

GOD BLESS YOU, MR. VONNEGUT

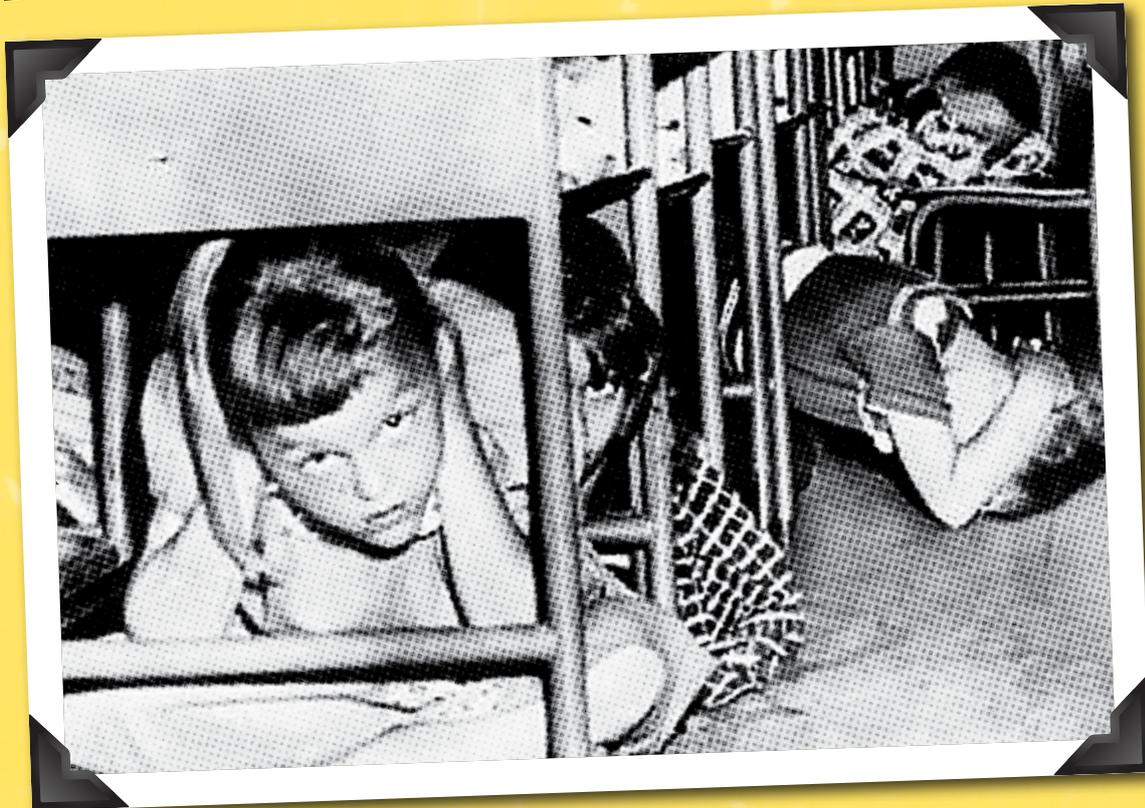
MAY 2007

IN THESE TIMES

**Why Women
Hate Hillary**

**Fair versus
Free Trade**

DUCK AND COVER!



**The Bush administration's "Complex 2030"
plan is reviving the nuclear threat**

PLUS:

Greg Palast and Joel Bleifuss tell the **real
story** behind the U.S. attorney **purge**

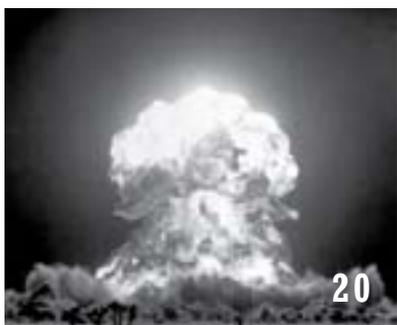
IF IT WEREN'T FOR
"IN THESE TIMES"
I'D BE A MAN WITHOUT
A COUNTRY.



[in memory 1922-2007]

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Thank You Mr. Vonnegut

THE DAY BEFORE this issue went to press, *In These Times* learned of the death of Senior Editor Kurt Vonnegut. *In These Times* lost a dear friend and the world lost a man who kept his moral compass always pointed in the right—excuse me, left—direction.

Kurt never ceased to be outraged by man's inhumanity to man. And while he could always find a corner of joy in the world—the fate of which he often despaired—he was ever ready with a droll, one-line quip that would eviscerate the pretensions of the powerful.

I first met Kurt over the phone, when I interviewed him early in 2003 during those dark weeks leading up the Bush administration's invasion of Iraq. During our talk he railed against the "PPs" or psychopathic personalities who had taken over the government "by means of the sleaziest, low-comedy, Keystone Cops-style coup d'état imaginable." He was speaking, of course, of Bush and Co. "Those now in charge of the federal government are upper-crust C students," he said, "Unlike normal people, they are never filled with doubts, for the simple reason that they cannot care what happens next. Simply can't. Do this! Do that! Mobilize the reserves! Privatize the public schools! Attack Iraq! Cut health care! Tap everybody's telephone! Cut taxes on the rich! Build a trillion-dollar missile shield! Fuck habeas corpus and the Sierra Club and *In These Times*, and kiss my ass!"

That was Kurt's strength as a political essayist: an ability to give voice to common-sense decency, accompanying it with a left hook that would leave the reader cheering.

Was he over the top? Perhaps. But also remarkably sane during those dark months early in 2003 when millions of citizens massed in the streets, and media mandarins and Democratic poobahs ignored them, nodding their assent as Bush marched the nation off a cliff to war.

There were two folks Kurt was wont to quote: Jesus and Eugene V. Debs.

In the May 10, 2004 issue, in an article titled "Cold Turkey"—the most popu-

lar of his essays that we published—he wrote, "For some reason, the most vocal Christians among us never mention the Beatitudes. But, often with tears in their eyes, they demand that the Ten Commandments be posted in public buildings. And of course that's Moses, not Jesus. I haven't heard one of them demand that the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes, be posted anywhere. 'Blessed are the merciful' in a courtroom? 'Blessed are the peacemakers' in the Pentagon? Give me a break!"

In that essay he also invoked Debs, who like him was both a socialist and a Hoosier: "Eugene Debs, who died back in 1926, when I was only 4, ran five times as the Socialist Party candidate for president, winning 900,000 votes, 6 percent of the popular vote, in 1912, if you can imagine such a ballot. He had this to say while campaigning: 'As long as there is a lower class, I am in it. As long as there is a criminal element, I'm of it. As long as there is a soul in prison, I am not free.' Doesn't anything socialistic make you want to throw up? Like great public schools or health insurance for all?"

Skeptical of the promises of technical salvation, Kurt was a self-proclaimed Luddite. Though he used a fax machine, he heartily scorned computers: "Bill Gates says, 'Wait till you can see what your computer can become.' But it's you who should be doing the becoming, not the damn fool computer. What you can become is the miracle you were born to be through the work that you do."

It was *In These Times*' pleasure and privilege to publish the work of Kurt Vonnegut. We applauded his humanist ethics, his one-off sense of humor and his in-your-face contempt for Beltway venality. We felt *In These Times* and he were a perfect fit, and he seemed to agree. One of the nicest faxes we received from Kurt read, "If it weren't for *In These Times*, I'd be a man without a country."

We have lost a citizen who spoke for us all. So it goes.

—Joel Bleifuss

IN THESE TIMES

"With liberty and justice for all..."

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759-C

mixed reaction



12 Number of presidential candidates with their own YouTube channel

9 Number who joined YouTube in 2007

17,212 Number of responses to Barack Obama's question, "How can we engage more people in the democratic process?" posted on Yahoo! Answers after it had been posted for three weeks

\$130 million: Approximate amount raised in first quarter of 2008 election cycle

\$46 million: Total amount raised in first quarter of 2000 election cycle

“

And if I should ever die, God forbid, I hope you will say, 'Kurt is up in heaven now.' That's my favorite joke.

”

—KURT VONNEGUT,
"KNOWING WHAT'S NICE," *IN THESE TIMES*, NOV. 6, 2003

LABANARAMA BY TERRY LABAN



QUID PRO QUO

THE QUID:

It turns out that it's not just the dreaded "tenured radicals" who are indoctrinating impressionable young college-goers with propaganda. The April 10 *New York Times* detailed some unseemly aspects of the business model of Student Loan Xpress, which claims to be the country's eighth largest student lending company. Of particular interest was the company's plan to "market to the financial aid offices of schools," which included

hiring financial aid officers from Johns Hopkins and Capella University as paid consultants and paying \$80,000 to send its executives to a conference run by a firm owned by the dean of financial student aid at Widener University.

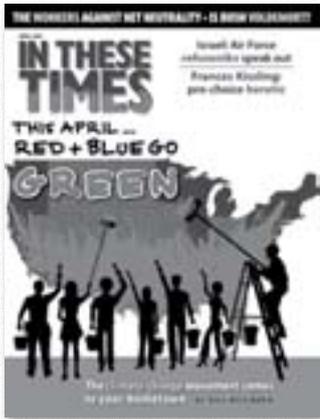
THE QUO:

Let's just say the practices—which may or may not be illegal—haven't hurt Student Loan Xpress. After losing \$28 million in 2002, the company made a profit of \$10 million in 2003



and was doing well enough by 2005 that it was sold for \$318 million. The New York attorney general is investigating, but seriously, where's David Horowitz when you need him?

letters



Mobilizing For What?

We wish Bill McKibben godspeed (“This April ... Red and Blue Go Green,” April), but he will not get far without an agenda. It’s fine to declaim we must do something, but what should we do?

We nevertheless have four ways to go right now. We should be building pilot plants making electricity using solar cells, with peak power at least 100MW, or a tenth the steady output of typical fossil-fueled plants.

We should be building wind-power plants far more rapidly, giving priority again to plants with 100MW or more peak output. With a combination of solar and wind power, we should replace an average of at least two percent of our total electrical generating capacity each year over the next 10 years, more than 50 times our current rate of progress.

We should be building pilot plants making liquid transportation fuels from agricultural waste and from field grass grown on marginal land. We should provide at least \$2 billion a year in competitive grants.

We should also be provid-

ing major funds for fuel cell research, at least \$2 billion a year. The missing link in a so-called “hydrogen economy” is a cost-effective way to convert hydrogen to usable power.

There are other useful ways to make progress, but these four are all far enough along to deserve major support!

*Craig Bolon
Brookline, Mass.*

Medicare For All Now

In his article “Health Care Monster Returns” (March),

The only way Americans will have totally free choice deciding who will provide their care is if all Americans are in on big risk group.

David Moberg mentions “choice” as being an argument against a “Medicare for All” type system, as if consumers can go to any care provider they want under profit-driven health insurance. The opposite is true. The only way Americans will have totally free choice deciding who will provide their care is if all Americans are in one big risk group. Doctors could not refuse to see anyone based on their coverage if we all had the same coverage.

*B. Spoon
via e-mail*

David Moberg’s article on the imminency of health care reform was excellent.

Dr. Elias Zerhouni, head of the prestigious U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), stated last summer, to my

surprise, that a treatment-based U.S. health care system is not economically sustainable. High technology disease treatment especially for the growing ranks of the elderly and “treatment” of the dying is extraordinarily expensive.

I support a modified H.R. 676 (Conyers/Kucinich-“Medicare for All”) with much more emphasis on individual and institutional prevention. Many health economists believe that up to one-third of health care dollars could be saved if prevention measures

er everyone effectively and efficiently. Cape Care is a coalition of Cape Cod residents, health and human service providers, business and civic leaders, and public officials, working to develop a single payer health care plan for everyone on the Cape. A non-binding resolution passed 10 towns in 2006 and we now have task forces engaged in elements of the plan design. It is clear that regional and state models must be in place before the federal government will brave the wrath of for-profit insurers. Cape Care is based on the premise that health care is a human right and a public responsibility. For a wealth of information, see www.capecare.info.

*Mary Zepernick
Cape Cod, Mass.*

Over The Top On Israel

One doesn’t need a conspiracy theory to account for the many sins of commission and omission by the Bush administration. Salim Muwakkil’s “For Israel’s Sake” (March) strings together a number of unoriginal, off-the-mark and over-the-top observations. To start, Israel does not have a “right-wing government.” It has a broad (overly broad) and relatively young centrist coalition that is paralyzed and beset by a host of scandals, legal investigations, internal divisions and plummeting public support. Muwakkil rounds up the usual suspects, a bunch of diabolical Jewish “neocons”—none of whom are in government anymore—cleverly manipulating their entirely non-Jewish higher-ups in the Bush administration to do Israel’s bidding. Muwakkil

had economic incentives for both individuals and institutions.

I am not proposing economic “punishment” for individuals who engage in self-destructive health behaviors alone. (These are often coping behaviors). Institutional prevention means low to no unemployment, safe and healthy workplaces and safe and healthy environments.

Moberg is correct, we have a window which allows us to fight for the best. Part of those best formulae includes prevention—but always with compassion.

*Richard A. Lippin, MD
Southampton, Pa.*

Thanks to David Moberg for making it clear that single-payer health care is the only way to control costs and cov-

contributors

even refers to the infamous “A Clean Break” paper submitted to Benjamin Netanyahu in 1996 soon after he was elected prime minister. Netanyahu completely ignored this document—one that was not “written for him,” as Muwakkil claims, but rather came to him gratis as a byproduct of a conference. You would never know from Muwakkil’s piece that Likud is currently a much-reduced parliamentary force that leads the right-wing opposition.

Ralph Seliger
Via e-mail

WTF, ITT!?!?

Good grief! Hasn’t Laura S. Washington (“United States of Amnesia,” April) heard that James Weinstein’s favorite historian, the one most influential on his own work, was anti-imperialist William Appleman Williams, lifelong adversary of inveterate Cold Warrior

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.? Or that Schlesinger’s signature volume was a romanticization of the slave-owning, Indian-killer Andrew Jackson? Or that his last major polemic, *The Disuniting of America*, was above all an attack on black history? Or that the greatest single muckraking of the 1960s was *Ramparts* magazine’s revelation of CIA activity among intellectuals, initiated and largely choreographed by Schlesinger? (Frances Stonor Saunders provides the documentation in *The Cultural Cold War*.) The generation of scholars who learned so much from Williams—and elected him president of the Organization of American Historians in the first popular vote of the membership—must be stunned to see this apotheosis in the pages of *ITT*. I know that I am.

Paul Buhle
Via e-mail



WILLIAM D. HARTUNG is a senior fellow at the World Policy Institute and the director of the Arms Trade Resource Center. The author of *How Much are You Making on the War Daddy* (NationBooks, 2003) and *And Weapons for All* (HarperCollins, 1994), Hartung’s analysis on the arms trade and the economics of military spending have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Newsday*, *The Nation*, *Harper’s* and elsewhere.



FRIDA BERRIGAN is a senior research associate at the Arms Trade Research Center, a frequent contributor to *Foreign Policy in Focus* and *TomDispatch*, and a contributing editor at *In These Times*. Hartung and Berrigan co-authored a recent report, “Complex 2030: The Costs of Consequences of the Plan to Build a New Generation of Nuclear Weapons,” from which their cover story is drawn. She writes in that “Bill moonlights as a standup comic and I’m teaching myself the concertina, so we won’t have any trouble finding a job once our work on military issues is out of the way.”



CHELSEA ROSS is a freelance writer and photographer working in Chicago. She served as managing editor of the *Madison Observer*, an independent bi-weekly, for two years while attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her last story for *In These Times* was on a study of black youth opinions on politics and culture.

WES ENZINNA is a winner of NACLA’s 2007 Samuel Chavkin Investigative Journalism award and works at *The Nation*. He lives in New York.

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Residents of El Alto, Bolivia hold a wake in the street for Jose Miguel Perez Cortez, shot dead during clashes between demonstrators and the Army and police forces, on Oct. 12, 2003.

STR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Gone, But Not Forgotten

Why Bolivians want the United States to extradite their exiled ex-president

BY WES ENZINNA

WHEN, ON OCT. 15, 2003, Filomena León was shot in the back by military soldiers in the Bolivian town of Patacamaya, near El Alto, she had no reason to believe hers would be anything other than an anonymous death in the Andes.

"I was in front of the soldiers and the bullet entered me from behind, into my spine," León, an indigenous miner and mother of six, told Verónica Auza and Claudia Espinoza, editors of *Gas War Memorial Testimony*. The shot left her paralyzed, and she told Auza and Espinoza on April 20, 2004, "[After being shot] I wanted to die. ... I still feel the same." She died 10 days later from a lethal infection.

But three years later, as the country struggles to rebuild its economy and empower its large indigenous population, Bolivians are rallying to remember—and vindicate—the death of León as well as 66 others who were slain.

In October 2003, protests erupted in

the impoverished and largely Aymara Indian city of El Alto over a government plan to export natural gas to the United States via Chile under economic terms protesters said would not benefit most Bolivians. The demonstrators filled El Alto and organized strategic blockades to stop gas from reaching the nearby capital of La Paz and later being exported. They also demanded nationalization of the country's gas reserves.

President Gonzalo "Goni" Sánchez de Lozada, widely recognized as the architect of Bolivia's neoliberal "shock therapy," had orchestrated the gas deal, and on Oct. 11 he ordered the military into El Alto to quell the protests and break the blockades. By the end of October, more than 60 demonstrators were dead and 400 wounded—the result of soldiers firing "large-caliber weapons, including heavy machine guns," into the crowd, as the Catholic Church testified in a public statement. León, stopped by troops along

with four others, was unarmed when she was shot. Among the others killed were small children and a pregnant woman. In the wake of the massacres, Sánchez de Lozada fled the country for the United States, where he remains today.

On Feb. 1, the Bolivian Supreme Court issued an indictment for Sánchez de Lozada that paves the way for an extradition request to be sent to the United States (along with the extradition of two of his ministers, Carlos Sánchez Berzaín and Jorge Berindoague, who also fled to the United States in 2003). The request will likely arrive in the United States in May. For his role in the massacre, known in Bolivia as "Black October," Sánchez de Lozada is wanted to stand trial for homicide, among other crimes, and faces a 30-year sentence if convicted.

Despite the uproar in Bolivia, U.S. officials appear ambivalent in the face of extradition efforts, which initially began in 2004. Bolivia's ambassador to the United States, Gustavo Guzman, characterizes the response his government has received from the Bush administration as a "truly deafening silence."

Both the State and Justice Departments declined to comment for this article. In what appears to be one of only two public statements on the case, a March 6 report by the State Department expressed concern that the Bolivian government's attempts to bring criminal charges against the ex-president "appear to be politically motivated." Beatrice Rangel, a Miami-based consultant and longtime friend of Sánchez de Lozada, told *Time* that the indictment is a "political trial ... without legal grounds," likely orchestrated by President Evo Morales and his MAS (Movement to Socialism) party.

Gregory Craig, one of the lawyers representing Sánchez de Lozada, says, "considering what is happening in Bolivia today, it seems difficult to conclude [Sánchez de Lozada] could get a fair trial," referring to the presidency of Evo Morales. Craig also believes there is no evidence of homicide or related crimes.

Despite these claims, Michael Krinsky, a New York-based lawyer who specializes in international law, points out that according to the extradition treaty

between the two countries, signed by Sánchez de Lozada himself in 1995, only probable cause is needed for extradition. The legal case for extradition appears particularly solid in light of *Ordinola v. Hackman*, a Feb. 22 ruling by the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that authorized the pending extradition of Wilmer Yarleque Ordinola, a former Peruvian general charged with leading two massacres in rural Peru in the early '90s. This ruling, says Krinsky, "could raise problems for the argument that Sánchez de Lozada should not be extradited."

Rogelio Mayta, the lawyer representing the families of the victims of the October massacre, says the claims of Sánchez de Lozada and his supporters have little substance. He points to a 2004 decision by the Bolivian Congress commonly known as the "Trial of Responsibility."

"On October 14, [2004], the National Congress authorized that Goni should stand trial, with an absolute [two-thirds] majority vote," says Mayta. "The majority of senators were from Goni's own party, as well as from his ruling coalition; MAS were a minority party in Congress." He adds, "Neither I nor the victims that

I represent are MAS party members."

The case against Sánchez de Lozada is criminal in nature, and the families of those killed in El Alto—where the average yearly wage is \$650 (U.S.)—are not requesting financial compensation. Nonetheless, the families could potentially receive damages at a later date, were Sánchez de Lozada to be convicted.

To date, the Morales administration has given a total of approximately \$6,000 to cover victims' funeral and hospital costs. This sum, critics say, falls short of providing real assistance to the families and survivors of Black October.

Sánchez de Lozada has a fortune estimated at \$50 million, largely garnered through the privatization of the country's state-owned mines. Even if a trial and conviction were to occur, it remains uncertain that victims would see any money. Various sources, who wish to remain anonymous, believe Sánchez de Lozada has "hidden his assets so that victims cannot collect damages under any circumstances."

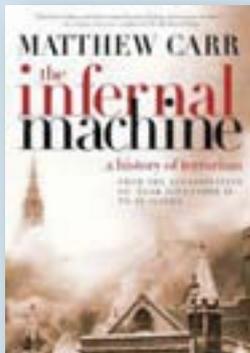
A trial could also have larger repercussions. "With this case, people have both a fear and a hope," says Mayta. "The fear

is that if the guilty parties are not sanctioned today, tomorrow another authority will order another massacre. The hope is that if we can bring [Sánchez de Lozada] to justice, it will serve as an inhibitor of future abuse and arbitrary violence."

