SEPTA FIGHT CONTINUES...

by Loreto Aguilar

On February 14th, 4000 demonstrators picketed the State Capitol in Harrisburg in spite of the sleeting rain to demand a stop to budget cuts for SEPTA. The crowd was a mixture of workers wearing their colors, senior citizens, people with disabilities, school children, community members, students: all public transportation riders. People from all over the state made an effort to show their solidarity: Lancaster, Norristown, Pittsburgh, Scranton and Philly among others were represented. This amazing show of collective power spearheaded by the Labor movement forced Governor Rendell to shift federal highway monies into SEPTA’s budget. But this measure taken by the Governor is only a temporary victory: SEPTA will have enough funding to continue operating normally through 2007, but the real fight to create a dedicated pot of money for this important service has not yet been won.

Having a dedicated pot of money, or “Dedicated Funding”, is very different than having to fight every fiscal year for enough money to cover the expenses for such a big service provider. The battle here is about two completely different projects and ways of understanding public transportation: For one side there is the popular vision in which public transportation is a strategic service that should be funded and even subsidized. Currently, most of SEPTA riders are workers traveling to jobs, middle and high school students, senior citizens, people with disabilities and college students that rely on SEPTA to get where they are going. SEPTA is not as efficient as it ideally should be, but it is terribly underfunded. For example: for the past ten years the budget increases for transportation have been smaller than inflation, which causes SEPTA to go into debt in order to keep operating. To avoid getting in debt SEPTA has taken some drastic measures, like eliminating 1133 administrative and hourly positions over the course of the years. But even these drastic measures do little to alleviate the fact that SEPTA faces a $64 million shortfall fiscal year 2004-2005.

In comparison to other public transportation systems around the nation, SEPTA users are paying a bigger portion of the operating costs for SEPTA (third highest only after New York and New Jersey) while the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania contributes to public transportation less than cities like Cleveland, Houston, Chicago, LA, Boston, New York, Dallas, Denver, Atlanta and San Francisco. This means that people in Pennsylvania pay higher and higher fares while the State puts less and less into public transportation.

The Pennsylvania Transit Coalition was formed to fight for Dedicated Funding for public transportation and it’s subsequent improvement, and is currently pushing to be included in a special committee formed by Governor Rendell to audit SEPTA. Organization and collective action will be key components in this battle to ensure that public transportation stays public. The more people who participate and stand up for their right to get to their places of work, worship, schools and hospitals, the closer we’ll be to victory. We’ve won a battle but not yet the war. To join the Pennsylvania Transit Coalition call 267-295-2040 or email info@paratransit.org <None>.

The cuts to SEPTA’s budget have a trickle-down effect not only on riders, but on SEPTA workers as well. These economic constraints give workers and unions less room to negotiate for better wages and benefits. To put it in a different way, the cuts force workers to fight to keep what they have, even agreeing to reductions in their benefits in order to avoid layoffs. The Transportation Workers Union Local 234, which represents SEPTA workers, has voted to authorize a strike if they can’t get to an agreement. The new deadline for contract negotiations is April 14th.

Support workers in their contract negotiations contact Jobs with Justice (215) 735-3615 Facts to support this article taken from www.patransit.org

Prison Staff! Caution! Protected Private Property

This newspaper remains property of the sender unless it has been personally and materially accepted by the prisoner to whom it has been addressed. In the event that the prisoner is denied direct access to this publication, it must be returned to the sender with notice of reasons for failing to deliver to addressee.

Distribute defenestrator outside of Philly! The defenestrator is free in Philly. Outside of Philly, send $2 per issue postage paid. If you want to distribute this fine paper, you can get 10 or more for 80 cents each. We ask you sell them for no more than $1.50 a piece.

Get on the defenestrator email list! We send out announcements for demonstrations, emergency mobilizations, benefit parties and defenestrator events. If you want on, send a blank email from your address to defenestrator-subscribe@lists.riseup.net or click the link on our website. The list is low traffic (usually about 1 message a week) and easy to get off if you so choose.

Freeriding Mass Transit

Vincent Valdamis

Public transportation in Philadelphia has been declining for some time, but SEPTA’s current financial crisis is the most serious in its 40-year history. Although a proposed base fare increase to $3 has been forestalled with a last-minute bailout, the underlying conditions behind the crisis remain unchanged. Dedicated federal and state subsidy streams are vital for SEPTA’s health but are unlikely to appear soon. This is because public transportation is viewed by suburban and rural legislators as unneeded urban welfare. SEPTA’s precarious position is a symptom of the structural realities of contemporary politics, distorted as they are by power and capital insensitive to the working class.

Transit activists have recognized this and used provocative methods to sidestep indifferent transportation bureaucracies. A highly successful example is a project operating in three Scandinavian cities called “Planka.nu,” translating roughly as “free ride now!” Members of Stockholm’s Syndicalist Youth Federation were alarmed at increasing transit fares in the late 1990s and turned to free-riding as a solution. Mobility, the organizers argued, was an essential right. While user fees were not collected on sidewalks and roads, they were applied to the public transit system that workers used to move from residential quarters to places of work.

To increase the feasibility of mass free-riding among Stockholm’s transit users, the Syndicalists established a “solidarity fund,” a collective fund for paying fines known as P-kassan. Members of P-kassan paid a membership fee, then used the system as free riders. When a rider was caught, P-kassan paid the fine. Within months the campaign was a hit, and by 2002 it had spread to Gothenburg in western Sweden and Helsinki in Finland.

“We are making it possible for our members to safely ignore paying the high transportation fares,” said Anders, a Planka.nu organizer in Gothenburg. City government there began reducing tax subsidies of public transit and increasing private fares, a formula that is an article of faith among American municipal governments. Such policies disproportionately burden the working class, who are less able to pay steep transit fees and typically use public transportation in greater numbers. Planka.nu’s organized free-riding resists this phenomenon as a form of direct action which also creates economic pressure on officials to revise their funding formulas. This pressure is a form of “auto reduction,” in which users of a monopolized service force a reduction in fees charged for the service.

Planka.nu activists in Stockholm used leaflets and stickers with the groups’ website address (www.planka.nu) to promote the solidarity fund. Transit officials responded with silence in order to deny the group media attention generated by a public controversy. Despite the absence of media attention, a stable membership base grew with dedicated grassroots work, leaflet distribution and public drives such as organized mass-free-riding events. Planka.nu’s Stockholm chapter now has 3,000 members, with higher membership during summer months since the school-financed transportation cards many students use are invalid during that time.

In Gothenburg, population 400,000, membership has crossed 1,000. Anders reports that their membership has expanded beyond activist circles. “Our members are not made up by a majority of politically-active youth as one might expect,” he said. “We have a wide range of people of all ages and backgrounds.

Our oldest member was born in the early 1920s.”

