Summer 2007

yes!

Building a Just and Sustainable World

5 Ways NOT to Travel Like a Tourist

Who Stepped Up for Climate Change? You Did

ISSUE 42

Democracy

LATIN AMERICA LEAPS AHEAD

Sex & Politics in Chile

Health Care for All Love, Cuba

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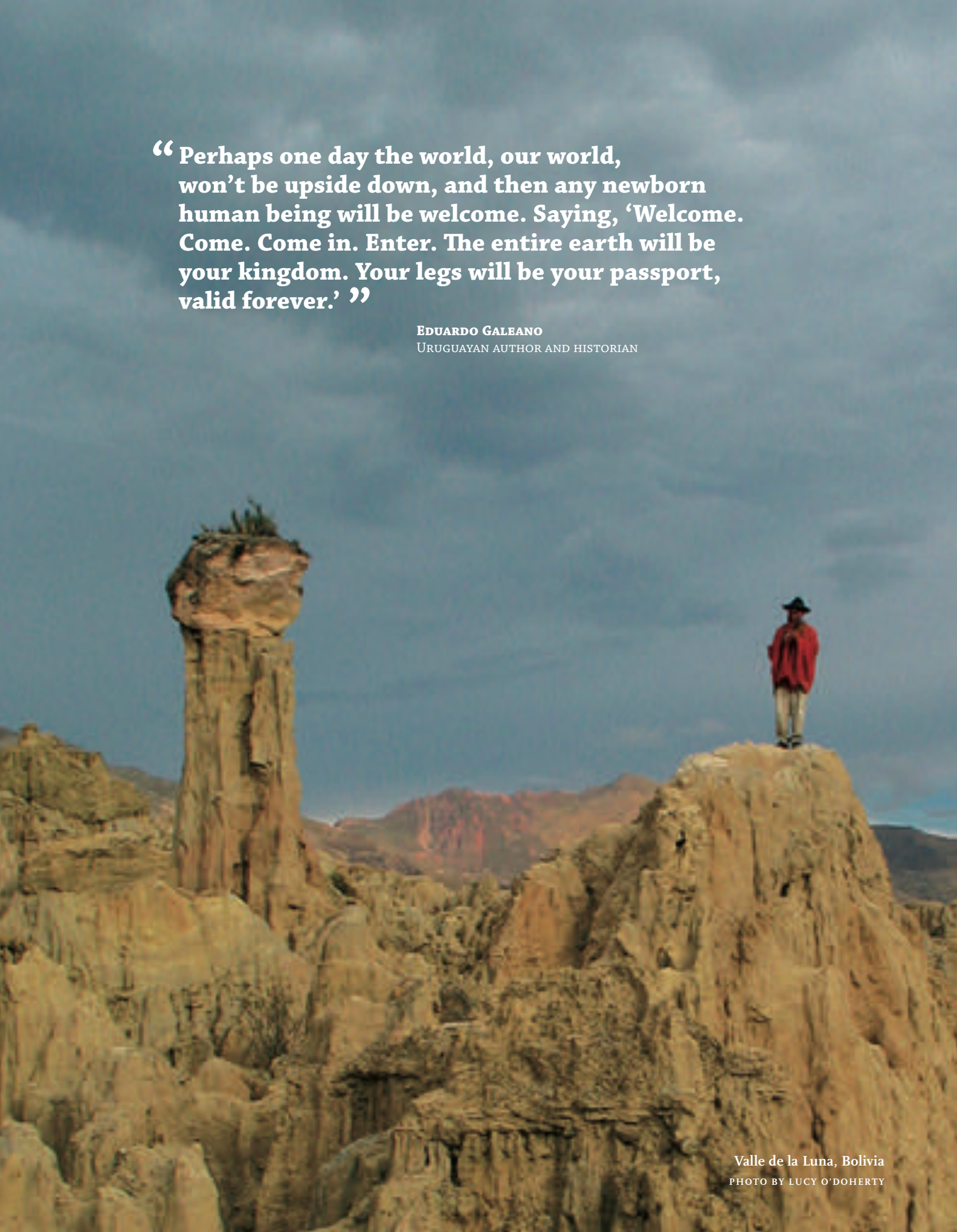

> **“Perhaps one day the world, our world, won’t be upside down, and then any newborn human being will be welcome. Saying, ‘Welcome. Come. Come in. Enter. The entire earth will be your kingdom. Your legs will be your passport, valid forever.’ ”**

Eduardo Galeano
Uruguayan author and historian

Valle de la Luna, Bolivia
PHOTO BY LUCY O’DOHERTY

FROM THE EDITOR

An Invitation from the South

This issue grows out of three months I spent in Latin America, meeting with social movement leaders, community organizers, writers, intellectuals, and ordinary people. Between October and January, I visited Mexico, Bolivia, Venezuela, Chile, Cuba, and Guatemala, looking for answers to a simple question. I already knew that many people in the Americas are rejecting "neoliberalism" (the face of globalized capitalism represented by large corporations, the WTO, IMF, and World Bank). But I wanted to know what the people of Latin America are creating to take its place.

I was especially curious because in the United States, we also have issues with neoliberalism. We're losing family-wage jobs and access to health care and affordable education. Like the people of the South, we find civil liberties, a functioning democracy, environmental protection, and the quality of life slipping away as corporate influence grows stronger and power shifts away from "we the people."

So what can we in North America learn from what's happening in Latin America?

What I witnessed, and what I want to share with you, are signs of new societies struggling to be born. Like any human effort, the results to date are far from perfect. Yet throughout my travels, I found an ambition to take on the big issues confronting human society—to end poverty and social exclusion, to establish and deepen democracy, and to listen to indigenous teachings about self-determination and the protection of Mother Earth.

The people of Latin America are choosing to be creators of their own futures, neither the passive victims nor obsequious beggars of the global economy. No longer will they allow outside interests—such as the U.S. government—to undermine their elected leaders in favor of dictators like Augusto Pinochet. They have not forgotten the human rights abuses of the past, and they expect to bring to trial those responsible.

They will no longer sign on to trade deals that open their natural resources and labor to unregulated exploitation and make protection of their own economies impossible.

They are forming new trade relationships among themselves based on "solidarity"—the notion that for any to win, all must win. And they have closed the door on IMF domination of national finances (see page 47) and on the economic growth model that promotes greater wealth for those who are already wealthy. Instead, they are working to share the wealth and eliminate joblessness, illiteracy, and preventable disease.

I didn't find any utopias in the South, and few saints; some areas remain mired in violence and hopelessness. But I did find increasingly self-aware and powerful social movements that remain, nonetheless, decentralized and democratic. They are bringing leaders to power, holding them accountable, and pressing for yet more democracy.

And in gatherings at all scales—of governments, social movements, and indigenous peoples—there is vigorous debate about the sort of societies they want to create.

Where do we in the North fit in? Those I spoke to understand that the people of the United States take very different positions than the elites who run the country. (We used to have that problem, too, one Venezuelan co-op worker assured me.) They urged us to drop our fear, as they have learned to do in the face of government repression, economic collapse, and military coups. And everywhere I heard the invitation for those of us in the North to join the people of the South in creating a better world for all.

Sarah Ruth van Gelder
Executive Editor

PHOTO AT TOP BY MARTHA VAN GELDER

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Photo by Rodrigo "RasDragon" Araya Plaza

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READERS FORUM

Tell us. Send your response to a *YES!* article, your stories about making the world a better place, and your ideas for connecting with *YES!* readers to **editors@yesmagazine.org** or to PO Box 10818, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110.

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Human Rights for Women

Thank you for the excellent spring edition on human rights. I'd like to expand the discussion to include reproductive rights, including abortion, as a core human rights issue that profoundly affects women, families, and communities around the world.

The basis for a woman's universal human right to safe, legal abortion can be found in numerous international treaties, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

According to the Center for Reproductive Rights, women's reproductive rights under international human rights law are a composite of a number of separate rights, including: the right to life, liberty, and privacy; the right to health and family planning; and the right to be free from gender discrimination.

More than 68,000 women a year, 98% of whom live in the developing world, die due to unsafe, illegal abortions. Access to safe, legal abortions is truly a matter of human rights for women everywhere.

Marcy Bloom
Seattle, WA

Put Human Rights First

The Human Rights issue (Spring 2007) is really splendid, one of your very best. The great insight for me came in the call by Larry Cox and Dorothy Thomas to move beyond single-issue advocacy. I have been teaching liberation theology and directing social justice agencies for nearly 50 years, both in the faith community and as a regional director for the American Friends Service Committee. I have led justice projects on trade union issues, economic and racial justice in South Africa, and food and development issues, among other things.

In all of this, there was always a context of human rights, but we argued our cases on specific legal, ethical, and constitutional rights rather than on an insistence that fundamental human rights are inherently the same for all people regardless of their particular status as women, workers, immigrants, or prisoners.

If I were a young man again, I know how I would change my basic approach to social change, and I hope that this issue of YES! will lead others in that same direction.

Thomas E. Ambrogi
Claremont, CA

The Right to Marry

I loved your issue on Human Rights. Heeding its warning, "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance," I think the Universal Declaration of Human Rights needs to be updated to include the rights of those in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community. Perhaps article 16 should now read, "All who are bonded by love have the right to marry and form a family."

Rev. Todd F. Eklof
Louisville, KY

Terminating Bad Policy

I read your article "Terminating Global Warming" in the Winter 2007 edition and applaud the efforts and intentions of California's Air Resources Board (CARB) in determining emissions caps and developing new regulations to implement the California Global Warming Solutions Act. However, the article states that the board will take four years to do the above, and polluters will have one year to comply or face criminal charges. Given that the polluting entity must assess how far out of compliance they are and their remedial course of action, which may include the design and construction of new equipment, shouldn't the timetable be reversed?

Faced with a choice between an impossible

timetable for compliance on one hand and criminal charges on the other, good companies may choose to fold. Someone with some experience in running a business and a sincere desire for a positive outcome should become a board member of CARB and adjust that timetable.

Barry C. Schlimme
Independence, KY

Global Support for Going Local

Today's local economies are threatened, not just by economic globalization but also by global problems—like pollution and climate change—that local economies cannot solve on their own.

To strengthen our local economies, we need to re-engage in politics to create national and international rules that mitigate these global threats.

We also need to create the right institutions on all levels. Currently the WTO rules worldwide, enforcing free trade values at the expense of a healthy environment and healthy communities. The World Future Council will be launched in Hamburg, Germany, on May 10 to speak up for our citizen values and the needs of future generations. It will also work with policymakers worldwide to reform the laws, rules, and agreements that threaten our common future.

Jakob von Uexkull
World Future Council
London, UK

CORRECTIONS TO ISSUE 41

On page 11, *the correct spelling for one cartoon caption author is Tara Drobnick.* **On page 38,** *we said the Center for Immigrant Families conducted a five-year study on race and class discrimination in Manhattan's Upper West Side schools. The study was only two years long.* **On page 43,** *the correct name for the photo credit is Susan Fried.* **On page 56,** *the author of the* Earthlight *review was not Marilyn Sewell. It was written by Carol Estes.* **On page 57,** *the correct spelling for the name of the performer of Carbon Glacier is Laura Veirs. We apologize for our errors.*

Hey, look! This is no ordinary dull white paper with occasional imperfections. The paper you are holding is New Leaf 100% recycled, 100% post-consumer waste, process chlorine-free paper. Wow.

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SUMMER 2007 ISSUE 42

yes!

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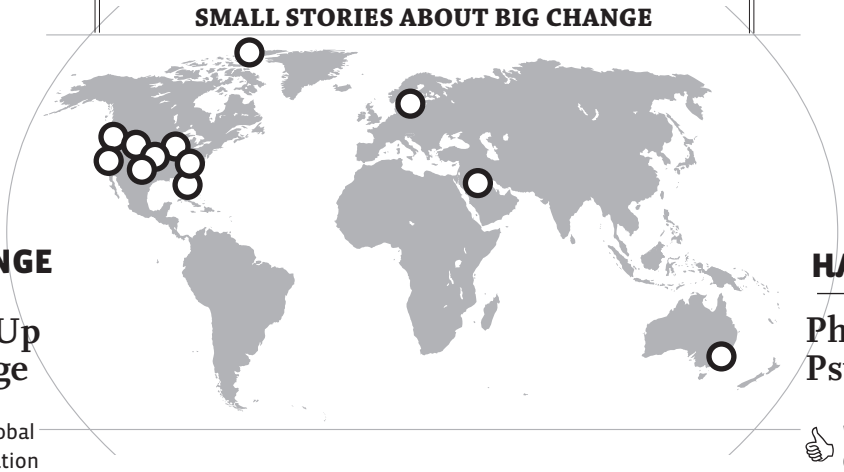
Signs of Life

SMALL STORIES ABOUT BIG CHANGE



CLIMATE CHANGE

Activists Step Up to the Challenge

In the largest U.S. global warming demonstration ever, tens of thousands stepped up on April 14, challenging Congress to cut carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2050. For this first National Day of Climate Action, volunteers organized local events in more than 1,400 cities in all 50 states.

Thousands of people gathered at iconic natural locations threatened by global warming, including an Alaskan glacier, a maple forest in Vermont, and a coral reef off the coast of Florida.

All this started with a website called Step It Up 2007, which was created by Bill McKibben and six graduate students at the beginning of the year. The goal: to launch an environmental "civil rights" movement to stop global warming. After the first National Day of Climate Action, McKibben declared success.

Each local event "means that many people worked hard and passionately to get something going about climate change," said McKibben. "That's what a movement is, and now there is one around global warming."

ALSO ...

It seems some leaders are beginning to see the light on global climate change and the energy crisis. Australia's government pledged to phase out inefficient incandescent lighting by 2010, and California assemblyman Lloyd Levine introduced a bill that would ban the bulbs in his state. In February, New Jersey assemblyman Larry Chatzidakis introduced a bill that would require a complete conversion to fluorescent lighting inside the state's government buildings within three years.

Construction has begun on an Arctic "doomsday vault" containing seeds of all the world's known food crops. This "Noah's Ark of Food" will allow for the replanting of agricultural crops in case of a major global disaster. One hundred countries have backed the plan, and the Norwegian government is overseeing construction. Located on an island just south of the North Pole, and strategically positioned 426 feet above the ocean to account for rising sea levels, seeds will be kept at –4°F.

—Catherine Bailey

HAPPINESS

Ph.D. in Positive Psychology

What makes people happy? Claremont Graduate University will be investigating that question in a new Ph.D. program in positive psychology. The program is being led by Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who has been teaching and writing about creativity, innovation, and managing "flow" for over 15 years. "Most research on human behavior has focused on what goes wrong in human affairs: aggression, mental disease, failure, and so on," Csikszentmihalyi says.

"We don't know enough about what makes life worth living, what gives people hope and energy and enjoyment."

Come autumn, curious graduate students will seek to find out.

—Catherine Bailey

Step It Up 2007 in Paia on Maui ...

In New Bedford, Massachusetts ...

In Cannon, New Hampshire ...

> **“To end this war, we have to bring new energy and new voices to the forefront.”**

Rev. Lennox Yearwood, president of the Hip Hop Caucus and organizer of the “Make Hip Hop Not War” 15-city concert tour of hip hop artists, activists, Iraq war veterans, and national leaders.

ACTIVISM WORKS

Creative Resistance to the Iraq War

As public opposition to the Iraq War grows, so do the ways ordinary citizens are taking a stand against the war. While the nationwide antiwar protests of March 17 garnered the most attention, a series of creative, decentralized movements have been spreading to local communities across the country.

One of the most visible actions has been **The Occupation Project,** in which peace activists from across the country have staged sit-ins in the offices of senators and members of Congress. Their goal: to pressure their representatives to stop funding the Iraq War and bring the troops home.

So far, 39 offices have been occupied in 25 states, says Jeff Leys of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, which launched The Occupation Project in early February. As of April 17, 327 people have been arrested for engaging in civil disobedience.

Across the United States, people have been working to get their cities to pass Bring Home the Troops resolutions, which condemn the injustices war inflicts both at home and abroad. According to Cities for Progress, which serves as a nationwide clearinghouse for this effort, more than 270 cities have passed resolutions calling for an end to the Iraq War. These resolutions also serve to build the peace movement from the ground up and unite cities across the country in sending a strong message to Congress to end the war.

To mobilize the younger generation, the nonprofit Hip Hop Caucus organized a 15-city **Make Hip Hop Not War** tour featuring music and speeches from members of Congress and prominent anti-war activists, such as Cindy Sheehan. The tour aims to galvanize youth to raise their voices against a war that inordinately impacts low-income communities and communities of color. The tour kicked off in Washington, D.C., on March 24 and worked its way around the country.

—Maile Martinez and Lisa Farino

Interested? www.vcnv.org, www.citiesforprogress.org, and www.hiphopcaucus.org

Huge Weapons Test Canceled

On February 22, the Defense Department canceled the so-called Divine Strake weapons test at the Nevada Test Site. This would have been the largest non-nuclear weapons test ever, equivalent to detonating a small nuclear weapon. The cancellation follows almost a year of grassroots organizing in Nevada and Utah, as well as a civil lawsuit, prompted by concerns about the health hazards of the resulting mushroom cloud. Although the explosives for the test were non-nuclear, heavily irradiated dust from the already-contaminated Nevada Test Site could have been carried downwind by the blast. Public outcry also moved Utah Governor Jan Huntsman to oppose the expansion of EnergySolution’s nuclear waste disposal in the state.

—Lilja Otto

Interested? www.healutah.org and www.downwinders.org

WTO Protesters Win in Court

Seven years after the “Battle in Seattle,” the City of Seattle has acknowledged that the arrest of scores of peaceful WTO protesters was unconstitutional. The city has settled a class action lawsuit filed by 160 wrongfully arrested protesters. The plaintiffs will collect a total of $1 million. According to *The Seattle Times,* this money will first be used to pay the protesters’ legal fees. The remainder will be divided into individual awards of at least $3,000. More importantly, the city has agreed to improve police training to protect—not violate—the right to peaceful assembly.

—Maile Martinez

At Sand Key Reef in Key West, Florida ...

On the levees in New Orleans

PHOTOS FROM STEP IT UP 2007

LABOR

Making it Easier to Unionize

Economic insecurity continues to grow in the United States as an increasing number of people cannot rely on full-time work to provide a livable wage, health insurance, and a pension plan. To counter this trend, labor unions and workers' rights groups are collaborating on a solution: make it easier for workers to form unions.

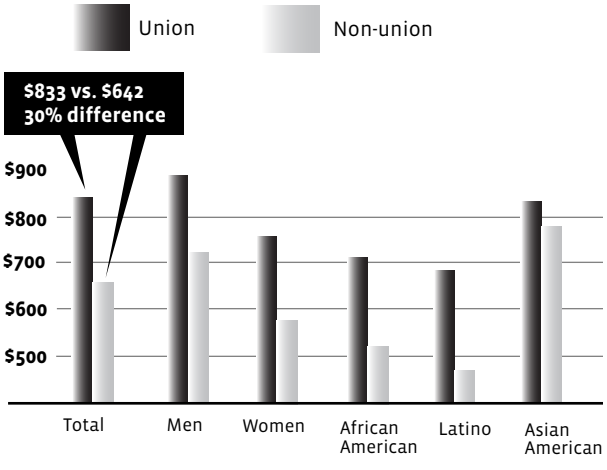
The Employee Free Choice Act, which passed the House of Representatives in March and is awaiting a vote in the Senate, would allow workers to form a union once a majority have signed union cards, instead of having to wait at least 8 to 10 more weeks for an National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) election. Nonprofit advocates for workers' justice argue that eliminating this delay is critical to limiting management's ability to engage in union-busting activity.

According to Kate Bronfenbrenner, a labor researcher at Cornell University, 75% of employers hire anti-union consultants during NLRB election campaigns and 25% fire at least one pro-union worker.

In a recent study by Rutgers University and Jesuit Wheeling University, 46% of workers in NLRB elections reported being pressured by management, while only 14% of workers in card-check campaigns reported being pressured by union organizers.

Unionized Workers Earn More

Median weekly earnings of full-time workers in 2006



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

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Much of the energy for changing labor laws is coming from national workers' rights organizations and the non-union workers they are mobilizing.

Kim Bobo, executive director for Interfaith Workers Justice, explains why Christians, Muslims, and Jews are coming together across the country to fight for the Employee Free Choice Act and other labor laws. "It grows out of our concern for people living in poverty," Bobo says. "One of the fastest and most effective ways for people to get out of poverty is to get them working in unions."

Sarita Gupta, Executive Director at Jobs with Justice, stresses that a revitalized labor movement would also help to rebuild the shrinking American middle-class.

In addition, she emphasizes that a strong, unionized workforce doesn't just benefit individual workers, it also strengthens local communities. "When workers are paid well, they contribute to a strong local economy," she explains. "And when workers only need to work 40 hours each week, they have time to participate in their communities."

—Lisa Farino

Interested? www.jwj.org, www.iwj.org and www.americanrightsatwork.org

E-WASTE

Universities Waste Not

The University of California has become the first U.S. university system to address the growing problem of waste from electronic devices. Under its new Environmental Sustainability Policy, California's 10-university system will only buy electronic products certified by EPEAT (Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool). EPEAT evaluates computers, laptops, and monitors for harmful chemical content, ability to be recycled, and product longevity. The new e-waste policy also requires producers to take back and either recycle or reuse computer components.

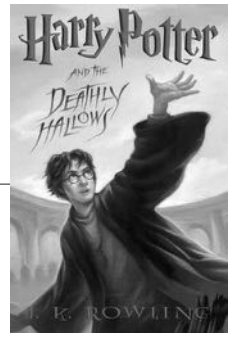
The University of California system has more than 200,000 students on 10 campuses and buys an estimated 10,000 computers each month, resulting in nearly 1 million pounds of e-waste annually. Each campus has developed or is developing e-waste drop-off sites where students can conveniently recycle personal electronics such as cell phones, computers, and music players.

The state of California remains at the forefront of progressive environmental policy. In February, the state passed laws requiring electronics to be recycled in an effort to keep mercury and other toxins out of landfills. In 2003, 515,000 tons of electronics were thrown away in the state.

—Zach Kyle

> **“This really will show our students why they’re hauling classroom paper to the recycling bin every day.”**

School librarian on hearing all 12 million U.S. copies of the last **Harry Potter** book will be printed on 30 percent post-consumer waste paper. At nearly 22 million pounds, this is the largest purchase of FSC-certified paper to be used in a single book printing. The first 100,000 copies will be printed using 100 percent post-consumer waste fiber.



ALTERNATIVE FUEL

Bio-Fuel Competes with Food

The rise of ethanol as an alternative fuel may mean corn will feed more gas tanks and fewer hungry people. The rapid surge in demand for corn to produce ethanol took experts by surprise, and resulted in a 50 percent increase in corn prices last year.

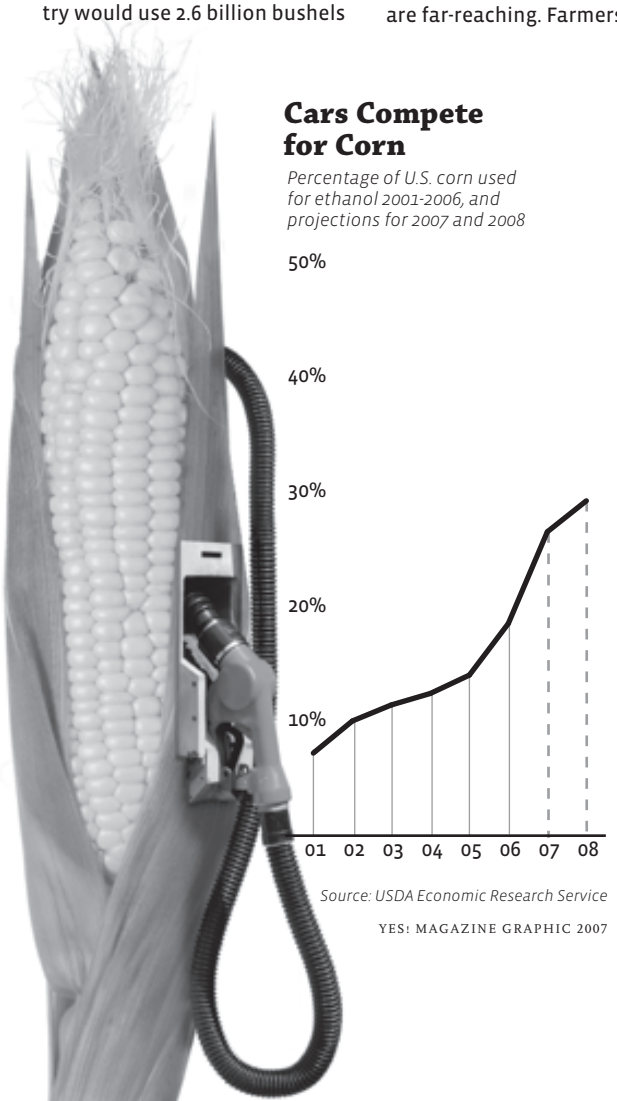
As recently as April 2006, the U.S. Department of Agriculture predicted that the ethanol industry would use 2.6 billion bushels of corn per year by 2010. Their current projection is a demand of 3.7 billion bushels in 2008, representing 29.2 percent of total corn use. In 2001, ethanol represented 7.2 percent of use.