For a country where Indians were banned from walking on the sidewalk until 1952 and where neoliberal policies were typically carried out at gunpoint, Sánchez de Lozada's trial would give the nation's indigenous majority something they've always been denied. Says Guzman, "The extradition of Mr. Sánchez de Lozada, as part of a process that is in strict accordance with Bolivian laws, has only one meaning for the Bolivian people, and that meaning can be summarized with a single word: justice." ■

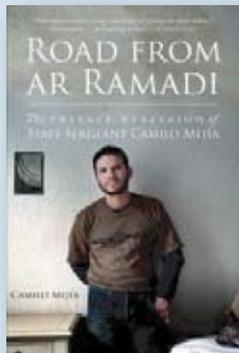
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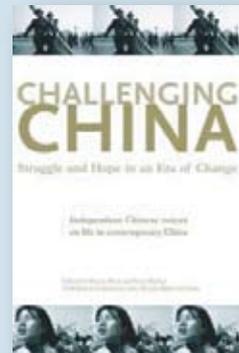
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Connecting Adoptees to their Birth Communities

As a Korean adoptee in New York, Michelle Koehn says she saw “a void in both the community at large and in [my] life for a network of friends, information and support in [my] adoption journey.” This prompted her, and many others, to get involved with the nonprofit group Also-Known-As (AKA), where Koehn serves on the board of directors.

AKA is volunteer-run by international adoptees. They provide resources for adoptees to seek out their birth families, learn about their birth countries, and address the “acculturation of the complex, hyphenated identity which is at the heart of the international adoptee experience,” Koehn says. In addition to an interactive e-mail listserv, AKA supports mentorship programs for children and teens.

This summer, AKA is one of many groups involved in a weeklong gathering in Korea hosted by the International Korean Adoptees Association. More than 700 international adoptees are expected to travel to Korea for the event. As part of the group’s participation in the gathering, AKA board members have arranged “a wine and cheese event of birth search research,” to encourage conversation about a topic that Koehn and AKA believe is an integral aspect of international adoption.

To join AKA, make a donation, sign up for the listserv or simply learn more, visit www.alsoknownas.org.

—Anna Grace Schneider



A Swazi patient undergoes circumcision in Mbabane.

Circumcision Promotion Divides AIDS Activists

THE LAST TIME circumcision made headlines in New York City, the city Department of Health and Mental Hygiene was objecting to an ultra-Orthodox Jewish practice in which *mohels*—professional circumcisers—sucked blood out of the wounds of newly cut infants. After three babies contracted herpes, the city tried to ban the obscure ritual in 2005, provoking an angry response from the Orthodox community and a media dust-up.

Now circumcision is news again in New York, but this time the city is promoting the practice. The April 5 *New York Times* reported that the city health department has decided to encourage male circumcision as an HIV-prevention method among at-risk populations, particularly gay and African-American men. The move comes after several clinical studies in Africa showed that circumcision of an adult male can decrease his likelihood of infection by as much as 60 percent.

But New York’s campaign brings up thorny questions for AIDS researchers and activists. Many are concerned about extrapolating prevention methods for American high-risk men, many of whom are bisexual or gay, from the African circumcision studies, which were conducted primarily among heterosexual groups. Meanwhile, others question

how a male partner’s circumcision affects a woman’s susceptibility to HIV.

Two decades of research show women are less likely to contract a variety of sexually transmitted infections when their male partners are circumcised. But a recent Johns Hopkins University study examining 997 men in Uganda found that their female partners were *more* likely to contract HIV following a circumcision if the men ignored doctors’ orders to abstain from sex until their wounds were fully healed, which usually takes about a month. And with the continued lack of a female-controlled HIV-prevention method—microbicide gels have yet to advance out of the trial phase—any HIV education effort must include a heavy emphasis on condom use. Spokespeople for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Health and Hospital Corporation, which operates public clinics and hospitals in the city, say the city hasn’t established any formal procedures for encouraging HIV-testing prior to circumcision in light of women’s increased risk, but stress that any public circumcision efforts will be just one part of a multi-pronged HIV-prevention program.

Cultural stigma against circumcision also remains, especially among immigrant groups like Caribbean Americans. Though about 60 percent of American men are circumcised, the practice is relatively rare worldwide. And it has become less popular in recent years as parents have come to see circumcision as a painful surgery that removes an integral part of the male sexual anatomy. According to

the CDC, in 2003, the American circumcision rate dropped to a postwar low of 55.9 percent.

Marjan Hezareh, scientific director of the Los Angeles-based AIDS Research Alliance, is cheered by New York City's decision to explore circumcision as what she terms an "additional prevention strategy" to condoms. For Hezareh, the health benefits for women of having a circumcised partner have been sufficiently proven and the medical benefits should outweigh any stigma against both adult and infant circumcision.

"We must disassociate circumcision from a sign of belonging to a specific religion or culture, and show it to people as another medical prevention strategy," she says. "I bet people will be very open about this."

But Tokes Osubu, executive director of Gay Men of African Descent in New York, is not so confident. He says he is baffled by the city's decision to focus on circumcision. "We might be sending the wrong message to people who are already circumcised," he says. "They might think, 'Oh, because I'm circumcised, I might be okay!' We are still dealing with the effects of HIV being misunderstood 25 years ago as a gay disease. Now I'm afraid people will say, 'I don't have a problem because Mayor Bloomberg said so.'"

AIDS activists also fear that a circumcision drive will undermine their long-term strategy to emphasize condom use. Indeed, homosexual anal sex is so risky that doctors agree circumcision provides little protection against HIV for gay men.

Ronald Goldman, a psychologist and founder of the Circumcision Resource Center, makes the point that "the U.S. has the highest circumcision rate and the highest HIV-infection rate in the developed world." A longtime anti-circumcision advocate, Goldman says, "If you're treating a problem, medical ethics would say use the least invasive method available. And condoms are more effective, plus they're cheaper."

But in battling a disease that continues to grow at alarming rates in urban areas (one in 20 Washington, D.C. residents is HIV-positive, and in New York City, African-American and gay men have infection rates as high as 10 to 20 percent), New York City's proposed circumcision drive is at the vanguard of public health efforts. Whether HIV/AIDS activists will get on board remains to be seen.

—Dana Goldstein

Abuses Alleged During Immigration Raid

SEVENTEEN IMMIGRANTS DETAINED for several weeks after an immigration raid at a candy packaging company in the Chicago suburbs were strip-searched, denied medical attention, roughly handcuffed, coerced to sign deportation papers they did not fully understand, and charged up to \$23,000 for bond, according to some of the detainees and their advocates. This treatment underscores a trend in the accelerating number of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids on workplaces nationwide—unnecessarily rough treatment of detainees that makes not only the threat of deportation, but detention itself a source of fear and anxiety.

On the morning of Feb. 27, ICE agents swept into the Cano Packaging Corporation in Arlington Heights, Ill., a mostly middle class, white suburb 25 miles from Chicago. The agents arrested the undocumented immigrants who had been hired by a temporary staffing agency to work at Cano. The nine men and eight women were then bused to a jail, which also serves as a regional immigration detention facility.

Maria de Carmen Santana says she was invasively strip-searched, and told the process was a search for hidden drugs. She was handcuffed so tightly that it left marks on her wrists, she says, and she was unable to get pain medication for severe tendonitis in her ankle.

"It was disgusting how we were treated,"

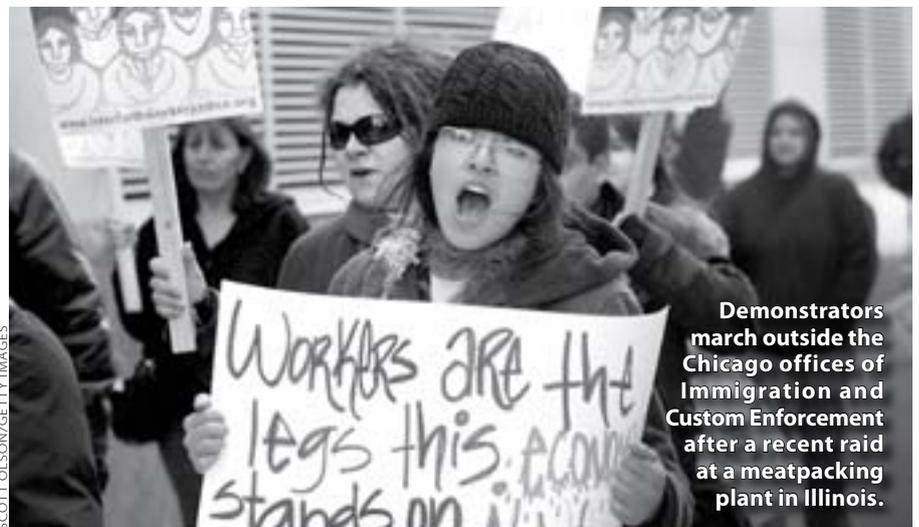
Santana, 46, says in Spanish. "We aren't murderers. We aren't drug addicts. Our only crime is being here to work without papers."

One woman alleges she was denied medical help while vomiting, and another when suffering an intense migraine. An ailing diabetic man was forced to do exercises as punishment for not making his bed. Detainees say the facility's meal portions left them extremely hungry, and a guard threw out fruit that detainee Leonel Trujillo had stashed in his cell.

ICE spokeswoman Gail Montenegro says that "ICE treats all detainees with the utmost respect and according to all detention standards. If anyone feels they have been treated unjustly, we urge them to file a complaint."

Three detained Cano workers signed papers agreeing to "voluntary" deportation. Tim Bell, executive director of the Chicago Workers' Collaborative, which has been developing a rapid-response network to immigration raids, says it is still unclear whether the orders, which were in English and not adequately explained to the Latino immigrants, were "removal orders," which would mean they could be charged with a felony if they re-enter the country within a set number of years. It is also possible they agreed to "voluntary departure," in which case they would not be subject to the re-entry "bars" which make it a felony to re-enter the U.S. after one has been deported. (Montenegro could not elaborate on specific cases.)

"A lot of them don't realize what they're signing. ICE doesn't explain it to them, and there's a lot of pressure on them the whole time to sign," says Bell. "One of



Demonstrators march outside the Chicago offices of Immigration and Custom Enforcement after a recent raid at a meatpacking plant in Illinois.

them was a diabetic who wasn't getting his insulin. He basically had to sign it to save his life."

The 14 other workers were given dates with an immigration judge. Santana was ordered by a judge to leave the country by January 2008; she is appealing. "But my case will be difficult because I don't have a U.S. citizen child or husband here," she says.

Since the workers were hired by the Georgia-based temporary agency Staffing Concepts International (SCI), Cano, which paid them about \$8 an hour, is likely not liable for hiring undocumented immigrants. A Cano spokesman declined to comment, and a call to SCI was not returned.

Bell says the Workers' Collaborative is filing a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor because SCI was apparently not licensed to work as a day labor contractor in Illinois; and he says a lawsuit is being filed in civil court regarding alleged employment violations on SCI's part. A civil rights lawsuit regarding ICE's allegedly abusive treatment of immigrants is also being considered.

The Cano raid was followed about a

month later by the arrest of more than 60 workers hired to clean a Cargill pork packing plant in Beardstown, Ill., a small town southwest of Chicago. Immigrant rights advocates denounced the timing of the raid—four days before Easter—and say the Beardstown workers also suffered abuses in detention.

In March, the National Immigration Project called for a moratorium on workplace raids and described recent ICE raids in Massachusetts, Iowa, Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, Nebraska, Minnesota and other states as "overzealous" and "military-style."

On April 6, a federal judge issued a temporary restraining order barring the government from deporting 110 of the 360 immigrants detained in a March 6 raid on a military equipment plant in New Bedford, Mass. The judge argued that ICE agents coerced the immigrants into waiving their right to appeal deportation orders.

"It seems like a way of scaring people about not only getting raided, but about detention," says Bell. "The government is using terror tactics on this community."

—Kari Lydersen

Power to the Public Financing

IN THE AFTERMATH of Jack Abramoff, a new clamor for clean money and clean elections can be heard nationwide. Finally, some legislators are offering more than cosmetic solutions.

In March, Senate Majority Leader Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) introduced the Fair Elections Now Act. Modeled after existing election-financing systems in states like Arizona and Maine, the legislation outlines a new system for financing congressional campaigns with public funds. With a proposed \$2.8 billion for each two-year election cycle, Durbin's bill aims to reward candidates who spend time with their constituents, and not golfing or dining with deep-pocketed lobbyists. In the House, Reps. John Tierney (D-Mass.) and Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.) introduced a similar measure, the Clean Money Clean Elections Act (H.R. 3099), in January.

Using an array of slides, Durbin lunged into the statistics during his Senate speech introducing the legislation: 74

appall-o-meter

1.3 Who's Been a Naughty Diplomat?

Police in El Salvador made a shocking discovery in March. They found a man in the courtyard of his home, drunk, bound and gagged, and wearing only bondage gear. Only after the policemen painstakingly removed the rubber ball from his mouth, reports the BBC, was the gentleman able to identify himself. He was Tsurial Raphael, the Israeli ambassador.

While his behavior was not illegal, it was deemed not quite correct, and the Israeli foreign ministry has decided to use Raphael's talents elsewhere.

0.8 Scenes From a Junket

A posting earlier this month to the forums of the Web site SomethingAwful.com offered a glimpse of Bush diplomacy from inside the motorcade.

The pseudonymous writer, a D.C. college student, was placed in the protective detail of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to accompany President Bush and Rice on their "fabulous South American tour to convince them that we're

cooler than Chavez." She posted photos she took, with captions laden with the irony characteristic of Bicoastal Nonspecific Elite College Girl Dialect.

Some highlights:

"Bush showed up for dinner without warning the restaurant he was coming. A minor security incident followed, with people screaming '[Fuck] Bush' from their balconies. ..."

"That's the first lady in the horrible pink suit. Yikes, Laura."

"Rice's flowers being checked to make sure they won't explode before we put them in her room. The dude on the left just poked them. Very scientific."

3.3 Eat Hot Lead, Gaylord!

What began as a lark for two Bay Area mouth-breathers and their dates ended in death and jail time.

After a party last Halloween, reports the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Jonathon Porter, 20, and Timothy McKeivitt, 19, broke into an ostrich ranch in Half Moon Bay, Calif., with a small group of young women in tow. The women



wanted to see the ostriches, according to prosecutors, and the young bucks sought to impress them at the expense of a very large bird named Gaylord.

What Porter and McKeivitt did not consider is that evolution had equipped Gaylord to handle much more fearsome adversaries than two pimply mannequins. With a few deft ostrich ninja moves, Gaylord kicked their asses—much to the amusement of the female company.

Not to be bested by a fucking bird, Porter and McKeivitt drove the women home and then showed Gaylord what happens when you piss off homo sapiens.

"We knew what had to be done," Porter later told detectives.

Returning with a shotgun and a rifle, according to the *Chronicle*, the men took seven blasts to avenge their humiliation.

Porter was convicted in March of felony animal abuse. McKeivitt, who has pleaded innocent, goes on trial this summer.

—Dave Mulcahey

percent of all American voters support fair elections; in the last three election cycles, spending in Senate races has increased from approximately \$300 million to more than \$550 million; and only 0.25 percent of Americans contributed more than \$200 in the 2006 elections.

Moreover, political TV advertising has skyrocketed from \$995 million in 2002 to approximately \$1.7 billion in the 2006 election cycle. Durbin fears that this “political money chase” undermines the democratic fabric of the United States.

“I used to say, ‘I don’t want a dime of federal taxpayer dollars going to some racist such as David Duke running for office,’” Durbin told his colleagues. “It was a pretty good response, but frankly, as I reflect on it now, it ignores the obvious. For every miscreant like David Duke, there are thousands of good men and women in both political parties who are forced into a system that is fundamentally corrupting.”

Durbin’s proposed legislation would allow candidates to raise “seed money”—up to \$100 from individuals, but not political action committees, living in any state—to finance the startup costs of a campaign. The cap for seed money follows a set formula for every state: $\$75,000 + [\$7,500 \times (\text{number of congressional districts minus } 1)]$. If a candidate exceeds this ceiling, they must refund the excess before they can qualify as a “Fair Elections” candidate.

Rather than focusing on large checks from special interest groups, Fair Elections candidates will have to procure thousands of \$5 qualifying contributions (QCs) from their constituents. Determined on a state-to-state basis, the minimum number of QCs follows this equation: $2,000 + [500 \times (\text{number of congressional districts minus } 1)]$. Independent party candidates, however, must amass 150 percent of the QCs required of major party candidates.

Nick Nyhart, president and CEO of campaign-finance watchdog Public Campaign, argues that the Fair Elections Act will shift America’s political focus back to the public. “As we saw with the last elections, the voters are watching,” says Nyhart. “They want politicians who work for them, instead of the big check. And voters of ordinary means are more relevant in Durbin’s proposed system.”

At the same time, the Fair Elections Act is a voluntary program. As much as anyone might crusade for a universal appli-

snapshot



KARACHI, PAKISTAN— Afghans nationals sit in a bus after being released by the Pakistani authorities in Karachi on April 4. Police said they arrested the men on their return to Pakistan for allegedly traveling on forged travel documents to perform Haj in Saudi Arabia. (Photo by Rizwan Tabassum/AFP/Getty Images)

cation, the U.S. Constitution stands in the way. Vermont’s state legislature tried to impose strict limits for campaign fundraising in 1997. But last June the Supreme Court, in a 6-3 vote, ruled that political contributions are a protected form of speech, meaning any limits imposed on them violate the First Amendment.

But if candidates are free to finance their campaigns with public or private dollars, how does the Fair Elections Act stop corruption? In order to compete with privately funded competitors, qualifying candidates are eligible for “fair fight funds,” up to 200 percent more than the general election allotment. The general elections allocation is based on another state-relative formula: $\$750,000 + [\$150,000 \times (\text{number of congressional districts minus } 1)]$.

Nyhart believes the Fair Elections Act will make privately funded campaigns obsolete. “From a voter’s perspective, I cannot imagine supporting a candidate who would rather pursue K Street dollars than spend time getting contributions from the average citizen,” Nyhart says. “It certainly questions one’s motivation and dedication. And in the end, the campaign dollars will match up anyway.”

The act already has strong outreach support within grassroots organizations. The nonpartisan advocacy group Common Cause, for example, started Stop-TheMoneyChase.org for citizens to voice their support or simply learn more about the bill. Moreover, an independent poll by Lake Research Partners and Bellwether Research reports “a significant majority of voters, across party lines, support publicly funded elections.”

Despite this grassroots support, Nyhart worries that the act will have to overcome adversity before it passes. He estimates that it will go up for voting in the fall and that conservatives, led by Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), will mount a tireless defense to retain or increase their political purses—with special interests groups paving the way in dollar signs.

“In last year’s elections, we heard a lot of talk about corruption and external influence,” Nyhart says. “It’s slowed down since then, so to get the necessary votes [to pass the act], the political environment has to come full circle. But the unearthing of one scandal can make a year’s progress happen in several months.”

—Michael Burgner

BY SUSAN J. DOUGLAS

Why Women Hate Hillary



WE SAT AROUND the dinner table, a group of 50-something progressive feminists, talking to a friend from England about presidential politics. We were all for Hillary, weren't we, he asked. Hillary? We hated Hillary. He was taken aback. Weren't we her base? Wasn't she one of us? Why did we hate Hillary?

Of course, a lot of people seem to hate Hillary. According to some polls, anywhere from 39 to 50 percent of respondents claim

they'd vote against her no matter what; her "negatives" continue to be high. Many of these are Republicans and men. But many are not. According to a Harris poll in March, 52 percent of married women said they would not vote for her. Nearly half of adults say they dislike her personality and her politics. Unlike her husband, people seem to find her cold and don't see her connecting with everyday people, and this is especially true for married women. Ironically, it is Gen Xers, those between 31 and 42, who give her the most support.

So what gives? For people like my friends and me, her hawkish position on Iraq and her insistence that the U.S. maintain a military presence there even after the troops are withdrawn have been very disappointing. But it's more than any specific position. Women don't trust Hillary. They see her as an opportunist; many feel betrayed by her. Why?

Baby boomer women grew up with the *Feminine Mystique* and then came of age with the Women's Liberation Movement. As a result, millions of us have spent our lives crafting a compromise—or a fusion—between femininity on the one hand and feminism on the other. And for many of us feminism did not mean trying to be more like men. It meant challenging patriarchy: trying to bring equity to family life, humanizing the workplace, prioritizing women's issues in politics, and confronting the dangers of militarism and imperialism. And millions of us fought (and continue to fight) these battles wearing lipstick, skirts and a smile: the masquerade of femininity we are compelled to don.

Hillary, by contrast, seems to want to be more like a man in her demeanor and politics, makes few concessions to the social demands of femininity, and yet seems to be only a partial feminist. She seems above us, exempting herself from compromises women have to make every day, while, at the same time, leaving some of the basic tenets of feminism in the dust. We are sold out on both counts. In other words, she seems like patriarchy in sheep's clothing.