While Planka.nu received little attention from authorities in Stockholm, it was fiercely attacked in Gothenburg. Local politicians denounced members of the group for “not performing their civic duty” by paying the increase in transit fares like everyone else, and threatened aggressive legal action against organizers. Provocateurs tried to infiltrate the group and the transit agency sued organizers for running an “illegal insurance company.”
Prison Poster Project Looking for Submissions

WANTED: Incarcerated Artists to help illustrate a Portable Mural about the Prison Industrial Complex. We are creating a portable mural/poster that will serve as an education tool to expose the injustices of the Prison Industrial Complex. The design of the poster is a cross-section of a prison where every cell houses one story or theme from each contributing artist. For example, one cell shows COs abusing inmates, a woman giving birth in shackles, or prisoners organizing against poor prison conditions, etc. The space outside the prison walls is divided into two sections. To the left will be a detailed depiction of the society that fuels the prison system (i.e., boarded up clinics, schools, and libraries; and telecommunications encouraging consumerism and breeding fear). The outside to the right of the prison will be a space to envision a just world, free from personal and state violence. There is also a cross-section of the underground - the bowels and basement of the prison illustrate the history of prisons in the U.S., and the underground outside the prison depicts, on the left, the history of oppression (from slavery to COINTELPRO) and, on the right, the heritage of resistance (from Attica to Assata). The possibilities are endless. And we welcome your input. We would really love more illustrators to participate in this project, especially incarcerated women and transgender artists.

Please contact us at: Prison Poster Project P.O. Box 71357 Pittsburgh PA 15213

but the case was dismissed by a Swedish court for lack of evidence. Local media jumped on the controversy and Planka.nu’s profile quickly grew, helped further by an expensive advertising campaign by the transit agency that implicitly targeted the activists. Planka.nu organizers immediately countered by co-opting the transit agency’s ad blit with alterations to the billboards using Planka.nu stickers and other material.

“The initial witch-hunt against the Gothenburg branch has died down to some degree,” said Anders, because officials realized they were only generating more attention for Planka.nu. Authorities are further stymied by the anonymity of Planka.nu organizers. Meanwhile, the grassroots work of Planka.nu Stockholmers forced local officials and media to take the arguments of community and transit activists seriously.

So far, the increased public transit fares in Scandinavian cities have not been reversed, but transit fares have become a significant political issue. Planka.nu has developed a sophisticated discourse around transportation in their member cities by sometimes successfully and sometimes unsuccessfully working with transit unions, refugee support-groups, and uncovering details about the administration of transit systems. Planka.nu activists believe the result is that it has become harder for officials to push through future fare increases. “[This way], such decisions don’t go unopposed,” said Anders. “We’re providing a way for people to make a choice not to stand behind [fare increases]. We actually provide our members with a bit more money in their wallet at the end of the month, which I think is one of the things that makes the campaign so great.”

Defenestrator Faces Financial Crisis

To all those who responded to our call out for funds and support, thank you. Your contributions make this project possible. The cost of printing the paper, covering office expenses, and distributing the more than 300 copies of defenestrator free to inmates adds up to around $1,000 per issue. Only a fraction of the cost is covered by advertising; the rest we have to fundraise. If you haven’t yet, please consider making a contribution: it means that the newspaper you’re holding in your hands can reach the streets, homes and businesses of Philadelphia, as well as the hands of prisoners locked down across this country. To make a donation online visit www.defenestrator.org and click the Make a Donation button on the left of the screen, or send check, money order, or well-concealed cash to:

defenestrator
PO Box 30922
Philadelphia, PA 19104

We are always looking for people interested in contributing art or articles, doing office work, computer layout, editing, organizing benefits or events. We also find ourselves in need of a couple more or less modern computers we can use for processing graphics, and desktop publishing. So if you can help, please get in touch!

Email: rosad@defenestrator.org (215)387-6155 and ask for someone from defenestrator.

‘McLibrary’ Scheme Sabotages Access to Information in Philadelphia

On January 10th Mayor Street laid off 13 branch librarians and designated 20 branches to be “Express” libraries, only open 4 hours per day and staffed with clerks instead of librarians.

More facts: City Council increased the Library’s 2004-05 budget by $1 million for staff, but the Mayor did not use this resource for staff. Instead he continues to decrease staff. Determination as to which branches would be designated ‘Express’ branches was based on circulation levels, which do not take computer usage into consideration. 41% of city households are without home computers. Many of these branches are located in low income neighborhoods struggling with low performing public schools, high rates of illiteracy and high unemployment. Branch libraries are the largest provider of free access to computer and internet service in our communities, among many other essential services. Libraries in the public schools are woefully inadequate - the Association of School Librarians found that the average copyright for books in Philadelphia public schools is 1972 - and many do not have a librarian on staff. They depend on their neighborhood libraries to pick up the slack.

Nor do circulation levels reflect morning story hours for toddlers, or readings and workshops held during evening hours. Inadequate staffing has resulted in no Saturday hours at most branches, further eroding circulation numbers. Over the past year branches have had to close sporadically due to staffing problems.

Around the same time as these cuts, there was an announcement that the central library is planning a multi-million dollar renovation of its facility for which they received a grant. As wonderful as the renovations at the main library sound, it’s infuriating to think that there is money out there for architects and contractors but not for librarians or books.

In the last few years, the library has had to make due with less of everything, both money and staff. And the people who use the library, including and especially children who go to their branch library after school every day and rely on librarians for reference assistance, are the ones who suffer. In the information age, access to information is key. The library branches are vital in their neighborhoods, every bit as essential to them as recreation centers and parks.

A petition protesting these cuts, and more information can be found at www.libraryfriends.info. On March 17th, City Council will meet at 2PM in City Hall to discuss library funding issues. Hopefully Philadelphians will show up to say they care. Perhaps public outcry will reverse this latest instance in the current trend of degrading public services in Philadelphia.
In Defense of Ward Churchill and Joseph Massad

- penelope

In times of war, real or manufactured, governments move to stifle dissent and debate. The irony is that this country falsely claims to be engaged in a war promoting liberation, to ensure the freedoms of democracy around the world yet it is repressing those freedoms at home. One of the first targets in this throttling of dissent is the classroom. From Nazi Germany, to Pinochet’s Chile, to the United States in times of war, it is more important when those in power feel their power threatened, teachers who speak out openly and challenge the repression around them are targeted by the government and silenced.

Today, Ward Churchill and Joseph Massad can attest to the fact that little has changed from the days of reactionary policies that cover the landscape of US history. Both are under the target of the repressive government apparatus growing in power and reach since September 11th, 2001. With the power of the Patriot Act looming over us all, these two professors find themselves trapped in the popular accusations of ‘pro-terrorist’ and ‘anti-American’ or, in Massad’s case, Anti-Semite, thrown from empty headed politicians and corporate media news reverberating on our television screens.