“The food and energy economies, historically separate, are now merging,” says Lester Brown, president of the Earth Policy Institute. “In this new economy, if the fuel value of grain exceeds its food value, the market will move it into the energy economy. As the price of oil climbs, so will the price of food.”

The effects of the price jump are far-reaching. Farmers are planting corn instead of rice and soybeans, which are also rising in price. The escalating cost of corn also translates into higher prices for pork, beef, and dairy, which depend on corn for animal feed.

The U.S. doesn’t utilize corn as a staple food, but 20 nations do. In Mexico where the price of tortillas jumped 60 percent, tens of thousands protested in the streets, forcing the government to regulate tortilla prices. More dire problems will arise in impoverished nations. The USDA projects a marked drop in corn exports in the coming year.

The energy industry is ramping up for increasing ethanol production. Currently, 116 ethanol plants are operating in the U.S., 79 are under construction, and an additional 200 are planned.



Cars Compete for Corn

Percentage of U.S. corn used for ethanol 2001-2006, and projections for 2007 and 2008

Source: USDA Economic Research Service

YES! MAGAZINE GRAPHIC 2007

ALSO...

Sweden has built the world’s largest biogas plant as part of its commitment to non-grain energy. Already boasting the world’s first biogas-powered train and 800 buses that run on the gasoline alternative, Sweden plans to build 200 new plants to heat homes and sustain its growing fleet of biogas-powered cars.

Biogas is methane produced by fermenting organic waste, including cattle dung, sewage, slaughterhouse waste, and food byproducts.

Biogas has significant potential for industry. It supplies 75 percent of the energy used to make the paper *YES!* is printed on. Methane collects at the bottom of a landfill and is piped eight miles to the mill in Saint-Jerome, Quebec.

—Zach Kyle

SAFE FOOD

No to Genetically Engineered Rice

Forty-one of the world’s largest rice exporters, processors, and retailers promised in February not to purchase genetically engineered (GE) rice.

The world’s rice supply was contaminated in 2006 by an experimental variety of GE rice produced by Bayer, a multinational biotech company. The incident caused a sharp drop in rice prices and subjected the global rice industry to recalls, canceled orders, and brand damage. Some countries and companies banned all U.S.-grown rice. Although some types of GE rice have been approved in the U.S., the Bayer variety has not been approved.

U.S. rice exports are expected to decline overall as a result of the contamination, and several class-action lawsuits have been filed by U.S. rice farmers against Bayer. However, Bayer continues to seek approval for its GE rice.

ALSO...

Farmers in Mali, located in Sub-Saharan Africa, recently voted against allowing GE crops. The non-binding decision was made by a “citizens’ jury” consisting of 45 farmers, who cross-examined 14 witnesses including scientists, government officials, and farmers from South Africa and India with first-hand experience of growing GE crops.

—Rik Langendoen

Interested? International Institute for Environment and Development: www.iied.org

Sheila Watt-Cloutier
Eco-Activist for Human Rights

As global climate change escalates, so do fears that it will disproportionately impact indigenous peoples in the Arctic, whose entire way of life depends on cold, ice, and snow. Inuit-born Nobel Peace Prize nominee Sheila Watt-Cloutier wants the world to see climate change as a human rights issue.

In March, she took an important step toward realizing that goal: after initially being turned down, she was allowed to argue her case before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. For her, the opportunity itself was the victory.

"Asserting our human rights in this public way gives us a vehicle to educate and inform," says Watt-Cloutier. Whatever the commission decides, she believes that getting the message out will inspire people to see climate change as a moral issue facing all of humanity and requiring urgent action.

"Climate change is the defining issue of our time that will ultimately impact all of us. The Inuit are giving the world the gift of an early warning."

Zimryah Barnes
Helping Pregnant Women Behind Bars

Over the years, Zimryah Barnes had driven past the Washington Correction Center for Women many times, wondering what life was like for the women there.

Last year, this certified doula and aspiring midwife got to find out. Inspired to help incarcerated pregnant women, she joined the Birth Attendants, a collective of doulas who offer free services to prisoners in Washington state.

Inside, she found women struggling with lack of adequate education and prenatal care, poor nutrition, limited access to exercise, and isolation from supportive family and friends. Through education, emotional support, and constructive collaboration within the prison system, she hopes to reduce these barriers.

In addition to providing education and labor support to pregnant prisoners, Barnes also brings her experience back out into the world. "I want to educate the community about prison as a form of violence against women."

Dr. Casey KirkHart
Standing Up to Big Pharma

Why aren't you eating? It was a typical question Casey KirkHart heard from fellow medical students as they headed for another free buffet lunch.

KirkHart's problem: those post-lecture lunches were catered by drug company representatives, who often served up a plug for their latest drugs along with the salad. "We should be learning from experienced physicians, researchers, and professors—not marketing reps from drug companies," Casey said.

After medical school, Dr. KirkHart went to work for the American Medical Student Association, talking to medical students and encouraging the removal of drug representatives from medical schools.

Several large medical schools are now crafting policies to do just that. Dr. KirkHart, now in his second year of residency, continues to advocate for limiting drug representatives' access to doctors. "There really is no free lunch," he says.

Raffi Cavoukian
Troubadour Takes on Climate Change

Known as the children's troubadour, Raffi has been delighting children for decades with songs such as "Baby Beluga" and "Bananaphone." A rare celebrity who has consistently campaigned against consumerism, Raffi has now turned his talents to envisioning a "child-honoring world" and writing songs about the possibilities for transforming the world.

His recent album, "Resisto Dancing: Songs of a Compassionate Revolution," encourages people of all ages to "sing and dance a new paradigm into being." Among its 14 songs are "Where We All Belong," celebrating the principles of the Earth Charter, and "Turn this World Around," dedicated to Nelson Mandela.

Raffi's latest song, "Cool It," is a rousing tune on global warming that's being used by activists to encourage people everywhere to take action to "cool this planet down."

Listen to Raffi's "Cool It." Free mp3 download at **www.yesmagazine.org/music**

COMMENTARY :: *Michael Leon Guerrero*

US SOCIAL FORUM: WHAT "ANOTHER U.S." WILL LOOK LIKE

At the World Social Forum in Nairobi, in January, there was much anticipation of the US Social Forum, which will take place in Atlanta, June 27–July 1, 2007. Many international allies are eager to attend and to know what initiatives emerge.

Like many people, I'm excited about the first-ever national U.S. Social Forum. We expect some 10,000 people, more than 600 workshops, street theater, music, a youth camp and more. There is a lot of potential for the USSF, and it comes at a critical time in U.S. history. We have to bear in mind, however, that this gathering is part of a longer process, and it will not result in "the roadmap" for change. Like all social forums, it will be a point of convergence for many social change processes. The trajectories of a variety of organizations and movements will come together in Atlanta. This will be a time to reflect, to see each other, and develop a snapshot of the progressive forces that will ultimately shape national and international politics. The USSF will be a moment to take stock of where we are and what we have with which to build a movement. New relationships will be forged, old relationships will be renewed, current partnerships will be strengthened.

Some groups will come ready to plan joint strategies. The organization I work with, the Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, is talking to partners in Latin America, Korea, and the United States about organizing a response to U.S. trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia, and Peru. Others plan to work on strategies to close military bases. Groups from the Gulf Coast envision the forum as a springboard towards the People's Tribunals and Survivors' Conference in New Orleans in late August. Others will talk about the war, indigenous sovereignty, energy, gay and lesbian rights, gender, education, immigrants' rights, and the 2008 national elections.

The National Planning Committee has defined six core areas for plenary discussion based on key movements that have surfaced, especially in the last 18 months:

1) Gulf Coast reconstruction
2) The war and militarism
3) Immigrant rights
4) Energy exploitation and indigenous sovereignty
5) Workers' rights
6) Women's and queer liberation.

Apart from the plenary sessions, the forum is planned by participants. Their workshops will be grouped by a theme for each day—day 1: consciousness, day 2: vision, day 3: strategy.

The purpose is to create a convergence so we can look beyond our own issues and explore how we build the whole into a movement. We encourage people to organize activities with other groups to help with this convergence.

The U.S. Social Forum is part of an international process. Here, we will take our place in a dialogue happening throughout the world and show that we are not isolated from the international community.

Undoubtedly, many will leave the forum asking, "What did we just do?" The answers to that may not be totally clear at closing ceremonies on July 1.

But in 10 years we may look back on this moment and realize that at a critical time we came together and struggled, argued, laughed, cried, sang, and marched. And just maybe that "aha moment" will come to many of us, and we will have a glimpse of what "another U.S." will look like in the context of "another world."

Michael Leon Guerrero is coordinator of the Grassroots Global Justice Alliance (GGJ) (*www.ggjalliance.org*) and a member of the National Planning Committee for the US Social Forum (*www.ussf2007.org*). He also serves as a representative to the World Social Forum International Council and attended the 2007 World Social Forum in Nairobi.

www.YesMagazine.org/ussf to see what *YES!* is doing at the US Social Forum.

LAUGHING MATTERS ::

"Sure it keeps your feet warm, but you can only surf the inshore break."
TOWNSEND TWAINHART

"Who killed the electric surfboard? GM or GW?"
TARA DROBNICK

www.YesMagazine.org/cartoon for more reader captions

COMMENTARY :: *Jonathan Rowe*

OUR CONSERVATIVE ALLIES

Would someone please explain what is "conservative" about the Bush Administration? They claim that banner, yes; and critics obediently oblige.

But look at what they do. Run up the deficit, erode local control of the schools, launch a grandiose nation-building fiasco in Iraq, regard truth-telling as optional behavior, give the federal government authority to pry into our lives. It sounds like the litany of things conservatives scold liberals for, or used to.

Or what about Ann Coulter? What exactly is "conservative" about age-inappropriate attire and incontinence of the mouth?

Calling such people "conservatives" just helps keep their act going. Worse, it obscures a confluence of ideas between many readers of this magazine—whatever they call themselves—and authentic conservatives, a confluence that is rich with political potential. My text here is *The Portable Conservative Reader*, which was edited by Russell Kirk, the intellectual patriarch of the modern conservative movement. In his introduction to the 1982 edition, Kirk lays out the guiding principles of the conservative mind. The implications might surprise you.

For example, Kirk says that conservatives believe there exists a "transcendent moral order." If you believe that, then you cannot accept the infallibility of "the market," which is a belief system based on moral relativism — that is, whatever makes money is good. The market is a religion of utility and convenience, not transcendence.

Similarly, Kirk says, conservatives believe in "social continuity." How then can a true conservative support Wal-Mart and the way it whacks the social continuity of traditional main streets and communities?

It gets even more interesting. Conservatives believe in the principle of "variety," for example. "They feel affection for the proliferating intricacy of long established social institutions and modes of life." Does that mean crop diversity or monocultures, a global economy or locally diverse ones? Conservatives are "chastened by the principle of imperfectability." We humans are flawed. We must be skeptical always of utopian schemes. Then what about the utopian scheme of solving all manner of problems through genetic engineering?

The test of any policy, Kirk says, is prudence, which is a concern for "long-run consequences." By that standard, we had better address global warming fast.

There must be a catch, you say; and in a way there is. Kirk generally had different applications of these principles in mind. The utopian schemes he worried about most were those of Soviet planners, for example, not corporate biochemists. But that was largely a function of his times. The principles stand; and Kirk made clear his wariness of the Mammon worship of the market.

True conservatives today are working in this spirit. A case in point is Rod Dreher's book *Crunchy Cons*. When I went to Dreher's discussion page on the *National Review* website, I found approving references to such writers as Jane Jacobs, E.F. Schumacher, and James Howard Kunstler (*Geography of Nowhere*). Where else on the political spectrum are such writers discussed seriously today?

Did someone say "Here"?

The Left typically has assumed that its Rightward allies would be libertarians on such issues as abortion, drugs, and privacy. But libertarian *me-first-ism* has a heavy price when the subject turns to economy and environment. Here the Kirkeans, with their emphasis on social cohesion and prudence, have a lot more to offer.

I say it's time to stop chastising—and thereby complimenting—Bush, and the rest for being "conservative." Instead we need to call them on the fact that they aren't, and start talking with the people who really are.

Jonathan Rowe, a *YES!* contributing editor, is a fellow at the Tomales Bay Institute, which recently published *The Commons Rising*, a report on the revival of commons-based economics throughout the United States. Rowe is a founder of the West Marin Commons Association and is host of America Offline, a weekly program on KWMR-FM in West Marin County, California.

LAUGHING MATTERS ::

"So many ways to sink or swim."
HENNING DRAGER

"I'm telling you. There's no point in asking for directions. It's always 'clockwise' or 'counterclockwise.'"
ANNIE OMINOUS

www.YesMagazine.org/cartoon for more reader captions

Why Iraq Veterans Can't Stay Silent

Sarah Olson

"American Veterans are a bridge to the heartland," says Garett Reppenhagen, a former Army sniper who is now chairman of the board of directors of Iraq Veterans Against the War. "Veterans give the anti-war movement credibility in the eyes of middle-America. People in the United States are disconnected from the war. For the men and women who fought in the Iraq War, speaking against the war is not just a hobby. They have a personal interest in ending it."

Soldiers do not easily fit our image of experts. It is often difficult to listen to their stories. Many are in pain; many have experienced trauma. The frankness of their perspective is almost entirely absent in the Iraq War debate. When we hear so few critical military voices, we lose a powerful tool for understanding the Iraq War and, more broadly, the consequences of U.S. military action abroad.

Part of understanding the reality of war is understanding how the stress and demands of battle lead otherwise good people to engage in inhumane behavior. When veterans and active-duty members of the military share their personal experiences, they provide us with vivid pictures of combat, raising our awareness of how war can emotionally devastate our soldiers. That awareness might also help us learn how to help this new generation of veterans heal the wounds of this war—veterans like Clifton Hicks, an Army tank driver who grew up near Savannah, Georgia.

"What struck me most was just how callous we had become," says Hicks, who was discharged from the Army as a conscientious objector. His point is not that soldiers inherently lack compassion, but that dehumanizing the enemy is a reality of war, a reality that most Americans don't typically consider. If the U.S. public is unprepared to deal compassionately with these realities, perhaps, Hicks argues, we should reconsider sending soldiers to war except in dire circumstances.

"Sure, some Iraqi kid had been killed," Hicks says. "It's like seeing a dead dog on the side of the road. We hated them and were happy to have killed one. That's how those kids on the news were able to rape the 14-year old girl, shoot »

"Jefferson"
From Suzanne Opton exhibit "Soldiers"

Portraits of veterans were made at Fort Drum, New York, between 2004 and 2005 shortly after each soldier's return from Iraq or Afghanistan. Photographer Suzanne Opton asked her subjects to rest their heads on a table. She wanted "to look in the face of someone who'd seen something unforgettable." *www.suzanneopton.com*

What do we miss when we fail to hear this perspective? We miss the reality of war—the horror, the pain, and the anguish.

CRAIG MORSE
WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/CULTURESUBCULTURE

In March 2006, Veterans for Peace and Iraq Veterans Against the War joined survivors of Hurricane Katrina for a 7-day march from Mobile, Alabama, to New Orleans. Their intent was to draw attention to the similarities between the devastation inflicted upon both Baghdad and New Orleans, and to protest the diversion of state and federal emergency resources toward the war in Iraq and away from Katrina reconstruction.

» her in the face, and kill her whole family. They just didn't care, they still don't care, they couldn't make themselves care if they tried. Every soldier on the front lines is capable of that or worse."

With GIs serving more and longer tours of duty, such callous thinking and behavior can be expected to increase rather than decrease.

"Active duty soldiers are immediately thrown back into training for the next deployment without time to physically or mentally heal," says Army Sergeant Linsay Burnett, who spent a year in Iraq with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101 Airborne Division. "You're seeing soldiers now facing their third deployment, almost at the breaking point, yet we are sending those soldiers into a foreign country with loaded weapons."

Burnett is now stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where her unit is preparing to redeploy sometime this year or next. "I think there might be more instances like we've seen with the soldiers shooting the detainees. It will get worse if we don't treat soldiers returning from Iraq." Burnett says soldiers are increasingly opposed to the continuation of the Iraq War because they see first hand the paradox of claiming to support the troops while thrusting them back into harm's way.

Bringing the War Home

From our safe homes and offices here in the United States, we often overlook the perspective of veterans like Hicks and Burnett. Soldiers know that this war is dehumanizing not just Iraqi civilians, but also American military personnel and ultimately all of us who allow it to continue by paying for it.

What do we miss when we fail to hear this perspective? We miss the reality of war—the horror, the pain, and the anguish. Without voices like Hicks and Burnett, it is possible to have the entire debate around this conflict take place among those who have not fought in Iraq. Thus, the debate is sanitized and reflects nothing of the "ground truth" soldiers are able to share.

The soldiers most often heard in the media say some variation of: "We've got a job to do, and I am here to do it." But an increasing number of veterans disagree with U.S. military involvement in Iraq. "The real issue I want to raise is why are we there in the first place," says former Marine Captain Anuradha Bhagwati. "Why is it so easy to get Americans to believe that military use of force is the only way to feel satisfied, secure, or whole?"

The stories soldiers tell us can also challenge our own culture, assumptions, and societal beliefs.

"I am ashamed and embarrassed, because I joined the Marines to prove myself," says Bhagwati. "This is a very American thing: be all you can be. I wanted to do something where I was better than others. That's my personal growth, but at whose expense? At the expense of people in villages around the world. It's not the way I hope humans can become fulfilled."

Most Americans will never serve in Iraq, but if we choose to hear the stories told by veterans, the war may finally penetrate the American consciousness. When that happens, veterans of this war can help us to collectively end it.

Sarah Olson is an independent journalist and radio producer based in Oakland, California. She was subpoenaed in the 1st Lt. Watada court-martial and objected based on press freedom concerns. She can be reached at solson75@yahoo.com.

RICKY CLOUSING, *Army Interrogator, from Seattle, Washington*

JEFF PATERSON PHOTO

In Iraq I operated as an interrogator and was attached to tactical infantry units during daily patrol operations. Throughout my training, very appropriate guidelines for the treatment of prisoners were set. However, I witnessed our baseless incarceration of civilians. I saw civilians physically harassed. I saw an innocent Iraqi killed before me by U.S. troops. I saw the abuse of power that goes without accountability.

Eventually, I started to ask my unit the same questions I had been asking myself. Wearing the uniform demands subordination to your superiors and the orders passed down. But what if orders given violate morality, ethics, and even legality? If those orders go unquestioned down my chain of command, am I exempt from re-evaluating them? I could not train or be trained under a false pretense of fighting for freedom.

We have found ourselves in a pivotal era where we have traded humanity for patriotism. Where we have traded our civil liberties for a sense of security. I share the same idea as Henry David Thoreau: As a soldier, as an American, and as a human being, we mustn't lend ourselves to that same evil which we condemn.

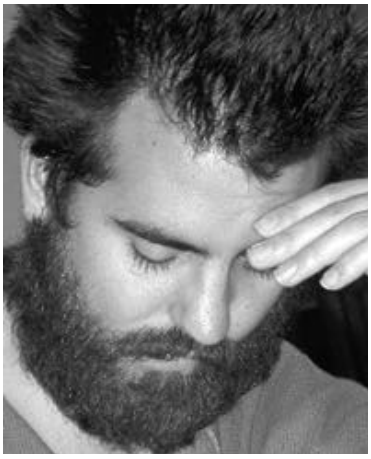
GARETT REPPENHAGEN, *Army Scout & Sniper, from Manitou Springs, Colorado*

JEFF PATERSON PHOTO

After serving as a U.S. Army cavalry scout and sniper in Iraq, I now suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, as do many of the people I served with. Recall where you were last year today, and now try to imagine the last entire year you were in a combat zone in Iraq. Imagine you are in constant danger from hidden road-side bombs and exposed to ambushes and sniper fire. Imagine that your home is constantly harassed with mortar explosions and rocket attacks while you try to sleep. Imagine you witnessed your closest friend being torn apart by enemy fire. Imagine you discover that the person you thought was an insurgent that you killed turns out to be an innocent child, or some one who looks similar to your own mother.

For many decades, we have seen the dire impacts of war on those who serve and those who are close to them. I don't understand why the VA has no plans for addressing the needs of the thousands of veterans like me who have served our country proudly and now find ourselves without the help we need. Despite being in the middle of two wars, our government is actually scaling back on services that are critical to the men and women trying to re-enter civilian society.

DARRELL ANDERSON, *Army 1st Armored Division, from Lexington, Kentucky*



I went AWOL from the military and spent two years in exile. In October 2006, I came back and turned myself in at Fort Knox.

I am not politically anti-war. I didn't go to Canada to talk about politics. I went to talk about war crimes. Because no matter what we're doing or what we're trying, it's inevitable that if you participate in an occupation, you will commit war crimes. Even in World War II, or any of the just wars we speak of, we killed innocent people.

From my experience in Iraq, I believe there is no way I could go back to Iraq and follow procedures without killing innocent people, committing war crimes, and eventually reaching a point where I'd commit massacres because enough of my friends had died.

It is my duty as a solider to refuse this illegal war and refuse to commit war crimes. And it is my right as a human being to choose not to kill innocent people.

More stories from Iraq War veterans

www.yesmagazine.org/veterans

THE PAGE THAT COUNTS

Average percentage of food Americans consume that is dependent on honeybee pollination: **33**

Dollars worth of seeds and crops honeybees annually pollinate in the United States: **14 billion**

Percentage of bees on the East Coast that have vanished due to Colony Collapse Disorder: **60**

Percentage of bee loss keepers consider normal: **20**[1]

Years Albert Einstein estimated humans could live if all bees died: **4**[2]

Percentage of American adults who reported that their computer receives more attention than their significant other: **65**

Percentage who reported increased psychological dependency on their computer over the past three years: **85**

Hours per month the average American spends fixing computer problems: **12**[3]

Number of sheep a Scottish farmer dyed red to cheer up drivers stuck in traffic jams: **54**[4]

Percentage of college freshman who reported recently discussing politics or political ideologies in 2004: **25.5**

Percentage in 2006: **33.8**

Percentage of self-identified "liberal" freshman who agree that "dissent is a critical component of the political process": **66.1**

Percentage of self-identified "conservative" freshman who agree: **63.2**[5]

Percentage of non-Muslims in the U.S. who believe that Muslims are disrespectful of women: **69**

Percentage of Muslims in Pakistan who believe that Westerners are disrespectful of women: **52**[6]

Percentage of female teenagers receiving formal instruction about birth control in 1995: **87**

Percentage of female teenagers receiving formal instruction about birth control in 2002: **70**

Percentage of female teenagers receiving abstinence-only sex education in 1995: **8**

Percentage of female teenagers receiving abstinence-only sex education in 2002: **21**[7]

Federal allotment for abstinence-only sex education per year: **$170 million**

Percentage of Americans who favor comprehensive sex education over an abstinence-only curriculum: **82**[8]

Percentage of Americans making $15–24,500 a year who report stress due to having too many things to do: **52**

Percentage of Americans making $75,000 per year or more who report this: **62**

Percentage of Americans making $15–24,500 a year who report stress due to problems with work, bosses, or coworkers: **19**

Percentage of Americans making $75,000 per year or more who report this: **30**[9]

Percentage of Americans who believed that global warming was a "serious" problem in 2004: **70**

Percentage who believe that global warming is a "serious" problem now: **83**

Percentage of Americans who agree that "the United States is in as much danger from environmental hazards, such as air pollution and global warming, as it is from terrorists": **63**[10]

Complete citations at www.yesmagazine.org

1. Mid-Atlantic Apiculture Research and Extension Consortium, Pennsylvania State University. March 2007. **2.** Spiegel Online International. March 22, 2007. **3.** SupportSoft. January 2007. **4.** BBC News, April 3, 2007. **5.** Higher Education Research Institute, University of California. January 2007. **6.** Pew Global Attitudes Project. June 22, 2006. **7.** Guttmacher Institute. December 2006. **8.** University of Pennsylvania. November 2006. **9.** Harris Interactive. October 6, 2006. **10.** Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy. March 2007.