Hillary wants to be more like a man in her demeanor and politics, leaving some basic tenets of feminism in the dust. She is like patriarchy in sheep's clothing.

One of progressive feminism's biggest (and so far, failed) battles has been against the Genghis Khan principle of American politics: that our leaders must be ruthless, macho empire builders fully prepared to drop the big one if they have to and invade anytime, anywhere. When Geraldine Ferraro ran for vice president in 1984, the recurring question was whether she had the *cojones* to push the red button, as if that is the ultimate criterion for leading the country. And while American politics has, for years, been all about the necessity of displaying masculinity, Bush, Cheney and Rove succeeded in upping the ante after 9/11 so that the sight of John Kerry windsurfing meant he wasn't man enough to run the country. But now, with the massive failures of this callous macho posture everywhere—a disastrous war, a deeply endangered environment and more people than ever without health insurance—millions are desperate for a new vision and a new model of leadership.

All of this frames many women's reactions to Hillary. If she's a feminist, how could she continue to support this war for so long? If she's such a passionate advocate for children,

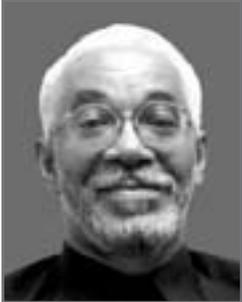
women and families, how could she countenance the ongoing killing of innocent Iraqi families, and of American soldiers who are also someone's children? If it would be so revolutionary to have a female as president, why does she feel like the same old poll-driven opportunistic politician who seems to craft her positions accordingly?

Maybe women like me are being extra hard on Hillary because she's a woman. After all, baby boomer women couldn't be "as good" as men in school or the workplace; we had to be better, to prove that women deserved equal opportunities. And this is part of the problem too. We don't want the first female president to be Joe Lieberman in drag, pushing Bush-lite politics. We expect something better.

Clearly, Hillary and her advisors have calculated that for a woman to be elected in this country, she's got to come across as just as tough as the guys. And maybe they're right. But so far, Hillary is not getting men with this strategy, and women feel written off. After the dark ages of this pugnacious administration, many of us want to let the light in. We want a break with the past, optimism, and a recommitment to the government caring about and serving the needs of everyday people. We want what feminism began to fight for 40 years ago—humanizing deeply patriarchal institutions. And, ironically, we see candidates like John Edwards or Barack Obama—men—offering just that. If Hillary Clinton wants to be the first female president, then maybe, just maybe, she should actually run as a woman. ■

BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

Globalism with Combat Boots



THE UNITED STATES launched a deadly air attack against Somalia last February, using the war on terror as a pretext. The bombings, which killed scores of civilians, were in support of an Ethiopian invasion to oust a Somali regime composed of “Islamic militants” considered hostile to Ethiopia and reportedly sought by the United States.

A convergence of Ethiopian and American interests provoked the air attack that helped rout this leadership, the so-called Islamic Courts movement, and endangered thousands of Somali lives. But it failed to turn-up the targeted Islamic militants. Continuing attempts to flush them out has produced what some critics have called an “African Guantánamo.”

According to an April 5 Associated Press story, “human rights groups say hundreds of prisoners, including women and children, have been transferred secretly and illegally to the prisons in Ethiopia” and interrogated by CIA and FBI agents. The bombings were part of “an on-going operation of air strikes in southern Somalia” to support Ethiopia’s struggle against fighters tied to al-Qaeda, a Pentagon spokesman said in explaining the deadly attacks. For five years, the U.S. military has operated a regional task force based in Djibouti designed ostensibly to prevent al-Qaeda sympathizers from gaining a foothold on the Horn of Africa. Last year, the Bush administration announced an enormous expansion of Camp Lemonier, the U.S. military base in Djibouti.

Perhaps the most amazing aspect of the Bush Administration’s bombing of Africa is the lack of any real public discussion in this country. The silence of African-American leadership is especially troubling. Aside from Rep. Donald Payne (D-N.J.), very few black politicians have even raised the issue. “I think the policy is wrong,” Payne told me when I asked him about the bombing of Somalia. It just “shows a misguided policy in Africa in particular, and the world in general,” he said.

John Prendergast and Colin Thomas-Jensen, two members of the International Crisis Group, argue in the March/April edition of *Foreign Affairs* that the Bush administration’s singular focus on stemming terrorism, “is overshadowing U.S. initiatives to resolve conflicts and promote good governance—with disastrous implications for regional stability and U.S. counterterrorism objectives themselves.”

And while the Greater Horn of Africa (which includes the Sudan, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya and Ugan-

da) has attracted the most public attention, the U.S. also has operations in Algeria, Angola, Chad, Gabon, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal and other locations.

The U.S. military presence in Africa has been increasing for many years but wasn’t officially acknowledged until Feb. 7, when President George W. Bush announced a new Pentagon command for the entire continent called AFRICOM. The new command, scheduled to start operation by October 2008, “will strengthen our security cooperation with Africa and create new opportunities to bolster the capabilities of our partners in Africa,” Bush said.

AFRICOM eventually will encompass the entire continent—except Egypt—and include the islands of Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea and São Tomé and Príncipe (in the Gulf of Guinea, where the United States is building another large

base). This region will become increasingly important to the United States for reasons made clear in press reports on the AFRICOM proposal: “The U.S., the world’s biggest energy consumer, also hopes the Gulf of Guinea region in West Africa

will provide up to a quarter of its oil imports within a decade.”

West Africa has about 60 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, and its oil is the low sulfur, sweet crude that petroleum refiners prize. Experts predict that one in every five new barrels of oil entering the global economy in the latter half of this decade will come from the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria already supplies the U.S. with 10 percent of its imported oil and Angola 4 percent. The continent is also rich in bauxite, diamonds, gold, uranium and a stunning variety of other useful minerals.

The buildup of U.S. forces is often justified as necessary, both to fight the threat of terrorism and to counter growing instability in the continent’s resource-rich regions—to guard against so-called “failed states.”

China’s growing influence in Africa is another reason the United States is anxious to assert a military presence. The burgeoning economic growth of the world’s largest nation has produced a desperate need for Africa’s natural resources and a vigorous rivalry with the West for influence.

America’s new Africa initiatives are driven by the same concerns as the imperialism of the past: unrestricted access to the continent’s resources and geopolitical advantage over perceived enemies. Today it might be characterized as globalism with combat boots, though it’s the same old story with the well-worn plot of Western hegemony.

Once, the enemy was Communism; now it’s Terrorism. But the real enemy is an independent Africa. ■

America’s new Africa initiatives might be characterized as globalism with combat boots, though it’s the same old story with the well-worn plot of Western hegemony.

BY H. CANDACE GORMAN

The Guantánamo Hunger Strike



GUANTÁNAMO IS IN the grips of a hunger strike—an age-old form of protest that marked such world events as the fight for women’s suffrage and Indian and Irish independence. The U.S. military’s response to the hunger strike is not surprising: punitive force-feeding, a dangerous and painful approach. In March I was treated to a grisly demonstration of this procedure at a conference of Guantánamo attorneys in

London and Oxford.

We also met with members of the British Parliament and ambassadors from our clients’ countries of origin (as well as ambassadors of countries that might be willing to offer asylum to former prisoners). But one of the main topics of the discussion was the current hunger strike, which is only now being discussed in the press.

The hunger strike coincided with the fifth anniversary of the opening of Guantánamo, as well as the opening in late December 2006 of the maximum security complex, Camp 6, constructed by Kellogg, Brown and Root, then a subsidiary of Halliburton. My Libyan client, Abdul Hamid Al-Ghizzawi, has been moved to Camp 6.

The exact number participating in the hunger strike is unclear because the military will not talk about it, but based on accounts emerging from the base through attorney-client notes as they get “cleared” by the military, we know the number is large. According to my Algerian client, Abdul Razak Ali, more than 46 prisoners are on hunger strike, but he is only in one section of the base, so presumably there are many more. The men participating in the hunger strike are force-fed “Ensure” twice a day. Each man is strapped to a chair (the model I saw was made of wood). A plastic tube approximately 30 inches in length is forced down his esophagus. (Occasionally it runs down the trachea into the lungs, *maybe* by accident.) This is what your country is doing—in your name.

One of the detainees subjected to this is Sami Al-Haj, the Al-Jazeera cameraman who has been held without trial for nearly 2,000 days. He described the force-feeding to his attorney, Clive Stafford Smith, in early March. According to Stafford Smith, Al-Haj is force-fed each day at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. This coincides with what Abdul Razak Ali told me about the men on strike who are taken from his camp every day. They are taken to several different buildings; Al-Haj is brought to the now-deserted mental health block.

In this building there are two cells with force-feeding chairs. Each day Al-Haj is strapped tightly into the chair with 13 straps. The guards begin with the feet straps, then his waist. Then they fasten one wrist at a time. There is one band around each shin, one on each wrist, one on each elbow, one strap that comes down over each shoulder and one around the waist. Three straps are used to immobilize his head. The ankles are shackled to an eye on the chair, and then they pull a mask over his mouth.

Every morning they insert the tube through Al-Haj’s left nostril and every afternoon, his right—presumably to avoid excessive pressure on a single nostril. According to Al-Haj, the pain of putting the tube up his nose is considerable; the tube’s diameter is 12 millimeters, (three times the clinically recommended width of a nasogastric tube) and he gags when

it passes through his throat. As it descends into his body, the attendants blow air into the tube to hear where it is, and then they put a stethoscope near his heart to listen. Most days he suffers in silence until tears stream down his cheeks.

‘Food is not enough for life. If there is no air, could you live on food alone? Freedom is just as important as food or air. Give me freedom, and I’ll eat.’

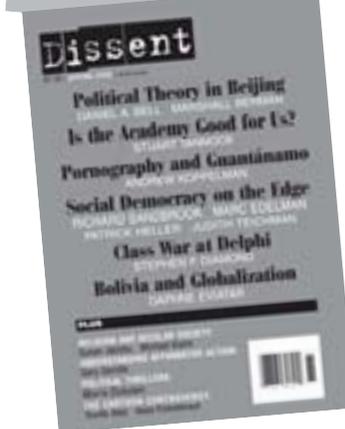
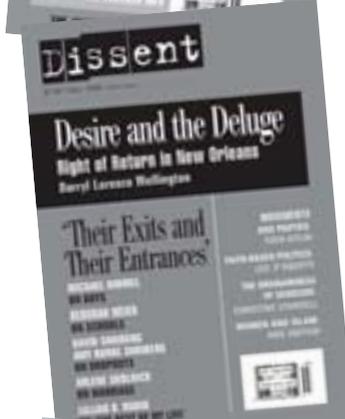
Three times they have inserted the tube the wrong way, so it went into his lungs. When they think that has happened they check by putting water into the tube, which makes him choke. Al-Haj says that never once have the hospital personnel apologized when the tube entered his lung.

After force-feeding Al-Haj, they hold him in the chair for an hour to make sure he doesn’t throw up. If he does, which Sami says happens frequently, he is given no clean clothes, and he cannot clean himself after returning to his cell because the water is turned off (so that the guards can check whether he has thrown up in the toilet).

At a press conference held before our meeting at Parliament, we watched a live demonstration of the force-feeding process. A brave volunteer underwent the grueling process, though the jumbo-sized feeding tube was not used. Everyone present looked away as this man was strapped down and the tube was inserted down his nostril.

Why does Al-Haj continue to endure this torture? He said, “Food is not enough for life. If there is no air, could you live on food alone? Freedom is just as important as food or air. Give me freedom, and I’ll eat. Every day they ask me, when will I eat. Every day, I say, ‘Tomorrow.’ Every day. It’s what Scarlett O’Hara says at the end of *Gone With the Wind*: ‘Tomorrow is another day.’” ■

H. CANDACE GORMAN is a civil rights attorney in Chicago. Adrian Bleifuss Prados, her law clerk, contributed to this column.



“an obscure journal”

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Defining Hate in the United States

Despite widespread public support, hate crime law across the country remains inconsistent and the crimes often go unpunished

BY JOHN IRELAND

ON FEB. 13, 72-YEAR-OLD Andrew Anthos was attacked in front of his apartment building in Detroit after returning home from the public library. His assailant was a fellow passenger on the bus who had confronted Anthos because he did not like his singing. The youth asked Anthos if he was gay, followed him off the bus, and struck him in the head with a metal pipe. Anthos died after 10 days in critical condition. Despite witnesses on the bus and at the scene of attack, law enforcement has not successfully identified the suspect.

Unfortunately, all too often, it is only the most violent hate crimes, like Anthos' murder, that are reported as such.

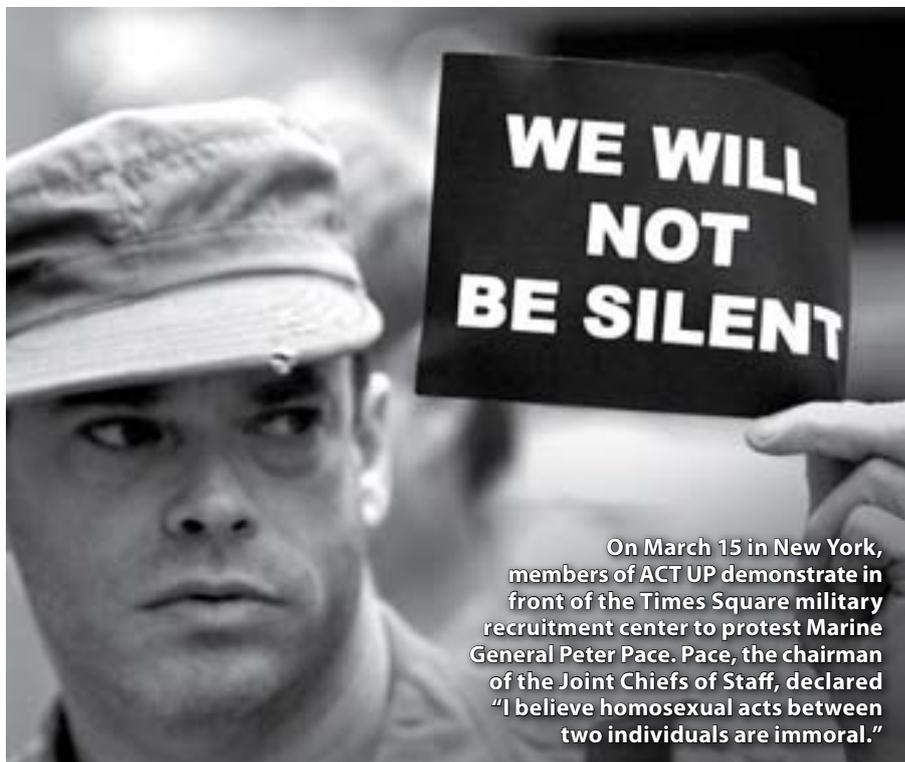
Studies show that victims of hate crimes rarely report the assaults to law enforcement because of fear and isolation. Such underreporting further leads to a false impression of the effect that real attacks have within communities.

Hate crimes underreported

According to Gregory M. Herek, a psychologist at the University of California at Davis, gays and lesbians report hate crimes to law enforcement only one-third of the time. Research shows that victims of severe hate crimes such as sexual assaults are the least likely of all hate-crime victims to report. The National Council of La Raza holds that Hispanics often do not report hate crimes because they mistrust the police.

Karen Franklin, a forensic psychology fellow at the Washington Institute for Mental Illness Research and Training, identifies four motives common to such crimes: ideology, thrill seeking, peer dynamics and panic defense. The common thread, she says, is that "offenders perceive that they have societal permission to engage in violence against homosexuals."

"Hate crimes are message crimes," says Jack McDevitt, a criminologist at Northeastern University. "The offender is send-



On March 15 in New York, members of ACT UP demonstrate in front of the Times Square military recruitment center to protest Marine General Peter Pace. Pace, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, declared "I believe homosexual acts between two individuals are immoral."

DOUG COLLIER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

ing a message to members of a particular group that they are unwelcome."

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), most hate crimes are committed by "otherwise law-abiding young people who see little wrong with their actions... [and who see] difference as threatening." The APA further asserts, "There is overwhelming evidence that society can intervene to reduce or prevent... hate-induced violence that threatens and intimidates whole categories of people."

A patchwork of laws

Nineteen states fail to include sexual orientation in their hate-crimes legislation. Law enforcement may view an alleged crime as motivated by hate, but prosecutors are limited to charges recognized within state code.

Although the commonsense meaning

of "hate crime" may seem obvious, the legal definition differs from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. A crime that carries an enhanced penalty in one state might not in another, or only if it is prosecuted in federal court. The debate over what constitutes a hate crime has raged for nearly four decades, with alternating accusations of police insensitivity and prosecutorial overzealousness. Critics accuse such laws of criminalizing certain types of thought. Nevertheless, in 1993, a unanimous Supreme Court found hate crimes laws to be constitutional, as long as they prosecute criminal activity and not speech activities protected by the First Amendment.

According to Brad Luna, director of media relations at the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), fewer than 11 prosecutions are brought under the federal statute each year. Most violent crimes are pros-

ecuted at the local level. Amid vocal opposition, 45 states have passed hate or bias crime laws, but only 31 of those include sexual orientation. Florida includes sexual orientation in its hate crime code, but Oklahoma and Michigan do not. Despite witness accounts that the attack in Detroit was anti-gay, the state does not provide for an enhanced penalty on that criterion.

The federal government, which does not prosecute hate crimes based on sexual orientation, does collect data on them and provides specific training to local law enforcement. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed into law the "Hate Crimes Statistics Act," which required the Justice Department to collect data about crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation or ethnicity. In 1994, the law was amended to include physical and mental disabilities. In 1996, the FBI published its "Training Guide for Hate Crime Data Collection," which cites many examples of what law enforcement should classify as hate crimes based on sexual orientation.

Data collection is inconsistent

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), which tracks the origins of such crimes, the data collection law was "doomed from the start." Reporting under the statute is voluntary and many local law enforcement agencies choose not to participate. John Holland, a retired senior program specialist who led Federal Law Enforcement Training Center efforts to teach officers about hate crime until 2000, told the SPLC's Winter 2001 Intelligence Report that despite the FBI's detailed classification system, many are unsure what a hate crime is and how to report one, "training is rare in police academies and even in most police departments."

A decade of data indicates that law enforcement agencies are increasingly using the FBI's Hate Crime Summary report. In 1995, 9,584 agencies participated, covering 75 percent of the U.S. population. That percentage increased to 83 percent in 2005. However, the rate of zero reporting has remained the same: 84 percent of law enforcement agencies reported no hate crimes whatsoever in 1995 and 2005.

Law enforcement vs. prevention

Edward Dunbar, a clinical psychologist at UCLA, points out that law enforcement's job is exactly that: law enforcement. And it's difficult to say whether

hate crime laws may or may not have a deterrent effect. The greater community can play an important role, however.

Dunbar explains, "Prevention is about education and, at least in major metropolitan areas, this is best addressed by a Human Relations Commission." These networks of social "stakeholders" include community leaders, educators, pastors and elected officials. "Communities have to arrive at a ba-

sic decision against violence that has to do with difference and answer the question, 'Where does it begin and end?'" Dunbar draws a direct parallel between hate crime reporting and the community's ability to respond with preventive education.

On March 20, Reps. John Conyers (D-Mich.) and Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) introduced the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act (H.R. 1592). The act adds "actual or perceived ... sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or disability," to the list of conditions that trigger federal support to investigate and prosecute. A companion bill was introduced in the Senate by Sens. Gordon Smith (R-Ore.) and Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) on April 12.

The legislation has been endorsed by 31 state attorneys general and more than 210 national law enforcement, professional, education, civil rights, religious and civic organizations. A Kaiser Family Foundation poll released in November 2001 showed that 73 percent of Americans support including sexual orientation in hate crime legislation.

In response, says Luna, "the typical

'Hate crimes are message crimes,' says criminologist Jack McDevitt. 'The offender is sending a message to members of a particular group that they are unwelcome.'

anti-gay, right-wing extremist organizations" are mobilizing against H.R. 1592. The American Family Association is calling for its members to oppose the legislation because it "further protects homosexual activity," and the Family Research Council is urging its members to "continue to pray that Congress will vote down ... any federal Hate Crimes."

In explaining why he sponsored the bill, Kirk told *In These Times*, "As a veteran of Kosovo, I saw firsthand what happens when a government allows one group to violently stigmatize another." He continues, "Congress must uphold our promise of 'Never Again' and give local law enforcement the tools they need to investigate and prosecute hate crimes." ■

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The Bush administration's "Complex 2030" plan is reviving the nuclear threat

BY WILLIAM D. HARTUNG AND FRIDA BERRIGAN

ONLY DAYS BEFORE THE fifth anniversary of September 11, President George W. Bush addressed military officers in Washington to warn that nuclear-armed terrorists could “blackmail the free world and spread their ideologies of hate and raise a moral threat to America.” This alarmist vision was accompanied by the White House’s release of “A National Strategy for Combating Terrorism,” which painted a picture of a “troubling potential WMD terrorism nexus emanating from Tehran.” The administration is building the case for war against Iran—a job made easier by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s recent announcement that Iran can now enrich uranium on an industrial scale—despite the fact that many Iran-watchers and nuclear experts consider their claims of enrichment capacity to be an overblown boast.