Ward Churchill is a long time activist and crucial fighter in the struggle for recognition of Native American cultures and rights. He is also the author of many books and essays, including a book on Cointelpro (the Counter Intelligence Program) run by the CIA that violently and illegally targeted the Black Panthers and the American Indian Movement. The book has become recognized as a standard text for studying that era. He is also the Chair of the Ethnic Studies Department at the University of Colorado-Denver. In the last two months Churchill was forced to step down from his position, pushed out thanks to Fox News and Colorado Governor, Bill Owens. But that has not satisfied Governor Bill Owens or Fox News, who seem lost in a zealous haze of patriotic ignorance and have made it clear that they will not be satisfied until Churchill no longer teaches. And just where did all this Fox News and Gov. Owen hysteria come from? Ward Churchill’s examination of the attacks on September 11th, 2001.

Churchill released a statement in 2002 (about 18 printed pages) which he went on to turn into a book called, On the Justice of Roosting Chickens: Reflections on the Consequence of US Imperial Arrogance and Criminality. Churchill’s book (which Gov. Owens has obviously not read, only manipulated uncontexualized observations from the text) attempts to examine why there is a strong anti-American sentiment among people in the global South, people of color, and non-Christian people. He also critiques the arrogant nature of the reaction to the tragedy of September 11th and the US’s foreign and domestic policies.

Whether one agrees with Churchill or not, he is not spewing empty accusations and emotionally manipulative rhetoric, as Fox reporters are so good at. Churchill has a well researched, and, yes, opinionated, historical examination of the reasons behind terrorism against the United States that challenges US foreign and internal policy. Owens has labeled this argument as “defending terrorism.” In Churchill’s statement in response to this assault he states, “I am not a ‘defender’ of the September 11th attacks, but simply pointing out that if U.S. foreign policy results in massive death and destruction abroad, we cannot feign innocence when some of that destruction is returned. I have never said that people ‘should’ engage in armed attacks on the United States, but that attacks are a natural and unavoidable consequence of unlawful U.S. policy. As Martin Luther King, quoting Robert F. Kennedy, said, ‘Those who make peaceful change impossible make violence change inevitable.’”

“IF US FOREIGN POLICY CAUSES MASSIVE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION ABROAD, WE CANNOT FEIGN INNOCENCE WHEN SOME OF THAT DESTRUCTION IS RETURNED…”

Joseph Massad, a professor at Columbia University, finds himself trapped in a similar cell as Churchill’s. A professor in the Department of Middle Eastern and Asian Languages and Cultures, he has been attacked as anti-Semitic because of his views on the occupation of Palestine. It is not pro-terrorist for Churchill to explore the context of September 11th and offer another side to the story, nor is it anti-Semitic for Massad to challenge and be critical of American and Israeli policy and the occupation of Palestine. The systematic silencing of Professors criticizing Israel’s policies and America’s policies regarding Palestine and elsewhere is the silencing of other equally legitimate views, is the silencing of open forum and debate, without which a more accurate picture of the world and viable change cannot happen.

Professor Massad in response to the accusations of Anti-Semitism stemming from a recent film, “Columbia Unbecoming”, said “it is the latest salvo in a campaign of intimidation of Jewish and non-Jewish professors who criticize Israel. This witch-hunt aims to stifle pluralism, academic freedom, and the freedom of expression on university campuses in order to ensure that only one opinion is permitted, that of uncritical support for the State of Israel.” Massad states that “the claim that criticism of Israel is an expression of anti-Semitism presupposes that Israeli actions are ‘Jewish’ actions and that all Jews, whether Israelis or non-Israelis (and the majority of world Jews are not Israelis), are responsible for all Israeli actions and that they all have the same opinion of Israel.” He also states the he clearly differentiates between Israel, the state, Zionism, and Jews. Massad has not only the right to be critical of Israeli policy, but a duty to the profession of education to present another side to a very complex picture. It is from dictates that are unchallenged that we find ourselves nothing more than drones spewing dogma socialized into us over years. It is from debate and from challenge that we find ourselves in a position to make our own opinions, which, lost somewhere in theory, is what “higher education” is supposed to be all about.

To get a copy of Churchill’s book- so you can read his words yourself, visit Wooden Shoe Books at 508 S. 5th St. or order online from AK Press, www.akpress.com
To support Ward Churchill you can find information at the AK press website or by going to www.indymedia.org
To access Prof. Joseph Massad’s statement go to: www.columbia.edu/cu/meslc/faculty/massad/
To support Massad send protest to: University President Lee Bollinger- phone (212)854-9970, fax (212)854-9973 or email: Bollinger@columbia.edu or University Provost Alan Brinkley- phone (212) 854-2404, fax (212)922-0418 or email: ab65@columbia.edu

In the southern province of Neuquen, Argentina, sits the Zanon Ceramics factory. The Zanon workers took over the factory during the 2001 governmental and economic collapse in Argentina. Since then the workers union has run and managed the plant successfully, despite being under constant threat from the local government and police. The oppression of this worker occupied factory has continued to get worse under the Governance of Jorge Sobisich.

On the morning of March 4th, 2005, the wife of a comrade in the Zanon factory was kidnapped and assaulted. According to her statement, made at the Public Prosecutor’s office, when she was leaving work in the city of Centenario, four men in a green Falcon forced her to get in. “We know where you work, we know your husband works in Zanon, and that you leave your son with your mother-in-law.” With those words, the kidnappers began their attack on her. They specified that the message was for Godoy, Lopez, Pedrero (union officials at Zanon) and the rest of the members of the Ceramic Workers Union. The verbal threats that have been repeatedly received have now progressed to physical violence. “This has to do with the Zanon factory,” the kidnappers told her while they were torturing her with a sharp cutting instrument.

They struck her in the face. They cut her chest, her arms, and her face. The wife of the Zanon worker also said that while they were assaulting her, the men warned her, “It’s going to be very bloody for the union.” The kidnappers went on to threaten that “If the unionists were unwilling to leave the ceramics factory, the unionists would all have to live there because we (the kidnappers) are going to kill all the unionists on the street.”

For more information and updates on the Zanon situation visit: http://argentina.indymedia.org or the Zanon Factory website, www.obrerosdezanon.org
Pentridge Children Celebrate Garden

by Betty Pulse

If you happened to walk down the 4900 block of Pentridge Street on March 5th you would have found the Pentridge Children’s Garden crew busy digging up allambs trees and pulling other vines with vigor. We were all amazed at the size of the root balls under some of those trees. When we walked into the garden for the first time in two years it felt like an overgrown mystery. When we left after a couple hours of working together it was as if the years of struggle to get our garden back had never happened. Two days later on March 7th the weed pulling continued, along with the tension and excitement of sharing a special place with a bunch of people in a world where distrust and disappointment are the norm.

