including members of the current administration gave whole-hearted diplomatic and military support to Saddam Hussein's Iraq in his war against Iran in the 1980s, in which over 600,000 Iranians were killed, many in chemical weapons attacks. We must forget that during that same period our navy waged an undeclared war against Iran in the Persian Gulf, even shooting down an Iranian civilian airliner and snuffing out the lives of 290 men, women, and children. The response of then president George Bush senior was: "I won't ever apologize for the United States — I don't care what the facts are." We must forget that Iran is being told to give up its weapons program by a nation that THOUSANDS of such weapons and is the ONLY



Donald Rumsfeld makes a pact in 1983 to give Saddam Hussein weapons to kill Iranians.

country — ever — that has actually used them on another country. If we forget all this Iran looks dangerous, belligerent and irrationally hostile to America, and so it is easy to be susceptible to whatever our leaders tell us and are apt to follow them like the Pied Piper's children, into yet another war.

It is true that the Iranian regime is hideous — a regime of religious fundamentalists, bigots, and torturers. But the way to a brighter future for Iran-and America-is to challenge religious fundamentalists, bigots and torturers WHEREVER they are, whether they are in Teheran or Washington, and not to be played off by one against the other, as in a depraved game of chess. In 1949, George Orwell wrote of a dystopian nightmare world, in which humanity was ground under the heel of three totalitarian states that were perpetually at war with other in order to keep their citizens in a constant state of deprivation, demoralization, xenophobia and fear. He wrote that the purpose of such a conflict is to distract the masses from their repressed lives by focusing on an external enemy, that far from being threatened by a state of perpetual war, the reactionary ruling elites of all three societies benefit: "On the contrary, they prop each other up, like three sheaves of corn." It is the duty of us, the students, the organizers, the independent media, the artists, to make an emphatic statement that there is an alternative to Islamic theocracy and U.S. corporate empire. And let us, above all, show the way to this alternative by revealing the truth to as many people as we can, as opposed to the lies that surround us. We must act quickly to get the word out, for time is running out. Thank you.

Peace is the Way to Peace

Mission Statement of Neighbors for Peace

We want peace among all people. We support and would take part in peaceful alternatives to respond to September 11 and other conflicts.

We condemn acts of terrorism, including state terrorism, and we mourn its victims. We support an international effort to bring the perpetrators of all terrorist actions before the International Criminal Court.

We Demand fundamental changes in U.S. foreign policy: from militarism and global domination to cooperation among all nations in creating a healthy, peaceful and sustainable planet where the dignity of every person is respected. We therefore oppose the U.S. making war in Afghanistan, Iraq or elsewhere.

We Adhere to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which among other things prohibits unjust, inhumane and illegal detention. We oppose secret military tribunals and any legislation that limits civil liberties.

We demand our government recognize in practice the worth of all people and work to eliminate ethnic and belief-based discrimination, profiling, and racism. We work for a more equitable distribution of the world's wealth and disapprove the policies of welfare for and protection of multinational corporations at the expense of working people.

We implement practices of peace and justice as we conduct our meetings, sponsor events, and educate ourselves and the public. Peace leads to peace.

Book Reviews

The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism by Naomi Klein,
Henry Holt & Co, 2007

A detailed analysis of the way many kinds of disasters, such as war and hurricanes, are exploited for profit. Klein explodes the myth that the global free market has triumphed democratically. There is nothing “democratic” about the effects of catastrophe. She traces the intellectual origins of what she calls “disaster capitalism” back to the theories of the University of Chicago’s Milton Friedman. Although he’s dead, Friedman’s influence is still being felt around the world. This fascinating book covers a huge amount of ground, both historically and geographically. The many events and places Klein describes include South Africa’s constricted “freedom” and the U.S. government’s abandonment of the victims of Katrina.

Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic by Chalmers Johnson, Metropolitan Books, 2006

This book is the third of what the author calls “an inadvertent trilogy.” The first two were Blowback and The Sorrows of Empire. However, Nemesis stands on its own. Johnson analyzes the impossibility of maintaining an empire abroad without establishing a

repressive regime at home. He draws interesting parallels between the U.S. today and the Roman and British Empires. Among other things, he shows how the Romans stopped paying taxes as their empire expanded. An especially alarming chapter in Nemesis describes the militarization of space.

Road From ar Ramadi: The Private Rebellion of Staff Sergeant Mejia
by Camilo Mejia. With an Afterward
by Chris Hedges, The New Press, 200

An account of painful personal experience. Camilo Mejia was born in Nicaragua, the son of revolutionary parents; but his own life has been very different from theirs. At 19, a poor American with few prospects, he joined the U.S. army against his parents’ wishes. He did this partly for the benefits, but mainly, because “I just wanted to be with a group of people with whom I shared something, to acquire a sense of belonging.” Until the invasion of Iraq, Mejia believed he had found what he was looking for. However, right from the start of the war, he found something else. He could not stomach what was happening. This led to his later desertion and consequent court-martial. Mejia’s writing shows him to be a man of courage and integrity.