This is not the first time the “no-nuclear-weapons-for-you” ploy has been used to lay the groundwork for a war. On Oct. 7, 2002, while making the case for regime change in Iraq, President Bush said: “America must not ignore the threat gathering against us. Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof—the smoking gun—that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.” Yellow cake, aluminum tubes and histrionics about Saddam Hussein’s nuclear capabilities followed ... all of which were challenged at the time, and have turned out to be completely fabricated. And, when not grinding the axe of pre-emptive war as counter-proliferation strategy, the administration periodically raises the specter of nuclear terrorism, in the form of dirty bombs and suitcase-sized warheads.

But while the United States demands that other countries end their nuclear programs, the Bush administration is busy planning a new generation of nuclear weapons. Nearly 20 years after the Berlin Wall crumbled, the United States is allocating more funding, on average, to nuclear weapons than during the Cold War. The Bush administration is pumping this money—more than \$6 billion this year—into renovating the nuclear weapons complex and designing new nuclear weapons. Such hypocrisy is one of the main obstacles to nuclear arms reductions because it runs the risk of shattering the 1970 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in which the nuclear-armed states pledged to begin the process of disarmament if the non-nuclear states opted not to pursue the deadly technology.

The centerpiece of the administration’s move toward developing a new generation of nuclear weapons is “Complex 2030,” a multiyear plan introduced last April by the National Nuclear Security Administration (the semi-autonomous agency within the Department of Energy that oversees the nuclear weapons program). Complex 2030 calls for the construction of new or upgraded facilities at each of the National Nuclear Security Administration’s eight nuclear weapons-related sites throughout the country. The plan also calls for building a new nuclear weapon, the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW), inside the old warheads. The program was conceived in response to concerns that the cores of existing nuclear weapons could be wearing out and need to be replaced. But RRW development has gone much further than that.

The Department of Energy (DOE) notes in its summary of Complex 2030 that one of the major goals of

the program is to “improve the capability to design, develop, certify and complete production of new or adapted warheads in the event of new military requirements.” In short, while the Bush administration has publicly stressed reductions in nuclear weapons, it is working to produce new, more usable nuclear weapons.

Three small steps forward

As a candidate for president in 2000, and during his first months in office, Bush suggested that the United States should significantly cut its nuclear arsenal. In his first address before a joint session of Congress, the new president went so far as to pledge: “We can discard Cold War relics and reduce our own nuclear forces to reflect today’s needs.” He followed through on this promise with the 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT), which calls for reducing the U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals from 6,000 each—the limit established under the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty—to between 1,700 and 2,200 warheads each over a 10-year period.

Presidents Bush and Putin signed the treaty at Konstantin Palace in St. Petersburg right after the city celebrated its 300th birthday in June 2003. Also known as the Treaty of Moscow, SORT has serious flaws. It has no method for verifying that each side is meeting its commitments; the cuts are not permanent—neither side is obligated to destroy or dismantle the warheads, only to take them “off-line;” and both sides would have to agree to extend the treaty if they have not met their obligations by the time the treaty expires in 2012. After the Senate unanimously voted to ratify the treaty, Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) called it “as flimsy a treaty as the Senate has ever considered.” Yet even with these flaws, SORT establishes important benchmarks and offers the potential of trust-building between the former superpower rivals.

Another positive development occurred in mid-February, when the Bush administration, after years of work through the “six party talks,” announced a deal with North Korea. The hermit nation agreed to take the first steps toward dismantling its nuclear program in exchange for large supplies of fuel oil and eventual political recognition. The first phase of the agreement calls for North Korea to take concrete steps within 60 days, including closing down its nuclear reactor at Yongbyon, getting inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency on the ground, and beginning



to reveal the locations of its other nuclear facilities. In exchange, it will receive 50,000 tons of fuel oil at the end of the 60-day period. The agreement demonstrates that the Bush administration is slowly learning the nuances of diplomacy—you have to give to get.

More good news surrounds the recent fate of the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (RNEP). One of the most controversial new weapon designs proposed by the nuclear weapons complex, the RNEP promised to destroy hardened and deeply buried targets, such as underground bunkers containing chemical and biological weapons and military command centers. Such a difficult challenge would necessitate decades of steady and climbing investment, making it the kind of techno-fantasy that the nuclear weapons complex of the future would love to tackle.

In 2003, Congress allocated \$15 million to study the RNEP. But in 2004 and 2005, Rep. David Hobson (R-Ohio), then chair of the Water and Energy Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, led successful fights to defund the RNEP. Later, he boasted: “It’s dead, forget about it! Go conventional. If I have to kick it three or four times, I’m going to keep kicking at it until we think we’ve totally gotten it out of the way.”

Giant leaps backward

The Bush administration has aggressively counteracted these small positive developments with a succession of negative and destabilizing actions and statements—the most significant of which is the assertion that nuclear weapons are a central component of U.S. military and political strategy. This stunner was concealed within the administration’s 2002 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), a Pentagon report that relies on input from the Joint Chiefs and the armed services to

define the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. security. The final classified report concluded that nuclear weapons “play a critical role in the defense capabilities of the United States, its allies and friends.”

Submitted to Congress in January 2002, the NPR was not made public until portions were leaked to the press two months later. It states, “The need is clear for a revitalized nuclear weapons complex that will ... be able, if directed, to design, develop, manufacture and certify new warheads in response to new national requirements; and maintain readiness to resume underground testing if required.”

The NPR introduces the concept of a “new Triad,” composed of nuclear and non-nuclear strike capabilities, defensive systems, and “responsive infrastructure” for maintaining and/or producing nuclear weapons as requested. The report also emphasizes the development of creative new nuclear weapons—like low-yield or surgical warheads that are able to “reduce collateral damage,” and nuclear bombs with “earth penetrating” capabilities.

The NPR concluded that nuclear weapons “provide credible military options to deter a wide range of threats, including WMD and large-scale conventional military force.” The Bush NPR explicitly named potential targets—Iran, Syria, North Korea, China and Russia. The review explained that the United States might use nuclear weapons to retaliate for

the use of chemical or biological weapons against U.S. targets, as the ultimate tool in a military conflict over Taiwan, or, disturbingly, as a response to undefined “surprising developments.”

Proliferation trumps prevention

During the Cold War, spending on nuclear weapons averaged \$4.2 billion a year. When the Cold War ended, DOE officials and members of Congress imagined the conversion of the nuclear weapons complex. But innovative proposals for civilian or green technology labs never got off the ground, and the nuclear labs successfully lobbied Congress for a new infusion of weapons money. By the end of President Clinton’s tenure, nuclear weapons activities within the DOE’s annual budget had jumped to \$5.2 billion—more than the Cold War average, but less than what the new Bush administration would say it needed.

Since then, spending on nuclear weapons has increased by almost 14 percent to a 2007 total of \$6.4 billion (after adjustment for inflation), but it is not enough to satisfy a nuclear-obsessed administration. The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), formed in 2000 to manage the nation’s nuclear weapons complex within the DOE, has a five-year “National Security Plan” that calls for annual increases that will push the nuclear weapons budget to \$7.4 billion by 2012.

Compare these significant increases in nuclear spending to what the DOE is allocating for non-proliferation and prevention of nuclear conflict. The NNSA spends more than nine times more on “Atomic Energy Defense Activities”—a category that includes nuclear weapons, naval nuclear reactors and environmental cleanup at military nuclear facilities—than it does on nuclear arms reductions and non-proliferation.

In addition, spending on nuclear weapons research, development and maintenance in the DOE budget far outpaces the funding devoted to the development of alternative energy sources, a critical need in the age of global warming and dwindling oil supplies. The DOE’s proposed budget for “Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy”—which includes non-nuclear, non-fossil fuel forms of energy—is \$1.2 billion for FY 2008, one-thirteenth of expenditures on “Atomic Energy Defense Activities.”

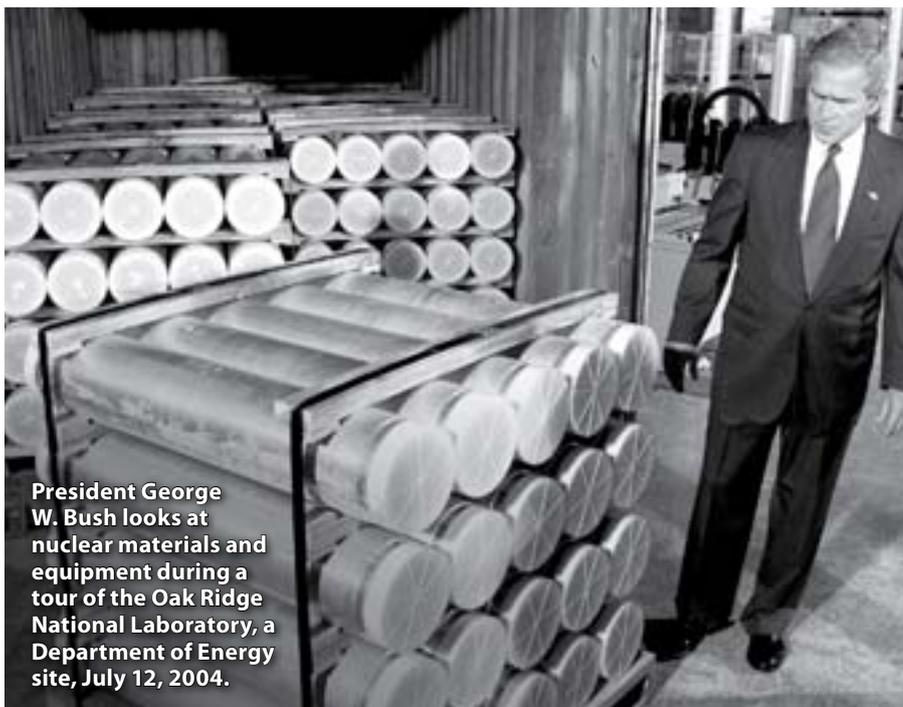
Upgrading nuclear capabilities

Under Complex 2030, the NNSA is taking steps to boost the U.S. ability to test and produce new warheads, and to consolidate production of uranium, plutonium and non-nuclear components within nuclear weapons.

The central component of Complex 2030 is the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program. The official rationale for the RRW program is to produce weapons that are safer and more durable than the warheads in the current stockpile. Supporters of RRW fear that the components of nuclear weapons could wear out and that the only way to know if the warheads are viable is to replace their inner workings. And—the line of thinking continues—as long as scientists are replacing the plutonium or uranium cores, they might as well “tweak” the weapon’s design.

But the assertion that the old nuclear weapons need to be replaced by reliable new warheads is undermined by a recent NNSA study that indicates that the existing plutonium triggers, or “pits,” may be viable for another 90 to 100 years. The report, issued in November and reviewed by an independent panel of scientists and academics, indicates the need for considerable skepticism of the Complex 2030 claims.

In addition, the RRW program will establish the infrastructure needed for



President George W. Bush looks at nuclear materials and equipment during a tour of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, a Department of Energy site, July 12, 2004.

TIM SLOAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

future development of new warheads with new capabilities. A key element of this upgraded and consolidated nuclear infrastructure is a new facility to produce “pits,” the plutonium triggers that set off the explosion of a hydrogen bomb. The DOE has proposed constructing a Modern Pit Facility, but Congress has deemed the \$2 to \$4 billion price tag too steep, and has rejected funding proposals for

including two new factories—a Highly Enriched Uranium Materials Facility (HEU-MF) and a Uranium Processing Facility (UPF)—at the Y-12 site; a new Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement facility at Los Alamos National Laboratory to “support plutonium operations”; a new factory for the production of non-nuclear components of nuclear weapons at the current site of the Kansas City plant; and

to the question of why the United States needs to build new nuclear warheads at this time,” he says. “My preference is that the DOE would have spent their resources reconfiguring the old Cold War complex and dismantling obsolete warheads.” He has not ruled out slowing or eliminating the RRW if the administration is unable to present a strategy “that defines the future mission, the emerging threats and

The United States might use nuclear weapons to retaliate for the use of chemical or biological weapons against U.S. targets, or as a response to unidentified ‘surprising developments.’

two years running.

As an alternative, the department is pushing the idea of a Consolidated Plutonium Center (CPC) that would bring all of the plutonium-related activities together at one site. The new facility would be a sort of “modern pit facility-plus,” capable each year of producing 125 plutonium pits to trigger nuclear weapons, and at the same time develop new military applications for plutonium. This more expansive concept is likely to cost more than the facility alone, but NNSA has yet to provide a cost estimate to Congress. A small down payment for the CPC—\$24.9 million—is proposed in the FY 2008 budget; budget projections for continuing work on the CPC total \$282 million through 2012.

Under Complex 2030, the new CPC will be one of a series “transformed” and “consolidated” nuclear sites. Currently, there are eight facilities—Los Alamos National Laboratory (N.M.), Lawrence Livermore Laboratory (Calif.) and Sandia National Laboratories (N.M.), the Nevada Test Site (R&D activities, including sub-critical experiments), the Oak Ridge Y-12 Plant in Tennessee (uranium and other components), the Pantex Plant in Texas (warhead assembly, disassembly, disposal), the Kansas City Plant (non-nuclear components), and the Savannah River Site (tritium extraction and handling) in Georgia.

While Complex 2030 would mandate that some of the sites have a smaller “footprint” (less floor space), it would also require the investment of tens of billions of dollars for new or upgraded factories, in-

cluding two new factories—a Highly Enriched Uranium Materials Facility (HEU-MF) and a Uranium Processing Facility (UPF)—at the Y-12 site; a new Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement facility at Los Alamos National Laboratory to “support plutonium operations”; a new factory for the production of non-nuclear components of nuclear weapons at the current site of the Kansas City plant; and

Broken pledges, skeptical Congress

All of this raises concerns for Robert Civiak. A program examiner for Department of Energy national security programs in 1988 and 1989, Civiak now does research for Tri-Valley Cares, a group that advocates the elimination of nuclear weapons. He calls the Reliable Replacement Warhead a “multibillion dollar effort to redesign and replace every nuclear weapon in the U.S. arsenal.” Jay Coghlan, executive director at Nuclear Watch of New Mexico, agrees, calling RRW a “nukes forever program, and a Trojan horse for future new designs.”

NNSA’s planning documents call for the production of the first RRW by 2012, and according to analysis by James Sterngold in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the work is already beginning. He writes, “Lab officials said researchers not only have produced extensive designs ... but they have already conducted non-nuclear tests of the critical detonation devices and other components. They have begun to plan in detail how the weapons would be manufactured.”

Rep. Pete Visclosky (D-Ind.), the new chairman of the House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee, has criticized the RRW project for its “make-it-up-as-you-go-along” approach. “There appears to have been little thought given

the specific U.S. nuclear stockpile necessary to achieve strategic goals.”

The 110th Congress and beyond

In an August 2005 speech to a symposium on post-cold war nuclear strategy, Rep. Hobson described the administration’s call for research on new bombs and the Nuclear Earth Penetrator as “very provocative and overly aggressive policies that undermine our moral authority to argue that other nations should forgo nuclear weapons.”

Hobson’s concerns are shared by a number of his colleagues on the other side of the aisle, including Reps. Ed Markey (D-Mass.), John Spratt (D-S.C.) and Lynne Woolsey (D-Calif.), all of whom joined him in successfully leading an effort to defund the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator. Skepticism about the need for massive investment in nuclear weapons at a time of huge war bills and growing deficits, a growing sophistication about nuclear issues, and a Democratic majority means that for the first time in years the nuclear weapons complex is feeling the heat.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) represents the state that houses the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, which recently won the Reliable Replacement Warhead competition. In a press release issued after the decision, she said, “While I appreciate the fact that Lawrence Livermore was selected, this in no way answers my questions about the Reliable Replacement Warhead program—a program that she remains “100 percent opposed to.”

Despite support from the White House,



the DOE, key contractors, and a number of powerful members of Congress such as Sen. Pete Domenici (R-N.M.), Rep. Zach Wamp (R-Tenn.) and Rep. Joe Barton (R-Texas)—all of whom have nuclear weapons facilities in their states or districts—the Complex 2030 plan to modernize the U.S. nuclear weapons infrastructure may be scaled back or rejected by congressional opponents, who will receive backing from arms control and environmental organizations. But it will take more than cutting a million here or a billion there, more than gunning against a specific corner of the Complex 2030 plan, more than defunding the most aggressive or alarming aspects of the nuclear weapons complex, to deal with nuclear weapons in the 21st century. Members of Congress are going to need to challenge the bedrock of administration foreign policy—that nuclear weapons should occupy center stage as a guarantor of U.S. security.

But they will not do that without being pushed—and pushed hard—by civil society. The urgency of the task creates opportunities for a big tent of strange bedfellows to work together: Weary cold warriors like George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn, who in January co-authored a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed titled “A World Free of Nuclear Weapons”; well-established Washington organizations like the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Arms Control Association; disarmament activists like Helen Caldicott and the Abolition 2000 network; and members of the international community from the United Nations on down are all saying the same thing: The United States cannot insist that other nations disarm or opt not to pursue nuclear technology, while aggressively ramping up U.S. nuclear capabilities. This hypocrisy cannot stand.

Global security through nuclear disarmament or a world awash in nuclear weapons. The choice is obvious. And it is ours to make. ■

WILLIAM D. HARTUNG is a senior fellow at the World Policy Institute and the director of the Arms Trade Resource Center.

FRIDA BERRIGAN is a senior research associate at the Arms Trade Research Center.

From top: A 1953 explosion at the Nevada Test Site, a 2006 rally in India to memorialize Hiroshima, the March 2007 six party talks.



Iraq war veterans Drew Cameron (L) and Matt Howard (R) on the University of Vermont campus in Burlington.

TERRY J. ALLEN

GI Bill Fails Vets

Soldiers returning from Iraq aren't receiving their education stipends until it's too late

BY TERRY J. ALLEN

WITH HIS BOYISH FACE and soft tangle of curls, Matt Howard looks like he should have carried a fishing rod through a Norman Rockwell summer. Instead, the 26-year-old Vermonter lugged a gun through two tours in Iraq. Now, what the former Marine really wants is a college diploma. But he and other returning veterans are finding it hard to collect the college benefits they expected when they enlisted in the military.

That expectation was fueled by promises from military recruiters and the soldiers' own financial commitment. All new recruits are given a one-time, use-it-or-lose-it opportunity to buy into benefits eligibility by paying \$100 a month for their first year of service. Any benefits unused 10 years after they leave the military are forever lost, including the \$1,200 "kicker." The almost 30 percent of active duty veterans who bought in didn't collect their educational benefits over the last decade effectively do-

nated hundreds of millions of dollars to the U.S. Treasury.

Many veterans who applied under the 1984 Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) say they faced black-hole bureaucracy and college costs that far exceeded benefits.

"I was so disgusted by how hard it was to get my college benefits, I just gave up," says Howard about his first experience enrolling in the University of Vermont (UVM), a relatively affluent state/private school in picturesque and progressive Burlington. "I volunteered for the Marines, served in Iraq and I appreciate the pat on the back and being called hero, but the military sells itself on money for college; it is the major recruitment tool. This is supposedly why I sold my soul to the devil."

Because many colleges require payment upfront, and benefit checks from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) typically arrive months after the semester begins, veterans often have to pony up thousands of dollars in tuition, fees

and living expenses to enter school. Already stressed, they may have to choose between going into debt, missing semesters, or exchanging college dreams for low-wage work to support themselves and their families.

"It creates a significant increase in anxiety in a population that is already anxious," said Jim Dooley, a mental health clinician for the VA in Vermont. "There is also a feeling of betrayal; they are angry enough already."

Gone are the post-World War II days when MGIB's predecessor, the GI Bill of Rights, helped educate 7.8 million of the war's 16 million veterans and provided a "magic carpet to the middle class." That bill fully covered tuition, books and fees at any public or private U.S. college or job-training program.

Under today's MGIB, vets who have served more than three years and are enrolled full-time typically collect \$1,075 per month for 36 academic months. The \$38,700 total covers about 60 percent of the average cost of college, according to the College Board's estimates.

While reservists don't need to pay the \$1,200 to buy into MGIB, their benefits and the window they have to use them are prorated by time and type of service and are significantly less than for active duty troops. Some 58 percent of reservists and members of the National Guard, even those who have served multiple combat tours, collected no money for education. (See "Getting Vets Their Benefits Back," February.)

A few lucky veterans attend schools that have learned how to work the VA system and have established policies that give vets a break, allowing them to pay when benefits arrive. But in the end, whether the VA educational benefits system works for an individual depends on the cost of the school, the vet's own economic resources and determination, how knowledgeable and helpful the school is, and luck.

Financial Catch 22

Most schools, however, borrow a page from the military by building in a Catch 22: No matter when the vet notifies the VA, the agency won't process MGIB paperwork until the vet's school submits a certificate of enrollment. Although the VA accepts the certificates 3 to 4 months before school starts, most schools won't certify students until they actually begin

classes. Last fall, the VA took an average of 16 weeks to process paperwork, and they now average between 8 to 12 weeks. Vets are lucky to get fall tuition payments by Thanksgiving.

“By far, the majority of schools are not certifying before school actually starts,” says one state VA official. Another, John V., a senior VA claims examiner in the regional office in Buffalo, puts the figure at “about half.” (Both VA officials asked for anonymity because they are not authorized to talk to media.)