Latin America Rising

Change is the rule in today's Latin America. The people demanded a new direction, and dictatorships have given way to democracies. After 20 years of stagnation, economies are taking off, and people are rising out of poverty. Here are stories of change from the bottom up—Latin America shows us the way.

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Democracy Rising. *Grassroots movements change the face of power.*

8 Hotspots of Progress. *20*

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Dignity for All. *Bolivia's indigenous people reclaim water, coca, land, and cultural pride. And the presidency.*

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Cuba's Cure. *Not satisfied with making just its own people healthy, Cuba sends doctors abroad and educates doctors for the world.*

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Sex & Power in Chile. *The election of a woman president has left some of the old guard a little lost—and women with a lot more power.*

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Powerful Beat. *AfroReggae's music has brought the sound of hope to Brazil's slums. Check out the film "Favela Rising."*

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Shared Power in Argentina. *When the economy crashed, workers found new independence—factories without bosses.*

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5 Ways NOT to Travel Like a Tourist. *Going there? Tips to have a more meaningful trip.*

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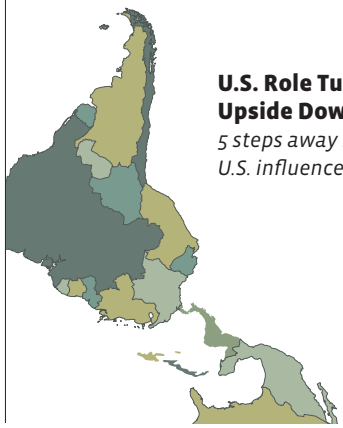
Cooperative Venezuelans. *An economic system of solidarity, not exploitation.*



U.S. Role Turned Upside Down. *5 steps away from U.S. influence.*

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If the world is upside down the way it is now, wouldn't we have to turn it over to get it to stand up straight?

EDUARDO GALEANO

Democracy Rising

Nadia Martinez

As the people of Latin America build democracies from the bottom up, the symbols of power are changing. What used to be emblems of poverty and oppression—indigenous clothing and speech, the labels "*campesino*" and "landless worker"—are increasingly the symbols of new power. As people-powered movements drive the region toward social justice and equality, these symbols speak, not of elite authority limited to a few, but of power broadly shared.

The symbolism was especially rich last year in Cochabamba, Bolivia, when the new minister of justice made her entrance at an international activists' summit. Casimira Rodríguez, a former domestic worker, wore the thick, black braids and *pollera*, a long, multilayered skirt, of an Aymara indigenous woman. As she made her way through the throng, Rodríguez further distinguished herself from a typical law-enforcement chief by passing out handfuls of coca leaves.

Throughout the region, marginalized people are rising up, challenging the system that has kept them poor, and pursuing a new course. In country after country, people are selecting leaders who strongly reject the Washington-led "neoliberal" policies of restricted government spending on social programs, privatization of public services such as education and water, and opening up

Inauguration Day in Chile represented people taking back power, especially women. A Chilean woman watches the ceremony wearing a replica of the presidential sash.

PATRICIO VALENZUELA HOHMANN, WWW.PATRICIOVALENZUELA.CL

borders to foreign corporations.

Of course, there are exceptions, most notably Mexico, where conservative Felipe Calderón claimed power after a bruising battle over disputed election results. But the growing backlash has driven old-guard presidents out of power in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Bolivia. And, while there are sharp differences among the new leaders, there is no question that what put all of them in power was a growing outcry against economic injustice. Over 40 percent of the region still lives in poverty, and the gap between rich and poor is the widest in the world.

No longer willing to accept perpetual poverty, Latin America's poor are redefining their societies and, in the process, redefining democracy. They are organizing large segments of society into strong, dynamic social movements with enough power to drive national politics. The challenge, of course, is to hold their new leaders accountable, to maintain the strength of the grassroots democratic power, and to go beyond symbolism to make real change.

Bolivia's Indigenous President

In Bolivia, where indigenous people are the majority, there are already some concrete signs of progress. Evo Morales, the country's first indigenous president, took office in 2006 with the strongest mandate of any Bolivian leader. Catapulted onto the national political stage by his struggles as a union leader defending the rights of coca growers, Morales came to power on the heels of massive popular uprisings that ousted three presidents in as many years.

Despite sitting on the region's second largest natural gas reserves, Bolivia is South America's poorest country. In tandem with a wave of privatizations that swept Latin America in the 1990s, the oil and gas industry in Bolivia was opened for business to foreign oil companies, which garnered 82 percent of the profits, while leaving a scant 18 percent for Bolivia's coffers. Shortly after taking office, the Morales government set out to rewrite contracts with private companies. Negotiators increased the country's share of the profits to 50-80 percent by renegotiating contracts with 10 different companies, which will yield billions in additional revenue for the government to sustain its new social agenda.

Spurred by his experience as a coca grower, Morales has introduced new policies that challenge the U.S. approach to the "drug war." Coca, the base ingredient of cocaine, has special ancestral significance for Bolivia's indigenous people and in its raw form is widely used to treat maladies such as stomach upset, altitude sickness, and stress, in addition to being a part of many Bolivians' daily routine. Under pressure from the U.S. government, previous Bolivian administrations tried coca eradication. Kathryn Ledebur of the Andean Information Network in Bolivia, says that "local farmers who planted coca as a means of subsistence would often face violent confrontations with the military and security forces who were mandated to destroy their crops, which in essence devastated their only means of livelihood."

The Morales government has developed a farmer-friendly program that allows small farmers to grow small amounts of coca for domestic consumption, while also implementing a zero-cocaine policy that includes interdiction and anti-money laundering efforts to prevent drug trafficking.

In Brazil, a Metalworker is President

The political shift in Brazil is also steeped in powerful symbolism. When Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva, a metalworker with an elementary education, rode a wave of popular support to the presidency in 2002, it inspired working-class people around the world. He was re-elected with a comfortable 60 percent of the vote in October 2006. Although his first term was tainted by corruption scandals and accusations from many on Brazil's left that he acquiesced too much to the demands by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for strict fiscal policies, he fulfilled some of his campaign pledges to the poor who form his political base.

According to the Center for Economic Policy Research, some 11 million families have benefited from the "*bolsa família*"—a monthly cash payment made to poor families in exchange for ensuring that their children stay in school. Signaling more pro-poor policies to come, one of the first acts of Lula's second term was announcing an 8.6 percent rise in the minimum wage.

Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution

President Hugo Chávez is best known in the United States for his overblown rhetoric against President Bush. But in Latin America, the Venezuelan president is fond of conjuring up the symbolism of Simón Bolívar, the "liberator" of South America from Spanish rule, who dreamed of uniting the region in a strong bloc. And while it has garnered little attention here, Chávez has used oil windfalls to advance Bolívar's dream. Venezuela has purchased big chunks of Argentina and Ecuador's debts to the IMF, for example, and sold discounted oil to several of its neighbors and even to poor communities in the United States. And Venezuela has signed trade pacts with several countries that include novel bartering arrangements, such as agricultural products in exchange for doctors and other technical personnel. Chávez has devised a regional trade plan to counter the Bush-favored Free Trade Area of the Americas. The Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America (ALBA, for its Spanish acronym) aims to benefit the poor and the environment, and to advance trade among countries within the region.

In January, Venezuela and Argentina took another step towards breaking the region's dependence on such neoliberal institutions as the World Bank, IMF, and Inter-American Development Bank, which have conditioned lending on "free market" policy reforms and harsh austerity measures. They pledged more than $1 billion to jump-start a new "Bank of the South." Bolivia and Ecuador have since signed on.

Within Venezuela, Chávez has made impressive progress in boosting literacy levels and providing health and other »

services to the poor. He has teamed up with Cuba in cosponsoring a program called Operation Miracle to provide free eye surgery to poor residents from Venezuela, Panama, Jamaica, Bolivia, Nicaragua, and a growing list of other countries. The Venezuelan government is also investing heavily in creating a model of local economic development through cooperatives (see page 41).

On the other hand, Chávez's fossil-fuel-based development plans—including a proposed gas pipeline from Venezuela to Argentina—are hardly visionary. As currently planned, the 5,000-mile pipeline will traverse areas of extreme ecological and cultural sensitivity. Several possible routes are being evaluated, but all run through the Amazon. Environmental and indigenous rights groups throughout Latin America have voiced opposition to the behemoth project, and have asked the Venezuelan government to halt all plans until they can be publicly debated.

Social Movements Redefine Democracy

Some of the most hopeful democratic advances in Latin America are not the result of official policies, but of social movements harnessing their own power. The thousands of poor peasants who make up the Landless Workers Movement (MST) in Brazil have claimed the right to settle on and farm close to 7 million hectares, or 43,000 square miles, of unused land—a territory a little larger than the state of Ohio. For millions of people who are largely outside of the mainstream economic system, access to land is of paramount importance, as they depend on it for subsistence.

Miguel Carter, of the Oxford-based Centre for Brazilian Studies, explains that groups like the MST contribute to the democratic process in important ways. "By improving the material conditions and cultural resources of its members" he says, "the landless movement has fortified the social foundations for democracy in Brazil."

Indigenous movements, too, have gained ground. In the Amazonian region of Ecuador, after witnessing multinational oil companies for decades cut through the jungles of their ancestral lands in search of petroleum, indigenous women put their bodies on the line against the armed soldiers sent to escort oil workers. Known for fierce resistance to oil exploitation on their lands, the remote community of Sarayacu has so far succeeded in keeping the oil companies out.

Throughout Latin America, scores of indigenous peoples have demonstrated that marginalized populations can organize and mobilize effectively enough to topple governments—as they have done in Ecuador and Bolivia—despite their lack of material resources and political power.

A new characteristic of Latin American politics is greater collaboration among countries with the goal of breaking dependence on the North. In the past, countries were largely in competition for U.S. markets and development aid. Now they increasingly focus on complementing the strengths and weaknesses of one another, and seeking common solutions to their shared problems.

One example is the newly formed South American Community of Nations (CSN, in Spanish), an attempt by the 12 countries of South America to create an "area that is integrated politically, socially, economically, environmentally, and in infrastructure." Because the initiative is new, it is unclear whether it will simply become a trading bloc that improves the region's competitive position in international markets, as is the case with the Southern Common Market (Mercosur). Alternatively, it could establish minimum social and environmental standards and the infrastructure not only to link to international markets but also to trade within Latin America.

Similarly, in a radical departure from a traditional market-based approach, the Morales government has developed a "People's Trade Agreement," an innovative economic alternative based on principles of fair trade, labor, and environmental protections, and active state intervention in the economy to promote development.

Although still in an embryonic stage, "it is unique," says Jason Tockman of the Bolivia Solidarity Network. "It has both a strong resonance with the alternative visions for social, economic and political integration proposed by the region's social movements, and the weight of state authority."

The response to President Bush's visit to five Latin American countries in March is yet another sign that Latin Americans are choosing their own path, independent of the United States and its political and economic interests. Along Bush's route, thousands of people in the streets carrying colorful signs and "Bush Out" banners sent a clear message: people's movements are alive and well in Latin America, and they aren't falling for the White House's attempt to repackage the same unpopular U.S. policies under the guise of poverty alleviation.

At the same time, Chávez was able to gather and rouse into a fervor an estimated 40,000 people at an anti-Bush rally in Argentina, where he announced that Bush was a "political cadaver"—alluding to the president's increased irrelevance in Latin America.

After two centuries of the United States treating Latin America as if it were its backyard, organized popular movements across Latin America are changing the dynamics of the hemisphere. By electing more popular governments in eight countries and by organizing tens of millions of people, they have put up strong resistance to the U.S. agenda of corporate-led globalization, and they have created real alternatives on the ground. These efforts, combined with the Venezuela-led effort for alternative regional integration, not only provide the strongest counterweight to the U.S. agenda anywhere in the world, but also offer multiple paths towards a better future for millions of people in the Americas.

Nadia Martinez was born and raised in Panama. She co-directs the Sustainable Energy and Economy Network at the Institute for Policy Studies (www.ips-dc.org) in Washington, D.C. Her focus is on Latin America, where she works with environmental, development, human rights, and indigenous organizations.

8 Hotspots of Progress

Building democracy in politics and workplaces. Collaborating across borders. Fighting poverty. Social movements and elected leaders are turning Latin America around.

ARGENTINA

President: Néstor Carlos Kirchner Ostoic. **Came to power**: Former President Carlos Menem conceded 2003 election after polls predicted a 40% margin of victory for Kirchner.

Indicators: Argentina restructured (and defaulted) on multibillion-dollar debt following economic collapse of 2001.

- Worker co-ops are operating factories abandoned by owners. Street-corner assemblies filled in for government (page 36).
- Freed of IMF mandates, strong and steady economic growth has brought 8 million out of poverty in a country of 36 million.
- 50% satisfied with Argentina's democracy*
- Approval rating for government: 73%*

BOLIVIA

President: Juan Evo Morales Ayma. **Came to power:** Won 54% of vote in 2005 following uprisings that led to the resignations of presidents Sánchez de Lozada and Carlos Mesa. Morales is Bolivia's first indigenous president (page 23).

Indicators: Renegotiated natural gas and oil contracts—Bolivia's chief export—to increase the nation's share of earnings.

- Constituent Assembly is drafting a new constitution aimed at giving more power to the majority indigenous population.
- Joined ALBA with Venezuela and Cuba.
- 39 % satisfied with Bolivia's democracy*
- Approval rating for Morales government: 54%*

URUGUAY

President: Tabaré Ramón Vázquez Rosas. **Came to power:** Won 52% of votes in 2004. Uruguay's first center-left president.

Indicators: Initiated $100 million "emergency plan" to meet basic medical needs and food assistance.

- Montevideo, the capital, is one of the 30 safest cities in the world.
- 98% of the population is literate. Life expectancy is in the 70s. High marks for civil liberties.
- 66% satisfied with their democracy*
- Approval for Vázquez government: 62%*

CHILE

President: Verónica Michelle Bachelet Jeria. **Came to power:** In 2006 with 54% of the vote. Chile's first woman president. Father was killed during dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

Indicators: Cabinet is gender balanced (page 32).

- 2005 constitutional amendments reduced presidential terms to four years and barred consecutive terms, and granted presidential authority to remove the commander-in-chief.
- 42% satisfied with Chile's democracy*
- Approval rating for Bachelet government: 67%*

CUBA

President: Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz (acting president, Raul Castro). **Came to power:** Led Cuban revolution in 1959.

Indicators: High health and literacy rates, and offers of medical help and training to dozens of countries (page 28).

- Uncertainty about succession following Castro's recent illness.
- With Venezuela, initiated ALBA, an alternative to U.S.-supported trade pacts.
- In 2004, oil find estimated at 4–9 billion barrels, plus natural gas, discovered off coast of Havana.

BRAZIL

President: Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. **Came to power:** Elected in 2002; re-elected in 2006 with 61% of votes.

Indicators: "Fome Zero" hunger-eradication program gives money directly to the poor.

- 19.8% poverty reduction in four years.
- Brazil co-founded Mercosur trade bloc in 1990s. Critics say Lula is soft on neoliberalism.
- 36% satisfied with Brazil's democracy*
- Approval rating for Lula's government: 62%*

ECUADOR

President: Rafael Vicente Correa Delgado. **Came to power:** Won election in late 2006 with 57% of the vote.

Indicators: Opposes renewal of U.S. military base at Manta.

- Won 80% support for rewriting the constitution in April 15, 2007, referendum.
- Calls Ecuador's debt illegitimate since much of it was established under military regimes.
- 22% satisfied with their democracy*
- Approval rating for the government: 23%* (Polls taken prior to Correa taking office.)

VENEZUELA

President: Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías. **Came to power:** Elected in 1998, re-elected in 2000 and in 2006 with 63% of the vote. Overcame coup attempt in 2002 and recall attempt in 2004.

Indicators: Social "missions" for literacy, health care, treatment for addicts, and job training address poverty and exclusion.

- Initiated rewrite of constitution (see page 45).
- Major moves towards regional integration through ALBA and Bancosur (page 21).
- Economy is mixed: some enterprises are state-owned, some remain private; cooperatives are encouraged (page 41).
- Proposed gas pipeline to Brazil, and later to Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay, would cut through rainforest and indigenous lands.
- 57% satisfied with Venezuela's democracy*
- Approval rating for Chávez government: 65%*

Research by Catherine Bailey and Sarah Kuck.

** Poll figures based on 20,234 interviews conducted in 18 Latin American countries between Oct. 3-Nov. 5, 2006, and published in LATINOBARÓMETRO REPORT 2006, www.latinobarometro.org. Cuba data not available.*

YES! MAGAZINE GRAPHIC, 2007

MAP KEY

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Via Campesina: International Peasant Movement

Coalition of over 100 organizations in the Americas, Asia, and Europe, Via Campesina combines the power of grassroots movements that oppose neoliberal control of agriculture. Invented the term "food sovereignty," the right of people to grow food sustainably on their own land in accordance with their development needs, and to regulate trade.

Landless Workers' Movement

Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement (MST) is one of the largest social movements in the Americas, with 1.5 million members. MST has won land titles for nearly 400,000 families through peaceful occupations in a country where 3% of the population owns 2/3 of all arable land. Members start co-op organic farms, build schools, and settle communities.

Recuperated Factories

Argentine workers began taking over abandoned factories during the economic crisis of 2001 and operating them as cooperatives. Today, recuperated factories provide jobs for more than 10,000 (page 36). Similar movements exist in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Water Wars

In Cochabamba, Bolivia, thousands protested the privatization of water in 2000. They eventually ejected foreign corporate "owners" and reclaimed the water system (page 26). Water protection movements are also found in Uruguay, Argentina, and Ecuador.

Human Rights Movements

Human Rights movements are found all over Latin America. Especially prominent are groups seeking justice for those who committed (or continue to commit) political murders and torture. Meanwhile, Argentina, Venezuela, and Uruguay have withdrawn their respective military personnel from the U.S.-based School of the Americas (WHINSEC).

Indigenous Rights Movements

Indigenous peoples are reclaiming rights to self-determination, ancestral lands, and cultural and religious practices. Many are blocking mining and oil exploitation of their lands—some of richest in biodiversity on Earth. Gatherings at all levels are issuing calls for change (page 27).

NEW REGIONAL COOPERATION

ALBA (The Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas)

Unlike "free-trade" agreements such as NAFTA and FTAA, ALBA's purpose is to end poverty and social exclusion while protecting the environment. Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, and Nicaragua have signed on. ALBA agreements to date have covered exchanges of Cuban medical care and training of doctors (page 28), Venezuelan oil, and Bolivian indigenous knowledge, natural medicine, and food exports, among others.

No to IMF; Yes to "Bancosur"

The IMF presence in Latin America has dwindled to nearly nothing as countries restructure and pay off their debt, often with help from Venezuela (page 47). Presidents Chávez of Venezuela and Kirchner of Argentina signed an agreement to launch the Bank of the South (Bancosur). Chávez has pledged 10% of Venezuela's foreign reserves to the bank (page 18).

BOLIVIA'S INDIGENOUS UPRISING

Evo Morales
New President, New Era

Jubenal Quispe

Juan Evo Morales Ayma was born on October 26th, 1959, in the rural community of Orinoca, in the province of Sud Carangas, Oruro, in the midst of uncertainty and misery. He was born under the *polleras* (traditional skirts) of his mother by the light of a kerosene lamp. Of the seven children born to his mother, only three survived. This is the reality in extremely impoverished areas with few health services: death is a constant companion.

Evo recalls: "When I was four or five years old, my father, who was a sugar cane worker, took me with him to harvest cane in Argentina. There was no work to be found, so we walked for four or five days. There was nothing to eat except toasted macaroni with tea. That's when I got my first job selling popsicles and earned a little money to help my family."

"I first became acquainted with school in the middle of the Galilea sugar cane fields, in Jujuy (Argentina), but because I spoke only Aymara (an indigenous Andean language) and barely understood Spanish, I sat and watched, but was finally forced to quit school." »

» This is how life was for Evo Morales, today the president of Bolivia, and this helps explain his sensitivity to the poor and excluded of his country. Indigenous children, like Evo and his brothers and sisters, continue to be born in poverty and continue to die before their time.

Some years later, back in his home community, Evo began to herd llamas and accompanied his father on trips from the high plains, the Altiplano, to the valleys to barter agricultural products.

"We walked for days behind the llamas. I always remember the huge buses that roared down the highways, full of people who threw orange and banana peels out the windows. I gathered up those peels to eat them."

Evo began to explore and cultivate his leadership abilities. Those who knew him then remember him as a restless youth, playing soccer and organizing tournaments among the various rural villages. To pay for his high school studies, he worked as a bricklayer, a baker, and a trumpet player.

Then in the 1980s, Evo Morales was forced to abandon the bone-chilling high-altitude existence of the Altiplano due to an acute drought. He moved down to the Chapare, a tropical region of Cochabamba Department, where he worked in the sweltering coca fields. Here is where he began his life as a union leader and a political leader.

He began as secretary of sports of the syndicate of San Francisco, a union of coca growers, and then in 1996 was elected head of the six coca grower federations of the Chapare. One year later, he was elected to the National Congress, and from that post he proclaimed to the world, "Coca is not cocaine!" He defended this sacred leaf until its meaning was restored as a symbol of the dignity and sovereignty of the people of Bolivia.

From that point, he was branded by the U.S. government.

Evo recalls: "I went through a difficult time in 1997 in Eterazama (a community in the Chapare), when a helicopter of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency strafed us, and five persons were killed in minutes. Then in the headquarters of the Human Rights office in Villa Tunari in 2000, there was a failed attempt to shoot me, but the bullet only grazed me."

In 2002, under pressure from the U.S. Embassy, the National Congress expelled Evo for having defended the right of the people to resist "militarily," in the name of democracy, a bloody massacre of civilians by the government. (Years later, this expulsion was found by the Constitutional Tribunal to have been unconstitutional). As he left the chambers of Congress, he pronounced, "I'm being thrown out, but I shall return!"

The MAS campaign released childhood photos of its presidential candidate. Here, in 1976 in the middle of rural Orinoca, 17-year-old Morales (in blue) poses with his mother (third from right), father (standing, second from left), brother, and others from his family.

In 1978 as a uniformed draftee serving in the army in La Paz. In 1983 during a soccer game with fellow coca farmers in the Chapare Province. In jail in Cochabamba in 1985.

ON PAGE 23: DADO GALDIERI/AP

President Evo Morales in El Alto, Bolivia, earlier this year.

Galvanizing Social Movements

Evo's speeches on national dignity and sovereignty, in the face of the continuous exploitation of Bolivia's natural resources, brought together the social, indigenous, rural, and worker movements of Bolivia.

These were further fortified with support from professional sectors as well as leftist intellectuals and businesspeople who were dissatisfied with the failure of the neoliberal economic system. Thus many sectors were united, shirts and ties and ponchos, polleras and pants, Indians and mestizos, leftists and Christians, united in a single goal—to build a sovereign, multicultural Bolivia with dignity, so that all could live well together.

In the general elections of 2002, the MAS party ("Movement Towards Socialism") won a surprising second place, with Evo as their presidential candidate. Then in 2005, Juan Evo Morales Ayma was elected president of Bolivia by a vote of 53.7 percent, with 84.5 percent of the electorate voting.

This was, and continues to be, the hardest blow dealt to the traditional political organizations, the kleptocrats of the country. They find it difficult to accept that an Indian (for them, the scum of the country) has conquered them politically, even when they had the open support of the U.S. government.

This blow hurts all the more as the victories continue to add up, not only in the political arena, but morally and intellectually as well. The opposition, allied with the mass media, and thus with a kind of monopoly on official discourse and official culture, cannot reverse the popularity of Morales, because he governs by obeying the will of the social movements.

WWW.BOLIVIA.INDYMEDIA.ORG
La Paz, 2005

Now that he has been elected president, life has changed for the indigenous people of Bolivia. Our renewed awareness and pride in our indigenous and intercultural identity is irreversible.

On an economic level, the government of Evo Morales is teaching a lesson to all of his predecessors. In 2006, Bolivia's economy ended the year with a record surplus. With the nationalization of the gas and oil industries, Bolivia now receives hundreds of millions in additional revenue that Morales is putting to work to help the poor.