The Pentridge Children’s Garden (PCG) is finally ours again - for real this time. On January 10th after two and a half years of tough, gardenless times, the papers were signed and the Pentridge Children’s Garden was returned to its rightful caretakers, the Life Center Association (LCA), a West Philly land trust that owns seven collective houses and the A-Space, agreed to be the holder of the property title. They purchased the land for $20,000, money raised by the PCG collective. An alliance, also forged between the PCG and the Neighborhood Garden Association (NGA), ensures that our annual insurance fees will be paid. There is a good possibility that the NGA will assume complete ownership of the PGA in a couple of years, in which case they would also assume responsibility of our property taxes. This would be wonderful for us, all bureaucratic business would be handled by the NGA, while preserving PCG’s autonomy. It has been exciting to see how partnerships can be built between small neighborhood projects and larger organizations. As we got closer to having the money to purchase the garden, we realized that we didn’t need to think about the longevity of the Garden project beyond the personalities that were currently driving the operation. People kept telling us we needed to incorporate, to get non-profit status, etc… As a small children’s garden, those processes required time and money that we didn’t have. It feels really good to accomplish our dreams by working with the LCA and the NGA.

We have also been lucky to receive an apprenticeship grant from the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts. This award provides the funding to make it possible for Blanche Epps, a nationally recognized heritage gardener, to share her knowledge with the PCG. We are so lucky to have this wise woman on our side. Born in South Carolina in 1932 and a long time resident of South West Philadelphia, it is her occupation to teach people how to grow their own food. In a conversation I had with her over a year ago Ms. Epps talked about how the young people in her neighborhood think food comes from the corner store. She feels that they aren’t connected to their ancestors, don’t think about what these people ate or where their food came from. I was most moved by another comment she made, “Most of the knowledge of the past is going into the ground, this is the knowledge that is needed now more than ever.” With Blanche Epps as our guide we have big plans for this summer. We are reworking our land to maximize growing space while still keeping an area for running, art projects, and play. Lena, a veteran of the Children’s Garden who is at college this year, made it clear that we need to keep space for the kids to run. Part of this years plan includes a three sisters garden with corn, squash and legumes; a hanging tiered garden (we need plastic milk jugs); a traditional garden with cotton, broomcorn, gourds and plants for dying; plus a garden of origins shaped like the United States. Cue-Man, a young gardener, reminded us that we couldn’t cut too many of the Mulberry branches because we needed the berries. Things are still in the developing stages as we reawaken and see what is possible. So we are looking for dedicated volunteers, monetary donations (we still have over $6,000 in loans to repay), food donations for snack time, tools, rain collection barrels, trees, wood, exterior paint in fun colors, and other garden essentials.

Thanks again to all those who have made generous contributions of money, time and creativity over the years. Dreams do come true and sometimes the underdog is crowned victorious. We are grateful, ecstatic and lucky to garden together, figure out how to be human in an inhumane world, paint murals, and dream as we uncover worms, grubs, slugs and spiders and watch our garden come alive again.

To get more involved or to make a donation call Erin (215) 726 0236 or Beth (215) 729 3673

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There has also been a change in the population from working class to upper-middle class in the white community. However, it has been largely invisible because the white population base has been replaced by white newcomers. In 2002 and 2003, there was vocal opposition to increased real estate taxes. There are occasional murmurs about inequities and relocations that are more economically based than a result of pure choice. But, there has essentially been no outcry or significant concern about the changes.

AABRA has embarked on a campaign to ensure that African-Americans remain in their community forever and that they become increasingly prosperous. We believe that we must accept the fact that there are legitimate reasons that some are selling properties and that our future depends on reducing the incentives for these sales. Our central concept is that we can accomplish this by improving our community for those already here.

This improvement must be on a scale that projects to the world that we truly care about our future here and will do whatever is necessary to secure it. This improvement must be comprehensive, addressing the major social ails that have impacted this neighborhood for 40+ years and which have tormented similar communities around the nation for generations. This improvement, most importantly, must signal to those living here that there is no reason to sell, that this is quickly becoming the best neighborhood in the city and that leaving it would have to be considered unthinkable.

Recently, AABRA has brought attention to the typically racist strategies of gentrifiers. Westrum, builders of a housing development in the neighborhood placed a billboard on 31st and Girard showing an angry white male seated on a leather couch below the caption “It’s your turn.” The billboard also states that Brewertown, a historic neighborhood of Philadelphia, will be “re-established 2005.” To AABRA the message is clear: It’s time for the privileged of all races to take their ‘turn’ at forcing out modest income residents. AABRA has called on all concerned Philadelphians to put a stop to racist, classist arrogance and displacement. Call Westrum and tell them that you want diversity and security in your community and city, and that attempts at displacement will fail.

Westrum: (215)283-2190, FAX: (215)283-0991. To get in touch with AABRA visit www.aabra.org or call (215)769-3333.
Bio-Destavation / Bio-Democracy
Philadelphia 2005

From June 19th to 22nd, 2005, the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) is holding its annual international convention in Philadelphia. BIO is the world’s largest trade lobbying organization for the biotechnology industry. Active in Washington, DC, and every state capital, and frequently appearing on local and national media, they are a one-stop-shop for information on the industry for the media, politicians and government regulators.

BIO has more than 1,000 members. While most are biotechnology companies and pharmaceuticals, other members include academic institutions, state biotechnology centers, and other biotechnology-related organizations. These members are in all 50 U.S. states and 33 nations and include 30 U.S. universities, two Canadian universities and 211 non-U.S. companies. Many of these members are based or present in the Philadelphia area: For example, 80% of the world’s largest pharmaceutical companies — and some which are engaged in bio-weapons research — are located within a 50-mile radius of Philadelphia.

BIO’s interests include research and development of biotechnology products in health care, agriculture, industry, weapons, and the environment. BIO’s priority issues are promoting genetically engineered foods and crops, crop trade reforms and incentives for biotechnology research and capitalization, blocking government price controls in biotechnology industry. BIO’s priority issues are promoting genetically engineered foods and crops, blocking government price controls in biotechnology industry.

From the New York Times of March 19th, 2005, “Disclosures by the New York Times of three previously classified bio-weapons projects—ones that, in the name of defense, undermine these Conventions and open the door to a biological arms race.”

In addition to providing forums for education about these issues, we also want to generate mass attention with forceful public demonstration against bio-weapons research and continued wars. On Saturday, June 19th, we hope to mobilize a large and vibrant March Against Wars (On Nations, Animals and the Earth) in central Philadelphia. We are seeking to work with local and national groups, from the Philadelphia Regional Anti-War Network to United for Peace and Justice, to help bring this event and endorse and publicize it once its details are set. We are aware of — and support — the desire of many people in the anti-war movement to adopt tactics beyond marching; but we are also attuned to the political reality that, as Seymour Hersh has predicted, the US may launch war against Iran during this spring or summer. If that happens, BIO’s Philadelphia convention presents an ideal opportunity to expose the hypocrisy of the US initiating wars against foreign nations for allegedly harboring “illegal” weapons programs while itself sinking more money into research and developing such weapons than any other country in the world. And even if war against Iran is not forthcoming, we still must begin to reclaim our society by publicly opposing bio-weapons! This would signify, we think, a much-needed evolution in anti-war strategy. For more info or to be involved, please contact Ethan from Philly RAGE at phillyrage@riseup.net; Nathaniel from SEAC at (215) 222 4711; or Brian Tokar from ISE’s Biotechnology Project at biotech@social-ecology.com or (802) 454 7138.