UVM says that it submits the certificate of enrollment 30 days before classes start, which still “guarantees that VA payments will be months late,” says Marie Johnson, UVM’s associate director for customer service for student financial services.

“I’m stressing out because I can’t survive without that check,” says Drew Cameron, who served eight months in Iraq. Now a forestry major at UVM, Cameron enrolled in the Army in hopes of getting a college education. “Every single beginning of school year for six semesters there is this huge lag,” he says of his experiences both at Community College of Vermont where he first enrolled and of UVM where

he transferred. “I submit my paperwork to the VA on time, but don’t get the check until November.”

UVM gives its 77 vets a break by requiring them to pay only half the tuition up-front every semester, says Johnson, and the rest in three payments. But that means a full-time, in-state student, living off campus will have to find \$2,500 not just once, but at the start of every academic year. “Maybe they should take out a loan,” Johnson suggests.

How willing schools are to let vets start classes before paying “depends how much they got burned by vets in the past,” says the VA’s John V.

The risk is that because MGIB checks are made out directly to students, they can attend classes, drop out, and leave the school to chase down the debt and struggle with the paperwork.

The risk is that because MGIB checks are made out to students, not to the college or university, vets could attend classes, drop out, and the school would have to chase down the debt.

Southern Connecticut State University certifies some 95 percent of its 400 mostly MGIB vets before classes start,

says Jack Mordente, full-time director of Veterans Affairs. “I can’t remember the last time we got stiffed, but if we get one a semester that’s a lot.”

Johnson also cannot recall when UVM was “left holding the bag” for a vet, but the school puts a block on student records until vets pay. Her hands are tied, she says, by the need to protect the university from the risk that a vet, “understandably,” will use a VA check intended for tuition, to meet such unexpected needs as “a broken car or a sick family member.” On occasion her office has suggested to vets that they delay school and work until they save enough to cover the gap.

“Other schools are all over the map,” says Johnson. “If they have deeper pockets they can be more flexible.”

But the system even breaks down when full-tuition funding goes directly to the school as it does for disabled vets. Mike Brennan, who is working toward a Masters in social work, says it took weeks of prodding to get UVM to fax his paperwork to the VA so that he could get the stipend owed to disabled vets. But “at least I was able to start classes on time,” he says. Howard, who gave up on collecting under MGIB, eventually qualified for disability benefits and plans to continue his education.

Some institutions, despite limited resources, trust the vets, adjust the rules, and provide hands-on counselors. Most of the schools in the City University of New York (CUNY) system certify students online well before classes begin, says Chris Rosa, in the CUNY office of student affairs.

Alexandru Ivan left the Army in December 2006 after two tours in Iraq. By March he was attending a two-year business administration program at LaGuardia College. Tuition at this CUNY branch is \$1,500 a semester, so Ivan has something left over for fees and books, and, at least for now, can supplement living expenses with savings.

“If not for Montgomery, I would not have gone to college,” says the 24-year old vet. “I just couldn’t have paid for it out of my own pocket.”

When Ivan’s VA check was late this spring, “We let him start anyway,” says Stanley Rumph, LaGuardia Community College veterans coordinator. “We have the wherewithal, and we take the risk.” Rumph says that vets can go to class even if the

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school has to wait until the end of the semester for the VA to pay up. "And we have never lost money because of it," he adds.

LaGuardia often checks the box on the VA form requesting a two-month advance payment. It goes to the bursar's office where the student picks it up and signs it over to the school.

"Any school can do that," says Rumph, "The money will come in and these guys are entitled to it." UVM says they were not aware of that option.

While the delays are an irritation to more affluent students, those most in need cannot bridge the financial gap.

"UVM and the VA, they are equally culpable," says Barry (not his real name). The 28-year-old Vermonter went with his National Guard unit to Iraq in 2004 when he was in his sophomore year at UVM. When he returned two years later after driving Humvees on IED-strewn roads around Baghdad, what he needed most was to put his life back on track.

Despite a good academic record, he says UVM refused him entry for the spring '07 semester. "UVM told me they hadn't sent in the certificate of enrollment paperwork to the VA, so I couldn't get the benefits in time for the semester. When I asked, they said they don't know how that happened and there was no making it right."

Barry "was never registered," Williams says, so he couldn't be certified.

Sympathetic to his plight, Barry's professor and academic advisor had let him attend classes during the weeks of limbo, hoping that the bureaucratic logjam would break. "I felt helpless," says Barry's professor. "He wasn't a wandering soul; he was very directed and on-track to do something positive not only for himself but for society, in a productive health science career—a field where we need more people. But he hit road blocks."

"I got angry enough so that I called [Sen. Bernie] Sanders (I-Vt.)," Barry says, "and his office had the problem ironed out in a week, but it was too late to enroll for the spring semester." Sanders office confirmed that it had intervened with the VA.

While only the most sanguine expect the vast VA bureaucracy to bend to individual needs, LaGuardia and Southern Connecticut State show that schools can be responsive and flexible. "We clear vets on the GI bill for classes with a notice saying that money will be coming," says Joe Bello, CUNY's veterans office

coordination. "It would be a shame if they had to wait a whole semester just because [the VA regional office in] Buffalo failed them."

That is what Barry is doing. "I lost two years in the service and now I am losing another half year," he says, adding that he hopes to enroll in the fall.

For now, he is unemployed and his

efits at all. "At in-processing before basic training," explains Rob Timmons of the Iraq Afghanistan Veterans Association, "they announce you can choose to have \$100 taken out of your paycheck every month for the next year. For some, it's no big deal. But a lot of the disenfranchised who have never even seen \$1,200 before in their lives don't sign up." By missing

'I appreciate the pat on the back and being called a hero, but the military sells itself on money for college; it is the major recruitment tool. This is supposedly why I sold my soul to the devil.'

mother is worried. "His life was derailed, he was shot at, his friend was killed, and when he got back, he couldn't continue school. He doesn't need more stress, he needs the structure of college. I can't believe that UVM wouldn't let him go to school. Why don't they give families a break?"

Education: the biggest draw

Vets are troubled not only by when they get their benefits but also by the amount. "They told me I would get all this money for college under the Montgomery bill," says Howard, "but somehow I was so naive that I didn't know it wasn't enough to cover school. They were very convincing."

With 62 percent of surveyed youth telling a Department of Defense (DoD)-sponsored poll that the war on terrorism made them less likely to enlist, military recruiters are hard-pressed to fill quotas. "Educational benefits are a major inducement for many individuals," according to the DoD, "and typically are the reason for enlisting cited by the largest percentage of new recruits."

While a careful read of recruitment material provides an accurate picture of what vets can expect, a cursory glance at the Army Web site dangles a level of benefits few will reach. "Depending on how long you enlist with the Army and the job you choose, you can get up to \$72,900 to help pay for college," the Web site promises. "All you have to do is give \$100 a month during your first year of service."

Most vets, however, end up with \$38,700 for 36 academic months. The small percent who fail to sign up for the \$1,200 "kicker" get no educational ben-

efits at all. "At in-processing before basic training," explains Rob Timmons of the Iraq Afghanistan Veterans Association, "they announce you can choose to have \$100 taken out of your paycheck every month for the next year. For some, it's no big deal. But a lot of the disenfranchised who have never even seen \$1,200 before in their lives don't sign up." By missing

that one-time opportunity, soldiers forever lose their eligibility to get educational benefits under Montgomery. "I had one gentleman who came to my office thinking he had benefits, but hadn't bought in," Bello says. "These kids joined at 17, 18 or 19, and they didn't know or have the foresight." A bill introduced by Sen. Jim Webb (D-Va.) proposes eliminating the \$1,200 kicker and fully funding college.

"At least half of LaGuardia's 113 vets didn't even know they qualified for benefits" when they showed up at his office, says Bello. "I blame the DoD and by extension the VA."

Frustrated by the VA bureaucracy, many vets turn to college administrators who have to tack veterans' concerns and navigating the VA on to myriad other duties.

That seems to be the case at UVM. Williams acknowledged that the VA's time lags combined with the administration's lack of attention to vets' special circumstances creates "a perfect formula for frustration. But we are going to change that," he says, pledging to file earlier using quicker on-line options and give vets more personal attention.

Meanwhile, thousands more war-weary vets returning home are in danger of slipping through MGIB's cracks.

"It's an extremely stressful situation for a newly returned vet," says Howard. "The check is late, the university is breathing down his throat. This is the first dealing with VA that most vets have, and when they come up against shit like this, it discourages them from claiming other benefits, including medical disability, treatments, etc." ■

The Fraudulence of Voter Fraud

The Bush administration purged U.S. attorneys for failing to prosecute crimes that didn't occur

BY JOEL BLEIFUSS

ON APRIL 6, 2006, in Washington, D.C., Karl Rove gave a speech to the Republican National Lawyers Association and issued this dire warning:

We are, in some parts of the country, I'm afraid to say, beginning to look like we have elections like those run in countries where the guys in charge are, you know, colonels in mirrored sunglasses. I mean, it's a real problem, and I appreciate all that you're doing in those hot spots around the country to ensure that the ballot—the integrity of the ballot—is protected, because it's important to our democracy.

When Rove talks about protecting “ballot integrity,” that is shorthand for disenfranchising Democratic Party voters. Over the last several years, the Justice Department, with the help of White House operatives, has sought to boost GOP electoral fortunes by orchestrating a national campaign against voter fraud. But the administration overreached on Dec. 7, when

President George W. Bush fired eight U.S. attorneys, a political scandal that some say could become this president's Watergate.

When Republicans talk about *voter* fraud they are referring to illegal voting by individuals, as opposed to *vote* fraud—systematic attempts to steal an election by an organized group of partisans. This emphasis on voter fraud has convinced eight states to pass laws requiring voters to present official photo identification in order to cast a ballot—laws that studies have shown suppress Democratic turnout among voters who are poor, black, Latino, Asian-American or disabled.

Understanding that one way to win closely contested elections is to keep Democratic voters away from the polls, the Republican Party has tried to stoke public fears of voter fraud. On Feb. 15, 2005, the U.S. Senate Republican Policy Committee issued a report, “Putting an End to Voter Fraud,” which said, “Voter fraud continues to plague our nation's federal elections, di-

luting and canceling out the lawful votes of the vast majority of Americans.” To remedy the situation, the Senate Republicans advised Congress to “require that voters at the polls show photo identification.”

But voting experts maintain that voter fraud is not a national problem. In March, Lorraine C. Minnite, a professor of political science at Columbia University, released “The Politics of Voter Fraud,” a report she prepared for Project Vote, an advocacy group based in Arkansas. She writes:

The claim that voter fraud threatens the integrity of American elections is itself a fraud. It is being used to persuade the public that deceitful and criminal voters are manipulating the electoral system. ... The exaggerated fear of voter fraud has a long history of scuttling efforts to make voting easier and more inclusive, especially for marginalized groups in American society. With renewed partisan vigor, fantasies of fraud are being spun again to undo some of the progress America has made lowering barriers to vote.



On March 6, six of the eight fired U.S. attorneys testified before the House Judiciary Committee. From left to right, Carol Lam, David Iglesias, Daniel Bogden, Paul Charlton, Bud Cummins and John McKay.

This is borne out by a study from the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, which found that in the 2004 election, voters in states that required documentation of identity were 2.7 percent less likely to vote than voters in states where documentation was not required. Specifically, the study, commissioned by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, found that Latinos were 10 percent less likely to vote, Asian-Americans 8.5 percent less likely to vote and blacks 5.7 percent less likely to vote.

What's more, despite GOP claims to the contrary, voter fraud is a very rare occurrence. In 2002 the Justice Department established the Ballot Access and Voting Integrity Initiative to ferret out fraudulent voters. On Oct. 4, 2005, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, with great fanfare, proclaimed, "We've made enforcement of election fraud and corrupting offenses a top priority." Yet according to an April 12 *New York Times* article, only 120 people have been charged with the crime over the past five years, leading to 86 convictions. Furthermore, the *Times* noted, federal attorneys say that most of the transgressions have been mistakes by immigrants and felons who simply misunderstood eligibility requirements.

The extent of voter fraud is further complicated by the fact that earlier this year the Election Assistance Commission changed the conclusions of a report it had commissioned. The original report by outside election experts concluded, "There is widespread but not unanimous agreement that there is little polling place fraud." The commission deleted that sentence and replaced it with, "There is a great deal of debate on the pervasiveness of fraud."

Rep. José Serrano (D.-N.Y.), who chairs the House Appropriations subcommittee that oversees the commission, is disturbed by this apparently politically motivated substitution. He told *In These Times*:

This possibly could be another Watergate. We have to ask the questions, "Why was this report doctored, and how does this play into the larger picture of voter suppression and intimidation?" By directing public attention to voter fraud you divert attention from the fact that Americans in certain communities are not able to cast their votes properly and that their votes are not being counted. Is this something that this small new agency thought of by themselves or did they get marching orders from somewhere else, perhaps as far up as the White House?

Firing prosecutors

It appears that, under Rove's direction the White House has been planning to use U.S. attorneys to fan national fears of voter fraud. In his speech to the GOP lawyers, Rove listed 11 states that would play a pivotal role in the 2008 elections. Since 2005, Bush has appointed new U.S. attorneys in nine of those states: Florida, Colorado, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Michigan, Nevada, Arkansas and New Mexico.

What's more, the firings of U.S. attorneys in New Mexico, Arkansas and Washington appear directly related to this Republican plan to exploit the issue of voter fraud and suppress Democratic turnout.

In Arkansas, Bush fired a sitting U.S. attorney in order to appoint Rove protégé Tim Griffin. (See "The Talented Mr. Griffin" by Greg Palast on page 31.)

In Washington, fired U.S. Attorney John McKay had refused to prosecute alleged voter fraud in the 2004 Washington governor's race, in which Democrat Chris Gregoire beat Republican Dino Rossi by 129 votes.

On March 6, McKay testified before the Senate that after the election Republicans pressured him to open an investigation. He said his office had examined the allegations of voter fraud and decided there was not enough evidence to pursue a case.

"Had anyone at the Justice Department or the White House ordered me to pursue any matter criminally in the 2004 governor's election, I would have resigned," McKay told the *Seattle Times*. "There was no evidence, and I am not going to drag innocent people in front of a grand jury."

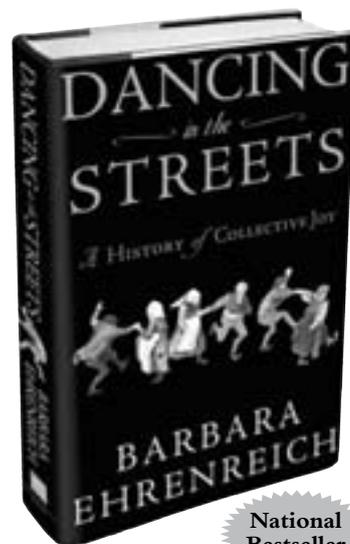
In New Mexico, David C. Iglesias was equally suspect in the eyes of the GOP. Recall that in 2000, Gore beat Bush by 377 votes in New Mexico. Consequently, in 2004, Democrat-affiliated groups initiated voter registration campaigns in New Mexico. As a result, two boys, age 13 and 15, received voter cards in the mail. Iglesias responded by setting up a bipartisan task force to investigate. This didn't satisfy attorney Mickey D. Barnett, who represented the 2004 Bush-Cheney campaign in New Mexico. He told Iglesias he should bring federal charges against a canvasser who forged their signatures, which he refused to do.

In a *New York Times* op-ed, Iglesias wrote:

What the critics, who don't have any experience as prosecutors, have asserted is

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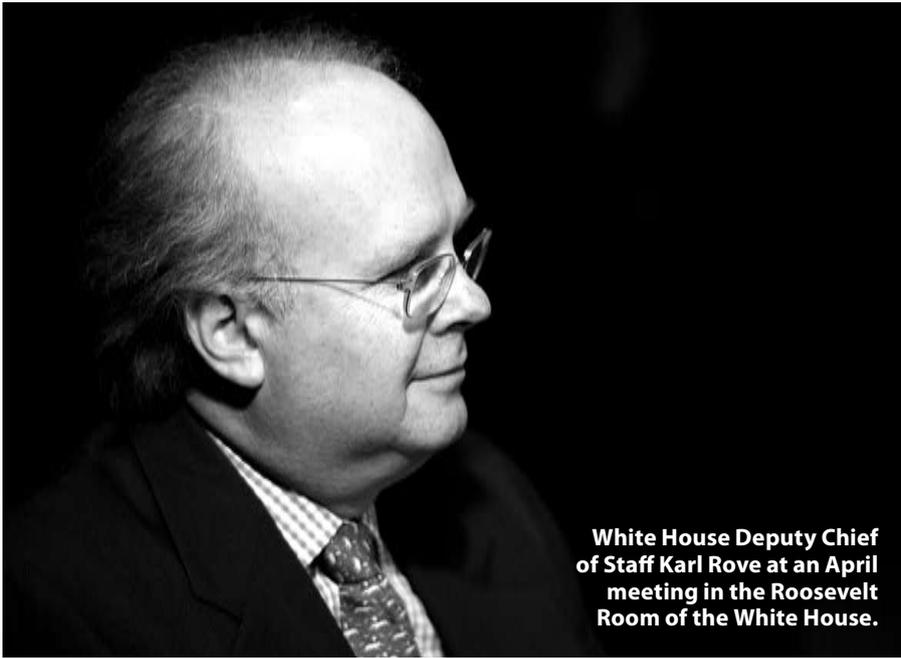
—*Harper's*

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reprehensible—namely that I should have proceeded without having proof beyond a reasonable doubt. The public has a right to believe that prosecution decisions are made on legal, not political grounds.

Manufacturing voter fraud

The issue of fraudulent voters undermining American democracy did not spontaneously erupt. To promote national concern about voter fraud, in March 2005 GOP operatives with ties to the White House established a 501(c)4 organization called the American Center for Vot-



White House Deputy Chief of Staff Karl Rove at an April meeting in the Roosevelt Room of the White House.

MANDEL NGAN/AP/GETTY IMAGES

ing Rights Legislative Fund (ACVR). The group went public by establishing a Web site, ac4vr.com. (The site has since been taken down for unknown reasons.)

According to its 990 tax forms, ACVR is based in Midlothian, Va., and its executive director is Robin DeJarnette, who is also the founder and executive director of the Virginia Conservative Action PAC. However, according to the registration form for its Internet domain name, the group's address is a mailbox at a UPS Store in Dallas. The chairman of ACVR is Brian Lunde, a former Democratic National Committee official from Texas, who in 2004 was head of Democrats for Bush.

ACVR specializes in issuing studies that purport to document a host of voter fraud cases, like the report titled: "Democrat operatives far more involved in voter intimidation and suppression in 2004 than Republicans."

On March 21, 2005, four days after ACVR went public, Rep. Bob Ney (R-Ohio), then chair of the Committee on House Administration, opened hearings on 2004 election irregularities. One person who testified was ACVR National Counsel Mark "Thor" Hearne II, who described himself as "a longtime advocate of voter rights and an attorney experienced in election law." In the aftermath of the 2000 presidential campaign, Hearne was dispatched to Florida as a Republican observer in Broward County's manual recount, and in 2004 he worked as the national general counsel for Bush/Cheney '04 Inc.

In his testimony, Hearne described ACVR as "committed to defending the rights of voters and working to increase public confidence in the fairness of the outcome of elections." And he submitted to the committee a copy of the ACVR's "Ohio Election Report," of which he was the lead author. That report read in part:

This [Democratic] voter registration effort was not limited to registration of legal voters but, criminal investigations and news reports suggest, that this voter registration effort also involved the registration of thousands of fictional voters such as the now infamous Jive F. Turkey, Sr., Dick Tracy and Mary Poppins. Those individuals registering these fictional voters were reportedly paid not just money to do but were, in at least one instance, paid in crack cocaine.

And in testimony on Dec. 7, 2006, the same day the prosecutors were fired, Hearne told the Election Assistance Commission: "Recent press reports suggest that voter registration fraud remains a significant issue in the recent mid-term elections."

The press contact for ACVR is Jim Dyke, who was the communications director of the Republican National Committee during the 2004 election. In the fall of 2005 he was working in the White House trying to get Harriet Miers on the Supreme Court, before moving on to work in Vice President Dick Cheney's office. Brad Friedman of BradBlog.com reported that according to internet records, Dyke registered the ACVR In-

ternet domain name, ac4vr.com, in December 2004. Those records have since disappeared from public view. (The source of ACVR's funding is also mysterious. According to the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, "When asked to name any contributors to his nonprofit, Hearne claimed he did not know but said Lunde did. When Lunde was asked, he claimed he did not know but said Hearne did.")

Dyke is a good friend of his fellow Arkansan Tim Griffin, the new U.S. attorney in Arkansas. In 2004, both worked at the Republican National Committee helping Bush get re-elected. Dyke has been a vocal defender of Griffin's appointment as U.S. Attorney. "He has a real passion for the law," Dyke told the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.

Rounding out the GOP operatives is Pat Rogers, who sits on the board of ACVR. An attorney for the Republican Party in New Mexico, he has been a vocal critic of fired U.S. Attorney Iglesias. According to the *Albuquerque Tribune*, Rogers is on the short list to replace Iglesias.