With the cooperation of Venezuela and Cuba, he commenced an all-out attack on illiteracy and health deficits, motivated by his own personal experience of the darkness of illiteracy and ill health. Those who have lost their eyesight due to cataracts are receiving vision-restoring surgeries. The homeless are beginning to receive houses. Families with young children in school receive direct assistance from the government.

With his austere lifestyle, Morales has by force of example made public administration into a form of service, and led the initiative to lower the salaries of government functionaries by 50 percent.

Indigenous Power

Now that he has been elected president, life has changed for the indigenous people of Bolivia. Our renewed awareness and pride in our indigenous and intercultural identity is irreversible. This is invaluable psychological capital for the sustainable development of Bolivia, together with the work ethic and discipline he imparts by example.

Now our Evo has moved beyond just a national symbol, to being an example throughout the region and around the world. The unfounded accusations that he was a communist, terrorist, or a narco-terrorist have been left behind. The empire of the North could not face down an Aymara Indian who came into the world under the skirts of his mother, to show the world that another Bolivia, another world, is possible.

In this short, 14-month process of historic change there have been political errors. And there are still many dreams to be realized, among them, rewriting the Bolivian Constitution, applying the agrarian reform laws that have already passed, continuing the struggle against poverty, illiteracy and corruption, and reversing the exploitation of Bolivia's natural resources through the application of a sustainable national mining policy, and much more. All this so that all of us can live well.

Quotes attributed to Evo Morales come from Pablo Stefanoni and Hervé Do Alto's book *La revolución de Evo Morales: de la Coca al Palacio,* La Paz: CI Capital Intelectual (2006/08)

Jubenal Quispe is a lawyer, theologian, and writer in Spanish and Quechua (an indigenous language). He is a university lecturer and researcher at the Maryknoll Center in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Translated by Julia Dunsmore.

Oscar Olivera: Winning the Water War

President of the Cochabamba Federation of Factory Workers, Oscar Olivera was spokesperson for the Coordinadora, the umbrella for those who came together in 2000 to reclaim water. He since wrote ¡Cochabamba! Water War in Bolivia *(South End Press, 2004) and was awarded the Letelier-Moffitt and Goldman Environmental prizes. YES! Editor Sarah van Gelder spoke to him at his office in Cochabamba.*

Sarah van Gelder: What do you think the water war means for Bolivia's future?

Oscar Olivera: The water war changed our history. We kept our sources of water from becoming the property of a foreign investor. And we stopped the confiscation of our self-managed water systems, which were developed by workers, neighbors, and farmers, through our own efforts and the wisdom of our communities.

Above all, we demonstrated to Bolivia and the world that when we come together and when we know what we want, it is possible to defeat multinational corporations, the World Bank, the IMF, and the policies of right-wing political parties.

I believe the water war was a fight for democracy, because democracy is, above all, about who decides. And since April 2000, the Bolivian people began to say that it is the people who decide. We not only recovered our water, we recovered our voice.

Sarah: What does your success mean for other places that are facing similar situations?

Olivera: Based on this victory, people in many parts of the world started to rebel and to organize. There is a network in the Americas and elsewhere that is working to preserve water as a commons, as a collective right, a patrimony of all living beings.

We expelled some very powerful multinationals, but when the companies left, we realized that we lack the alternative. We want to create participative, social, communal management of water, but we're lacking the specific means to create this alternative.

I want to emphasize that the fight for water is really a struggle for life. It's about understanding ourselves not as proprietors, but as beneficiaries of this "blood," as indigenous communities say, which Pachamama [Mother Earth] generously gives us so life can continue.

We need a new kind of relationship between people and nature; we cannot keep letting multinational corporations and governments turn everything into commodities. We know that Mother Earth gives us life, and we must use oil, water, gas, biodiversity—not as commodities—but in a way that allows the generations of today and of the future to live lives of dignity.

Beginning with water, I think we can build and design a new world, a new society, based on this struggle for life.

Sarah: You have been asked to join Evo Morales' government. Why did you refuse?

Olivera: I believe that the true transformational power of life resides in people's capacity for organization and mobilization. So it would be inconsistent to try to change things from above, when that is what I have fought.

Sarah: Is there anything you would like to say to the people of U.S.?

Olivera: Yes, I've been 14 times in the U.S. I've seen much dignity in the American people, but I also have seen much fear, and I think one of the most important things that the American people should do is let go of the fear, as we have here in Bolivia.

I don't believe we will win a victory for all of humanity until the peoples of the North and the South come together to struggle for what we have in common, which is the struggle for life itself.

"... The U.S. company Bechtel took over the water system and tripled the rates overnight. Indigenous communities marched in from the valleys and blockaded the city, which also rebelled, raising barricades and burning water bills in a great bonfire in the Plaza de Armas.
The Bolivian government answered with bullets, as usual. There was a state of siege, people were killed and imprisoned, but the uprising continued day after day, night after night, for two months unstoppable, until with a final push, the people of Cochabamba won back the liquid that nourishes their bodies and sustains their crops. ..."

Eduardo Galeano, from Voices of Time: A Life in Stories

Declaration of La Paz

La Paz, Bolivia Tawatinsuyo October 12, 2006

From the heart of what is known as South America, from the territory of Bartolina Sisa and Tupaj Kartari, on the 12th of October of 2006 the delegates of the original Pueblos and Nations of the Indigenous Peoples of Abya Yala, upon gathering at the Continental Encounter of Indigenous Pueblos and Nations of Abya Yala, emit the following message:

MICHAEL BOLLINO

Herding llamas in the southwestern Bolivian Altiplano

Upon this new dawn of the Pachacuti, in these times of the culmination of the Fifth Sun [2012], soon will end the world of fear in which we live, the world of hate and materialism that we suffer. When that sun rises, humanity will have disappeared as a species that threatens to destroy the planet, evolving towards integration and harmony with the universe in its totality, with the understanding that all things are alive and conscious, understanding that we are all part of the whole, emerging to live in a new era of enlightenment.

In spite of 514 years of oppression and domination, we have not been eliminated: we are still here. We have resisted invasion, destruction and pillage, and now neoliberalism which imposes the exploitation of our natural resources for the benefit of the multinational corporations, causing grave social, economic, and cultural impact upon our Pueblos of Indigenous Peoples. These same negative effects extend also to the rest of humanity and the natural world.

Yet now we begin a new era for the original Indigenous Pueblos and Nations, for the times of change are upon us. ...

...Our proposal is one of integrity: a Culture of Life, which constructs sovereignty as embedded within our cultural identity and cosmovision, and with democratic participation we shall emerge to construct new nation states oriented by our indigenous thought and with the participation of the majority of the peoples.

... We shall reconstruct the principle "to live well," which for us means to live in harmony with our fellow human beings and the world of nature, and at the same time we offer to the world to accept and benefit from the values of our cultures.

From our families, our homes, our communities, Pueblos and Nations, whether we are or are not present within the systems of government of our respective countries, we ourselves shall decide and define our own destiny.

We shall assume the responsibility and the will "to live well" in accord to the teachings of our ancestors and so to radiate from the most simple to the most great and complex in order to construct in a just and plural manner the diversity of the culture of life, and so exercise our right of self determination. ...

... We are direct witnesses to the serious problems which presently befall the Bolivian people and government, brought about by the oligarchies that count on the support of the United States. We also are witness to the efforts of the Bolivian people and the government of President Evo Morales in order to build a new country, and we commit our solidarity to this heroic effort. We shall remain permanently vigilant regarding what occurs in Bolivia and we ask that all of the Peoples of the world offer their support and solidarity to this process as well.

!!!!!Jallalla Indigenous Pueblos and Nations of Abya Yala!!!!

Health Care for All Love, Cuba

Cubans say they offer health care to the world's poor because they have big hearts. But what do they get in return?

SARAH VAN GELDER

Cuba's health care system is based on the neighborhood doctor and nurse. Most often, one of them lives upstairs from the office.

Sarah van Gelder

They live longer than almost anyone in Latin America. Far fewer babies die. Almost everyone has been vaccinated, and such scourges of the poor as parasites, TB, malaria, even HIV/AIDS are rare or non-existent. Anyone can see a doctor, at low cost, right in the neighborhood.

The Cuban health care system is producing a population that is as healthy as those of the world's wealthiest countries at a fraction of the cost. And now Cuba has begun exporting its system to underserved communities around the world—including the United States.

The story of Cuba's health care ambitions is largely hidden from the people of the United States, where politics left over from the Cold War maintain an embargo on information and understanding. But it is increasingly well-known in the poorest communities of Latin America, the Caribbean, and parts of Africa where Cuban and Cuban-trained doctors are practicing.

In the words of Dr. Paul Farmer, Cuba is showing that "you can introduce the notion of a right to health care and wipe out the diseases of poverty."

Health Care for All Cubans

Many elements of the health care system Cuba is exporting around the world are common-sense practices. Everyone has access to doctors, nurses, specialists, and medications. There is a doctor and nurse team in every neighborhood, although somewhat fewer now, with 29,000 medical professionals serving out of the country—a fact that is causing some complaints. If someone doesn't like their neighborhood doctor, they can choose another one.

House calls are routine, in part because it's the responsibility of the doctor and nurse team to understand you and your health issues in the context of your family, home, and neighborhood. This is key to the system. By catching diseases and health hazards before they get big, the Cuban medical system can spend a little on prevention rather than a lot later on to cure diseases, stop outbreaks, or cope with long-term disabilities. When a health hazard like dengue fever or malaria is identified, there is a coordinated nationwide effort to eradicate it. Cubans no longer suffer from diphtheria, rubella, polio, or measles and they have the lowest AIDS rate in the Americas, and the highest rate of treatment and control of hypertension.

For health issues beyond the capacity of the neighborhood doctor, polyclinics provide specialists, outpatient operations, physical therapy, rehabilitation, and labs. Those who need inpatient treatment can go to hospitals; at the end of their stay, their neighborhood medical team helps make the transition home. Doctors at all levels are trained to administer acupuncture, herbal cures, or other complementary practices that Cuban labs have found effective. And Cuban researchers develop their own vaccinations and treatments when medications aren't available due to the blockade, or when they don't exist.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

LUIS SANDOVAL
Orthopedic surgeon, served in Pakistan, Indonesia
We arrived in Pakistan soon after the earthquake with our own tent hospitals equipped with x-rays and ultrasound. Within a few days, I was operating on bone fractures. One day it snowed so much the tent collapsed. Everyone went outside to shovel off the tent roof. I cried when I left, and so did many of the people there. Then, a month later, an earthquake hit Indonesia, and again a group of us went to help. We made an impact in the three months we were there. When the president of Indonesia came to Cuba, he gave us an award.

HERUERREA MIRIAM ROMERO
Pediatric nurse, served in Honduras
In 2002, there was a dengue fever epidemic in Honduras. Children were dying every day. Students from the Latin American Medical School in Havana gave up their summer vacations to help, and we were able to control the outbreak. We were scared when we first arrived because of all the soldiers with machine guns. There was a lot of violence. The hospital was full of children. People would pretend they had dengue to get treatment for other problems. We saw people who had never seen a doctor before.

www.YesMagazine.org/ownwords
***In Their Own Words**: Cuban doctors who provide disaster relief abroad.*

Exporting Health Care

For decades, Cuba has sent doctors abroad and trained international students at its medical schools. But things ramped up beginning in 1998 when Hurricanes George and Mitch hammered Central America and the Caribbean. As they had often done, Cuban doctors rushed to the disaster zone to help those suffering the aftermath. But when it was time to go home, it was clear to the Cuban teams that the medical needs extended far beyond emergency care. So Cuba made a commitment to post doctors in several of these countries and to train local people in medicine so they could pick up where the Cuban doctors left off. ELAM, the Havana-based Latin American School of Medicine, was born, and with it the offer of 10,000 scholarships for free medical training.

Today the program has grown to 22,000 students from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the United States who attend ELAM and 28 other medical schools across Cuba. The students represent dozens of ethnic groups, 51 percent are women, and they come from more than 30 countries. What they have in common is that they would otherwise be unable to get a medical education. When a slum dweller in Port au Prince, a young indigenous person from Bolivia, the son or daughter of a farmer in Honduras, or a street vendor in the Gambia wants to become a doctor, they turn to Cuba. In some cases, Venezuela pays the bill. But most of the time, Cuba covers tuition, living expenses, books, and medical care. In return, the students agree that, upon completion of their studies, they will return to their own under-served communities to practice medicine.

The curriculum at ELAM begins, for most students, with up to a year of "bridging" courses, allowing them to catch up on basic math, science, and Spanish skills. The students are treated for the ailments many bring with them.

At the end of their training, which can take up to eight years, most students return home for residencies. Although they all make a verbal commitment to serve the poor, a few students quietly admit that they don't see this as a permanent commitment.

One challenge of the Cuban approach is making sure their investment in medical education benefits those who need it most. Doctors from »

» poor areas routinely move to wealthier areas or out of the country altogether. Cuba trains doctors in an ethic of serving the poor. They learn to see medical care as a right, not as a commodity, and to see their own role as one of service. Stories of Cuban doctors who practice abroad suggest these lessons stick. They are known for taking money out of their own pockets to buy medicine for patients who can't afford to fill a prescription, and for touching and even embracing patients.

Cuba plans with the help of Venezuela to take their medical training to a massive scale and graduate 100,000 doctors over the next 15 years, according to Dr. Juan Ceballos, advisor to the vice minister of public health. To do so, Cuba has been building new medical schools around the country and abroad, at a rapid clip.

But the scale of the effort required to address current and projected needs for doctors requires breaking out of the box. The new approach is medical schools without walls. Students meet their teachers in clinics and hospitals, in Cuba and abroad, practicing alongside their mentors. Videotaped lectures and training software mean students can study anywhere there are Cuban doctors. The lower training costs make possible a scale of medical education that could end the scarcity of doctors.

U.S. Students in Cuba

Recently, Cuba extended the offer of free medical training to students from the United States. It started when Representative Bennie Thompson of Mississippi got curious after he and other members of the Congressional Black Caucus repeatedly encountered Cuban or Cuban-trained doctors in poor communities around the world.

They visited Cuba in May 2000, and during a conversation with Fidel Castro, Thompson brought up the lack of medical access for his poor, rural constituents. "He [Castro] was very familiar with the unemployment rates, health conditions, and infant mortality rates in my district, and that surprised me," Thompson said. Castro offered scholarships for low-income Americans under the same terms as the other international students—they have to agree to go back and serve their communities.

Today, about 90 young people from poor parts of the United States have joined the ranks of international students studying medicine in Cuba.

The offer of medical training is just one way Cuba has reached out to the United States. Immediately after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, 1,500 Cuban doctors volunteered to come to the Gulf Coast. They waited with packed bags and medical supplies, and a ship ready to provide backup support. Permission from the U.S. government never arrived.

"Our government played politics with the lives of people when they needed help the most," said Representative Thompson. "And that's unfortunate."

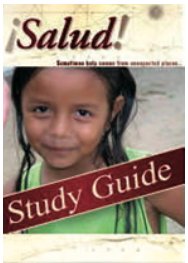
When an earthquake struck Pakistan shortly afterwards, though, that country's government warmly welcomed the Cuban medical professionals. And 2,300 came, bringing 32 field hospitals to remote, frigid regions of the Himalayas. There, they set broken bones, treated ailments, and performed operations for a total of 1.7 million patients.

The disaster assistance is part of Cuba's medical aid mission that has extended from Peru to Indonesia, and even included caring for 17,000 children sickened by the 1986 accident at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in the Ukraine.

It isn't only in times of disaster that Cuban health care workers get involved. Some 29,000 Cuban health professionals are now practicing in 69 countries—mostly in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa. In Venezuela, about 20,000 of them have enabled President Hugo Chávez to make good on his promise to provide health care to the poor. In the shantytowns around Caracas and the banks of the Amazon, those who organize themselves and find a place for a doctor to practice and live can request a Cuban doctor.

As in Cuba, these doctors and nurses live where they serve, and become part of the community. They are available

¡Salud! Cuba's Global Health Mission



The film *¡Salud!* follows Cuban doctors to Honduras, Venezuela, the Gambia, and other poor countries where they offer medical care and training. The 90-minute documentary also tells of the thousands of international medical students studying in Cuba, and what it means to their communities when they return. *www.saludthefilm.net*

MEDICC (Medical Education Cooperation with Cuba), distributes *¡Salud!* and supports international medical students and graduates trained in Cuba who are returning to under-served areas to practice medicine. MEDICC publishes *MEDICC Review*, a peer-reviewed journal on Cuban medical and public health, and *Cuba Health Reports, an* online news service, and assists U.S. health professionals exploring the Cuban public health experience. *www.medicc.org*

MENINGITIS B

Cuba's Got the Vaccine —Why Don't We?

A vaccine with proven effectiveness against Meningitis B was developed in Cuba in the 1980s. Since then, 55 million doses have been administered in Cuba and other countries. But not in the U.S., where outbreaks still kill children. Dr. Robert Fortner, MD, wanted to find out why. His findings are at:

www.yesmagazine.org/vaccine

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

NARCISO ORTIZ
U.S. medical student, Salvador Allende Hospital, Havana

When I first came here to Cuba, I was in a hurry to finish up and go back to the U.S. I had the idea that when I returned I would have a big house, and cars. … At first it was a challenge to be here. I shared a room with seven other people. I ate mostly rice, beans, and salads. But now, I find it a more satisfying way of living. It is not paradise, but it's different when you have the basic necessities met. The human interactions are better; it's more of a community.

I was born in the Dominican Republic; my family immigrated to Newark in 1981. My father works at the Board of Education cleaning offices. My mother works at the airport; she cleans airplanes.

I would like to offer free health care when I get back. I met a doctor here who spent two years in Africa and did 800 operations on little kids without getting a dime. I would like to have that opportunity.

One thing that perplexes me is how much the Cubans have done with so little. When I go home, it's backwards. We have money, resources, technology, and yet we don't have universal health care. I believe that we can make it happen. We have to fight off the pharmaceutical and insurance companies, but I think we can do it.

One of the things I see here in Cuba is they are always optimistic. Sometimes when I go back home that's missing. Here, they have the attitude that yes, you can! A better world is possible!

for emergencies, and they introduce preventative health practices.

Some are tempted to use their time abroad as an opportunity to leave Cuba. In August, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced a new policy that makes it easier for Cuban medical professionals to come to the U.S. But the vast majority remain on the job and eventually return to Cuba.

Investing in Peace

How do the Cuban people feel about using their country's resources for international medical missions? Those I asked responded with some version of this: We Cubans have big hearts. We are proud that we can share what we have with the world's poor.

Nearly everyone in Cuba knows someone who has served on a medical mission. These doctors encounter maladies that have been eradicated from Cuba. They expand their understanding of medicine and of the suffering associated with poverty and powerlessness, and they bring home the pride that goes with making a difference.

And pride is a potent antidote to the dissatisfaction that can result from the economic hardships that continue 50 years into Cuba's revolution.

From the government's perspective, their investment in medical internationalism is covered, in part, by ALBA, the new trade agreement among Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Cuba. ALBA, an alternative to the Free Trade Area of the Americas, puts human needs ahead of economic growth, so it isn't surprising that Cuba's health care offerings fall within the agreement, as does Venezuelan oil, Bolivian natural gas, and so on. But Cuba also offers help to countries outside of ALBA.

"All we ask for in return is solidarity," Dr. Ceballos says.

"Solidarity" has real-world implications. Before Cuba sent doctors to Pakistan, relations between the two countries were not great, Ceballos says. But now the relationship is "magnificent." The same is true of Guatemala and El Salvador. "Although they are conservative governments, they have become more flexible in their relationship with Cuba," he says.

Those investments in health care missions "are resources that prevent confrontation with other nations," Ceballos explains. "The solidarity with Cuba has restrained aggressions of all kinds." And in a statement that acknowledges Cuba's vulnerabilities on the global stage, Ceballos puts it this way: "It's infinitely better to invest in peace than to invest in war."

Imagine, then, that this idea took hold. Even more revolutionary than the right to health care for all is the idea that an investment in health—or in clean water, adequate food or housing—could be more powerful, more effective at building security than bombers and aircraft carriers.

Sarah van Gelder, executive editor of YES!, was in Cuba (legally) in December 2006 visiting medical schools, clinics, and hospitals. Her travel was supported by The Atlantic Philanthropies, and MEDICC provided program consulting.

JUAN CATEPILLAN

Politics and Sex in Post-Pinochet Chile

Marcelo Mendoza

In March 2006, the socialist candidate, Michelle Bachelet, became the first woman ever elected president of a South American country.

Her rise to power sent shock waves through Chile's political elites, who still, after a year of her government, remain implacable. Between the lines, their message could be read as this: "She is a woman, she acts like a woman, and women don't know how to exert authority."

A close look at the private lives of ordinary Chileans reveals changes that were quietly laying the groundwork that made it possible for a woman to become president in spite of the conservative influence of the Catholic Church and the political elites.

But after Bachelet's first year in the government, many of her critics maintain they were right, since the center-left coalition is experiencing its worst period and showing obvious signs of wear.

If Michelle Bachelet can be criticized for anything it's her inefficiency in constructing a story, an epic of this new form of governing—that of a woman who wants to govern as a woman, with geniality and greater participation of ordinary citizens.

Women Take Power

As is true of almost all Latin American countries, Chilean society has

Chilean Street Art (above)
Patricio Madero

Muralist Patricio Madero has left his mark on Chilean walls and Chilean history for decades. His roots go back to the late 1960s with the creation of the mural art collective Ramona Parra Brigade. Under President Salvador Allende, the brigade gained members nationwide and became an important cultural movement. During Augusto Pinochet's military dictatorship, street art was part of the counterculture resistance to that regime. Now muralists like Madero are celebrated heroes of the new democracy.

always been patriarchal. Ever since the Spanish conquest, the figure of the "*señor*" or "lord" reigned supreme in the large, landed estates and later in the cities. Until the 1960s, women were largely excluded from government, work, and business; their lives centered on matters of the home and child raising.

Military dictator Augusto Pinochet embodied the most stereotypical characteristics of this machismo: those of the omnipotent and authoritarian man. He promised order and security in exchange for liberty and human rights. Lucía Hiriart de Pinochet, wife of the dictator, told women to take a secondary role in support of their husbands.

With the end of the dictatorship in 1990, the democratic coalition installed a more benign patriarch: President Patricio Aylwin. Ricardo Lagos, the third president after the dictatorship, also represented a patriarchal figure who, in moments of conflict, would bang on the table to get the last word—a practice that increased his popularity.

Michelle Bachelet does not fit any of these characteristics. She is a socialist, agnostic, and daughter of a general assassinated by the dictatorship. She is separated, with children from different fathers; her youngest was born when she was single. She is seen as unpredictable in her friendly, feminine, maternal ways.

As Lagos' minister of health and later of defense, she was well-liked. It was citizens, not the political class, who invested in her candidacy and later in her presidency.

The fact that she has become president is the clearest sign of an erosion of traditional, masculine ways of wielding power. A snapshot of this change was captured on the day Bachelet was elected. Thousands of women gathered in Santiago de Chile's main avenue wearing the tri-colored presidential ribbon as if to say that the power now belongs to all women.

But how real is this image?

In 2000, journalist and author Pia Rajevic presented her research into changes in the private lives of Chileans during the time of the dictatorship and the first decade of the return of democracy. Her book *El Libro Abierto del Amor y el Sexo en Chile* (*The Open Book of Love and Sex in Chile*) debunked various myths. Rajevic showed that Chileans aren't as conservative as believed; youth lose their virginity earlier than the Dutch; different family models exist (single parents, extended families, and so on); homosexuality, though illegal, is widely accepted. Since the 1960s, Chile has been a pioneer in family planning, and contraceptive methods.

But Rajevic also showed that this openness in private life was not supported by the country's elites. As a result, the legal code, the public discourse, and the mass media hid the reality of private life in Chile. This explains why the political powers for many years refused to adopt a divorce law, although a majority of marriages had resulted in separations and almost half of all children were born outside of wedlock. It wasn't until 2004 that the divorce law finally passed, making Chile the last western nation to legalize matrimonial dissolution.

The strong influence in public life of the profoundly conservative Chilean Catholic Church, made the asymmetry possible. Though 80 percent of Chileans call themselves Catholics, they generally do not follow the dictates of the ecclesiastic hierarchy in matters of private life.

Masculine Expressions of Power

The dictatorship, which began with the overthrow of President Salvador Allende in 1973, was not only a huge political setback in a country that had been on an exemplary democratic course. It was also a cultural and social regression in private life. Women lost the ground they had gained over the previous decade. Instead of recommending contraception at public clinics, for example, poor women were told to "have all the children God gave them."