GM Foods and India: No More Bio-Destavation!

In a recent column for the journal Farm Front, Ashok B. Sharma of New Delhi, India, reported that the “government is likely to announce a national biotechnology policy soon [...] that would also emphasize [use of] traditional biotechnology like bio-pesticides, bio-fertilizers, and development of industrial enzymes.” Such an announcement will fly in the face of valid cautions and critiques. Dr. Suman Sahai, of the Gene campaign, pulled out of the decision-making panel before the original draft for the policy was made public, suggesting that the short timeframe proposed for policy implementation was not nearly enough for a program with far-reaching consequences for consumers, farmers and the environment. She further argued that “before attempting to frame such a policy, it was necessary to study the global experiences of successes and failures of transgenic crops, cases of contamination of other crops on account of pollen flow from genetically modified crops, related health and environmental hazards.” Dr. Sahai, who also asked that reps from the NGO sector, farmers, social and agriscientists be included in panel discussions, was forced to resign from the panel as none of her warnings or suggestions was heeded. Resistance to biotechnology, as Dr. Sahai found, is not easy task, but globally, and especially in India, many are engaged in the battle, and biotech policy or not, will continue the struggle.

LMMCs (Like-Minded Mega-Diverse Countries), a group of 17 developing countries (including Bolivia, Costa Rica, Congo, Malaysia, Kenya and Madagascar – mega-diverse countries which also claim about 70% of world bio-sources), currently being chaired in India, held a 5-day ad-hoc/open-ended meeting in Thailand in mid-February to discuss access to and the benefits of sharing each other’s bio-resources in resistance to the forward, environmentally threatening march of biotechnology (devastation). At earlier meetings in January the group came out with a New Delhi ministerial declaration affirming their unity of purpose in sharing bio-resources which previously were shared freely amongst countries and considered own mankind’s common heritage. Their goal is to prevent “the theft of community-owned bio-resources and traditional knowledge” and to ensure that “the prevalent laws and practices of the country deliberate patenting of community-owned resources and traditional knowledge, perhaps because it is too difficult to enforce such penalties given the power of neo-liberal (World Bank, IMF, WTO) policies to do whatever they want. The group hopes to work both legally (through legislative policies/laws, instruments that would protect the interests of communities who own bio-resources) and through grass-roots movements that encourage resistance to and greater awareness of the negative consequences of bio-tech. Unfortunately, though perhaps not surprisingly, despite such efforts on the part of groups like LMMCs, there have been many instances of betrayal of local communities (the Kani tribe in Kerala, India, and the San tribe in South Africa) by the state national governments. “In November 1998, activists from Karnataka State Farmers’ Association (KRRS) – one of the largest and most radical farmers’ movements in India – began a massive direct action movement of crop-pulling against GM crops around the world that lives. Governments, of course, hired and trained extra police to protect American-based companies. KRRS, part of PGA (People’s Global Action) has goals of “the realization of the Village Republic, a form of social, political, and economic organization based on direct democracy, on economic and political autonomy, on self-reliance, on the participation of all members of the community in decision-making about the affairs that affect them...” Here in the US, it’s key that we work in solidarity with such movements against biodevastation and in support of human beings and the environment.

GM Foods and India: No More Bio-Destavation!

No More Bio-Destavation!
Al-Manar Television in Lebanon was recently listed as a ‘terrorist organization’ by the US State Department after a letter was submitted to Treasury Secretary John Snow by the American Jewish Committee requesting that it be listed as such. Satellite stations began dropping the station, and it is no longer available in the US. The American Jewish Committee is part of an alliance that bills itself as “The Coalition Against Terrorist Media,” a group whose stated goal is to “urge[ ] action against terrorist-owned media outlets that promote hate and incite violence...with particular focus on al-Manar Television.”

Now, I am no fan of al-Manar Television – I find it biased, untrustworthy and unprofessional as a news source. But regardless of my feelings about the station, I find it extremely disturbing that a private pressure group, formed with the express purpose of shutting down this particular television station, was, in a very short period of time, able to pressure the US State Department into making the unprecedented move of declaring a media outlet a “terrorist organization.” The accusations against the station do not include any accusations that it actually engages in terrorism, but simply that it ‘incites’ its viewers. Now, with that as a measure, how far of a stretch would it be to say that Fox News, with its blatantly partisan and sensationalized “infotainment” version of news, falsification of information, and use of well-researched psychological tools to manipulate imagery of fear, is also a ‘tool of incitement’ – in this case the incitement to continue state-sponsored terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan? Most would be unwilling to make such a connection, but there are some unnerving similarities in the production style of the two stations (Fox and al-Manar), and I would argue that Fox News also engages in the ‘incitement’ of its viewers.

The targeting of media outlets which present a dissenting voice to the ‘Washington Consensus’ is not a new thing. During the conflict in Kosovo in 1999, US forces targeted Serb television, because it was seen as an agent for the opposing side. In November 2001, BBC World Service correspondent William Reeve was injured in Kabul, Afghanistan, by an American missile that had scored a ‘direct hit’ on the Al-Jazeera network’s office next door. Nik Gowing, a colleague of Reeves, stated at the time that “Journalists now appear to be legitimate targets. It seems to me that a very clear message needs to go out that this must not be allowed to continue,” adding that al-Jazeera’s only ‘crime’ was presenting news that Western audiences found uncomfortable.

The targeting of journalists became even more apparent when the US army invaded Iraq in 2003, in a conflict that continues until today (although the war was declared by US President George Bush to be a ‘victory’ several months after it began, the military occupation continues). During this conflict, US officials have urged journalists to ‘embed’ themselves with military battalions – a position that would previously have seemed absurd to any journalist concerned with the task of presenting a fair and accurate picture of what was going on (the historical job description of a journalist). In this case, however, the proposition was accepted at face value and with little outcry from most of the US media conglomerates.

International Journalists, on the other hand, were far less willing to allow their journalistic integrity to be compromised by agreeing to this obviously partisan proposal, and were warned by the US administration that they would be ‘fair game’ if they did not accept it. Sure enough, on April 8, 2003, the US army bombed the offices of two television networks and the hotel where most international journalists were staying in Baghdad – three separate attacks on journalists in the same day, which the US administration even now insists were ‘accidents’ and unrelated. Three journalists were killed in the attacks; a Ukrainian cameraman for Reuters, a Spanish cameraman and a reporter from Qatar.

Eason Jordan, the former chief executive of CNN, resigned in February after making disparaging remarks about the US ‘targeting of journalists in Iraq. He said, “After 23 years at CNN, I have decided to resign in an effort to prevent CNN from being unfairly tarnished by the controversy over conflicting accounts of my recent remarks regarding the alarming number of journalists killed in Iraq.” It seems that the alarming trend of the apparent targeting of media sources has touched even the untouchable echelons of the major media conglomerates which, thanks to the loosening of Federal Communications regulations under the oversight of Colin Powell’s son Michael, have consolidated from hundreds of independent news sources into four major corporations which own 90% of the media in the US. With two of the major news corporations also owning major weapons manufacturing plants, is it any wonder that their journalists are so willing to embed themselves with military units? In many ways they are already ‘embedded’.