Rove's role

Minnite, who did the study on voter fraud, has read through the reports prepared by ACVR and presented by Hearne at various official hearings. She noticed that the claims follow a predictable script. "It all starts to look the same," she says. "There is a pattern in the way the documents that claim to show voter fraud are put together. It is usually a compilation of news reports on allegations. There is no follow up, no research done, no analysis."

"As I delved into it, I was faced with the question: 'Why do people think there is a lot of fraud when there isn't any real evidence?' I think people are being manipulated by politics, which takes the form of these reports that are dumped on the public. It is as if you get a big enough pile maybe you will convince people that the volume of fraud is quite large and that we have a serious problem."

Wisconsin provides a case in point. At a March 13 press conference, White House Counsel Dan Bartlett identified Wisconsin as one of the states from which the White House had "received complaints about U.S. attorneys."

In 2005, U.S. Attorney Steve Biskup, who was appointed by Bush, investigated these allegations of voter fraud and reported that he found no evidence on

which to press charges.

It turns out that early in 2005, Republican officials in Wisconsin prepared a report titled “Fraud in Wisconsin 2004: A Timeline/Summary.” The document, which was found in White House and Justice Department records released by the House Judiciary Committee, was written by Chris Lato, the former communications director for the state Republican Party, on orders from Rick Wiley, the party’s executive director. The 30-page report, which covers Aug. 31, 2004 to April 1, 2005, contains 65 entries detailing voter fraud. The final example is titled: “RPW [Republican Party of Wisconsin] News Release: Evidence of Election Fraud Piles Up.”

The information contained in this Wisconsin compilation, made its way into a 78-page report released on July 21, 2005, by ACVR: “Vote Fraud, Intimidation & Suppression in the 2004 Presidential Election.” In the introduction, the ACVR’s Hearne and Lunde wrote that the report “documents hundreds of incidents and allegations from around the country. ... [T]housands of Americans were disenfranchised by illegal votes cast on Election Day 2004 ... [P]aid Democrat operatives were far more involved in voter intimidation and suppression activities than were their Republican counterparts. ... [R]equiring government-issued photo ID at the polls ... will help assure ... that no American is disenfranchised by illegal votes.”

And who was behind this trail of misinformation? On April 7, Daniel Bice, a columnist for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, reported that a source familiar with the document told him, “The report was prepared for Karl Rove. Rick [Wiley] wanted it so he could give it to Karl Rove.”

On April 6, 2006, in Washington, at the aforementioned speech to Republican Party attorneys, Rove began with a joke: “I ran into [AVCR’s] Thor Hearne as I was coming in. He was leaving; he was smart, and he was leaving to go out and enjoy the day.” Rove then told the assembled party lawyers, “We have, as you know, an enormous and growing problem with elections in certain parts of America today.”

Rove should know. He helped grow the problem. ■

The Talented Mr. Griffin

Arkansas’ new attorney general has a history of suppressing minority voters

BY GREG PALAST

WITH THE SACKING OF eight honest prosecutors, the Bush administration has accelerated its politicization of the Justice Department.

The only thing worse than sacking an honest prosecutor is replacing one with a “criminal.” In this case, Timothy Griffin, who during the 2000 Bush-Cheney campaign worked as deputy research director for the Republican National Committee (RNC) conducting “oppo” (opposition) research. On Dec. 15, Bush named Griffin as the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, replacing fired prosecutor Bud Cummins.

I don’t use the term “criminal” lightly. In August 2004, while he was research director for the RNC, he sent a series of confidential e-mails to Republican Party chieftains. But instead of using the party honchos’ e-mail addresses at GeorgeWBush.com, he sent these notes to GeorgeWBush.org. That domain belongs to a brilliant jokester, John Wooden, who, suspecting he had something important in hand, forwarded them to BBC Television Newsnight, where I worked at the time.

Griffin’s dozens of e-mails contained what he called “caging lists”—simple

Excel spreadsheets with the names and addresses of voters.

Sounds innocent enough. But once the addresses were plotted on maps—70,000 names in Florida alone—it became clear that virtually every name was in a minority-majority voting precinct. And most of the lists were made up of itinerant, vulnerable voters: students, the homeless and, notably, soldiers sent overseas.

It was, according to Leon County, Fla., Elections Supervisor Ion Sancho, a “challenge” list—tens of thousands of voters who the Republicans intended to block from casting ballots. This was a variant of the scheme in 2000 when then-Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris removed thousands of black citizens from voter rolls on the claim they were “felons”—when their only crime was Voting While Black, or, in other words, likely to vote Democratic. In the 2004 campaign, Griffin had a new trick: challenging voters on the grounds that they did not live at their registration address.

To “prove” these voters were committing fraud, the RNC sent first-class or registered letters to these voters, most of them black, to their address of registra-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47



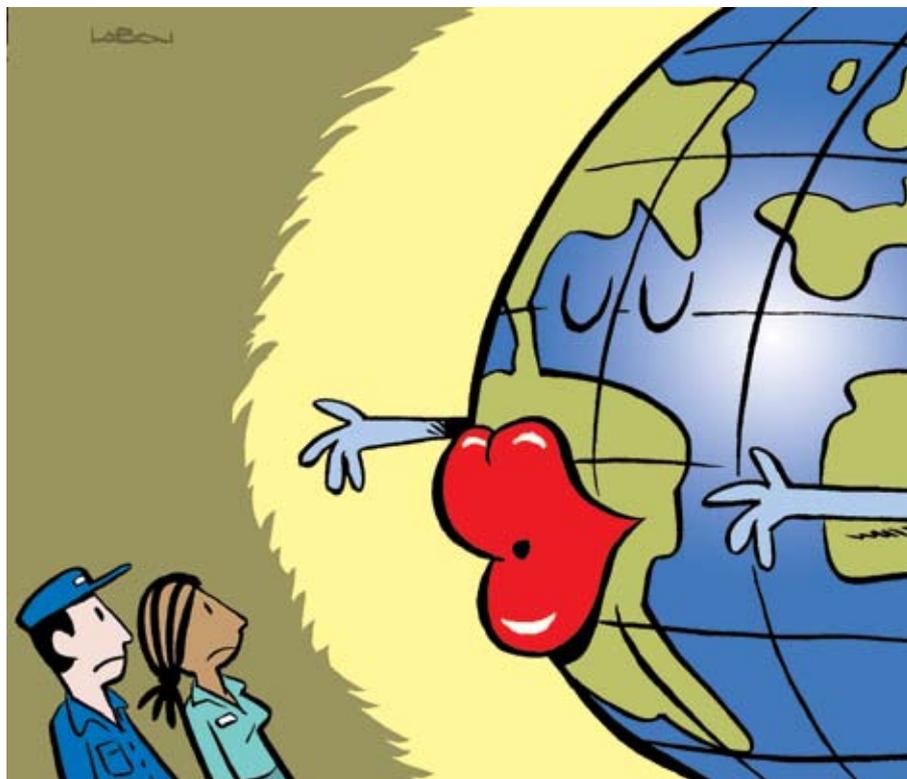
Voters lined up to cast their ballots at a polling place November 2, 2004 in St. Petersburg, Florida.

TIM BOYLES/GETTY IMAGES

Making Trade Work for Everyone

Voters aren't happy with the reality of free trade—and Democrats are starting to listen

BY DAVID MOBERG



THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS want their elected leaders to know that globalization isn't working for them. Democratic politicians have heard the message and are now taking a few first steps to better regulate America's integration into the global economy.

The November elections—when 37 House and Senate seats changed from “free trade” to “fair trade”—created a Democratic majority that needed to stake out a new position on trade. Globalization and offshoring of jobs ranked among the electorate's top issues, according to polls by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and Public Agenda. Results in key races indicate that Demo-

crats could have picked up even more seats with a stronger message on global economic issues, according to an analysis by Chris Slevin and Todd Tucker of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, an organization critical of corporate-backed free trade.

Recent public opinion surveys reveal that Americans often support globalization in theory but criticize the reality. Steelworkers President Leo Gerard put it this way: “I don't know any worker or trade unionist who is against trade, but we're against exploitative trade that pits worker against worker, and country against country, and that's what this current round of globalization has brought.”

In a March *Wall Street Journal*/NBC

News poll, Americans agreed, by a margin of 46 percent to 28 percent, that trade deals have harmed the United States. And late last year, a Pew Research Center poll found that nearly 44 percent of the people surveyed thought free trade had lowered wages, compared to 11 percent who thought it had raised wages.

The majority of House Democrats have opposed most previous trade deals, even more so under Bush than Clinton. But key leaders—including Speaker Nancy Pelosi, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer and Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chairman Rahm Emanuel—have often supported free trade deals in the past. And the party's influential business-financial supporters have largely embraced the same free trade agenda as the Republicans.

However, in March, Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, with a mixed voting record on trade issues, proposed a “New Trade Policy for America” that sets conditions for the administration to win Democratic support for recently negotiated trade agreements with Panama, Peru, Colombia and South Korea.

Rangel would make all trade agreements require enforcement of core International Labor Organization (ILO) rights—such as the right to organize and prohibitions on child labor, forced labor and discrimination in employment—through the same dispute settlement mechanisms used to enforce business interests, like intellectual property rights. His proposal, hastily endorsed by the House Democratic Caucus, also insisted on enforcing multilateral environmental agreements, establishing a fair balance between poor countries' access to drugs and pharmaceutical com-

many patents, ensuring that government procurement promotes worker rights and guaranteeing that foreign investors in the United States are not granted greater rights than American investors (reversing one of NAFTA's most controversial provisions).

Rangel's proposal also called for more strictly enforcing existing trade laws, pressuring China to revalue its currency, opening markets for U.S. exports, increasing assistance for retraining displaced workers and expanding help to the world's poorest countries.

Bush administration officials did not dismiss the proposal out of hand, but they are unlikely to accept it without modifications, which would then lose crucial Democratic support. Fair trade advocates were cautiously optimistic. "It's a good step trying to fix what's awful," says Slevin, deputy director of Global Trade Watch. The AFL-CIO did not immediately endorse the deal, but Policy Director Thea Lee says, "This is a good step forward, but if there's any weakening, all bets are off."

The administration doesn't want to include ILO core rights, preferring to require only that countries enforce their own laws or the equivalent of American labor laws. Free trade ideologues argue that including ILO-defined rights in the agreement could lead to challenges under future trade agreements to American labor laws. "In a rare show of honesty by the administration, they acknowledge in their proposal that labor standards in the U.S. are so bad that they fear they no longer meet ILO standards," AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer Rich Trumka says. In any case, neither Democrats nor unions would accept anything short of ILO core rights.

But the issue is not only standards but also writing tougher enforcement mechanisms into any agreement. Despite requirements under the Central American Free Trade agreements to strengthen worker rights, recent reports in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* about Guatemala highlighted the use of child labor, an assassination of a labor leader and other labor rights

violations. Serious labor rights violations also have occurred in Jordan, even though the Clinton-negotiated labor rights provisions there were the strongest of any recent trade agreement.

Bush's new trade agreements faced an uphill battle even before Rangel's challenge. Unions and human rights advocates will oppose any agreement with Colombia, where 77 trade unionists were killed last year. And American auto, agricultural and other industrial interests, as well as unions, have spoken out against the Korean trade deal, which South Korea's unions and farmers oppose. U.S. fair trade advocates also criticize the Peru and Panama agreements but more for the damage they're likely to cause those countries than for harm to the United States.

Slowing down 'fast track'

Beyond the negotiations over the new Democratic conditions for accepting the four signed trade agreements, a bigger battle looms this summer over renewal of "fast track" authority that

Urban MEDITATIONS

By Kip Tiernan and Fran Froehlich

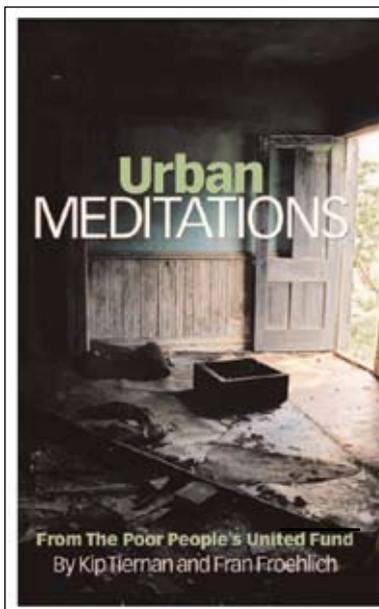
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gives the executive branch the power to push for approval of trade agreements with little debate and no amendments. Fair trade advocates are determined to block its renewal. They also propose an alternative arrangement that would grant Congress a bigger role. Under the AFL-CIO's proposal, similar to principles endorsed by the Change to Win labor federation, Congress would set "readiness criteria" to determine what countries qualify as potential negotiating partners and to mandate objectives on labor rights, the environment and investment. Then Congress would have to certify that the agreement meets those objectives before it would vote under rules of expedited debate and without amendment.

The battles over both the new trade agreements and fast track are likely to be more important politically than economically. If Democrats stick to their new principles and reject or replace fast track, they will signal a new direction for the party and raise the bar for global economic negotiations. That is likely to both help Democrats in the next election and to pressure presidential aspirants and free trade Democrats to adopt the new perspective.

"People aren't idiots," Lee says. "Everyone can read the results of the last election and look forward to the next election and see that trade and the middle-class squeeze will be central issues. I don't think anyone on the Democratic side wants to see a messy split on trade."

Easier said than done

But actually relieving the pressure squeezing American workers will take bolder action. With the world already wide open to trade and investment, new trade deals will have relatively little effect for good or ill until the new rules are applied globally. "If we had a law saying no more trade agreements, it wouldn't make that big a difference," says Dean Baker, an *In These Times* contributing editor and co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR), a Washington think tank.

Global currency exchange rates, especially the undervalued Chinese currency, also make a big difference, according to Baker and trade economist Robert Scott of the Economic Policy Institute (EPI). "We cut deals," Scott says,

cuts will pinch hard.

A new political direction on trade would likely lead to a "strategic pause" in pursuit of free trade agreements, which has been advocated by Jeff Faux, distinguished fellow at the EPI. During that pause, the country could evaluate the successes and failures of the past decades, then decide how to move forward, possibly renegotiating past trade agreements according to a different model for the global economy.

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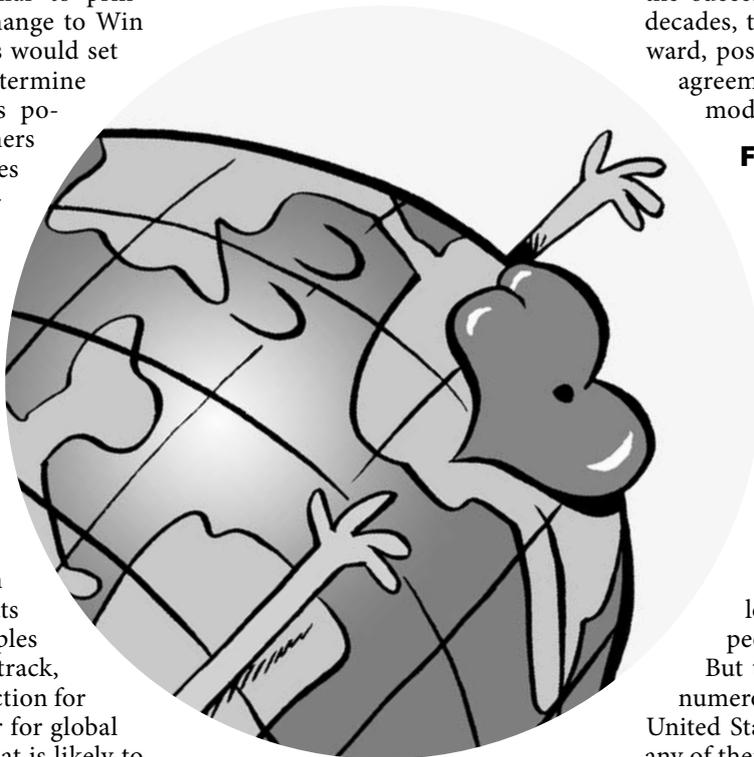
The momentum for new agreements is fed by relentless projections of the financial gains from trade liberalization. But the economic gains are much smaller for the world economy than free trade apologists have argued. Moreover, the distribution of those gains is skewed.

Free traders argue that the vast majority of Americans gain from free trade through lower prices, even if a few people are hit hard by job losses.

But the losers from free trade are numerous, and little is done in the United States to compensate or to help any of them.

For example, rather than NAFTA being a win-win-win for Mexico, Canada and the United States, wages of workers in all three countries have stagnated since it was implemented. A study from the New School for Social Research, harshly critical of the models used to estimate trade gains, concluded that full liberalization of world trade would add so little that it "is equivalent to a rounding error in a \$44 trillion world economy." Faux argues that even these studies, by focusing on trade alone, fail to account for both the damage caused by U.S. investment and technology flowing overseas, and the erosion of workers' bargaining power at home.

The rich, in any case, capture most of the gains from globalization. Academic studies typically conclude that trade accounts for 20 to 40 percent of the recent increase in inequality in the United States. Even the International Monetary Fund found that "labor globalization has negatively affected the share of income going to labor in the



"then countries devalue, and that wipes out everything." For example, with the Chinese renminbi undervalued, Chinese goods are artificially cheap, contributing to China's huge trade surplus and the record \$764 billion United States trade deficit last year.

At the same time, the overvalued dollar makes American products more expensive on the world market. If the dollar declines in value, U.S. exports should be more competitive. But because U.S. multinational corporations have moved so much of their production overseas, the United States has lost some of its ability to take advantage of a weaker dollar. Simply lowering the value of the dollar will not quickly restore America's exports. Indeed, the dollar's value has declined sharply for three years, but the trade deficit has continued to soar. The trade deficit could be reduced by greatly constricting the American economy, but the payback for years of trade defi-

advanced economies.” EPI economist Josh Bivens calculates that the median household in the United States was \$1,500 poorer in 2005 than it would have been if trade had remained at the 1979 level, even taking into account cheaper prices. Most people, not just the displaced textile or auto workers, are poorer as a result of globalization.

Broadly based and progressively financed policies like national health insurance and better public pensions would help all families hurt by globalization. But workers who lose their jobs permanently—whether from globalization or technology—deserve additional targeted help. Existing programs are narrowly conceived—excluding workers who produce services or most parts suppliers indirectly hit by plant closings. And they are even more narrowly administered: The Bush administration’s Labor Department denies trade adjustment aid to three-fourths of those workers lucky enough to be certified as eligible. What’s more, the programs are stingy and force people quickly into poorly paid jobs.

The United States needs more generous

income support and extended training programs, as well as strengthened unemployment insurance, which now covers less than 40 percent of the unemployed and offers pay replacement rates among

strengthen labor unions, expand social benefits, revise NAFTA and negotiate new rules for global trade. Harvard political economy professor Dani Rodrik argues that national governments need

‘I don’t know any worker or trade unionist who is against trade,’ says Steelworkers President Leo Gerard. ‘But we are against exploitative trade that pits worker against worker.’

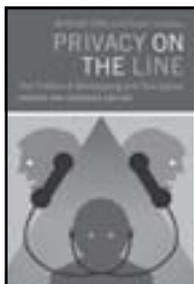
the lowest in the industrial world.

But current proposals for wage insurance, which would typically pay half the difference between a displaced worker’s old and new jobs, would push workers quickly into inferior jobs with little prospect of creating new skills and better jobs that both workers and the national economy need.

In order to make globalization work for working Americans, Faux argues for policies that make the American economy more competitive (such as promoting manufacturing and investing in research and technology development),

more power to craft their own responses to global markets, and that future WTO talks should focus not on further liberalization but on giving both rich and poor nations “policy space” to respond to their citizens’ needs.

It’s possible that the champions of globalization have no interest in serving the needs of citizens. “They never intended it to be good for American workers,” says the Steelworkers’ Gerard. “They intended it to be good for Wall Street and American financiers. The rich have gotten richer, and the rest of us have taken it on the chin.” ■



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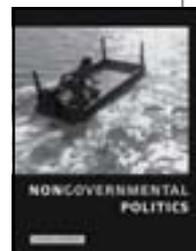
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BY CHELSEA ROSS

Rebelle for the Cause

Dolores Huerta is a hustler. At around 5 foot nothing and 77 years old, she does not look like a force to be reckoned with. And while neither her face nor her name might be familiar, Huerta is one of the most significant rabble-rousers of her time.

When Huerta founded the National Farm Workers Association (what later became United Farm Workers, or UFW) with Cesar Chavez in 1965, nobody—let alone a single Latina mother—was organizing farm workers.

But with UFW, Huerta became a thorn in the side of major agricultural corporations. She helped direct the famous five-year Delano grape boycott, and negotiated a three-year collective bargaining agreement signed by the majority of the California table grape industry. She secured unemployment benefits for workers, lobbied against federal guest worker programs and spearheaded amnesty legislation. She was also one of the first to speak out about the dangers posed by toxic pesticides to workers, consumers and the environment.

After more than 50 years of fighting for what she and Chavez called La Causa (the cause), Huerta shows no signs of fatigue or cynicism. At one moment she speaks with the wisdom and affections of a grandmother (she has 11 children, 20 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren), and in the next with the fury of a warrior still on a lifelong mission.

Recently, she has been traveling the country, speaking at marches and \$100-a-plate dinners on behalf of the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants living in the United States. In *These Times* caught up with Huerta on the University of Illinois-Chicago campus where she spoke at a conference about the immigration movement in Chicago.