The elite still have a taste for masculine expressions of power. But these aspirations collide with reality, and these men—the patriarchs—ramble about in disagreement and puzzlement.

The economic crisis of the early 1980s forced hundreds of thousands of housewives to get jobs, which inevitably brought them a level of empowerment that had not existed until then. Women's steadily increasing economic autonomy was key to their adopting a role similar to that of men.

Today, after decades of struggle in the home and on the streets, women have advanced substantially. Nobody today would dare to portray Mrs. Pinochet as a symbol of Chilean womanhood. Now she represents a pretentious way of being prevailing in a country crippled by antiquated values inherited from an invented past. The icon of today is Bachelet, a medical doctor, from the middle class, who lives simply as head of a household without a husband, and who built her life through her own effort.

Nonetheless, the majority of the powers-that-be continue to question her leadership style, which is inclusive »

Love Under the Dictator

A mural made from a prisoner's unraveled sweater. Jewelry for a girlfriend or daughter made from dried bread and avocado pits. This inventiveness allowed political prisoners jailed under Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet to make gifts for loved ones. Later, the Cooperative Committee for Peace in Chile supplied materials to the prisoners and found markets for their crafts. Today, Fundación Solidaridad helps the poor and indigenous create and distribute handicrafts. *www.fundacionsolidaridad.cl*

FUNDACION SOLIDARIDAD

» rather than authoritarian. She creates broad commissions to write bills concerning such issues as pensions and secondary education. While the political class is resistant to this cultural change, the general public continues to award her approval ratings above 50 percent. This is especially remarkable given the bad press and setbacks that resulted from policies of the previous government of President Lagos.

This shows that what Pía Rajevic described in her book seven years ago remains unresolved: the elite still have a taste for masculine expressions of power. But these aspirations collide with reality, and the men—the patriarchs—ramble about in disagreement and puzzlement.

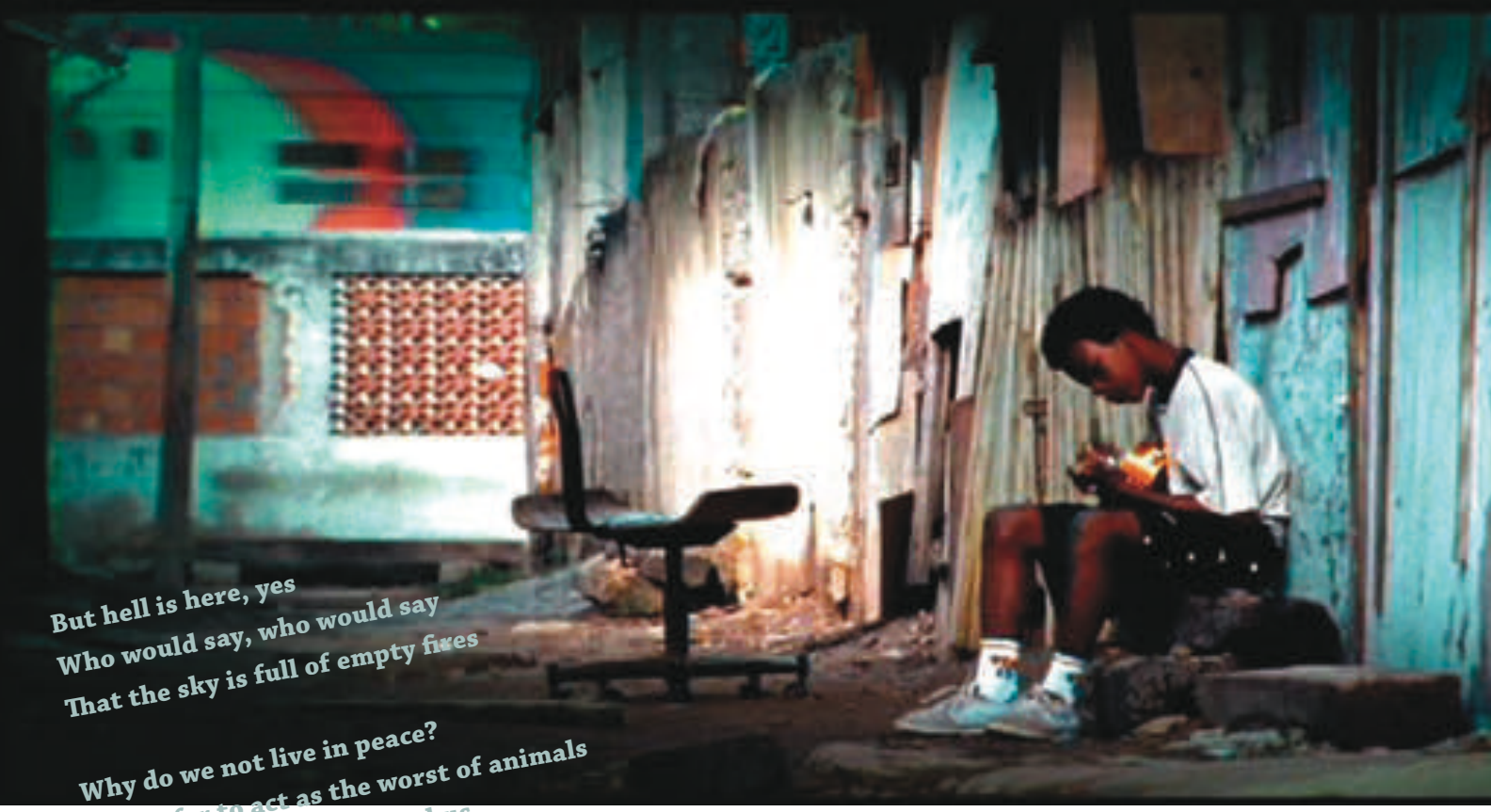
Gender Balanced

Without doubt, the power of the Catholic Church has receded, allowing changes in the private lives of Chileans that are unlikely to be reversed. However, women still do 95 percent of the housework; they represent only 35 percent of the labor market (below the Latin American average); only 20 percent of company executives are women; and the average income for women is 30 percent lower than that of men.

When Bachelet took office, she kept her campaign promise and appointed a gender-balanced cabinet. This provoked protests in her own coalition as it left out some important male leaders. But it also showed that exerting power is not only for the experts, but is something more commonplace and civic, therefore more maternal than paternal.

But power is still power—in itself conservative—and it's too soon to predict the effects of a woman president on Chilean society. In the private realm, the feminization of Chile is obvious, but it remains to be seen how far it will turn into a public virtue.

Marcelo Mendoza is a Chilean journalist, sociologist, and writer. He co-authored, together with Fernando Villagrán, the book *La Muerte de Pinochet* (*The Death of Pinochet*, 2003). Translation by Lilja Otto.



But hell is here, yes
Who would say, who would say
That the sky is full of empty fires

Why do we not live in peace?
We prefer to act as the worst of animals
But even animals are not thus

It is enough that I rebel
Resistance, I see,
Is made by few
But this number will grow
Free we will be, believe it, bet on it

Culture is the main instrument
Of strong change
This is our hope

Lyrics translated from Portuguese

Listen to "Iguais Sobrepondo Iguais" by AfroReggae. **www.yesmagazine.org/favela**

AfroReggae Raises Fists in Song

The documentary "Favela Rising" tells us that while 467 kids were killed from 1987 to 2001 in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the number in Rio de Janeiro for the same period was 3,937. It was amid this violence that Anderson Sá, one boy from the *favelas*—Brazil's slums—decided to fight for peace. He found his most powerful weapons in the high-energy music of AfroReggae and in his community's furious pride.

As frontman for the band AfroReggae, "a group of destroyed people infected by idealism," Sá was determined to offer an inpirational alternative to the drug culture of the favelas. Through local concerts and classes in dance, drumming, spoken word, and music, Sá and a growing movement began to "change our reality."

Favela Rising, documentary, 2005, 80 min. Directed by Jeff Zimbalist. Filmed in Brazil. Portuguese with English subtitles. *www.favelarising.com*. Available to borrow for free from www.*thefilmconnection.org*, a national public film library.

HORIZONTALIDAD

Argentina's People Build a Society Where Everyone Leads

Marina Sitrin

The autonomous social movements in Argentina are part of a global phenomenon. From Latin America to South Africa to Eastern Europe and even in the United States and Canada, people are creating the future in the present. These new movements are built on direct democracy and consensus, and they make space for all to be leaders.

Within Argentina, they are also a "movement of movements." They are working class people taking over factories and running them collectively. They are the urban middle class, or those who have recently lost that status, working to meet their needs in solidarity with those around them. They are the unemployed, like so many unemployed around the globe, facing the prospect of never finding regular work, yet collectively finding ways to survive and become self-sufficient, using mutual aid and love. They are autonomous indigenous communities struggling to liberate stolen land.

Horizontalidad is the word that has come to embody these new social arrangements and principles of organization in Argentina. Horizontalidad implies democratic communication on a level plane and involves—or at least strives towards—non-hierarchical and anti-authoritarian creation rather than reaction. It is a break with vertical ways of organizing and relating.

The social movements in Argentina describe themselves as autonomous to distinguish themselves from the state and other hierarchical institutions. Autonomy also describes a politics of self-organization called *autogestion*, and direct, democratic participation.

Simply put, they reject the very idea of anyone having power over someone else. Instead, they work toward the goal of creating "power with" one another. They organize themselves in every aspect of their lives, both independently and in solidarity with others. It is a process of continuous creation, constant growth and the development of new relations, with ideas flowing from these changing practices.

Unemployed Workers Movement

Argentina has a long, rich history of rebellion, resistance, and self-organization. The recent movements developed in two cumulative waves that spread the new organizational concepts broadly in Argentina. The first, a movement of unemployed workers that emerged in the 1990s, adopted consensus decision-making early, but had little support from the Argentine middle class. The collapse of the Argentine economy in 2001 sparked a second wave of popular rebellion, during which the Argentine middle class, rapidly losing its status, linked up with unemployed and underemployed workers. Horizontalidad thus took hold across class lines.

The emerging rejection of old political ways gained public notice in the 1990s, when unemployed workers' movements and other popular movements began organizing against local governments and corporations. Generally led by unemployed women workers, they took to the streets by the thousands, blocking major transportation arteries to demand unemployment subsidies from the government. In a decisive break with the past, this organizing was not led or brokered by elected leaders, or by any leaders at all. Instead, those in the streets decided day-by-day and moment-to-moment what to do next.

During the road blockades, people used direct forms of decision-making, and began creating new social relationships. Both the people and the movement are referred to informally as *piqueteros*, a name taken from "piquete," the tactic of blockading roads. Distinct from previous forms of organizing, where there was always a person speaking for the group (most often without consent), in these early piquetes, people decided they would negotiate at the blockade itself. There are some cases of government officials being helicoptered onto the road to negotiate directly with the assembly at the blockade.

Rebellions and Assemblies

The definitive moment for the second wave of change occurred in the popular rebellion of the 19th and 20th of December of 2001, often referred to as the "nineteenth and twentieth." Millions spontaneously took to the streets across Argentina and, without leaders or hierarchies, forced the government to resign, and then, through continuous mobilizations, proceeded to expel four more governments in less than two weeks. The precipitating incident was the government's freezing of people's bank accounts.

These protesters were not demanding something new, but were creating it. »

(CC) ORIANA ELIÇABE, WWW.ORIANAELICABE.TK

After the Argentine economy collapsed in 2001, the workers of the closed Zanon ceramic tile factory in the province of Neuquén, Patagonia, organized themselves and restarted the factory. What was once a business of 262 workers, today has more than 400. And no bosses. The self-managed workforce renamed the factory FaSinPat, which stands for Fábrica Sin Patrones, or "Factory Without Bosses," and it remains one of the most prominent in the recovered factory movement of Argentina. From the start, the factory has nurtured its relationship with the surrounding community. In 2005, FaSinPat voted to build a community health clinic. The community had been demanding such a clinic from the provincial government for two decades; FaSinPat built it in three months.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

ESTEBAN MAGNANI
Author,* El Cambio Silencioso (The Silent Change), *Prometeo, 2003

The recovered factories have built networks within the community. At first it was probably more a matter of survival—bringing more people into the factory made it harder for the police to evict them. But it's proven to be more than that, because it adds a lot to the life of the factory to have a cultural center or a kindergarten or adult school. When people really understand what's going on in the factory they're willing to help in other ways so the factory can grow and develop, and it's good for the whole community. So that's what cooperation is all about. You being better is going to make my life better. That's really powerful, I think.

Excerpt courtesy Melissa Young and Mark Dworkin, from their forthcoming documentary, "Argentina—Turning Around." Their website is www.movingimages.org.

» These days, many refer to this moment as a rupture with the past, a break from the deeply instilled fear and silence that was a legacy of the most brutal dictatorship in Argentine history, one that "disappeared" 30,000 people, often torturing them in the most horrific ways.

The popular rebellion of 2001 was comprised of workers and unemployed, the middle class, and those who had recently lost their middle-class status. It was a rebellion without leadership, either by established parties or by a newly emerged elite, a fact which formed part of the foundation of horizontalidad and other new organizing forms. It precipitated the birth of hundreds of neighborhood assemblies involving many tens of thousands of active participants.

People in neighborhood assemblies first met to try to discover new ways to support one another and meet their basic needs. Many explain the organization of the first assemblies as an encounter, as finding one another. People were in the streets, they began talking to one another, they saw the need to gather, and they did so, street corner by street corner, park by park. In many cases someone would write on a wall or street, "neighbors, let's meet Tuesday at 9 p.m." and an assembly was begun.

New Groups Replace Assemblies

The years after the rebellion have witnessed a significant decrease in neighborhood assemblies. Many early members predicted an eventual decline in participation and even felt it would not be a significant loss. Something, they explained, had changed in them as people, in how they related to one another. These changes could not be undone, even if the structures of organization changed.

The remaining assemblies work on a variety of projects, helping facilitate barter networks, creating popular kitchens, planting organic gardens, and sometimes taking over buildings—including the highly symbolic takeover of abandoned banks, which they turn into community centers. These occupied spaces house many things, including kitchens, small print shops, and day care areas. They may offer after-school help for kids or free internet access and computer usage—one even has a small movie theater.

A number of new groups have emerged, including political prisoner support groups, anti-repression organizations, collectives of street artisans, and high-school student groups. All of these began with the basic consensus that they would organize based on horizontalidad and autonomy. Like earlier groups, these new formations absolutely reject political parties and hierarchical organization. The experience of the neighborhood assemblies continues as a living part of an overall continuity.

Relationships Among Movements

Just as the popular rebellion sparked the growth of neighborhood assemblies, it also inspired the unemployed workers movements. A network grew among those in various autonomous movements, a network that crossed class lines and class identification.

Before the 2001 rebellion, the middle class considered the piqueteros' use of road blockades an annoyance, at best. There was a general consensus that the unemployed were to blame for their own economic and social condition, and that drastic methods were justified in suppressing them. After the rebellion, joint actions with middle class groups were organized, including bridge and road blockades. The same middle class people who had hated the piqueteros for disrupting daily life were now supporting blockades as a necessary action for re-establishing economic viability. At the same time, many piqueteros, who in the past had seen the middle class as partly responsible for the dire economic situation, were now organizing side by side with them.

Recuperated Workplaces

The dozen or so occupied factories that existed at the start of the 2001 rebellion grew in only two years to include hundreds of workplaces, taken over and run by workers, without bosses or hierarchy. Almost every

workplace sees itself as an integral part of the community, and the community sees the workplace in the same way. As the workers of Zanon, a ceramic factory say, "Zanon is of the people."

Workplaces range from printing presses and metal shops to medical clinics, from cookie, shoe, and balloon factories to a four-star hotel and a daily newspaper. Participants in the recuperated workplaces say that what they are doing is not very complicated, despite the challenges, quoting the slogan: "Occupy, Resist, and Produce." Autogestion is how most in the recuperated movements describe what they are creating and how.

This movement continues to grow and gather support throughout Argentina, despite threats of eviction. So far, each threat has been met with mobilization by neighbors and various collectives and assemblies to thwart the government's efforts. In the example of Chilavert, a printing press, the retirement home across the street came out and not only defended the factory from the police, but insisted on being the front line of defense. The recuperations are hugely popular, and many outside the movements explain them quite simply, saying that there is a lack of work and these people want to work.

Over time, recuperated workplaces have begun to link with one another, creating barter relationships for their products, and collective links to the global workplace. For example, a medical clinic will service members of a printing factory in exchange for the free printing of their material. This has happened on a global level, as well.

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The Zanon ceramic factory was renamed FaSinPat—Factory Without Bosses.

New Movements Internationally

While movements of such rapid growth, diversity, and popularity are not unprecedented, the most significant innovation in Argentina may be that disparate groups are creating global networks of exchange and communication. Argentine movements have made significant connections to the MST (Landless Workers' Movement) in Brazil, with each sharing experiences and strategies for land take-overs, forms of traditional medicine, and tools for democratic practice.

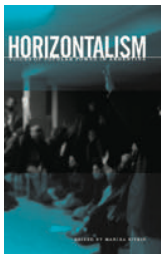
The Zapatistas have also consistently engaged in exchanges. Since the 2001 rebellion, a number of people from unemployed workers movements have been invited by the Zapatistas to spend time in the autonomous communities in Chiapas, exchanging ideas and experiences. Despite limited resources, dialogue between various movements has been long and varied.

During the past three years in Buenos Aires, autonomous movements have held an annual gathering called *Enero Autonomo* (Autonomous January). Groups came from all over Latin America, including Mujeres Creando from Bolivia, and autonomous groups from Brazil. Participants also included various collectives and community-based organizations from Europe and the United States. This linking process has gained momentum over the past few years, and all signs indicate that this growth is accelerating.

Horizontalidad and direct democracy are important models for building a new society, one basis for which is the creation of loving and trusting spaces. From this space of trust and love, using the tools of horizontalidad, a new person—who is a protagonist in her or his own life—begins to take shape. This is not random, it is a conscious process of social creation. Women, in particular, have created new roles for themselves. Based on this new individual protagonist, a new collective protagonism appears, which changes the sense of the individual, and then the sense of the collective. From this relationship arises the need for new ways of speaking, a new language.

Ideas and relationships cannot occur in a vacuum. They take place in real places, in "territories" that are liberated from hierarchical structures, and involve real people. These territories are laboratories of social creation. The new movements in Argentina are examples of these laboratories.

Marina Sitrin is a writer, teacher, student, dreamer, and self-described militant, who has participated in numerous anti-capitalist and visionary movements and groups. She is working on a new book, *Insurgent Democracies: Latin America's New Powers* (Citylights Press, 2007).



This article is based on the Introduction to Horizontalism: Voices of Popular Power in Argentina *(AK Press, 2006), a collection of first-person narratives of the people who lived through, and created, the events recounted here.*

Horizontalism *was published first in Spanish by Chilavert, a recuperated print house in Argentina.*

Uyuni Salt Flats at the southwestern portion of the altiplano. Bolivian campesinos harvest the salt by hand.

5 Ways NOT to Travel Like a Tourist

RORY O'BRYEN
WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/RORYOBRYEN

Lisa Gale Garrigues

So you're sitting in your armchair reading about all the interesting things happening in Latin America and would like to go. Now what?

1. DO YOUR HOMEWORK

First, you'll want to know about the practical stuff, like the new Bolivian visa and throwing your toilet paper in the wastebasket and not in the toilet. In addition, as a socially conscious gringo, you don't want to come off as a cultural imperialist.

As part of the privileged minority who can actually afford to travel to distant places, it's sometimes difficult to see the assumptions we carry around with us. These assumptions cause us to unwittingly make mistakes, like talking to a person who can't afford to leave their home town about all the places we've traveled, expecting Latin America to run on "gringo time," expecting others to speak English, or becoming unduly upset at the "double pricing" system for foreigners and locals.

The more you can learn about the practical and cultural aspects of Latin America before you go, the better.

2. LEARN THE LANGUAGE

Learning Spanish will make a world of difference in your experience of Latin America as well as Latin Americans' experience of you. If you are planning on studying Spanish in Latin America, try to find a school that pays its teachers a fair wage. Some, unfortunately, do not—your dollars go into the pockets of owners and administrators.

3. WORK

Your chances of finding work in Latin America are enhanced if you are bilingual and skilled in business, technology, international relations, development, tourism, or media. ESL teachers are also in high demand. Although there are people in both hemispheres who believe teaching English in Latin America encourages cultural imperialism, many Latin Americans feel learning English is a practical way to develop new cultural and economic options.

4. VOLUNTEER

There are two ways to volunteer in Latin America. One is to sign up with a volunteer organization, which will often charge you a placement fee. The second way is to go directly to an organization that interests you and volunteer your skills. Skills most in demand are ESL teachers, doctors, nurses and other healing professionals, as well as outreach people who can help small businesses and organizations obtain funding or contacts in the United States. Other skills that have been put to good use are environmental and agricultural expertise, technical skills, and video and arts teaching.

5. STAY IN SOMEONE'S HOME

Whether you are just passing through, volunteering for a few weeks, or living abroad for work, there is no better way to really experience and understand a foreign country than to stay in someone's home. You—and your host—learn about each other's daily customs and have more informal time to exchange thoughts and ideas. You also bring your dollars directly to the community.

Lisa Gale Garrigues is a contributing editor for *YES!* She has lived and traveled extensively in Latin America and occasionally writes about her travels at *lisagarrigues.blogspot.com*.

Going There?

Need help with your travel homework? Looking for work, study, or volunteer opportunities in Latin America? Want to try a homestay? We have answers.

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In Venezuela, a Cooperative Mood

Michael Fox

When Estrella Ramirez's 14-year-old son signed her up to participate in the government's free literacy program, Mission Robinson, she reluctantly agreed. Ramirez, who lives in the poor western Caracas neighborhood of Catia, lost her right arm in 1991 from an arterial thrombosis. Six years later, her husband left her, leaving her to raise her young children alone. She looked for work but couldn't find a job. "I lived locked in my house with my children, and I maintained my children sometimes selling coffee at the hospital, making lunches," she says.

MICHAEL FOX

Estrella Ramirez learned to read, and then to run a business with the help of Venezuela's new literacy and job training "missions." She and some of her co-workers started Manos Amigas, a co-op that makes uniforms.

Three months after Ramirez started the literacy program, her teacher enrolled her in the government's new cooperative job-training program, Vuelvan Caras (About Face).

"I thought they wouldn't accept me or put up with me," Ramirez says. "There's discrimination. You're treated as if you are useless, a cripple."

Ramirez began the year-long Vuelvan Caras industrial sewing course in spring 2004 with a group of other unemployed women from her community. Some, like Ramirez, were also offered scholarships so they could study and still care for their children.

Three years later, Ramirez is a co-founder and associate of the textile cooperative, Manos Amigas (Friendly Hands). She is also, according to former cooperative president, Maria Ortiz, "one of the hardest workers" of the 15-person outfit.

Ramirez formed Manos Amigas with her fellow Vuelvan Caras graduates shortly after finishing the program. They received an $80,000 zero-interest loan from the Venezuelan National Institute for Small and Medium Industry to buy 20 sewing machines and purchase their first materials. The government provided a prime location—free of charge—from which to run their cooperative, in a rundown building in downtown Caracas. They invested part of their loan in fixing up their space on the fourth floor.

At Manos Amigas, members voted to work eight hours a day, five days a week, and to pay themselves minimum wage, or around $200 a month. They also receive a bonus at the end of the year, depending on the cooperative's yearly profits. As is the norm under the 2001 Venezuelan Cooperative Law, a president, secretary, and treasurer are elected yearly. The co-op holds a general assembly once a month, and decisions are made by consensus or by majority. "No one is boss, everyone is part of the team," said one member.

Manos Amigas is just one of the 8,000 cooperatives, or worker-collectives, formed by the nearly 300,000 graduates of the Vuelvan Caras cooperative job-training program since it began in 2004. It is also just one of the 181,000 cooperatives officially registered in Venezuela as of the end of last year—an astonishing figure that puts the South American nation at the top of the list of countries in the world with the most cooperatives.

»

» Over 99 percent of Venezuela's cooperatives have registered since President Hugo Chávez Frias took office in 1999. The cooperative boom is key to the shift by the Venezuelan government towards an economy based on the inclusion of traditionally excluded sectors of society and the promotion of alternative business models as part of its drive towards what Chávez calls "socialism of the 21st century."