But it is the ‘un-embedded’ journalists with which this article is more concerned. The journalists who are targeted by those who disagree with their presentation of the news, targeted not only with words and threats, but by military attack. The US has the most powerful military in the world, but is also a signatory to the Geneva Convention’s Article 79 which states that “journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians within the meaning of Article 50, Paragraph 1. They shall be protected as such under the conventions of this Protocol, provided that they take no action adversely affecting their status as civilians.”

It seems from the reading of this Article that the only journalists who appear to have taken action that would ‘affect their status as civilians’ are those who have ‘embedded’ themselves with the military of one side of a conflict.

So whether or not one agrees with the coverage presented on al-Manar, surely they should be able to present their views without being blocked by ‘terrorist’ organizations. Surely, if a free and democratic media is to exist in this world, and to proliferate, a multiplicity of viewpoints should be encouraged, not discouraged, and most certainly should not be blown into oblivion with high-tech smart bombs like those that the US dropped on media offices in Baghdad on April 8, 2003.
G.I. Resister Camillo

Freed!

Some of you might remember Camillo, a courageous soldier who spent more than 7 years in the military, 8 months fighting in Iraq, came home for a 2-week furlough, and decided that he could not - in good conscience - return to Iraq. He applied for Conscientious Objector status, and was declared a Prisoner of Conscience by Amnesty International. But the US military convicted him of desertion, and sent him to serve a one-year prison sentence in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. This happened the same day that Spc. Jeremy Sivits was court-martialed and sentenced to a year in prison for abusing Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib, an order Camillo had refused to obey. Camilo was recently released from prison. Following is an essay composed of some of his writings from prison.

Regaining My Humanity

By Camilo Mejia February 15th, 2005

I was deployed to Iraq in April 2003 and returned home for a two-week leave in October. Going home gave me the opportunity to put my thoughts in order and to listen to what my conscience had to say. People would ask me about my war experiences and answering them took me back to all the horrors - the firefight, the ambushes, the time I saw a young Iraqi dragged by his shoulders through a pool of his own blood or an innocent man was decapitated by our machine gun fire. The time I saw a soldier broken down inside because he killed a child, or an old man on his knees, crying with his arms raised to the sky, perhaps asking God why we had taken the lifeless body of his son.

I thought of the suffering of a people whose country was in ruins and who were further humiliated by the raids, patrols and curfews of an occupying army.

I am confined to a prison but I feel, today more than ever, connected to all humanity. Behind these bars I sit a free man because I listened to a higher power, the voice of my conscience.

I realized that none of the reasons we were told about why we went to war, and that in spite of my confinement I remain free in many ways. What good is freedom if we are not able to live our conscience? What good is freedom if we are not able to live with our own actions? I am confined to a prison but I feel, today more than ever, connected to all humanity. Behind these bars I sit a free man because I listened to a higher power, the voice of my conscience.

While I was confined in total segregation, I came across a poem written by a man who refused and resisted the government of Nazi Germany. For doing so he was executed. His name is Albrecht Hanshofer, and he wrote this poem as he awaited execution.

GUILT

The burden of my guilt before the law weighs light upon my shoulders; to plot and to conspire was my duty to the people; I would have been a criminal had I not.

I am guilty, though not the way you think, I should have done my duty sooner, I was wrong, I should have called evil more clearly by its name. I hesitated to condemn it for far too long.

I now accuse myself, within my heart.

I have betrayed my conscience far too long.

I have deceived myself and fellow man.

I know the course of evil from the start.

Today I know what I was guilty of...

To those who are still quiet, to those who continue to betray their conscience, to those who are not calling evil more clearly by its name, to those of us who are still not doing enough to refuse and resist, I say “come forward.” I say “free your minds.”

Let us, collectively, free our minds, soften our hearts, comfort the wounded, put down our weapons, and reassert ourselves as human beings by putting an end to war.

Mine is a small price compared to the price Humanity has paid for war.

Many have called me a coward; others have called me a hero. I believe I can be found somewhere in the middle. To those who have called me a hero, I say that I don’t believe in heroes, but I believe that ordinary people can do extraordinary things.

To those who have called me a coward I say that they are wrong, and that without knowing it, they are also right. They are wrong when they think that I left the war for fear of being killed. I admit that fear was there, but there was also the fear of killing innocent people, the fear of putting myself in a position where to survive means to kill, there was the fear of losing my soul in the process of saving my body, the fear of losing myself to my daughter, to the people who love me, to the man I used to be, the man I wanted to be. I was afraid of waking up one morning to realize my humanity had abandoned me.

I say without any pride that I did my job as a soldier. I commanded an infantry squad in combat and we never failed to accomplish our mission. But those who called me a coward, without knowing it, are also right. I was a coward not for leaving the war, but for having been a part of it in the first place. Refusing and resisting this war was my moral duty, a moral duty that called me to take a principled action. I failed to fulfill my moral duty as a human being and instead I chose to fulfill my duty as a soldier. All because I was afraid. I was terrified, I did not want to stand up to the government and the army. I was afraid of punishment and humiliation. I went to war because at the moment I was a coward, and for that I apologize to my soldiers for not being the type of leader I should have been.

I also apologize to the Iraqi people. To them I say I am sorry for the curfews, for the raids, for the killings. May they find it in their hearts to forgive me.

One of the reasons I did not refuse the war from the beginning was that I was afraid of losing my freedom. Today, as I sit behind bars I realize that there are many types of freedom, and that in spite of my confinement I remain free in many important ways. What good is freedom if we are afraid to follow our conscience? What good is freedom if we are not able to live with our own actions? I am confined to a prison but I feel, today more than ever, connected to all humanity. Behind these bars I sit a free man because I listened to a higher power, the voice of my conscience.

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With ongoing military commando units and covert special ops: “In some cases, according to the Pentagon advisers, local citizens could be recruited and asked to join up with guerrillas or terrorists. This could potentially involve organizing and carrying out combat operations, or even terrorist activities. Creating terrorism to fight it.” Iran just happens to be one of the bigger targets.

While Iran has long been out of favor with the U.S. (post Fall of the puppet Shah), the target date for Iran, according to Hersh and others (former U.N. Weapons Inspector Scott Ritter is making similar assertions) could be as early as late Spring, with the Pentagon pursuing one of two options - a full-scale invasion ala Iraq and/or the bombing of specific nuclear facilities. Last June, Israel ordered nearly 5,000 “smart bombs” from the U.S. that can penetrate 6 ft. concrete walls such as those that might encase Iranian nuclear sites. Iran has long insisted that the West must take care of the “Iran problem” or they will do it themselves. U.S. troops, of course, have no intention to go into Afghanistan and Iraq (part of the rationale for attacking Iraq - an easier/more vulnerable target - first). Pennsylvania’s very own slim-ball Senator Rick Santorum introduced a bill asking the “U.S. to support regime change for the Islamic Republic of Iran and to promote transitions to a democratic government to replace that regime.” The bill didn’t pass but Santorum plans to reintroduce it. Due to the state of an already overextended U.S. military, it is hard to imagine the U.S. having the capability for such ongoing war, but geo-politically Iran’s desirability makes it an almost inevitable target of U.S. global strategy.