Websites

commondreams.org
wluw.org
zmag.org
consortiumnews.com
electronicintifada.net
thisishell.net
courageto resist.org

chicago.indymedia.org
counterpunch.org
allthingspass.com
Jeremy Scahill on Blackwater:
blackwaterbook.com
The Nuclear Resister:
serve.com/nukeresister

Dahr Jamail:
dahrjamailliraq.com/index.php
EnviroLink: *envirolink.org*
Colors of Resistance: *colours.mahost.org*
Venezuela Analysis: *venezuelanalysis.com*

Internet Calendars

ilcpj.org/actions
newworldresourcecenter.com

Tue
Jan
1

1:00pm — Celebrate the 14th Anniversary of the Zapatista Uprising

“Arco de la Villita” on 26th St. between Kedzie and California. www.chicagotra.org

Fri
Jan
11

**4:30pm — Witness Against Torture — End Torture
From Guantanamo to Chicago**

This date marks the sixth year of abuse, detention, and torture at the U.S. prison at Guantanamo

Gather at Federal Plaza (Dearborn and Adams) for rally and music. Speakers: survivors of torture, a representative from Black People Against Police Torture, and a lawyer representing Guantanamo detainees.

More information at www.vcnv.org and 773-878-3815.



Wed
Jan
23

9:30am — Truth in Recruitment Rally at the Chicago Public Schools Board of Education



meeting, CPS Central Office, **125 S. Clark St. , Chicago**

Join AFSC's Truth in Recruitment program for a rally to support a policy to limit access of military recruiters in high schools.

Wed
Jan
23

7:00pm — Scott Ritter — Iran - Still A Target

Also speaking - **Former Ambassador Edward Peck**

The Unitarian Church of Evanston, 1330 Ridge Ave. (4 blocks west of Dempster St. Purple Line Station) \$10 admission (discounts available)(Free parking)



5:30pm - Reception Fundraiser - meet Scott Ritter and Ed Peck

Admission \$35 at the door, \$30 in advance - call 773-860-6969 (includes 7:00pm event)

Scott Ritter is the former Marine intelligence officer and United Nations weapons inspector in Iraq who opposed the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq speaks on Iran and the future of the Peace Movement.

Initiated by: **No War On Iran Coalition** - Presenting Sponsors: Peace and Justice Program of the

Sat
Jan
26

3:00pm — Uncounted: the New Math of American Elections-uncountedthemovie.com

Riverside Public Library, One Burling Rd., Riverside, IL (3mi Nof Hwy171exit - Interstate 55)

(Also near Metra/BSFN Riverside Stn) Sponsored by Near West Citizens for Peace and Justice - www.nwcpj.org. The election fraud that changed the outcome of the 2004 election led to even greater fraud in 2006 - and now looms as an unbridled threat to the outcome of the 2008 election.

Sat
Mar
15

5th ANNIVERSARY OF THE IRAQ INVASION

Mass National Rally In Washington D.C.

Initiated by International ANSWER
www.internationalanswer.org

Wed Mass Chicago/Midwest Rally

Mar 19 Initiated by the Chicago Coalition
Against War and Racism
www.ccawr.org

Participate in Neighbors for Peace by joining in our activities - see top of page 2 and bottom of page 20. You may also help by mailing a donation made out to "Neighbors for Peace" to: Neighbors for Peace, PO Box 215, Evanston, IL 60204-0215

The ARTS Page

Resistance Fantasies

We like to think we would have been
Hans or Sophie Scholl, scattering
anti-Reich leaflets for our lives.

We like to think we would have given
our homes, our future children
for the safety of our neighbors.

We like to think we never could have owned slaves
or better yet, that we were abolitionists.
We never would have paid a factory death wage.
We never would have sat at bulging tables
while the potato famine harvested the villages
or packed people into coffin ships.

We hear of every trail of tears:
The only good Indian is a dead Indian.
How could the people come to that—solution?

And then we close our newspapers, somewhat
aware of what our investments might support,
disturbed to be reminded, in the news or in a poem.
We might quietly recognize ourselves
when we hear that all it takes for evil
to triumph is for good people to do nothing.

And yet go home to our lives and our Silence,
that true rough beast, hiding in the hole
of our full bellies
so easily convinced there is nothing we can do.

And each of us continues to dream
of having been willing to give anything
at that moment in history, of having been,
at the very least, an active resister.
We were all heroes in someone else's war.

Diane Thiel

Birmingham Sunday

(September 15, 1963)

Four little girls
Who went to Sunday School that day
And never came back home at all
But left instead
Their blood upon the wall
With spattered flesh
And bloodied Sunday dresses
Torn to shreds by dynamite
That China made aeons ago—
Did not know
That what China made
Before China was ever Red at all
Would redden with their blood
That Birmingham-on-Sunday wall.

Four tiny girls
Who left their blood upon that wall,
In little graves today await
The dynamite that might ignite
The fuse of centuries of Dragon Kings
Whose tomorrow sings a hymn
The missionaries never taught Chinese
In Christian Sunday School
To implement the Golden Rule.

Four little girls
Might be awakened someday soon
By songs upon the breeze
As yet unfelt among magnolia trees.

Langston Hughes

London

I wander thro' each chartered street
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forged manacles I hear.

How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldiers sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlots curse
Blasts the new-born Infants tear
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

William Blake