Seeds of Venezuela's Co-op Boom

At the time that President Chávez was elected in 1998, poverty had been on a slow but constant rise since the middle half of the century. The consolidation of lands into a few hands had displaced farmers who migrated in large numbers to the cities in search of work. As a result, Venezuela became the most urbanized country in Latin America; its capital, Caracas, is surrounded by poor barrios that house almost half of its population of nearly 5 million in substandard conditions. The implantation of neoliberal policies during the 1990s only aggravated the situation by privatizing state-owned businesses, and cutting subsidies and social spending. Inflation skyrocketed and zeros piled on to the end of the national currency, the Bolivar.

Venezuela's poor were left with few options in a society that former vice-minister of popular economy (MINEP) Juan Carlos Loyo, described last year as "profoundly individualistic ... profoundly unequal, and discriminatory."

In 1998, however, things began to change. Chávez was elected president with the promise to rewrite the Constitution. As he built on the vision of South America's liberator, Simón Bolívar, his popularity grew among the poor. His "Bolivarian Revolution," Loyo says, includes building an economic system "based on solidarity and not exploitation."

Chávez decreed the Special Law of Cooperative Associations in 2001, which made it easier to form cooperatives, and, in the words of former Cooperative Superintendent (SUNACOOP) Carlos Molina, "transformed cooperatives into a fundamental tool of social inclusion."

Why cooperativism? "Because cooperativism goes further than purely economic activity, and is based on productive relations which are collective, in solidarity, and above all else inclusive," says Molina.

The Venezuelan government began promoting the creation of co-ops by prioritizing them for government contracts, offering grants and loans with little or no interest, and eliminating income tax requirements for co-ops. Cooperative numbers immediately began to grow.

Venezuela kicked off Vuelvan Caras in spring 2004 as it began to reinvest its oil wealth in educational, social, and health "missions" in an attempt to incorporate Venezuela's marginalized poor back into society.

The same year, the Venezuelan government began to promote what it called "Endogenous Development" (economic development from within), directly in contrast to the neoliberal model imposed during the 1990s, which promoted privatization and corporate ownership.

Endogenous Development puts the development of the community in the hands of the residents and builds on the local resources and capacities for the benefit of the region and its inhabitants. The model is based in 130 Nuclei of Endogenous Development (NUDEs) located across the country as centers of local development.

At the pilot Venezuelan NUDE in western Caracas, Fabricio Ojeda, more than 40 worker-collectives intermingle with the government health mission, Barrio Adentro, and the low-priced government-sponsored food store, Mercal.

Unfortunately, the reality of the cooperative boom is not without its problems. According to last fall's first Venezuelan Cooperative Census, less than 40 percent of the cooperatives registered at the time were actually functioning.

Many of the discrepancies come from businesses that registered and either never got off the ground or failed to comply with the cooperative law. In rare cases, so-called "ghost cooperatives" registered and received loans from the government before disappearing with the cash.

Venezuelan cooperative totals are growing at hundreds per week, and former SUNACOOP director Molina verified last year that they have no hope of being able to audit them all.

Manos Amigas has not been spared its share of difficulties. Only half of the nearly 30 founders remain. The greatest challenge is individualism, say numerous cooperative members. It's difficult to change overnight. But improvements are being made, and Venezuela's cooperatives have a long history to learn from, even if the new co-ops don't necessarily recognize it.

SARAH VAN GELDER PHOTOS

At Fabricio Ojeda in Caracas, (from left) the Mercal sells cut-priced groceries. Co-op worker-owners make shoes. Workers at a T-shirt co-op decided to work six-hour shifts to make time for family and education. Political and religious expressions line the walls.

Co-ops that Pre-Date Chávez

In the foothills of the Andes, in Lara's state capital, Barquisimeto, is one of Venezuela's oldest, largest, and most important cooperatives.

CECOSESOLA started as a funeral co-op in the late 1960s and now has over 300 associated workers, 20,000 associated members, and is composed of over 80 cooperatives (savings, agricultural, production, civil associations, organizations, and a puppet crew).

Each week they sell groceries and 400 tons of fresh fruits and vegetables from affiliated co-op producers at their low-priced markets to more than 55,000 families, many of them from the poorest communities in the city. CECOSESOLA reports weekly sales of about $800,000, which works out to approximately $40 million annually, but that's just for starters. CECOSESOLA still provides funeral services and also offers banking services, a home-appliance consignment program, a network of affordable health clinics, and they are in the process of building their own hospital.

For those who cannot get to the markets, CECOSESOLA loads up buses with vegetables and fruits and takes them to the barrios. When a neighborhood begins clamoring for its own local market, CECOSESOLA helps set it up. All is self-financed by the cooperatives without help from government or charities.

Unlike the Chávez government cooperatives, CECOSESOLA has no elected officers or management team. Decisions are made by consensus in meetings that take up a major portion of the work week. Associates rotate through different jobs, and each is expected to take full responsibility—in front of their work mates when necessary—for the choices they make.

"The goal is transformation," says long-time CECOSESOLA organizer, Gustavo Salas Romer, "The economy is secondary."

Establishing CECOSESOLA was not easy. During the 1970s, co-op members were labeled subversives, the cooperative was infiltrated by agents from the Venezuelan secret service, and their transportation bus co-op was shut down and looted by the local government for offering services so reasonable that private bus companies couldn't compete. The struggle drove the co-op into a decade and a half of bankruptcy, from which many members thought they could not escape.

But they did, and when Chávez was elected, members of CECOSESOLA along with dozens of Venezuela's nearly 800 cooperatives began to push hard to get co-op norms established in the new Constitution.

At the same time, CECOSESOLA maintained its autonomy. "We are a-political and a-religious," says Salas Romer. "We have been called a lot of things, but we stay with our own process. That is our strength. If we were to get caught up in politics and religion, it would create divisions and we would fall apart."

Cooperative Realities

Back at Manos Amigas in mid-March, the members were hard at work producing uniforms for their first contract with the Venezuelan Armed Forces. A poster of Chávez watches over their tiny one-room factory, which is filled with the hum of sewing machines and the chatter of voices. In contrast to most factories in Latin America, the atmosphere is relaxed. Although Manos Amigas receives many of their contracts through the Venezuelan state for the production of uniforms, they themselves wear none. There is no punch-card. When someone is suspected of abusing the system, the matter is »

» taken up in a general assembly before all Manos Amigas members.

Meanwhile, many Manos Amigas members continue to study in the government education missions, Ribas and Sucre. Such study is encouraged by the cooperative. Other textile cooperatives have voted to work less, to allow more time for continued study and time with families. Larger co-ops have set up day-care centers to care for the children of the cooperative workers.

"It's a huge success," says Angel Ortiz, the only male member of Manos Amigas. "We were workers for others, we were employees, but today we are business people, and we are not only producing for the state, but for our community."

Manos Amigas members say they are economically viable. The government, they say, pays them four to eight times more for their merchandise than they would receive as individual workers in a private company. Plus, since they cut out the corporate overhead, they can sell the product at less than half the price charged by private businesses.

With billions of dollars invested over the last three years in the training and support of the Vuelvan Caras cooperatives alone, and with the first Vuelvan Caras cooperatives only now beginning to pay off their loans, it is difficult to say what the future holds. Nevertheless, Venezuela is banking heavily on these democratic businesses, which already account for 6 percent of Venezuela's workforce. There is no doubt that the cooperatives are changing the lives of hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans, who, only a few years ago, didn't believe they could find a job—not to mention run their own business.

Estrella Ramirez would surely agree, as would her partners at Manos Amigas who have an economic future in a world which, until recently, shut them out.

Michael Fox is a freelance journalist based in South America. In 2006, he was a staff writer with Venezuelanalysis (www.venezuelanalysis.com) and a correspondent with Free Speech Radio News.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

PEDRO GARCIA POLILLA
Co-founder, La Aliancia Co-op near Barquisimeto, Venezuela

In this globalized world, some say they are happy because they have money in the bank. But that's why the world is in so much trouble. The forests turn into money in the banks, but that doesn't produce oxygen!

We are indigenous people, *campesinos* with dirt under our fingernails. We once worked for a landlord, but when we got the soil productive, he would take it away.

So we got together and asked the landlord if we could buy the land. He laughed and said, "What? Peasants buy my land? Sure! I'll sell it." We got a loan from some nuns in Caracas and bought the land. Over time, we paid back the loan and bought more land. Today, we own 50 hectares.

In the cooperative, everything is shared. The property is collectively owned, and money goes into a joint account. Sometimes our income reaches minimum wage and sometimes not. But there are things we can't count—happiness, tranquillity. And today our young people are starting on the cooperative path.

GAUDY GARCIA
Co-founder, Moncar Cooperative near Barquisimeto, Venezuela

In the past, we wanted to be like those in the United States. If we wanted something special, we went to Miami. A lot of our culture was lost—our knowledge of our history and our music. Some would even rather eat hamburgers than black beans and *empanadas*.

This is something Chávez is helping to change. Now, we are again fully identifying with our culture. And now, women are participating in literacy programs, and we are fighting for our emancipation. During the coup, it was women who gathered in front of the palace to demand our president back.

Cooperativism puts the human being at the center. The accumulation of goods is not important; what's important is that people have a house and a school for their children. Some people say in the co-op we work hard and we have nothing, but what we have is a sense of being human. We share, we take care of each other, we think everyone is important.

We know a cooperative society is possible, because we are living it.

Democracy or Dictatorship?

Michael Fox

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recently said, "I believe there is an assault on democracy in Venezuela and I believe that there are significant human rights issues." She did not, however, say what she meant by "democracy." We've selected essential characteristics of democracy and supplied key facts about them from the Chávez era. Is Secretary Rice correct? You be the judge.

PARTICIPATION

75% of registered voters participated in the December 2006 election. More than 15,000 Communal Councils formed in 2006 that give neighborhoods power to make local decisions. Massive community participation in government social missions.

FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

Eleven internationally observed national elections in last eight years. Government promotes voter registration. Independent National Electoral Council oversees elections. Standardized voting machines nationwide produce paper trail. Opposition claims of fraud exhaustively investigated. Constitution provides for recall of any elected official.

FREEDOM OF PRESS

Hundreds of new independent community media outlets. 2005 reform increased state control of airwaves. Media highly polarized. Private media strongly critical of Chávez, supported coup in 2002 and oil lockout in 2002-2003. Public media strongly supportive. Non-renewal of RCTV license widely criticized; decision is constitutional.

VARIED POLITICAL PARTIES

77 parties participated in December 2006 election. Chávez wants to consolidate support in one "United Socialist Party," says parties that don't join "can leave."

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, EXPRESSION, SPEECH

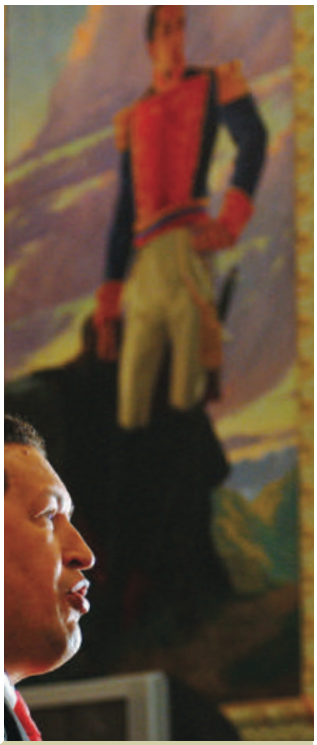
No extralegal retaliation by Chávez after 2002 coup. Political repression much decreased. Freedom to demonstrate highly respected. PROVEA, Venezuelan NGO, reports 4.5% of 1300 demonstrations in 2006 were "repressed, blocked, or obstructed," a 70% decrease from 1997–98.

PRIVATE PROPERTY

Constitutional requirement of payment for nationalization honored. Opposition fears of unpaid expropriation not borne out. 2001 Land Law calls for unused state land and large, unproductive *latifundio* holdings to be redistributed to *campesinos*. Government promises to compensate at market rate for land.

EQUALITY

Constitution covers gender, rights for the poor, campesinos, and indigenous, but omits race. Tremendous improvements for poor. Society still machista, individualist, and discriminatory. Treatment of non-Chávez supporters questionable: some government institutions do not employ people who supported 2004 Recall Referendum.



MATT PASCARELLA

Hugo Chávez elected president

CHECKS AND BALANCES

Five independent, autonomous branches of government. Grant of temporary "rule by decree" power criticized by opposition and U.S., but is constitutional; used by at least three other presidents. Chávez criticized for reform of Supreme Court; critics claim court stacking.

TRANSPARENCY

Chávez fairly transparent, but many government officials are not. Little progress curing government and police corruption inherited from past. One of highest crime rates in the world; no improvement under Chávez. Prison conditions still abusive.

CONSTITUTION

1999 Constitution written with massive popular participation; passed with 72% support in referendum. Protects human rights and democracy; promotes social justice. Chávez has explicitly followed the Constitution. Constitutional Reform can start in National Assembly or at request of 15% of registered voters.

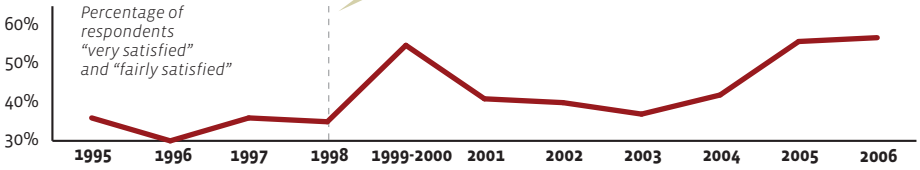
ECONOMIC HUMAN RIGHTS

Poverty and unemployment down, minimum wage and social spending up. Venezuela declared itself free of illiteracy in October 2005. Free universal education, including university. Free universal health care and drug rehabilitation. More than 180,000 cooperatives registered since 1998.

COMMUNITY AND WORKPLACE DEMOCRACY

Chávez requires communities to organize to receive government aid. Co-ops, community councils, and co-managed factories promoted with state incentives. Government encourages endogenous development based on democracy and collective production.

Who's Satisfied with Democracy in Venezuela?



Source: Latinobarometro 1995-2006

YES! MAGAZINE GRAPHIC 2007

Stories by
Eduardo Galeano

Wind

The morning Diego López turned four, joy was leaping in his breast, a flea jumping on a frog hopping on a kangaroo bouncing on a pogo stick, while the streets flew on the wind and wind battered the windows. Diego hugged his grandma Gloria and whispered a secret order in her ear: "We're going into the wind."

And he pulled her from the house.

JAMES RODRIGUEZ, WWW.MIMUNDO.ORG

Quechua woman, Ollantaytambo, Peru

Tik

In the summer of 1972, Carlos Lenkersdorf heard this word for the first time.

He had been invited to an assembly of Tzetzal Indians in the town of Bachajón, and he did not understand a thing. He was unfamiliar with the language, and to him the heated discussion sounded like crazy rain.

The word *tik* came through the downpour. Everyone said it, repeated it—*tik, tik, tik*— and its pitter-patter rose above the torrent of voices. It was an assembly in the key of *tik*.

Carlos had been around, and he knew that in all languages *I* is the word used most often. *Tik*, the word that shines at the heart of the sayings and doings of these Mayan communities, means "we."

Eduardo Galeano is an Uruguayan author and historian. The author himself denies that he is a historian: "I'm a writer obsessed with remembering, with remembering the past of America above all and above all that of Latin America, intimate land condemned to amnesia."

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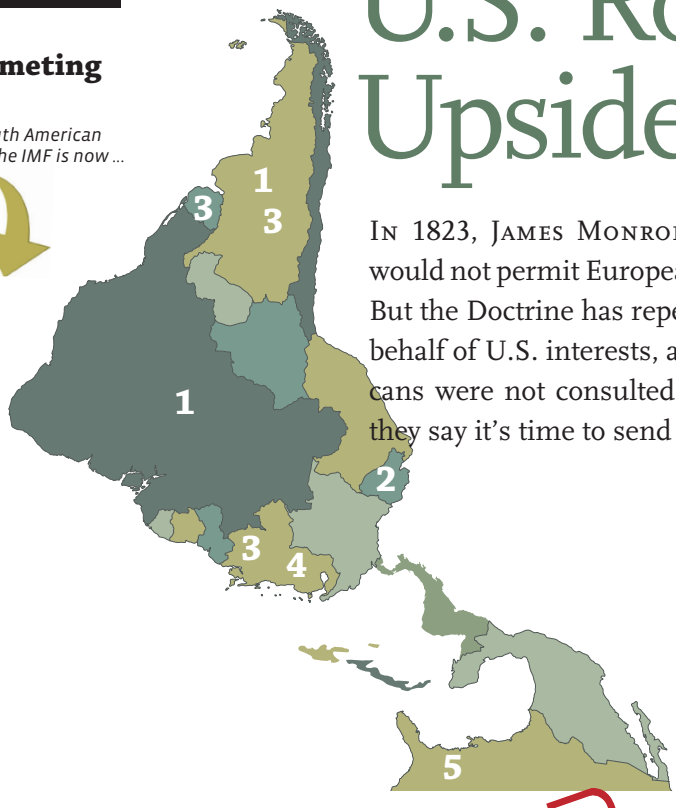
$42.9 billion in 2004

Plummeting Debt

Total South American debt to the IMF is now ...



$108 million

2004 2007

U.S. Role Turned Upside Down

In 1823, James Monroe told the world that the United States would not permit European colonization in the Western Hemisphere. But the Doctrine has repeatedly been a tool to justify intervention on behalf of U.S. interests, and rarely a tool for protection. Latin Americans were not consulted before the Doctrine was announced. Now they say it's time to send Monroe home.

1 IMF: PAID IN FULL

Sarah Anderson

For most Americans, the International Monetary Fund is just one of the hulking edifices in downtown Washington, D.C., filled mostly with men in dark suits. But for millions of people in the developing world, the IMF is painfully familiar.

For more than a quarter-century, this public financial institution has imposed policies on countries that have been disastrous for the poor and the environment. Governments have gone along with these harsh measures for fear of losing the IMF "stamp of approval" needed to get credit from other sources. Today, however, South America is leading a historic break from the IMF.

At the forefront is Argentina, a country that was once a star IMF patient. In the 1990s, the country took a full dose of the IMF's bitter medicine. Like medieval doctors, IMF economists prescribe the same "cure," no matter what the ailment. While seemingly more sophisticated than bloodletting, the success rate of IMF policy reforms has not been much greater.

Based on textbook "free market" theories, the IMF prescription includes public spending cuts, market liberalization, deregulation, and privatization. Countries that implemented these reforms in the past 20 years had slower economic growth rates than during previous periods. In Argentina, millions of citizens suffered reduced access to services and lost both jobs and health care coverage.

In 2001, the country suffered a total economic meltdown. With their jobs evaporated and their currency worth next to nothing, thousands of formerly middle-class Argentines had to resort to selling their possessions on the street and rummaging through garbage for food. When the IMF ordered more spending cuts, the country exploded in riots. Only after the government threatened to default on its loans did the IMF back down. And once Argentina rejected the IMF's medicine, it started a remarkable recovery.

That act of standing up to the IMF—and surviving—was empowering for other countries chafing at IMF control. Beginning in late 2005, Argentina and three other major IMF clients—Brazil, Uruguay and Ecuador—announced they would pay back their loans early and completely.

A reduced need for loans was one factor, but another was the emergence of the Venezuelan government as a major lender. Flush with oil money, Venezuela purchased bonds »

» from Argentina and Ecuador to help them repay their IMF debts. This year, Venezuela and Argentina took steps to create a formal Bank of the South as an alternative to the IMF and other institutions that require similar loan conditions. Ecuador, Paraguay, and Bolivia are also initial backers of the new bank.

Some other key clients have followed Latin America's lead. The IMF's total loan portfolio has shrunk by more than two-thirds over the past couple of years, and most of the remainder is loans to one country—Turkey. By 2010, the IMF is expected to face an operating deficit of almost $400 million as its income from interest on loans dries up.

Citizens in countries liberated from IMF control will have greater power to advocate for more equitable economic policies that reflect each country's particular needs. They can also enjoy the irony of the IMF itself faltering financially. We'll see if the dark-suited economists care to drink their own medicine.

Sarah Anderson directs the Global Economy Program at the Institute for Policy Studies.

2

Rafael Correa, president of Ecuador
Promising during his election campaign to close the U.S. airbase in Manta, Ecuador. Correa continues to pledge that the lease for Manta will not be renewed when it expires in 2009.

"We can negotiate with the U.S. about a base in Manta, and if they let us put a military base in Miami, if there is no problem, we'll accept."

3 SOA: School's Out

Jeremy Orhan Simer

As they grapple with the legacy of "dirty wars," Latin American countries are questioning their participation in the School of the Americas (SOA). This academy at Fort Benning, Georgia, now renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, is alma mater to many Latin American dictators and death squads.

The School of the Americas Watch (SOAW), which advocates closing the SOA, has sent delegates to meet with governments throughout Latin America. The delegations have included torture survivors Carlos Mauricio, from El Salvador, and Pablo Ruiz, from Chile, along with SOAW founder Fr. Roy Bourgeois. Lisa Sullivan Rodriguez, SOAW's Latin America coordinator, says, "We have visited 12 countries in the last year, and 11 have been receptive."

Venezuela, Argentina, and Uruguay have stopped sending troops to the SOA. Bolivia is phasing out its participation, and Chile is reconsidering its plans to send troops.

SOAW has visited five countries in 2007. In Panama, which expelled the SOA in 1984, a public outcry arose after SOAW informed the media that Panamanian police had recently attended the school. In El Salvador, human rights groups expressed concern that the new International Law Enforcement Academy may serve the same function as the SOA. After Colombian officials refused to meet with the SOAW, the delegates accompanied Puerto Matilde residents, refugees from paramilitary violence, to tell an army field officer about continued killings in Colombia.

SOAW also visited Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, and will continue its outreach this year in Mexico, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic.

Jeremy Orhan Simer is a writer, activist, and Spanish interpreter who lives in Seattle.

4 U.S. Funds Fronts

Eva Golinger

The U.S. government has a well-established history of intervening in Latin American politics. In recent years, gunboat diplomacy has given way to more sophisticated techniques.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez's Bolivarian Revolution is causing concern in Washington. In response, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) have to date funneled more than $50 million of U.S. taxpayers' money to anti-Chávez groups, some of which led the April 2002 coup against Chávez.

Documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act show that, in the months before the coup, the NED quadrupled funding to groups such as the labor federation Confederación de Trabajadores Venezolanos (CTV—

also associated with the AFL-CIO), CEDICE, Asamblea de Educación, Fedecámaras, Consorcio Justicia, and right-wing political parties including Primero Justicia, COPEI, Proyecto Venezuela, and Acción Democrática.

Many of these groups received training from NED-funded groups such as the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute to improve political platforms and communications strategies.

In one compelling case, Consorcio Justicia, which says it works on issues of justice in the country, planned a conference, using $80,000 of NED money, for April 8, 2002—just 3 days before the coup—to discuss developing a "transition plan" for a new government in Venezuela. The headline speaker at the conference was to be Pedro Carmona, who took over briefly during the coup as dictator. The conference never took place.

USAID has established an Office for Transition Initiatives in Caracas, funded with $10 million to "promote democracy and stability." The funds were provided to many of the same organizations involved in the coup, who also led the a 64-day shutdown of the oil industry from December 2002 to February 2003. A grant from USAID to an organization affiliated with the CTV and Fedecámaras, the two main groups directing the shutdown, was aimed at crafting TV commercials in support of the action.

More than 300 politically motivated organizations and programs in Venezuela now receive funding through the NED and USAID, despite Venezuela's laws prohibiting foreign government funding of political activities.

The investment has, so far, had no effect. The 2002 coup was put down by the people. Two years later, they defeated a referendum to recall Chávez, and in 2006 re-elected him by a substantial majority.

Eva Golinger is a Venezuelan-American lawyer living in Caracas and author of *The Chávez Code: Cracking US Intervention in Venezuela* (Olive Branch Press, 2006) and *Bush vs. Chávez: Washington's War in Venezuela* (Monte Avila Editores, 2006).