So why Iran? The Pentagon’s claim is that Iran as part of the “axis of evil” has or is close to having nuclear warhead capability, and the democracy is weak (and nuclear weapons leak into the Islamic Republic which, unlike Saudi Arabia (hardly democratic), is not U.S. friendly. But the real reasons point Iran as a great strategic prize - with its geographic location and natural resources Iran sits at the very core of the West’s strategic interests. In her book Persia, Islam, and the Soul of a Nation, Middle East expert Sandra Mackey describes the desirability of Iran: “Sixty-four percent of the world’s known oil reserves lie below and around that shallow saltwater lake known as the Persian Gulf, Iran, the most populated nation of the Persian Gulf, occupies its entire eastern shore and straddles that strategic global choke point known as the Strait of Hormuz.” What made Iran so desirable for both the Imperial British and czarist Russia in the 1800’s - its warm water ports and black gold (oil) still holds true today. Iran also has the 2nd largest reserve of natural gas in the world and is right next to central Asia where 212.8 billion cubic feet of gas await development by Western companies. The gas would have to be moved through pipelines which must cross Turkey, Russia, the Ukraine and Iran. U.S. relations with all of these countries are tenuous at best. Iran lies between Russia and the Persian Gulf thus creating a bridge between the Middle East and Asia. A alliance of convenience between Russia and Iran if fortified could deny the West an opportunity to control access to energy sources. And oil and gas pipelines are the lifeline of the western industrialized world. The E.U. has been more cooperative with Iran in terms of research as leverage in taking Iran into nonparticipation of nuclear capabilities (and for their own strategic interests), but the U.S. has refused to cooperate with such a strategy, instead keeping its options open. Asked several months ago on NBC if military action against Iran was possible, Bush kept it vague: “we hope that we can solve it diplomatically.”

Iran also poses, in the bizarre plans of the Project for the New American Century (the boys – Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld, Cheney who helped bring us, and had long-strategized for the war on Iraq), an ideological challenge to the U.S. Iranians, a complex mix of different ethnic groups, languages and religion, are certainly not all in line with the beliefs of an historically repressive Islamic Republic. An Iranian diplomat who visited Iran twice last year said the current government is very unpopular with the people. Many Iranians, he told me, (especially those living in urban areas) would prefer a more secular government. But nationalism is strong as is anti-U.S. sentiment. Ahmadinejad, who visited the U.S. in February and then went to Washington in March 2006, said the return to World War II (and earlier) when the Soviet Union, Britain and the U.S. invaded and occupied Iran. The ideals, of leading the oppressed against Western domination and materialism (the abuses and extravagance of the Shah heightened those sentiments), which allowed someone like the Ayattolah Khomeini to take power after the fall of the U.S. friend Shah whose greed created high unemployment, inflation and poverty, are not entirely dead. Some in Washington believe that someone like the Ayattolah Khomeini to take power after the fall of the U.S. friendly Shah whose greed created high unemployment, inflation and poverty, are not entirely dead. While some in Washington have a sense thepling of the religious leadership in Iran would be welcomed (probably the same folks who believed Iraqis would be just fine with an occupation) by the Iranian people, Hersh provides sound evidence that an attack from Washington would create an increased sense of nationalism, causing “an Iranian backlash against the U.S. and a rallying around the regime.” Iranians I have spoken to affirm this argument.

In his post 9/11 book, The Clash of Fundamentalisms Tariq Ali describes the outcome of the 1979 Iranian Revolution: “It was impossible for the Iranian leadership to imagine that the people who participated in the gigantic mass mobilizations that secured the revolutionary victory could be serious when they chanted Allah_Auhan (God is Great) or Long Live Khomeini - or when they cheered the turbanned clerics who spoke of creating the Islamic Republic.” Many on the left saw such a regression as a revolt against history and progress, but the Islamic clergy offered (though, like any other hierarchical government) they failed to deliver and continued p.15
Land Occupation in Brazil

By Onion, Defenderat field-reporter

On February 18th 2005, a contingent of anarchists from Rio’s anarchist federation (FAR) or Federação Anarquista do Rio de Janeiro (FARJ) made their way to Olga Benario Prestes, a squatted piece of land on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro to participate in their 2nd year anniversary and victory celebration. It had been two years of occupation and there was much to celebrate. The celebration was taking place just days after Brazilian military and pigs had brutally evicted hundreds of families (12,000 people in total) from squatted land in Goiania, in the north of Brazil, killing several and disappearing many.

To put the occupation in further context, Brazil - whose boundaries boast the world’s 6th largest economy - is also home to some 12 million homeless and landless people who share little of the country’s wealth. From these landless (called Sem Terras) and homeless (Sem Techo) spring an enormous squatter movement, now recognized internationally by virtue of the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST) by now 20 years claim some 2 million in its occupations. Tracts of abandoned or unused land is taken by sometimes thousands of families who immediately go about building new more stable communities, often in the face of severe repression.

I had tracked down activities of the FARJ, Rio’s anarchist federation, a few days before at their Cultural Centre. Located in a sleepy neighborhood of Rio, at the foot of favelas on the hills from where regular manned machine gun fire exchanges between police and extra-legal capitalists calmly added punctuation to the traffic noises. The FARJ accords, some of whom live in these communities, have been keeping up solidarity work with various squats and occupations in and around Rio, all of which are autonomous from the MST and thus in many ways left out of the solidarity work some of the other occupations enjoy. Olga Benario Prestes is one of these.

Olga Benario Prestes

After a long ride to Campo Grande on the periphery of Rio and a short walk, we found ourselves at the gates of the occupation, a sign proudly announcing themselves “Ocupacao Olga Benario Prestes”. Through the gates, a main road leads through the occupation, past houses in various stages of completion and scruffiness: past sleeping dogs, playing kids, and adults looking out walking with looks of cautious interest. André, a lawyer working with the occupations led us on a tour of the territory, explaining some of their history.

OBP had been initially taken by about 115 families in February of 2003. According to André, the land had been used previously for burying cadavers, drug trafficking, and orgies. The families immediately started building shelters and improving the structures into more stable homes as more resources became available. Work and schools in Brazil, people are kept out of schools, which for poor people with few resources is a catch 22 and a systematic entrenchment of poverty. Vila Conquista and its neighbor occupations Vila Conquista and Nelson Faria Marinho had only been squatted for the last few years, but support from the landless, homeless and other struggles forgotten and remembered...