The immigration marches last May were among the largest in U.S. history. What do you think they accomplished?

Number one, they moved the immigration debate forward. We ended up getting a bill in the Senate—the McCain-Kennedy bill. Although it wasn't the greatest bill, at least they proposed a legalization bill. It didn't stop the conservatives, the people like [Rep. James] Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.), from doing their sham hearing, but it gave people a sense of their power.

One of the themes was "Today we march, tomorrow we vote," and the number of Latinos who voted for Democrats was like 69 percent. Also, we've had an increase in the number of people who are fighting for citizenship. And I think the activism in general has increased, although you also have the reaction from the right.

What hasn't been covered as much is that some really anti-immigrant congresspeople lost their elections. In Arizona, we have two really good examples: Gabrielle Giffords (D-Ariz.) and Harry Mitchell (D-Ariz.) were elected to the Congress. The person Mitchell ran against, J.D. Hayworth (R-Ariz.), his whole campaign was anti-immigrant, and this guy lost.

When the Republicans put someone like Sen. Mel Martinez (R-Fla.), who is head of the Republican National Committee, as one of the co-authors of the Senate bill—that to me is a strong signal that they are at least thinking about immigration—that they put a Latino, although not Mexican, on a bill.

Aside from the marches—which have been unifying and have generated debate and brought the cause to national attention—what else can be done?

One of the things I'm promoting—which comes from Chicago—is support of Elvira Arellano, the woman who has taken refuge in a Methodist church. The idea is to promote children's marches for the weekend of April 28-29.

April 30 is Dia de los Niños, Children's Day in Latin America. It's a call to justice for immigrant children and immigrant working parents—a call to all grandchildren and great grandchildren of previous immigrants, so they will also come in and support the cause.

I'm a great grandchild of immigrants on both sides of my family.

Almost everybody is the great grandchild of some immigrant in this country—unless, of course, they're indigenous. So we're calling for all the children and grandchildren and great grandchildren of immigrants to join us in this call for justice for immigrants' children.

You mentioned Elvira Arellano. In many ways, she has become the face of the movement—almost a martyr symbol. Do you think her actions have been productive?

Absolutely. First of all, she's very tiny, but she's got all this strength and this sincerity, and you just feel her strength. And she's very eloquent. She speaks simply, but profoundly. So in terms of the Latino community right now, she really is an icon.

I tried to get Cardinal Roger Mahony in Los Angeles to call for a sanctuary movement in California. Unfortunately, Cardinal Mahony did not endorse a sanctuary movement. So, clergy are just doing it on their own. I think they have about 69 churches signed up right now. Clergy like Father Richard Estrada, who is from Los Angeles. They're trying to sign up other churches of other denominations too.

Father Estrada has been very active in the immigrants' rights movement. Every single year he takes different labor and political leaders out to the desert, and they set up poles with flags on them, marking where people coming across can find water. He's been doing this now for the past 10 years or so.

A coalition called the Faith and Justice



Dolores Huerta worked to organize the farm workers in California through the National Farm Workers Association, which later became United Farm Workers.

Leadership Alliance was formed by religious and community leaders in the Black and Latino communities in Chicago to organize around issues they have in common such as crime, education and housing, but also to bring the black community into the fight for immigrant rights as a continuation of the Civil Rights movement. Do you see these communities coming together in a broader movement?

Jesse Jackson has been pounding this issue now for the last five years, saying, “we gotta work together,” saying to the leadership of the black community: “You all have got to learn to speak Spanish.” Danny Glover and Harry Belafonte have organized conferences bringing together not only Latinos, but also indigenous leadership. They had conferences in Atlanta, in Mississippi and in California—to get people to work together on the issues of education and incarceration.

You’re obviously a big advocate of the marches, but in terms of policy, do you advocate an open border between the United States and Mexico and Canada?

I think something has to be changed. When we talk about immigration, we don’t talk about why people are coming here. And the reason that people have to leave the beautiful places they live—where we go to as tourists—is to come here to work as indentured servants because they can’t find jobs in their own countries. So we’ve got to look at our foreign policy in regards to Latin America, a policy I call economic colonization. We want to go into these countries and take over their economies and make these people again into just low-wage earners.

We don’t help them develop their own economies, so that they can stand on their own and employ their own people. There is more than enough work that needs to be done in all of these countries, right? But our policy is one of exploitation. So we need to look at our free trade agreements and what we’ve done. All of these countries now are worse off: Their unemployment is rising and their wages are lower because of the changes that were made.

Compare this with what happened after World War II. We defeated Germany,

Japan and Italy, and we had the Marshall Plan where we lent them millions of dollars to help them rebuild their economies. We forgave those loans. So, American companies didn’t go into Japan and Germany, we just gave them the money to develop their own economies.

This is totally the opposite from what we’re doing with Latin America, where American companies go in and take over. Here we have small shopkeepers in Mexico who cannot compete with Wal-Mart. You have corn farmers who cannot compete with agribusiness. So small corn farmers have been wiped out, you have 2 million corn farmers who are now in the United States trying to survive. Right now Mexico is actually importing more corn from the United States than what they grow in Mexico.

It’s economic colonization. We can’t keep blaming the victims, who are the immigrants. We’ve got to say, “OK, what are we doing to make this happen?” I think that’s got to be part of it. When we talk about immigration, let’s talk about the free trade agreements.

What policies do you advocate in terms of border patrol?

The best people to police the Mexican border are the Mexicans. Some people keep talking about terrorists, but no terrorists have ever come in through Mexico. Terrorists have only come in through Canada. And I remember one congressman saying, “Well, you can’t tell the difference between a Mexican and an Arab.” Well, maybe he can’t, but the Mexicans can. It’s all very xenophobic.

You spoke at the Ms. magazine benefit last night. As one of the country’s most prominent female activists and organizers, do you have any advice for young girls going into politics today?

I really do believe that unless women get into positions of power, we will never end wars, we will never have peace, we will never end violence. I think part of the changes that we need in our world is for women to take power.

Are you endorsing Hillary?

I haven’t been asked yet. But, yes, I think I will endorse Hillary because she’s intelligent and she’s compassionate and she’s tough. She’s going to have everyone in the world trying to bring her down because she’s a woman. ■



Salt of the Earth defied '50s black listings to chronicle a labor strike in a Mexican-American mining town.

BY CHRISTOPHER CAPOZZOLA

A Crime to Fit the Punishment

Unless you attended its 10-week run at New York City's Grand Theatre in 1954, you missed *Salt of the Earth* the first time around. In the decades since, director Herbert Biberman's dramatic account of the real-life strike by the men and women

of a Mexican-American mining community has taken on a mythic status among cultural feminists, interracial unionists and indie film buffs. In most accounts, the movie itself is the main character. A heroic one at that: Producer Paul Jarrico called it "our chance to really say something." Its blacklisted creators, he boasted, had finally committed "a crime to fit the punishment."

In *On Strike and on Film*, historian Ellen Baker explores *Salt of the Earth*, but shifts the focus from crimes to labors: industrial work, political work, cultural work. She begins by charting the decades-long battles of miners in Grant County, N.M., who dug copper, lead and zinc out of one of capitalism's most unforgiving corners. In the rural Southwest, struggles

over class and power were always about race, too. The mining company Empire Zinc presided over a system of employment that sorted "American" and "Mexican" employees into two tiers of worker rights and housed their families in two kinds of company housing.

For workers like José Martínez, who started at Empire Zinc as a track laborer in 1918 and retired in 1953 from the same job at the bottom of the pay scale, it might have seemed like things would never change. But as Baker shows, in the 1930s the ground began to move. The Depression shut down some of the mines for years at a stretch, devastating nearby communities. "Let's start up again clean"—without union labor—muttered the vice president of another closed mine; when it reopened in 1937, even the town's left-



Salt of the Earth movie poster, 1954

ist barber found himself blacklisted. But the Depression also created grassroots demands for action. Community relief work brought the federal government into company towns where bosses had never before answered to anyone. And there was a new actor on the stage, with a mouthful of a name: the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers. After America entered World War II, workers wielded new weapons: patriotic rhetoric, military demands for copper and zinc, and the relative strength that came with wartime labor shortages.

Meanwhile, in California the cultural workers who made up the Hollywood chapter of the Communist Party gathered for beachfront struggle sessions. They were, as Baker shows, the party's elite: cultivated and coddled, absolved even of the dreary task of selling the *Daily Worker* from soapboxes. Although the industry's structure and its executives' politics foreclosed any truly transformative possibilities, leftist filmmakers slowly opened opportunities.

But if New Mexican copper miners and progressive filmmakers emerged from the war with a new sense of power, the Cold War, as Baker shows, brought quick retraction. Loyalty oath requirements led to lost jobs. House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) subpoenas appeared in Hollywood mailboxes. The 1947 Taft-Hartley Act

announced that the government would not hear complaints from unions that couldn't certify their members weren't communists; three years later the CIO purged Mine-Mill, "honeycombed" with subversion. "Mine-Mill was a be-

not on its payrolls, had stepped forward to take over the picket line. For six months, they stared down tear gas, mass arrests, indecent exposure and the hostility of some of their own husbands. But they won: In January 1952, company negotiators agreed

For six months, the women who labored in the shadow of Empire Zinc stared down tear gas, mass arrests, indecent exposure and the hostility of some of their own husbands.

leagued union in 1950," writes Baker, "cast outside the pale of the mainstream labor movement that it had helped build." On top of it all, changes in global metal markets made mining jobs scarce throughout Grant County. When the men of Local 890 walked off the job on Oct. 17, 1950, they were striking not only for better wages, but against America's all-out assault on their union.

It was an ugly strike, with racist threats, blacklists and fisticuffs. Mine-Mill was a fighting man's union, and fought back hard. Not only with the men of its rank and file, but—as eviction notices appeared on the doors of company-owned housing and the grocery store closed its credit books—with the energy of whole families. Finally, on June 12, 1951, came an injunction forbidding striking miners from returning to the picket line the next day. At the union meeting hall that night, as miners' wives served coffee, the men of Local 890 considered their equally unappealing options: Give up the strike or go to jail. Either way, the strike was lost.

From the audience, one of the women pointed out that the "striking miners" cited in the injunction didn't include her. In *Salt of the Earth's* account of the midnight union meeting, a lone woman stumbles upon the idea that women could take over the picket lines. In reality, as Baker shows, that idea had emerged from long planning sessions among Grant County's activist women. And the vote carried only because members of Mine-Mill women's auxiliaries could vote in union meetings—a right that came from decades of organizing and activism by labor feminists and democratic unionists. By 2 a.m., the women who labored in the shadow of Empire Zinc, if

to most of the workers' demands.

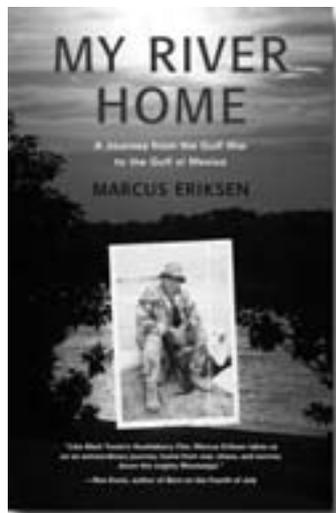
The two strands of Baker's story first came together in the summer of 1951, when Paul and Sylvia Jarrico heard of the strike and went to Grant County to walk the picket line; within a year, Michael Wilson was in town. Although Wilson started the script, the men and women of Local 890 finished it, insisting in the era of Ricky Ricardo that Latino/a characters would be favorably presented in the mass media. Biberman cast only five professional actors, among them a young Will Geer (better known to television viewers as the folksy Grandpa Walton) and the leftist Mexican actress Rosaria Revueltas, who called *Salt of the Earth* "the film I wanted to do my whole life." Strike participants filled the ranks, most memorably Juan Chacón, who played the leading role of Ramón Quintero. His emotional richness and sly humor make him far and away the film's best performer.

Filming began in January 1953 on a lightly fictionalized version of the Empire Zinc strike. Art soon imitated life in more disturbing ways as well. Congressmen denounced the film as "a weapon for Russia." Police hounded cast and crew. On March 7, the crew left town with just enough film to string together a movie. On March 8, Local 890's union hall burned in a mysterious fire.

By most of the standards that filmmakers use to measure the greatness of a film *Salt of the Earth* comes up short. In fact, watching 90 minutes of agitprop can almost make you understand why the Eastern Europeans who leapt the Berlin Wall in 1989 so eagerly snapped up *Ernest Goes to Camp* videos. In Baker's hands, though, artistic missteps open windows into the

“Eriksen takes us on an extraordinary journey; home from war, chaos, and sorrow, down the mighty Mississippi.”

—Ron Kovic, author of *Born on the Fourth of July*



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MARCUS ERIKSEN

One August day, veteran Marcus Eriksen set off on a journey down the entire length of the Mississippi River, a trip he had dreamed of doing over a decade earlier, while serving amid sandstorms and oil fires in Kuwait as a marine in the Gulf War.

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Inside of a giant caterpillar puppet operated by 10 cyclists. It is ridden in parades and Critical Mass in New York City to draw attention to the plight of the city's community gardens.

cultural politics of the Cold War. If the editing seems choppy, that's because Biberman and Jarrico had to submit the film to a dozen different developing houses under false titles, lest anticommunist developers destroy it; some of the editing they did themselves in a converted bathroom. An orchestra, told only that it was scoring a movie called *Vaya Con Dios*, accompanied a film its members never saw.

Likewise, critics have sneered at the frequent scenes in which Rosaria Revueltas appears in close-up silent shots that feel distant from the film's real action. Well, in fact, she was: Revueltas was deported in February 1953, before filming was finished. Months later, Biberman shot a handful of makeups in Mexico. Blacklisted in two countries, she never made another film.

In Grant County, *Salt of the Earth* found only a single showing, at the Silver Sky-Vue drive-in. *On Strike and on Film* presents that fact not in a close-up but from the panoramic view, part of Baker's rich history of work, politics and creativity that restores the Mexican-American men and women of Grant County to the center of the story. Years after the film, Biberman reflected, “We had thought of ourselves as ‘the blacklisted.’ And we were the veriest newcomers.” ■

CHRISTOPHER CAPOZZOLA teaches American history at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

BOOKS

In Praise of Pageantry

By Jen Angel

THIS PAST JANUARY I spent a week in a chilly warehouse in Tacoma, Wash., making puppets with 20 other activists to support Army First Lt. Ehren Watada, the first commissioned officer to publicly refuse deployment to Iraq. We were creating a play to perform on Feb. 5 at the vigil outside the gates of Fort Lewis, Wash., where his court-martial—which would end in a mistrial—was being held.

We spent hours painting, taping, cutting, gluing, eating and talking. For the characters in our play, we created a 15-foot-tall judge with a sculpted cardboard head and paper mâché hands, jurors and witnesses, and, for our finale, doves and suns to end with a vision of a beautiful future.

But art and activism aren't just about pageantry. Skilled activists use culture as an entry point into larger discussions of politics and theory, and use art and culture to celebrate victories and mourn losses. Art becomes a way to engage the public, reinspire activists who are tired of the same old marches and chants, and at its best, model a future world where our lives are both productive and enjoyable.

But connections between art and activism are often tenuous. Individuals who straddle the two communities face artists who don't care about politics and activists who don't take art seriously. *Realizing the Impossible: Art Against Authority*, a new and beautifully illustrated anthology edited by Josh MacPhee and Erik Reuland, explores these intersections and contradictions while linking art, culture and anarchist politics.

As most anthologies do, *Realizing the Impossible* covers a wide territory. Interviews with pioneers in arts and organizing like the group Black Mask, which created provocative street theater in the '60s, Clifford Harper—well known for his late-80s *Anarchy: A Graphic Guide*—and Crass artist Gee Vaucher sit alongside essays on how social movements like the Zapatistas use video technology to strengthen their community. There are historical pieces, like Dara Greenwald's look at video collectives of the '70s, and theoretical discussions, like David Graeber's "The Twilight of Vanguardism," covering art for art's sake,

the relationship between alienation and oppression and, of course, vanguardism. Each of these contributions provides snapshots of a vast political-cultural movement.

The strength of this anthology is its accessibility, with none of the authors assuming a deep familiarity with anarchism or art history. Christine Flores-Cozza interviewed the late Carlos Cortez, an artist, poet and lifelong activist known for his prints and woodcuts. Cortez, who went to jail for refusing the draft in World War II, tells Flores-Cozza, "The artists who are strong enough and courageous enough can fight, can use their art to fight tyranny, repression, and that." Asked how someone would study under him, Cortez responds: "You don't teach art. You open doors. It's one thing to show you how to push an engraving tool, handle a brush, blend colors, and that. But that only liberates what is inside of you."

The best piece in the anthology is Morgan Andrews' detailed history of radical puppetry. The puppet-making

in Tacoma, Andrews shows, was just one more act in a long legacy of social justice puppeting. "Protest puppetry is any kind of puppet theater that draws attention to the ironies and flaws in the way things are," Andrews writes, "and hopefully illustrates a way that things could be instead."

He covers the use of puppets in 18th and 19th century Europe, like Punch and Judy in England, to criticize the government or satirize local leaders, and moves on to an in-depth look at modern-day pioneers like the Bread and Puppet Theater in Vermont which, as Andrews says, is "the chief progenitor of modern protest puppetry in the United States," and Heart of the Beast, based in Minneapolis. Andrews skillfully brings out criticisms of these groups without diminishing the groups' impact or significance. The article continues with contemporary groups like Art and Revolution, which played an integral part in creating the look and feel of the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle.

Another great selection is Nicolas

[art space]



Benjamin Rosenbaum and Ethan Ham's **Anthroptic** is a cross-platform blend of found photography, artificial intelligence and literary artistry. The project arose from a quasi-A.I. computer program, dubbed "the Robot," that Ham trained to find representations of his own likeness on Flickr.com, an image-sharing Web site. Inspired by the Robot's strange selections (which included a man with wings, graffiti and a housecat), Ham recruited Rosenbaum to develop the Robot's personality with short fictions.

"I would pull out the sheaf of pictures and stare at them," Rosenbaum says of the writing process. Eventually, he came to see the Robot as "a doomed creature trying its best ... to make sense of chaos." Check out Anthroptic at www.thepresentgroup.com.

—Erin Polgreen

Lampert's essay on memorializing the Haymarket massacre, "Struggles at Haymarket: An Embattled History of Static Monuments and Public Interventions." In 1886, demonstrations for an eight-hour workday in Chicago's Haymarket Square turned violent when an unknown person threw a bomb into the police line, and the police responded by firing into the crowd. When it was over, the bomb and the shooting had killed eight policemen and 200 civilians were injured (the civilian deaths are uncounted). Eight anarchists were tried and convicted of murder, even though some of them were not even in the square at the time of the bombing. Four of them were executed, one committed suicide, and three were later pardoned.

Lampert's essay recounts the long history of the attempts to memorialize this horrific event with different statues, including the monument to the policemen that was run over by a streetcar and later bombed by the Weathermen, and which is now housed at the police academy instead of a public place. A separate monument remembering the executed anarchists stands in Waldheim Cemetery in Chicago. Lampert considers the controversies that can result when groups with competing perspectives want input on the placement, imagery and message of a permanent monument.

Realizing the Impossible is crowded with photos and illustrations, dark lines and sometimes-intrusive footnotes. It provides a window into a hidden history of the world (and it truly is the world, as the book documents artists and movements in the U.S., Indonesia, Argentina and Mexico). What you will not find in this book, though, is a cohesive analysis of how different art and activism movements developed in an interconnected way over time. A careful and interested reader, however, will be able to piece together much of this history.

In their introduction, MacPhee and Reuland summarize the purpose of *Realizing the Impossible*: "This book is the beginning of an anarchist art theory ... as political artists, we believe it is critical that we understand the history of what we are doing and think of ways we can use art for our collective liberation. It is no longer enough today to lock ourselves in our studios and produce culture. We must engage in our world in as many ways as possible." ■



The board of HWC, Inc.—planning another blockbuster business venture.

MUSIC

Our Profit Margin Could Be Your Life

By Anne Elizabeth Moore

THE BACK OF some crappy beer-soaked tavern is not where one expects an awakening of political consciousness. But if you've out come to see hardcore punk band HeWhoCorrupts (HWC), you're going to have one—smoky and sweaty though it may be.

At some point late in the evening (or more likely, early in the morning), the CEO of HWC, Thomas Camaro, will take the mic and deliver his annual report in the form of a 12-song set. His suit is screenprinted with the company logo. His lackeys mill around, helplessly awaiting his lead like standard-issue office drones. When he begins, Camaro will outline a strategic economic program the likes of which you have never seen.

At the end of a set where the songs average less than a minute-thirty each—"Ride the Limo," maybe "No Personal Emails," or their hit "Master of Profits"—Camaro is screaming, he is naked, the ceiling has begun to crumble, the kid standing next to you is bleeding from an elbow to the mouth, and you may wake up with a black eye.