5 Forum Heads North

The World Social Forum started in Porto Alegre, Brazil, as an alternative to the World Economic Forum. The WSF emphasizes non-heirarchical, democratic organization. The WSF model has now moved north, to the Southeast Social Forum (*YES!* Issue 39) and to the US Social Forum, slated for June in Atlanta.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

ROSALINDA GUILLEN
Community to Community Development, Bellingham, WA

I think the best part of the Social Forum is that we all understand that getting along together, transforming our relationships, and finding solutions is forever evolving. I like the saying that's used by a lot of the Social Forum activists, "We make the road by walking." And the walking never stops and the path is forever going forward. I see it as critical right now in the current political environment for social justice movements to come together and look beyond our own regions, and look beyond our own specializations in the work that we're doing and begin to intersect our issues. To me, the exciting part of the US Social Forum is to begin to build that path, so to speak, so that we're all walking together instead of waving at each other from different paths along the regions. *www.foodjustice.org*

JEROME SCOTT
Project South, Atlanta, GA

The U.S. government is trying to drive a wedge between African Americans and the immigrant community, particularly the Latino community. We think it's really important that we unite, that we don't allow that wedge to be driven. And, you know part of our future plan is to build a black-brown alliance through the process of the US Social Forum and beyond. We think that a movement for social and economic justice in the United States is so necessary. We have got to build that movement up so that it's worthy of uniting with the movements that are developing across the globe. We look at the US Social Forum process as a major movement-building moment. And so that's why we're putting so much effort into it. *www.projectsouth.org*

NORTH AMERICA-BASED GROUPS

The Council on Hemispheric Affairs reports on the progress of democracy in Latin America and advocates for a "rational" U.S. policy in Latin America. Its well-researched archives are listed by country. *www.coha.org*

Global Exchange coordinates volunteer missions to regions all over the world, including Latin America, promoting the exposure of human rights violations and the development of just and sustainable practices. *www.globalexchange.org*

The International Relations Center advocates a "more responsible" U.S. stance in the world community. The IRC publishes e-zines, newsletters, and books examining progressive policy alternatives, with emphasis on the Americas. *www.americas.irc-online.org*

The Latin American Solidarity Coalition is an association of grassroots organizations specializing in the human rights movement of Latin America. The site offers an Organizer's Kit, with fact sheets, flyers, and more. *www.lasolidarity.org*

The Latin America Working Group is a coalition of over 60 U.S.-based groups that advocate for the improvement of U.S.-Latin American relations and the enforcement of human rights. *www.lawg.org*

The Pachamama Alliance supports the indigenous people of the Andes in preserving their rights to ancestral land and their ability to protect its biodiversity. The group also brings people from the North to the rainforest, and conducts "Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream" symposiums drawing on the teachings of their indigenous collaborators. *www.pachamama.org*

Pastors for Peace brings school-bus loads of food and medicine into Cuba, educates North Americans about Cuba and the trade embargo, and recruits U.S. young people to study medicine in Cuba. *www.ifconews.org*

The Resource Center of the Americas offers press releases about the struggle against globalization and other Latin American human rights movements, articles, a bookstore, and more. *www.americas.org*

School of the Americas Watch protests the School of the Americas, which trains military personnel and is often associated with human rights violations. *www.soaw.org*

The US Social Forum will be the first-ever national gathering in this country based on the model of the World Social Forum first held in Porto Alegre, Brazil. See who will be there and sign up to attend from June 27–July 1. *www.ussf2007.org*

LATIN AMERICA-BASED GROUPS

The Bolivia Solidarity Network supports Bolivia's human rights movements and offers resources and updates for international journalists and activists. *www.boliviasolidarity.org*

The Democracy Center, based in Cochabamba, Bolivia, is a source of real-time information and long-term analysis about current affairs in Bolivia. *www.democracyctr.org*

The Landless Workers' Movement (MST) is Brazil's largest social movement, having resettled thousands of people on unused land. Their website provides ways for you to get involved. *www.mstbrazil.org*

La Via Campesina, the "International Peasants' Movement," fights for food sovereignty, and socially just, sustainable agricultural production by coordinating peasant organizations of rural workers, women, and indigenous communities in Asia, the Americas, and Europe. *www.viacampesina.org*

No Bases tracks U.S. military bases in Latin America, works to get them shut down, and holds conferences and rallies to curtail U.S. military, political, and economic influence in Central and South America. *www.no-bases.org*

ONLINE JOURNALISM

CounterPunch is a good source of articles about Latin America. *www.counterpunch.org*

The Inter-Press Service's Latin America division offers news from the global South, including stories on the impact of globalization on the lives of Latin American people. Also publishes **Tierramérica,** a journal of Latin American environmental news. *www.ips.org*

Latin America Press offers articles sorted by country and by theme, and also commentaries, radio clips, and statistics. Available in English and Spanish. *www.latinamericapress.org*

Upside Down World covers the social movements and changing politics in Latin America. Links to each nation provide lists of articles and blogs. *www.upsidedownworld.org*

Venezuela Analysis has current news and analysis on a country where things are happening fast. Based in Caracas. *www.venezuelanalysis.com*

FILMS

Argentina: Hope in Hard Times shows the street-corner assemblies, workers' cooperatives, urban gardens, and other ways Argentines picked up the pieces of their devastated economy after the collapse in 2001. *www.movingimages.org*

The Take tells the story of 30 Argentine workers who take over an auto-parts factory when their boss abandons it, and the movement to reclaim factories that followed the economic collapse. *www.thetake.org*

The Revolution Will Not Be Televised tells of the attempt by opponents in the media, trade unions, the Church, and military to unseat Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez through a coup in 2002, and the popular uprising that restored him to power. *www.chavezthefilm.com*

Thirst follows the stories of people in Bolivia, India, and the United States who fight for access to water as a fundamental right, not a commodity. *www.thirstthemovie.org*

www.YesMagazine.org

/ resourceguide42 *More resources on the Americas*

/ discussion42 *Conversation starters and article summaries*

www. yesmagazine.org/ latinamericafilms
Get some popcorn and check out the documentaries and feature films at the online YES! Picks Latin America Film Festival. Many are available to borrow for free through www.thefilmconnection.org

SHOWING FEMA A THING OR TWO ABOUT REBUILDING COMMUNITIES, COMMON GROUND TAKES CHARGE

AND NO WAITING

NEAL SANTOS, WWW.NEALSANTOS.COM

A fence stuffed with gloves for volunteers. The water was still high when residents formed the guerrilla reconstruction corps, Common Ground Collective. Now volunteers from across the country show up to work in the crews.

Greg Palast

A full year after Hurricane Katrina, 73,000 New Orleans residents remained encamped in FEMA trailer parks, an aluminum gulag spread all the way to Texas. They were waiting for a chance to reconstruct their homes. They're still waiting. There's little or no insurance money, and no one is even allowed to rebuild, nearly two years after the flood, in some of the poorer areas like the Lower Ninth Ward.

But waiting on compensation from Washington, waiting for a hand-out, waiting for anyone to help save the city is simply not in the constitution of Malik Rahim. The water was still high when Rahim helped create a guerrilla reconstruction corps of local residents. They call themselves Common Ground. When you see progress in the poor sections of New Orleans, you're often seeing the group's work crews.

The organization started out distributing food and water to hurricane victims and running a free, volunteer-staffed medical clinic (See, *YES!* Issue 39). It was an insurgent action, neither financed nor sanctioned by state or federal government. Since then, they have organized thousands of volunteers to gut water-damaged homes, removing deadly mold, and in the process trained residents in construction skills.

When we were filming in New Orleans, I visited The Woodlands, where Common Ground was doing a gut rehab on 350 apartment units. The residents themselves did most of the work. With sweat equity and small-scratch donations, Common Ground built hurricane-proof homes, a health clinic, even a restaurant for employment of residents once construction was complete.

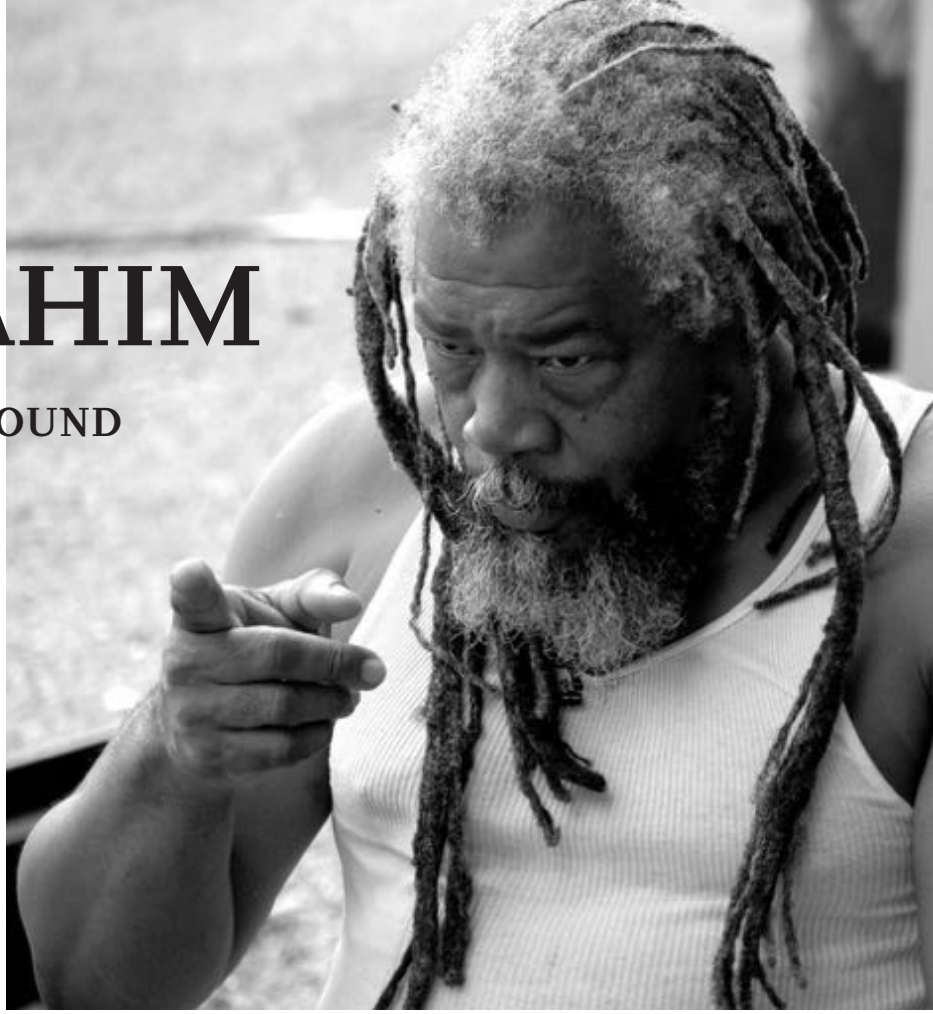
Then, a week before Christmas, the owners of The Woodlands, who'd agreed to sell the property, rendered nearly worthless by the hurricane, to Common Ground, sent every resident an eviction notice. Now that the place was spiffed-up and rebuilt, it was worth a fortune in the tight New Orleans market. In January, marshals removed every Woodlands family, including a paraplegic who'd been a resident for decades. Following a too-familiar pattern, there was no compensation.

But Rahim and crew are far from defeated. Their call for the residents to take control of their city and their future was not about real estate nor even compensation. It was about teaching self-respect, self-empowerment, and self-defense, the only weapons left to the moneyless in a class war in which one front is New Orleans and another the closing Chrysler plants in Michigan. The battle is now political, as Rahim takes Common Ground's case and story nationwide. For them, the insurgency has just begun.

Greg Palast is an investigative reporter for, among others, the BBC, and author of three books.

MALIK RAHIM

SPREADING COMMON GROUND



"I believe the first thing that we should be teaching is civic responsibility—why is it important to help your neighbors?"

An interview with Doug Pibel

Doug: It's been 18 months since the hurricanes hit New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. It seems that New Orleans has all but disappeared from the major media. What do people need to know about the current state of things in New Orleans?

Malik: That it's the tale of two cities. Where the majority are white, rich, and politically well-connected there is almost 90 percent recovery. The Saints are winning, Mardi Gras was a success, the Jazz Fest is coming forward, and the Essence Festival is coming back. But that's only one side of the city. There's another side, where only about 10 to 15 percent have recovered. In that part, it's still like the disaster happened last month.

Doug: What has the experience of Common Ground taught you about how communities can learn to act together?

Malik: I'm going to tell you, that's the reason why I continue on. Not only has it taught me what we can do, it has shown me the true greatness of this nation.

Yes we are a rich nation; yes we are one of the most powerful nations. But, the greatness of our nation is not in our government—it is in our people. I have seen the essence of that greatness in those who made sacrifices to come down to help us in our time of need.

Doug: What would the future New Orleans look like if it were rebuilt in the way you think it ought to be?

Malik: I think that we can show, not only people in New Orleans, Louisiana, or in America, but globally what happens when people of conscience come together, in spite of their government. If we can rebuild New Orleans in such a way that we break the dependency upon fossil fuels, if we look at alternative energy in our reconstruction and look at new methods, if we could move away from a levee system and start developing a storm protection system that no longer challenges nature, but works with nature. If we break the shackles of racism, and become a truly progressive city. If we could develop the schools and the education system, if we can work to develop health care for everyone. If we could do these things, we'd know that the sacrifice by all the thousands of volunteers from Common Ground and others wasn't in vain, and I believe that the rest of the world can look at us as a model.

One of the things that we try to project is that we can no longer be less than 10 percent of the world's population utilizing almost 30 percent of the world's resources and causing maybe 40 percent of the world's pollution. We can no longer just sit idly by and be this way. We have to change it, we have to find some sort of solution to global warming. We can be victorious in overcoming hatred, bigotry, racism, class-ism. We can make this city a jewel in America.

Doug: The motto of Common Ground is 'Solidarity not Charity.' Can you tell me what that means in practice?

Malik: In many cases people will come into a community to do good work, but then they go back to their own communities. To us that is offering charity. Solidarity is working with the community. Living with the community, going through the same hardships they are going through, working with them to develop the

MATT PASCARELLA

method for social and economic uplift. It is meeting the basic needs, and meeting them by not just offering a donation, but by truly rolling up your sleeves and working with them. So that's why we say solidarity not charity.

Doug: What's the essence of the Common Ground approach that is different from other relief organizations?

Malik: We don't get bogged down in bureaucracy. And we always keep emphasis upon grassroots organizing; that you can make a difference. I believe the first thing that we should be teaching is civic responsibility—why is it important to help your neighbors?

Doug: How have you dealt with issues of race and class between volunteers and residents?

Malik: We do an "undoing racism" workshop for our volunteers. We've been infiltrated by different hate groups that tell many of our white »

Who Drowned The Big Easy? What You Haven't Been Told

Greg Palast

DON'T blame the Lady. Katrina killed no one in New Orleans. In fact, Katrina missed the city completely, going wide to the east.

It wasn't the hurricane that drowned, suffocated, de-hydrated and starved 1,500 people to death in August 2005. The killing was done by a deadly duo: a failed emergency evacuation plan combined with busted levees.

Here's the story you haven't been told.

A year before Katrina, the Bush Administration did something quite unprecedented: took the planning for evacuating New Orleans away from government and gave it to a private contractor, Innovative Emergency Management (IEM). But there was a big problem with implementing the plan when Katrina hit: no one could find it.

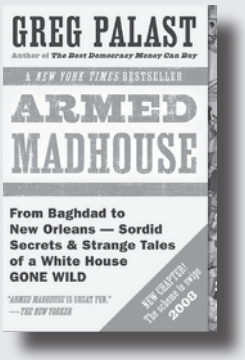
Something else was missing in their office: expertise. The company claimed their CEO, Madhu Beriwal, had "a lot of experience with evacuation." However, the company couldn't name a single city for which Beriwal had planned an evacuation before getting the lucrative FEMA contract.

But IEM and the Bush FEMA crew did draft a plan; and they had good reason for letting it float away. Basically, the expensive plan was, if a hurricane hits, get in your car and drive like hell.

Problem is, 127,000 New Orleans residents didn't have cars. And if the Bush contractors didn't know it, Ivor Van Heerden did. Dr. Van Heerden is Deputy Chief of the Louisiana State University Hurricane Center. Long before Katrina struck, his team developed a sophisticated computer model for evacuating the city which did not involve abandoning those without wheels.

Van Heerden complained, offered to give FEMA the LSU life-saving plans for gratis. He was told to back off, he said, by a state official, one who now works for IEM. Back off or there would be consequences.

Nevertheless, using his special post at LSU, Van Heerden took warnings right to the top, "to senior White House officials." He had a list of concerns. An Army Corps miscalculation had left the levees too short, by a mere 18 inches. That might not seem like much, but the LSU models showed raising the levees just a bit would have prevented their breeching in Katrina's tidal wake.



Palast's investigation of the White House's drowning of New Orleans is covered in the newly released edition of his bestseller, *ARMED MADHOUSE: From Baghdad to New Orleans—Sordid Secrets and Strange Tales of a White House Gone Wild*; with the new chapter, "Busted," the story of how Palast was charged by Homeland Security with violating anti-terror laws while filming the New Orleans story for "Democracy Now!" For video of the investigation, visit *www.GregPalast.com*.

» volunteers that they don't have a place in these communities. And by what we call progressive racists, who believe that, "Yeah we can come in and help, but we need to be in charge because we know what they need." We have been dealing with those people.

As for an incident—I'm superstitious so I knock on wood—we have yet to have one major incident. Volunteers come down to some of the most violent communities in New Orleans and we've never had an incident. Any rational person knows that the person is there to help them. Not only here to help, but to live with them and go through the hardships.

Doug: How did Common Ground start without government assistance?

Malik: Faith. Faith in the Most High and faith in the American people.

Doug: Did you see any risk in starting this kind of work without any official permission?

Malik: Well, I've been at risk all my adult life. I've spent the last 35 years in the struggle for peace and justice, so I've always been at risk. I've always challenged this government when I thought that what they were doing wasn't in the best interest. But that's the beauty of America. We do have the right of expression, whether it's pro-government or anti-government.

Doug: It seems that it would be easy to get discouraged. How do you keep going?

Malik: I'm a spiritual person. I see the spirituality in the work that I'm doing. And then, I've been blessed with the opportunity of meeting so many great people, so many young people. Right now, we had to turn down over 1,000 students who volunteered to come down and work. We just couldn't provide housing and support for all of them. They could have easily said "Well, I'm going to spend my spring break out at some beach just partying," but they made a conscious decision that they were going to come down and work to help rebuild this community. Sometime that's the thing that keeps me going even when I go home burnt out, sometimes so tired I can't even take off my clothes.

Then there's the fact that I have seven kids and 21 grandkids, and I don't want my grandchildren to ever say, "Why didn't you do something?" I believe we're the generation that's going to be known as the ones that saved life as we know it or the generation that squandered the opportunity and caused the loss of life as we know it. I'd rather be the former. So I continue on.

MATT PASCARELLA

Doug: You're on tour to raise awareness about New Orleans residents who are still living in other parts of the country. How many cities are they in?

Malik: Well I can't say how many cities, but I do know that we have displaced people in every state of the union, on the mainland.

But that's one part of what I'm doing. The second part is to establish different chapters of Common Ground. So that not only can we work with displaced people who are in these cities, but also teach people the lessons learned in emergency preparedness. As progressive people, we need to be prepared. We cannot wait on the federal government.

So say here in Seattle, if an earthquake would happen, you wouldn't have the four days' warning that we had with the hurricane. If that happened, how long would it take before FEMA could deliver the services that would impact this area? The hurricane only had an impact on a little over 2 million people. If we're talking about a major catastrophe on the West Coast, we're talking about something that may have an impact on tens of millions. So if our government responds slowly, at best, when FEMA is prepared, what would be the response to a sudden emergency?

We are telling communities to work with local officials on developing and revising their disaster plans. And we're telling individuals how to get together. The Red Cross does a tremendous job of helping families and individuals, but now we need to learn how to survive as cities, neighborhoods, and communities. We need to make people aware that you can't just be talking about three days, and then expect the federal government to come in and start offering those services. You should be prepared as a neighborhood, as a community, or as a city to provide service for at least two to three months.

Interested? For more on the Common Ground Collective, go to www.commongroundrelief.org.

FROM THE PUBLISHER

The climate of public opinion is shifting rapidly. That shift opens new possibilities for policy and action that previously would have been thought out of reach. This is a great time for ideas big enough to match the scale of the problems.

Step Up to More Than Climate Change

Sometimes positive change happens faster than you dare to imagine.

I recall in the early fall, 1999, our editors were sinking into despair. They were delving deep into the literature on global warming as they prepared the issue of *YES!* called "Changing the Climate." Their research indicated that the speed and consequences of climate change would be worse than any of us at *YES!* had realized.

The double-entendre issue title spoke to our intent to help change the climate of public opinion and show possibilities for reversing the threat. At the time there was no public agreement that climate change was even real, let alone serious enough to inconvenience our lives. Big oil and gas companies were promoting disinformation, politicians were leery of addressing the topic, the majority of churches were silent, and the mainstream media, if it covered the issue at all, fed public uncertainty with "even-handed" treatment of scientists and skeptics. It seemed almost hopeless to think the climate of opinion could change enough to meet the challenge.

Now, eight years later, the climate of opinion has changed markedly. There are still skeptics, but when *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *Vanity Fair* simultaneously feature global warming on their covers, as they did in April, you know we have moved beyond denial. Across the country, 453 mayors have signed on to plans to meet or beat the Kyoto targets for cutting greenhouse gases; some businesses are boasting about reducing their carbon emissions; Congress has a new Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming; and Newt Gingrich and John Kerry are debating not whether the issue is urgent, but whose solution will work faster. The field of what is possible has shifted.

The shift is no accident. It's the result of relentless activism by organized groups and concerned citizens, persistent scientific and scholarly work, and effective communication through the independent media. That combination shifted the story in the mainstream press, changed the climate of public opinion, and enabled politicians and businesses to embrace the issue. Now the challenge is to move fast enough and at a sufficient scale to prevent the impending damage—the new front for creative activism, honest research, and effective communication. A great example was the April 14 Step It Up Campaign, which drew citizens in more than 1,400 communities across the United States to demand Congress move to cut carbon emissions 80 percent by 2050. Independent media, including *YES!*, did a heroic job of communicating this campaign far and wide—hopefully helping to shift the ground of what is possible.

Global warming is not the only topic on which the public is moving beyond denial. The futility of the war in Iraq, the dangerous consequences of an attack on Iran, the broken U.S. health care system, and the excessive power of corporations are other areas in which the climate of public opinion is shifting rapidly. That shift opens new possibilities for policy and action that previously would have been thought out of reach. This is a great time for ideas big enough to match the scale of the problems.

As our editors gear up for the next issue of *YES!*, they are taking on another challenge that sits below the radar, just as climate change did eight years ago. It's the challenge of curtailing the enormous power of giant corporations. Hopeless cause? Maybe so. Yet polls show that 93 percent of the public feels that corporations have too much power. Consumer and shareholder pressure have been surprisingly effective at changing corporate behavior. And a growing number of communities have succeeded in restricting the rights of corporations in their locales. So there may indeed be prospects for a significant shift in the role of corporations in our society. If we step it up to combine courageous activism, solid research, and widespread communication, that shift may come faster than we dare imagine.

Fran

Fran Korten, Publisher

WHO WE ARE ::

YES! Magazine is published by the Positive Futures Network, an independent, nonprofit organization supporting people's active engagement in creating a just, sustainable, and compassionate world. The work of the Positive Futures Network is to give visibility and momentum to signs of an emerging society in which life, not money, is what counts; in which everyone matters; and in which vibrant, inclusive communities offer prosperity, security, and meaningful ways of life.

NEWS AND NOTES ::

YES! welcomes new Education Outreach Manager

In March we welcomed Kay Hubbard as the new manager of our *YES!* Education Connection program, which is now reaching over 8,000 teachers with inspiring stories from *YES!* Kay comes to us from a long career at the University of Washington, where she served as Director of International Programs. Kay is a true global citizen, having taught at universities in Korea, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Mexico. Kim Corrigan, who previously managed this program, is now our *YES!* Ambassador at Large—currently traveling in Latin America.

—Fran Korten

YES! Action Resource Center

Looking for the best ways to take action to build a just and sustainable world? Check out the new *YES!* Action Resource Center. It's an easy, one-stop infoshop for articles and links on local economies, sustainable food, human rights, clean elections, and dozens of other topics. Find the visionary thinking and practical how-tos you expect from *YES!* Plus, you can expand this resource. The Action Resource Center is built on "wiki" technology, so you can join other *YES!* readers and share favorite links and stories from your own networks of change. Browse, or jump in and contribute at *www.yesmagazine.org/arc*. —Susan Gleason

Your name in lights

Each issue, *YES!* publishes a cartoon with captions from our readers. To match wits with the best, look for the latest cartoon posted on our website. Worried about missing one? Sign up for our email newsletter and get first crack at fresh cartoons. To sign up, go to *www.yesmagazine.org/newsletters*.

—Doug Pibel

YES! — En Español

Do you have Spanish-speaking friends who would love the stories in *YES!*? Turn them on to "*YES!* En Español." Over 80 articles from recent issues are available at *www.yesmagazine.org/espanol*. Major Spanish-language news portals in Spain, Brazil, and Cuba are already reprinting our stories. To subscribe to our Spanish-language email newsletter, send your request to *spanish@yesmagazine.org*. You'll receive links to each new set of *YES!*-in-Spanish articles.

—Susan Gleason

Discussion Guides for _YES!_

Fired up about an issue of *YES!*? Want to discuss it with your family, students, congregation, or study circle? Let *YES!* Discussion Guides help you. You'll find summaries of each issue's theme and thoughtful questions to start the conversation. You can download and print these free guides from *www.yesmagazine.org/discussion*. If you want multiple copies of an issue of *YES!* for your discussion group, order them for just $3 each for five or more copies (plus shipping). Find an order card on page 57.

—Doug Pibel

YES! PICKS ::

Things To Do, Places To Go

www.YesMagazine.org
For an expanded listing of upcoming events

EarthSpirit Rising

June 8-10, 2007. Louisville, KY. The EarthSpirit Rising Conference brings together hundreds of spiritual leaders, educators, business leaders, social workers, environmentalists, and other concerned people with an interest in building a sustainable and compassionate future. Featured presenters include Paul Loeb, Margaret J. Wheatley, Kirkpatrick Sale, Starhawk, and Jerry Mander. *www.earthspiritrising.org*.

US Social Forum

June 27-July 1, 2007. Atlanta, GA. If you haven't made plans yet, do so now for the US Social Forum. Activist leaders, artists, youth, community groups, and others from all regions of the country will gather at this historic cross-movement event. Six days of exciting programming and cultural events, featuring presenters Howard Zinn, Angela Davis, Dennis Brutus, and David Korten, among others. Join *YES!* readers and staff at a special *YES!* reception on June 28th. See the announcement inside the back cover for more details about *YES!* USSF events. *www.ussf2007.org*.

WorldFuture 2007

July 29-31, 2007. Minneapolis, MN. Organized by the World Future Society, WorldFuture 2007: Fostering Hope and Vision for the 21st Century offers a wealth of sessions on technology, health, governance, values, education, societal trends, business, environment, and more. *www.wfs.org*.

Organizing for Deep Democracy

August 10-12, 2007. Eureka, CA.
The 2007 Community Organizing for Deep Democracy Retreat will be held at Democracy Unlimited Headquarters, on the Redwood Coast of northern California. This weekend workshop will help participants organize effectively in their own communities to reclaim citizen sovereignty and challenge corporate influence in the democractic process. *www.DUHC.org*.

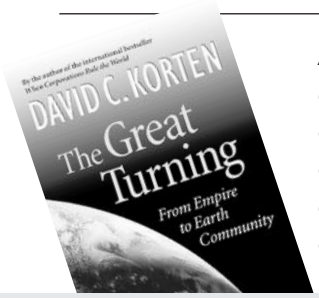
Supporting the YES! Education Program

After Hurricane Katrina struck, Betty Burkes realized that the children of New Orleans would need a way to talk about their experiences and be a constructive part of reimagining and redesigning their futures. So she has been devoting energy to a new program, "Kids Rethinking New Orleans Schools."

In this program, middle-school students work with artists, architects, media experts, and educators to speak out publicly about new models for their schools and ways to evaluate them. Betty, an activist and educator, uses her skills as a facilitator and circle-keeper to invite the kids to step into their own wisdom and power.

Betty lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she is co-chair of the Cambridge Peace Commission, a department of the city now in its 25th year. She supports the integration of peacebuilding into the everyday work of city departments, promotes peace education, and challenges the epidemic culture of violence.

She finds *YES!* an inspirational resource and appreciates the *YES!* commitment to young people. She signed up as a Dedicated Friend based on the peace education curriculum that *YES!* is providing to schools.



As a Dedicated Friend, you'll receive:

- **A complimentary copy of David Korten's new book: *The Great Turning***
- **Your subscription to *YES!* included (no more renewal notices)**
- **Quarterly updates from our publisher**
- **Future free gift offers of books, CDs, or calendars**
- **Invitations to *YES!* events**

YES! I would like to become a Dedicated Friend of YES!

Your subscription to YES! is included when you sign up for a monthly or quarterly donation—

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☐ $30/quarter ☐ $50/quarter ☐ $100/quarter

☐ I hereby authorize the Positive Futures Network to charge my credit card for a recurring donation in the amount indicated. I understand I can change or end this pledge at any time by notifying the Positive Futures Network in writing.

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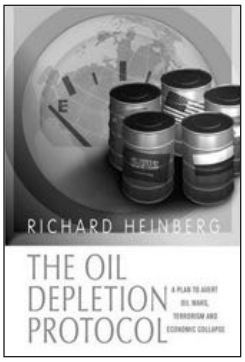
BRETT LAMB / IS

Finding a Better Balance



The Oil Depletion Protocol: A Plan to Avert Oil Wars, Terrorism and Economic Collapse

Richard Heinberg

New Society Publishers, 2006, 208 pages, $16.95

reviewed by Guy Dauncey

Several hundred million years ago, long before humans, mammals, or dinosaurs roamed the Earth, a host of plants, trees, and sea creatures rejoiced in the sunlight, breathing in carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. When they died, some of their carbon was locked away underground where it was slowly cooked and pressured, turning into coal, gas, and oil—the fossil fuels that our civilization has become so dependent on.

Every gallon of oil that we burn—a visit to some friends here, a trip to the theater there—represents the accumulated energy of 100 tons of plant material slowly converted into oil over tens of millions of years. In rough numbers, we will have used in two hundred years (1850–2050) the energy that Nature laid down over two hundred million years.

For the first 150 years, we used these fossil fuels without much thought. We needed them, so we took them—even if it took wars and military coups to secure them, Iraq being just the latest. Now we have entered the age of consequences, with global warming and oil depletion knocking on our door saying "Time's up!"

Either we plan and achieve a rapid transition into the Solar Age, powered by sustainable sources of energy, or those horsemen are going to break down the door and play merry hell with our carefully built civilization. If global warming increases by more than 2°C, the meltdown of the Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets may become inevitable, bringing as much as a 13-meter rise in sea level, and a daunting list of other disasters.

Similarly, if we don't plan how to share out the second half of the world's oil supply, when all nations will be competing for a rapidly diminishing supply, there will be conflict, starvation, chaos, and a generally unpleasant scene.

Richard Heinberg's *The Oil Depletion Protocol* describes a logical solution to one important dimension of the mess we're in. Almost every oil expert in the world agrees that sometime between 2007 and 2030 the world will hit peak oil, the moment when the production of oil peaks and starts to decline. All they differ on is when. During the golden "Dynasty" years of oil expansion, nobody worried. It's a whole other story when there's less each year, and more people wanting it.

The Oil Depletion Protocol was developed by the noted oil expert Colin

THE CARBON MATH

Burning a barrel of oil releases 77 kg of carbon. If we burn the remaining trillion barrels of conventional oil, we will put 77 gigatonnes (GT) of carbon into the atmosphere. If we decrease oil use at the Oil Depletion Protocol's depletion rate of 2.6 percent a year, in 40 years we will burn 650 billion barrels, releasing 50 GT of carbon—an average of 1.25 GT a year. This tells us that if we were to burn all of the remaining conventional oil while limiting carbon emissions to the "safe" rate of 1.5 GT a year, we would need to stop burning virtually all coal and natural gas immediately, and also find an instant end to the carbon emissions from deforestation in Indonesia and the Amazon.

Campbell. He proposes, quite simply, that the nations of the world agree to reduce their annual use of oil by the annual depletion rate. If the supply is diminishing by 2.6 percent a year (Campbell's current estimate), then each nation will agree to use 2.6 percent less oil each year. Over ten years, that amounts to a 25 percent reduction. Importing nations would reduce their use, and oil-producing nations their production, by this amount. Unconventional oil from the Alberta and Venezuela oil-sands is not included in the Protocol.

Heinberg's book is a valuable analysis of the Protocol that also explores a range of methods for reducing our use of oil in transport and looks at ways in which the Protocol might be linked to the need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Here's where the debate gets interesting, however. The Protocol addresses the problem of keeping the peace as the world's oil supply diminishes. It does not address the larger (and in my view far more ominous) problem of global warming.

The climate crisis is the result of us releasing 9 gigatonnes (GT) of excess carbon a year from fossil fuels and deforestation, of which around 2.5 GT comes from our use of oil, 4.5 GT from coal and gas, and 2 GT from tropical deforestation. To prevent the world from passing the dangerous 2°C threshold, which would likely trigger the meltdown of Greenland and West Antarctica and cause a 6- to 13-meter rise in sea level, we need to reduce our overall emissions of carbon from all sources to no more than 1.5 GT a year. If we were to use the Oil Depletion Protocol to ration the world's remaining supply of oil, 100 percent of the ecologically "safe" carbon (if there is such a thing) would come from oil, with no allowance for the continuing emissions from coal, gas, and deforestation.

Carbon math, therefore, along with our collective concern for our grandchildren, tells me that it simply can't be done: we have to leave most of the oil in the ground. We need a Global Carbon Reduction Protocol, which we already have in the Kyoto Protocol and in its successor, which will be negotiated for the years beyond 2012.

The Protocol is a useful contribution, as we certainly can't solve the problem of global warming in the midst of resource wars. But the more critical task is keeping those gigatonnes of carbon out of the air in the first place.

Luckily, my analysis tells me that the global potential of sustainably-produced electricity, combined with demand reduction through efficiency measures, and the use of electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid electrics, using a small amount of biofuel from cellulosic ethanol for long-distance trips, can solve most of the problem. Once our use of fossil fuels falls to a level that is safe for the planet, we'll have solved both problems. Peak oil won't matter, because we'll no longer depend on oil. But that's another story.

Guy Dauncey is co-author of *Stormy Weather: 101 Solutions to Global Climate Change*, and president of the BC Sustainable Energy Association. His website is www.earthfuture.com.

YES! PICKS ::
Musical inspiration while putting out this issue

To the Races

As indie-folk music gossip has it, **Eric Bachmann** took time off from his band Crooked Fingers to write songs while living out of his car. This solo CD is the product of that life crisis. Although the music is soothingly acoustic, the poetic lyrics are painfully raw, telling us more about Bachmann himself than about his subjects.

Excuse O

In this 1976 Afrobeat treasure, the late **Fela Anikulapo Kuti** merges his activism with a mesmerizing groove, seducing the listener while critiquing the weak African education system, the treatment of his fellow Nigerians by the Europeans, and the delinquency of Nigerian leaders.

The Blue Scholars

The Blue Scholars merge traditional hip hop with the unique energy of an Iranian-American, jazz-trained pianist and a Filipino-American community organizer. Their steady, confident beats propel their politically conscious lyrics, which speak of grassroots social transformation, the realities of minorities and workers, and youth empowerment.

Listen to music by Eric Bachmann, Fela Kuti and The Blue Scholars.
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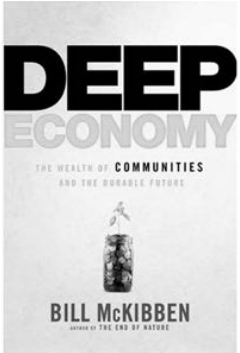

Deep Economy

Bill McKibben

Times Books, 2007

272 pages, $25

reviewed by Fran Korten

AN EXCERPT ::

A single farmers' market may not seem very important compared to a Wal-Mart, but farmers' markets are the fastest-growing part of our food economy. They've doubled in number and in sales and then doubled again in the last decade, suggesting new possibilities for everything from land use patterns to community identity. Similar experiments are cropping up in many other parts of the economy and in many other places around the world, driven not by government fiat but by local desire and necessity. That desire and necessity form the scaffolding on which this new, deeper economy will be built, in pieces and from below. It's a quiet revolution begun by ordinary people with the stuff of our daily lives.

For decades, economic growth has been the Holy Grail of our national and local economic policies. But in today's world, is economic growth an appropriate goal? Is it providing us health and happiness?

In *Deep Economy,* Bill McKibben answers with an emphatic "Not anymore." He suggests that over the last couple of centuries, growth in economic productivity has enabled a great many people to move from lives of grueling drudgery to relative comfort. And there remain several billion people for whom increased income can bring greater happiness. But for those who have achieved a modicum of prosperity (he cites research that pegs the threshold for a country at $10,000 per capita per year), more no longer equals better. The consequences of economic growth are not only devastating our planet, they are also making us unhappy. In the U.S., our national happiness level peaked in 1950 and has been declining ever since.

In flowing, personal prose sprinkled with stunning facts and vivid examples, McKibben looks at the consequences of our single-minded pursuit of the economic efficiencies that enable growth—such as a giant hog farm center in North Carolina that produces more fecal material than California, New York, and Washington combined. He suggests that economic growth is producing a hyper-individualism that leaves people alienated from community and desperate to fill the resulting vacuum in their lives with more money and more things, which further feeds the economic growth engine.

So how do we wean ourselves from our addiction to growth? For McKibben, the key is to discover that happiness is derived from an economy rooted in community. He cites examples of food, energy, communications, housing materials, and entertainment that when produced and purchased locally, not only reduce impact on the planet, but also create the neighborly connections fundamental to human happiness. McKibben cites a study showing that a person who shops at a farmers' market will have 10 times more conversations than one who shops at a supermarket. He tells with humor and satisfaction of his own experiment with a Year of Eating Locally—attuning his diet to the natural rhythms of the seasons (lots of turnips in the winter) and getting to know the folks in his region who produce and process food.

Can we make the transition to a no-growth or slow-growth economy more rooted in community? Spurred by the specter of global warming and the end of cheap oil, a burgeoning movement is arising around the world to do exactly that. But there's an inconvenient truth about our economic system that keeps us tethered to economic growth. It's the fact that money is created from bank loans which must be paid back with interest. Without growth, there's no money to pay the interest. It doesn't have to be this way—economic growth is not required when governments, rather than banks, issue money. But history shows that the powerful interests that reap vast riches from the current monetary system will fight tooth and nail against any change in the system. What McKibben shows us in *Deep Economy* is that it's a fight we need to take on. If we can get off the growth train and rebuild our communities, we may not only restore the planet, but our happiness as well.

Fran Korten is the executive director of the nonprofit Positive Futures Network and the publisher of *YES!* Magazine.

ARA OSHAGAN

FILM ::

Juvies *Documentary, 2004, Chance Films, 66 min. Directed by Leslie Neale. Filmed on location at the Eastlake Juvenile Hall in Los Angeles.*

I wish I'd made this film. It's humane and honest, fair, and brave. That's a lot more than we can say for our juvenile justice system.

In the mid-nineties, the film points out, Princeton professor John Dilulio scared the bejesus out of nearly everyone when he warned that the current generation of young men was a "wolf pack of superpredators."

Dilulio later changed his mind, but by then it didn't matter—the specter of gangs of youthful superpredators roaming the city streets had already gripped the public imagination, and the perceived menace led to a popular wave of tough-on-crime legislation and harsh sentencing guidelines.

These so-called superpredators are the "juvies" that this film is about.

At Eastlake Juvenile Hall in Los Angeles, scores of violent and dangerous kids await sentencing as adults. For the film, 12 of them are selected at random to learn video production. Many of these kids have committed terrible crimes, such as assault and murder. Others seem simply to have been in the wrong place at the wrong time, guilty mainly of associating with members of gangs. Almost all end up with sentences ranging from 11 years to life-plus-25 years.

In *Juvies*, you have a chance to become acquainted with them, minus the TV-news hype, to hear their stories, and to make up your own mind. You'll find that they're not who you thought they were. You will also find it hard not to like them, even knowing what they've done.

The kids featured in *Juvies* are part of a national trend—each year more than 200,000 juveniles are locked up in adult prisons. Incarceration in adult prisons offers these kids little opportunity for education or rehabilitation and puts them at high risk of being beaten or sexually assaulted. *Juvies* asks us to rethink a justice system in which children are tried as adults, serving sentences out of proportion with the crimes they committed. Are we really safer as a result?

The documentary finally asks us to examine the role we play. What's doing more damage to our world, these so-called superpredators or our fear of them?

"Scared people are dangerous people," a California Crip serving a life sentence once told me. *Juvies* shows us why he's right.

Carol Estes is a *YES!* contributing editor. She teaches college classes at Washington State Reformatory.

Juvies can be borrowed for free from The Film Connection: *www.thefilmconnection.org*.

YES! PICKS ::
Maddening and motivating independent films

Pirate Radio (84 min)

This suprisingly funny film follows radio pirates DJ Him and DJ Her as they document the stories of unlicensed micro-radio stations before they're shut down by the FCC. Director Jeff Pearson weaves in the complex legal and political issues of indy media and free speech. Even if you've never dreamed of getting involved in rogue radio, this film will have you itching to grab a mic and get active.

Ground Truth (72 min)

In the controversy over war, the long-term impacts of combat on veterans often gets lost. By following the lives of 10 veterans of the Iraq War, *Ground Truth* brings home the reality of war. This film is a must-see for anyone contemplating joining the military, as well as anyone seeking to understand the experiences of military men and women as they struggle to reintegrate into civilian life.

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RID OF ROACHES

Help! My house is infested with cockroaches. What's the best way to get rid of them without using toxic chemicals?

Roaches like to live in warm, damp places with access to food, water, and shelter. The best way to get rid of roaches is through a three-pronged approach: remove those cozy roach crash-pads, trap and kill the roaches with non-toxic traps, and lock the roaches out of your house so they'll never come back.

Make your house inhospitable to roaches. Inside, store food in insect-proof containers, keep garbage and trash in containers with tight-fitting lids, clean cabinets frequently (especially the one under your sink) , remove trash and recycling regularly, and eliminate plumbing leaks.

Make your own traps. All you need is a quart-sized can, some petroleum jelly, and a slice of white bread. Coat the top third of the inside of the can with the petroleum jelly and place the bread inside the can as bait. Place your traps anywhere you've found roach hideouts, as well as behind the refrigerator and in kitchen and bathroom cabinets. Once the roaches are in the can, they won't be able to climb out because the petroleum jelly is too slick. You can kill the trapped cockroaches with hot, soapy water.

Keep new roaches out. Roaches can get into your house through cracks as small as 1/16 of an inch. Common entry points are small cracks in the wall and space around pipes. Seal all cracks and spaces to prevent a new team of roaches from moving in.

For more advice on eradicating cockroaches, visit the University of California's Integrated Pest Management site: *www.ipm.ucdavis.edu* —S.K.

VEGAN'S DILEMMA

I am a vegan, and some omnivorous friends have invited me over for dinner. I'm worried that unless I pipe up, I will be presented with a plate of meat and other animal products. I don't want to offend my friends, but I must stay true to my principles. How do I broach this subject politely and without sounding militant or judgmental?

Speaking from personal experience, making this dietary decision can put a real strain on social eating. No good dinner guest wants to reject a slaved-over cordon-bleu in disgust and send the chef sobbing into the kitchen. The best thing to do is communicate with your friends in an open, honest way that refrains from using accusatory terms.

Here are some concrete suggestions:

• Tell your friends about your dietary needs ahead of time. This will give them some time to prepare.

• Treat veganism like any other dietary restriction. Would someone who is allergic to peanuts be ashamed to request a nut-free meal? True friends should be willing to keep an open mind and compromise to meet each other's needs. Remember that this applies to you, too. If the time comes for you to accommodate the dietary needs of a friend, treat them with the respect and acceptance you'd like to receive yourself.

• Don't want to ask your friends to go out of their way to accommodate you? Supplement the confession of your dietary needs with an offer to bring a vegan-friendly dish. This will ensure you have something to eat, and you can introduce your friends to the delicacies of vegan cuisine.

• Be prepared to answer the inevitable question—why are you a vegan—in an informative, non-threatening way.

Our Issue 42 researchers

Sarah followed her *YES!* internship with some world travel. She is co-founding an online environmental magazine, debuting this fall at www.seattleDIRT.com. Catherine is taking time off from her undergraduate studies to intern at *YES!* She plans to return to college this fall. She was the organizer of the Bainbridge Island, WA, Step It Up event.

Sarah M. Kuck

Catherine Bailey

Focus on arguments that affirm the positives of the vegan lifestyle—increased energy, better health, lower food bill, better for the environment, and a sense of harmony with all living things—instead of immediately jumping to the horrors of factory farming. And stick to the facts rather than delving into the messy (and possibly inflammatory) world of emotions.

For lists of facts covering everything from environmental impact to health benefits of a vegan diet, visit *www.vegsource.com/how_to_win.htm.* —C.B.

THE REAL PHANTOM MENACE

I've heard that power strips may be helpful in saving energy, but don't they also consume energy as well? What's the scoop? Should I be using one or not? And do I need to unplug it at the end of the day?

Yes, power strips do consume energy, but the amount used is trivial, less than one watt of power per hour, just enough to power the tiny "on" light. When they are turned off, they consume no power at all.

The real energy vampires are the items that are plugged into the power strip. Even when seemingly turned off, many modern electronics—such as TVs, computers, stereos, DVD players, and printers—are secretly leeching energy, a phenomenon frequently referred to as a "phantom load."

By continually drawing a reduced amount of energy even when turned off, these devices remain in "standby mode," ready to be activated at a moment's notice. This is why we no longer have to wait for more than a second after turning on the TV before the picture comes into view and why music will play as soon as we turn on the stereo.

Fortunately, identifying and slaying these energy vampires is easy. First, look for the telltale glowing "eye" (sometimes slyly hidden in the back) that most phantom menaces shine at you even when supposedly turned off. Then plug these menaces into a power strip. When you turn off the power strip, you cut power to all the devices that are plugged into it. The energy-saving potential here is huge, since most phantoms suck at least 4 watts/hour each and there are likely many of them lurking in your home.

Clarification: In the Spring 2007 issue, we recommended choosing an Energy Star dryer as one way to reduce the amount of energy consumed in drying clothes. In fact, Energy Star doesn't rate dryers because most consume similar amounts of energy. Instead, they recommend a variety of methods to conserve energy in the clothes-drying process. These include choosing a dryer with a moisture-sensor option so the machine will shut off automatically when the clothes are dry, and using the "high-spin" or "extended-spin" setting on your washing machine, which reduces the amount of residual moisture in the clothes, allowing them to dry faster.

YES! PICKS :: Win the Slug Wars, Naturally

We all know about killing slugs with salt. Here are other earth-friendly ideas from EarthEasy.com:

Watering Schedule: Avoid watering your garden in the evening. Water in the morning—the surface soil will be dry by evening, when slugs are most active. Studies show this can reduce slug damage by 80%.

Beer: Slugs are attracted to beer. Set a small amount of beer in a shallow wide jar buried in the soil up to its neck. Slugs will crawl in and drown.

Diatomaceous Earth: Diatomaceous earth is the sharp, jagged skeletal remains of microscopic creatures. It lacerates soft-bodied pests, causing them to dehydrate. Be sure to buy natural or agricultural grade diatomaceous earth, not pool grade, which has smoother edges and is far less effective.

Copper: Small strips of copper can be placed around flower pots or raised beds as obstructions for slugs to crawl over. Cut 2 inch strips of thin copper and wrap them around the lower part of flower pots, like a ribbon. Or set the strips in the soil on edge, making a "fence" for the slugs to climb. Slugs are repelled by the small electrical charge given off when their slime reacts with the metal's ions.

Grapefruit Halves: At night, the scent of the fruit will act as bait for slugs. Simply flip it over during the day to reveal the culprits.

Seaweed: Seaweed is not only a good soil amendment for the garden, mulching with it repels slugs.

Coffee: Coffee grounds scattered on top of the soil will deter slugs.

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Sustainable Cheating

You've heard of carbon offsets. You buy them to make your CO_2 production guilt-free. Cheatneutral lets you apply the same principle to other aspects of life—even the most intimate ones.

A Sample Project: "James and Jo have been together since they met at school. They cheat on each other regularly–James with an ex-girlfriend he can't let go of, and Jo with a man who delivers stationery to her office whose name she doesn't know. To offset their cheating they fund Chris and Mim through Cheatneutral. In return for the payments from Cheatneutral, Chris and Mim promise to remain loyal and faithful to each other so that James and Jo can carry on cheating."

The London group that created *www.cheatneutral.com* notes on the website: "Cheatneutral is a joke. Carbon offsetting is about paying for the right to carry on emitting carbon. The Carbon offset industry sold £60 million of offsets last year and is rapidly growing. Carbon offsetting is also a joke."