Camaro is Ryan Durkin, who with Andy Slania runs the Chicago-based independent record label HWC Inc., (www.hewhocorrupts.com) and the label's roster of hardcore bands like Tusk, 7000 Dying Rats, and Holy Roman Empire (a rare female-fronted getup) for little to no pay. A struggling label, HWC vies against the majors for survival. The label's philosophy is a trimmed version of the band's—like most independent labels, HWC grew from a band's own musical interests—maximize profit margins by eliminating frills. Frills like melody, or the standard chorus/verse/chorus structure.

"The first time I saw HeWhoCorrupts," Chicago-based music writer Mike Barron recalls, "was in a classroom at DePaul University." They were playing an all-ages show on campus in 2004, and Barron thought it would be in an auditorium but found himself in what looked like a standard Econ 101 classroom. "Before the first song was over, there was a circle pit. Before the end of the second song, all five members of HeWhoCorrupts were wearing nothing but their underwear as Ryan Durkin screamed and growled about money and the financial market. At that, I looked around and realized that this was the man that I wanted to be learning economics from—not a DePaul professor."

Such fan devotion was not unusual when the loud and raw music genre known as hardcore punk first came to popularity in the early '80s. Now, though, word of mouth is just another tool of corporate marketing, and however much they sound like that stridently independent subculture, the goals of HWC are pure profit. The band plays loud and fast because, as Camaro remarked, "If we played any slower we would have less time to concentrate on our profit margin."

While the audience may find the corporate message confusing given, you know, the nudity, Camaro is patient with his marketing plan. It focuses, he admits, on "the package"—a juvenile double entendre that calls to mind both marketing speak and his genitals. Focusing on the package, he says, is the way to reel in customers. "Let's face it: when you look at the demographics of our core audience you are dealing with 14- to 22-year-olds, many in high school or lacking a GED. So can I really blame them if they don't know what positive cash flow is?"

At some point it's all a joke. HWC, Inc., and their roster of hardcore bands, videos, live shows and releases—not to mention their ridiculously well-conceived merch, including branded ties and bags of shredded money—is an independent music label mocking the corporate approach to culture. Yet it's a joke they take seriously, meticulously crafting their wares, songs, backstory and stage presence to convey a demeanor perfectly appropriate for the boardroom.

Like the Yes Men, HWC present themselves not as the artists and pranksters they are but as business professionals. So Durkin is sort of kidding when he says, "I'd like to think I was born with the corporate ethos," but he's also verifying what Naomi Klein and Alissa Quart have hammered home in recent years: that kids today are born sold.

Having grown up in an environment of sponsorship deals and youth branding initiatives, the 14- to 22-year-olds who form the core of HWC's audience are post-ironic; they read *The Onion* for news. They want, like Mike Barron does, to learn economics from a screaming man in underpants.

Therefore when Slania describes their core audience, he adopts the derisive language megacorporations might con-

fine to martini lunches. To maximize profit, HWC avoids reaching out to creatives, and critics. As well as "people genuinely caught up in the music world, because these types of people generally do not purchase music from any record label, including ours."

Honestly, HWC's hypermasculine posturing and (ahem) naked profiteering are offensive in every way. On purpose. (If they played any longer than 20 minutes, I personally couldn't stomach them at all.) One wonders if, in this modern age, such a business strategy can pay off.

But Slania, a tall, clean-cut man with a genuine enthusiasm for his corporate lifestyle, argues it can. "I don't think you can be truly independent and profitable. Some of these losers will twirl around in the flowers and have candy cane dreams and all that fruity shit and think they're really making a difference in this world." He pauses, scornful.

"This world is controlled by corporations and creatively fueled by the independents; it's only a matter of time before both entities walk hand in hand in harmony."

It's a nightmare vision for the future—unless more corporations like HWC get involved. ■

BOOKS

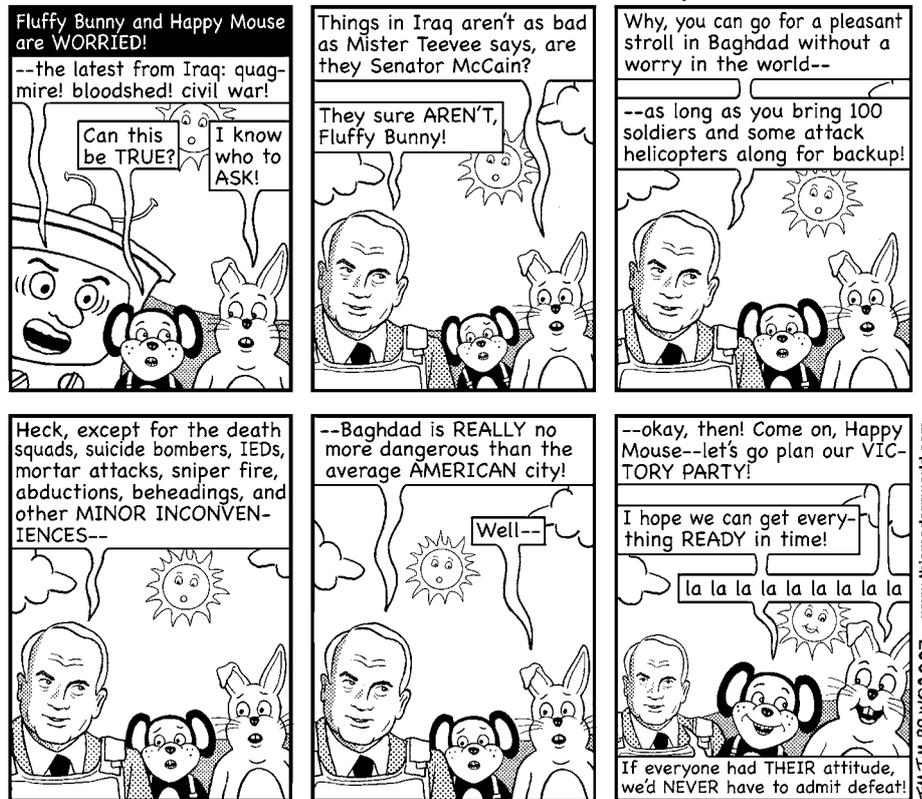
Deconstructing Hezbollah

By Allen McDuffee

WHEN GEORGE W. Bush issued Executive Order 13224 on Sept. 23, 2001, presenting a protocol to combat al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations of "global reach," Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shia organization, was not on the list, despite the fact that in 1997 the State Department had designated it a "foreign terrorist organization." Two weeks later, under congressional and external pressure, the administration amended the order and Hezbollah was added. The administration's initial omission indicates the complex nature of Hezbollah. How do you classify and develop policy toward an organization that has committed acts of terrorism in the past, that currently provides important social services such as health care, schools and financial services, that defends its country from occupation in the south, and that plays by the rules in official Lebanese national politics (and thereby exercises democratic principles

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



in a region with a less than stellar democratic record)?

Richard Norton, professor of international relations and anthropology at Boston University, elucidates these domestic and international complexities in his new book, *Hezbollah: A Short History*. Working as an observer with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, Norton first encountered the Shia of Lebanon in 1980—in the midst of Lebanon's bloody 15-year civil war and two years after Israel's 1978 invasion. In *Hezbollah*, Norton addresses both the fundamentals (the basic tenets of Shi'ism, the Lebanese civil war and biographical notes on prominent Shia figures) and the complex issues (the oscillating relationship with Palestinians and the PLO, carefully cultivated relations with Syria and Iran, and the "rules of the game" in engaging Israel during the occupation of southern Lebanon).

Most Americans remember Hezbollah for its 1983 attack on U.S. marine barracks in Beirut that killed 241 servicemen. As Norton notes, Hezbollah has engaged in that and other acts of terrorism, such as the hijacking of TWA flight 847 in 1985 and the 1998 kidnapping of Lieutenant Colonel William R. Higgins of the U.S. Marines, an unarmed U.N. observer who was tortured and murdered. While the blame was not undeserved, Norton argues that it is "generally easier to trace much of the terrorism of the '80s and early '90s to Iran than to Hezbollah."

He writes: "For Iran, the creation of Hezbollah was a realization of the revolutionary state's zealous campaign to spread the message of the self-styled 'Islamic revolution.' From Syria's standpoint ... supporting Hezbollah allowed Syria to maintain its alliance with Iran, gain the means for striking indirectly at both Israel and the United States, and keep its Lebanese allies, including the Amal movement, in line."

Unlike other recent books on Hezbollah, such as Judith Palmer Harik's *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, Norton's was written after the 2006 war, which was touched off when Hezbollah captured two Israeli soldiers in Israel and provoked an Israeli offensive that left more than 1,000 (mostly Shia) Lebanese dead. Although Hezbollah admits that it miscalculated the extent of Israel's response and would not have acted as it did had it properly assessed the situation, the war had no victor. However, Norton writes that the war "solidified Hezbollah's

excerpt



From the *Joy of Sex to Joyless Sex*

Feminism doesn't just get a bad rap. In some circles, there must be a fight to discuss it at all. In her new book, Full Frontal Feminism (Seal Press), Jessica Valenti, founder and executive editor of Feministing.com, issues a rallying cry for women to reclaim the movement.

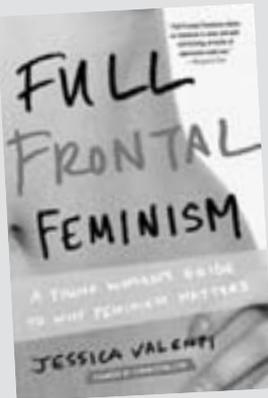
Can someone tell me when sex became such a goddamn downer?

You would think from the way that people talk about it these days that intercourse was a potential epidemic—teen girls running around like junkies trying to get a quick dick-fix.

No doubt there are serious consequences to sex. But if you're well informed and being responsible, what's the problem?

We need to get beyond the politics, the religious guilt trips, and the moral tsk-tsking and start to remember that sex is a good thing. A great thing. Perhaps the best thing ever.

Someone handed me a sticker at a women's rights march once. It said: I FUCK TO COME NOT TO CONCEIVE. I can't find that sticker and I want it back! Because what's been lost in this whirlwind of abstinence-only, married-only, straight-only nonsense is pleasure. I don't know about you, but when I have sex it's because it feels good, not because I'm gearing up to knit some booties.



But there are plenty of people out there—powerful ones—who want you to forget that. Take this nut job, for example: Former Senate candidate Alan Keyes, who once called homosexuality "selfish hedonism," because gay sex isn't for popping out kids; it's just about feeling good. (The horror!) The fact that someone could outright say that it's a bad thing to have sex because it's fun is beyond scary to me. Because that's the one thing we all have in common. Whether you're married, single, gay, young, whatever—we all want to have orgasms. Unless you're Alan Keyes, I guess.

role as both a political player in Lebanon and a regional exemplar for other opposition-minded Muslims."

One of Norton's shortcomings is his willingness to cater to certain themes overemphasized by essentialist writers and scholars of the Shia. For example, he devotes seven pages to one element of Ashura (the commemoration of Imam Hussein's martyrdom at Karbala), namely bloodletting (*tatbir*)—a nicking of the forehead to induce bleeding that symbolizes the beheading of Imam Hussein. Sensationalist media accounts often depict Shia with footage of processions of men marching down the street with blood dripping down their heads and faces. And while Norton points out that this is "not to every Shi'i's taste," and Hezbollah's religious leader, Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, disapproves of the practice, he still devotes a significant portion of a short book to it, thereby legitimiz-

ing the simplistic, sensationalist media accounts he hopes to avoid.

In a similar simplification, Norton refers to Hezbollah as a Janus-faced organization, suggesting that it acts in one capacity in order to deceive in other capacities. A more useful analysis would explain that each of Hezbollah's dimensions—as a militia, as a legitimate political party, as a provider of social services—work in conjunction with the others. For example, it is precisely *because* of the social services it provides to (mostly southern) Lebanon that it is afforded the privilege of operating as an armed militia in the south with tacit consent and support.

Nonetheless, with other similarly complex organizations on the rise, such as Hamas in Palestine, Norton provides a model of how we might begin to think through their multidimensional, seemingly contradictory natures. ■

BY TERRY J. ALLEN

Poisoning Pets with Industrial Food



IN NEW YORK City's East Village, a string of Indian restaurants stretches side by side for a block along Sixth Street. The running joke is that tucked behind the row is one kitchen that dishes up

the same food for all the restaurants. But while that model makes for urban myth on Sixth Street, it is nearer to corporate reality when it comes to pet foods.

Until a few weeks ago, Americans might have been amused to imagine that—despite the varieties of colors and adorably shaped fishes, bones and jolly little stars—the multitudinous brands of major pet foods come from the same factory kitchen. However, a recall of possibly poisoned cat and dog food revealed that for three months ending on March 6, Canadian-based Menu Foods Income Fund produced ingredients that ended up in 100 brands manufactured in two U.S. plants.

No one knows how many pets ate the tainted chow before companies recalled 60 million cans, pouches, biscuits, kibbles and treats. The Food and Drug Administration listed 250 different flavors of recalled cat food alone.

Adding to the bad taste is that Menu Foods is an income trust, a kind of Canadian tax dodge, sometimes equated with Ponzi schemes. It will be interesting to see how readily that financial structure regurgitates the millions in potential damages.

Menu Foods' suspect ingredient was 1.7 million pounds of wheat gluten imported from China by Las Vegas-based ChemNutra. ChemNutra's PR firm admitted that the company had sold the gluten to three other pet-food makers, but told *In These Times*

that confidentiality agreements precluded revealing the names.

The FDA called the companies, names "commercial confidential information," raising questions not only about the distribution of the wheat gluten, but about the secrecy of the regulatory process itself.

ChemNutra also appears less than transparent. It "has not filed as a Nevada corporation," reports Las Vegas Review-Journal.com, and California listed its "incorporation status as 'surrender,' which means the company has voluntarily surrendered its right to transact business in California."

But while ChemNutra and Menu Foods may lack corporate pedigrees, the pet food industry they supply boasts top breeds. Three of the five major pet food companies in the United States are subsidiaries of major multinational companies: Nestlé, Heinz and Colgate-Palmolive. Other pet food biggies include Procter & Gamble, Mars and Nutro.

These companies' pet foods rely on industrial food production for most of their ingredients, and industrial food relies on the alchemy of pet food to turn its waste into profits. But let's be clear: What's wrong with pet food is not that it contains animal parts such as beaks, intestines, animal necks, feet and undeveloped eggs that finicky Americans reject as icky. After all, Fido's ancestral diet includes deer carcass and Fluffy is partial to rat parts.

The problem with pet food—whether it's ground steak or chopped rectum, sawdust or grain filler—is that with FDA approval, it can include ingredients that are putrid, disease-ridden, and filled with the chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

In addition to helping industrial food transform potential garbage, pet food also serves the restaurant industry by buying up tons of used and

possibly carcinogenic grease.

And then there is the generous contribution made by pets themselves. The corpses of the 7 million homeless cats and dogs euthanized every year have to go somewhere. Many are sent to rendering plants, which sell their products—you guessed it—to the pet food industry. Some pet food manufacturers deny using rendered pets in cat and dog food, but the industry is secretive. FDA oversight is spottier than a Dalmatian, and, short of DNA testing, who's to know?

We are not talking chopped liver, here; the stakes are huge. Americans fed their 75 million dogs and 88 million cats almost \$16 billion worth of food last year. That amount surpasses the GDP of almost 100 of the world's 229 countries. The \$38.5 billion that Americans spent on pets last year is slightly less than the GDP of Kenya for its 35 million people.

Almost a month after the original recall and five full months after the tainted food was first manufactured, there is still no conclusive evidence about what caused the deaths and illnesses, which some experts predict will mount into the thousands. Wheat gluten is the chief suspect, but why it was toxic is up for debate. The first culprit was a rat poison found by the New York State lab, but the FDA failed to confirm that finding and pointed to melamine, a plastic not known for serious toxicity.

"The system broke down," said Senate Majority Leader Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) according to the April 6 *Washington Post*. "It's not just about contaminated food killing pets, it's a system that failed."

But in the end, the system that failed feeds not just our pets, but us, too. *Bon appétit.* ■

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Tim Griffin

Continued from page 31

tion, no forwarding allowed. Letters that came back as “undeliverable” were used as evidence to block the voter obtaining a ballot—or block an absentee voter from having their ballot counted.

BBC called the homes of several “fraudulent” voters. The wife of one, Randall Prausa, admitted her husband did not reside at her address in Jacksonville anymore. He was a naval airman serving overseas. Of course, it is not illegal for a serviceman to vote absentee from their home address, even if he’s black.

But it is quite illegal to target voters for challenge where race is a factor in the targeting. “That’s a crime,” Robert Kennedy Jr., an attorney expert in election law, told *In These Times*, “a violation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.” And this crime was directed by the man who is now a U.S. attorney.

On Feb. 16, Griffin stated, in a rare moment of candor, that he does not want to face a confirmation grilling by a Democratic Congress. He’s theatrically written the president suggesting he be replaced at some unknown date in the future. This dramatic “I’m leaving” flourish is most cute. Under a provision snuck at the last minute into the reauthorization of the PATRIOT Act, Griffin can stay to the end of Bush’s term—through the 2008 election—which is clearly why Griffin was “important to Karl,” according to one e-mail released by the Justice Department. But Griffin has not offered his resignation, so his self-proclaimed designation as “temporary”—i.e., until the next president takes office—smells of just another Rovian ruse.

Back in 2004, Griffin wouldn’t answer questions about this vote-fixing “caging” scheme, but BBC did smoke out Bush campaign press flacks. When confronted with the lists on camera, one mumbled that these were lists of potential Bush donors. Really? Several pages of men registered at the Jacksonville State Street Rescue Mission? A lot of Bush-Cheney donors among the homeless?

The importance of Griffin

Details of how Griffin was selected have become public through thousands of e-mails released in March by the Justice Department. These e-mails show that Griffin’s appointment was clearly important to

the White House. Kyle Sampson, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales’ chief of staff, wrote in a Dec. 19 e-mail, “[I] know that getting him appointed was important to Harriet [Miers], Karl [Rove], etc.”

Why was it so important to Karl Rove and then-White House Counsel Harriet Miers to make Griffin a U.S. attorney in Arkansas? A couple reasons come to mind. Maybe the Republicans were hop-

Why was it so important for Karl Rove and then-White House Counsel Harriet Miers to make Tim Griffin a U.S. attorney in Arkansas?

ing to revive their investigations of presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton’s tenure as first lady of Arkansas. Or perhaps they wanted an operative experienced in suppressing Democratic turnout in what Rove had designated as one of the 11 battleground states in the 2008 election.

As Richard Fricker observed on ConsortiumNews.com: “With Democratic Sen. Mark Pryor expected to face a tough reelection fight, Arkansas could be a possible Republican senatorial pickup in 2008. Arkansas also has a large African-American population, and Griffin has had experience in ‘voter fraud’ investigations that have targeted the registrations of black voters.”

The Bush administration was well aware of Griffin’s role in the 2004 Florida election. In an Aug. 24 e-mail, the Justice Department’s Monica Goodling wrote to Sampson, that Griffin’s nomination would face opposition in Congress because he was involved “in massive Republican projects in Florida and elsewhere by which Republicans challenged tens of thousand of absentee votes. Coincidentally, many of those challenged votes were in black precincts.”

Setting the stage for 2008

When it comes to felonious racial profiling, the Republican Party is a repeat offender, Kennedy says. In the ’80s, the party signed a consent decree with the Democratic National Committee to never again mount mass challenges against voters of color. But those were the days when the U.S. Justice Department thought its job was law enforcement.

That the Republicans are planning electoral mischief in 2008 is also borne out by the firings of John McKay, the U.S. attorney for Western Washington, and David Iglesias, the U.S. attorney for

New Mexico, both of whom had refused GOP demands to bring charges of alleged voter fraud. (See “The Fraudulence of Voter Fraud,” page 28.)

Note the Republicans use of the term “voter fraud.” This is the crime of an individual voting illegally. It’s also a crime that almost never occurs.

But *vote* fraud, as opposed to *voter* fraud, is epidemic. *Vote* fraud includes racially

targeted “caging lists,” wrongful registry purges, machine manipulations—in other words, games played by those who control the voting system, not the voters.

It is important, however, to Republican efforts to restrict the vote that hysteria be created about massive “voter fraud,” even though it doesn’t exist. And they have been successful in the vote restriction game. “Voter fraud” claims have led to a number of states imposing restrictive voter ID requirements. In 2004, according to the U.S. Elections Assistance Commission, “improper” ID was the number three reason for rejecting more than 1.1 million provisional ballots. Yet not one was proven to be a fraudulent voter, the crime the new ID requirements are supposed to prevent.

In New Mexico, the bulk of rejected voters were Hispanic, legal voters whose IDs were challenged. The worst case of this attack on voters occurred in “Little Texas,” the southwest corner of New Mexico controlled by Republican elections supervisors. Iglesias was fired after he refused to prosecute cases of so-called voter fraud.

Miers and Rove wanted to make an example of Iglesias and McKay, both of whom had refused to assist the political witch hunt for the nonexistent fraudulent voters.

As the Republicans polish off new tricks for the 2008 race, they will have the comfort of knowing the law will be enforced at the “discretion” of Griffin and the other Rove-bots now wearing the badge of U.S. attorney. ■

GREG PALAST is the author of the bestseller *Armed Madhouse: From Baghdad to New Orleans—Sordid Secrets and Strange Tales of a White House Gone Wild*. *The expanded paperback edition was released in April by Plume.*

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