We made our way through the occupants to the party site where I chatted with some folks. One, a vegan, expressed his fear that there would be nothing to eat but meat. His fears were well founded. Behind some tables, a small bovine community was slowly growing out of coals and flames. Squatters from the community served up generously, seemingly endless proportions of rice, beans, meat, beer, and mango juice from the trees in whose shade we sat.

The program for the celebration started off with poetry stirring the still meager crowd to chuckles, yawns, and sighs, as only poets know to do. A moment of silence was held for those who’d died in Goiania as well as for those dead, tortured, and disappeared from the landless, homeless and other struggles. Throughout the night, music and theatre were interspersed with speeches and statements of solidarity from the various unions, individuals and groups that had shown up to share in the celebration. The visitors were especially appreciated. Numerous locals embraced me with heartfelt warmth. And the feeling was mutual as I was inspired on a number of levels.

“We are libertarians! We don’t want anything to do with the state. We want self rule!” Marcos was passionate to say the least. He stressed the communities’ refusal of leaders, and their horizontal intentions, the communities’ resourcefulness in opposition to the state, their strong DIY ethics. Our conversation kept led to education, though, and the importance of teaching people to teach. With large numbers of adult squatters illiterate, literacy is an important elemental need in all the occupations I visited. Unable to pass a basic literacy exam, part of the basic entrance exam for schools in Brazil, people are kept out of school, which for poor people with few resources is a catch 22 and a systematic entrenchment of poverty. Vila Conquista and its neighbor occupation Nelson Faria Marinho had a total of one teacher: Jonas, 13 years old and, though quiet (beside Marcos at least), full of warmth and intelligent creativity radiating from his smile. Jonas took us around the corner to the school, a one room shack with a couple desks. At one, a girl practiced writing, while at the other a teenage kid sketched pieces in a notebook. “Gratuito!” Marcos boasted enthusiastically, pointing to the dance of contorted letters in the artist’s fingers. On a chalkboard, some basic elements of anarchist theory were left over from an earlier day.

We left the classroom for the garden and compost pile, still in experimental stages, and then on to a recycling project started by a guy who’d started a similar project at the FARJ’s centre, making furniture for sale from used plastic bottles and other trashpickings. We were introduced to a shed loaded to the ceiling with empty tetra packs and bottles. The tetra packs were used as roofing tiles and insulation, Marcos explained. We were then introduced to an apparently wise and certainly crazy old man who took me aside for a whirlwind tour of his medicinal herbs.

I caught up with the rest of the MEL activists, as Marcos led us through both occupations, separated apparently more by theory than geography. Nelson Faria Marinho (NFM), which was also younger by several years, was noticeably less together than Vila Conquista, with more trash and less built up structures. Later when I asked someone about political prisoners in Brazil, I learned that a group from NFM had carried out an armed attack on a police station intending to spark off a general uprising. The spontaneous insurrection didn’t occur and all the militants were snatched up, in prison to this day.

Vila Conquista’s history, like those of many other Brazilian occupations, was punctuated by evictions, violent repression and新世纪的恐惧, 生存的恐惧, 生活的恐惧. Just a few years ago, in the midst of the so-called “social movement”, a completely new set of people, from the landless, homeless and other struggles, emerged as a spontaneous movement, and quickly spread to occupy the land. The members of the occupation, mostly known internationally by news of the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST), started to organize classes in the communities. When the meeting wound down, the idea of expanding Jonas’ literacy classes had grown between the community and the MST to flesh out plans for organizing classes in the communities. When the meeting wound down, the idea of expanding Jonas’ literacy classes had grown between the community and the MST to flesh out plans for organizing classes in the communities.

I was invited to visit some occupations closer to Rio the next day. Other FARJists who also worked with the MEL (Movimento Educacao Libertario), an education collective inspired by Paulo Freire, the godfather of liberatory education, were visiting Vila Conquista to discuss the community’s first popular education project. Entering the Vila, folks were relaxing and chatting in a small social centre, a building which could hold basic meetings and travail of the project. Entering the Vila, folks were relaxing and chatting in a number of other projects including health education, self-defense workshops, and a fund- and food- raising benefit party for the squatters. We exchanged embraces and contacts and were off.

It was good to see that even in squatter occupations in Brazil, libertarian rebels finished their meetings with discussion on which bar to go to next. We chose the only one we could find on the way to the bus. I caught up on bits filtered via the language barrier. A woman from the MEL reaffirmed what seemed glaringly obvious, that Vila Conquista, though full of people with obvious drive and enthusiasm, is more often than not stuck with nothing to work with. Sometimes unable to afford the very basics, such as nails or school supplies, many projects just stop despite extensive resourcefulness on Vila Conquista’s part. One such project is a small social centre, a building which could hold basic meetings and events. At Olga Benares Prestes the situation was similar, with various education and building projects coming to a stop because of lack of resources. Also the folks at both occupations, specifically asked to tell others about their existence, their struggles and in the case of Vila Conquista, certainly welcomed visitors.

By this time our table had filled to capacity with empty beer bottles, conversations had shifted from solidarity to Michael Jackson’s trial and the sun had let up. Recharged with some inspiration and stories, we made the long bus ride back to the city of beaches, telenovela stars, surfers, and favelas - and ghosts of past struggles forgotten and remembered...

To support the efforts of Olga Benario Prestes or Vila Conquista, get in touch with Onion via the defenestrator (defenestrator@riseup.net) or write to the FARJ (farj@riseup.net).

For info on the recent violence in Goiania, read Bill Will of NYC indymedia’s 1st person account here:
http://defenestrator.org/x/news屁ng/display/157/index.php
Photos of the funerals:
http://brazil.indymedia.org/pr/blue/2005/02/307915.shml
In November of 2004 representatives of People’s Global Action came to Philadelphia to address a small gathering of people about the network. PGA, People’s Global Action is a loose international network of thousands of resistance movements, organizations, and people struggling against capitalist globalization and towards a vision of global liberation. Such an array of groups from such an array of cultures and situations are inevitably, intentionally diverse. Without agreeing to any homogenized ideology or set of tactics or beliefs, all of the members of the PGA do agree to PGA’s Five Hallmarks. These Hallmarks provide the barest template for struggle against capitalism, and prefigures a world built upon different relationships: horizontal instead of vertical, liberatory rather than oppressive, a world where people are tied together by solidarity instead of exploitation. The broad network includes landless squatters’ movements in Brazil (see Onion’s article on pg.10), anti-GM movements in India (see Bronwyn Lepore’s article on pg.6) and anti-globalization and anti-capitalist movements in the United States and elsewhere.

At our meeting in November, the defenestrator collective decided to become an infopoint for the PGA, and in this direction will be publishing a PGA page (such as the one you’re reading) with info about PGA actions globally. We are also more generally interested in drawing connections between local struggles and issues, and global ones. As capitalism tries to integrate the world into its machineries of death, we must start to recognize that our actions have global implications, and that global events affect us as well. It is our hope that the cultivation of a global consciousness can help to inspire us to cast off the roles we have been dealt and rewrite them in a way that respects human life, nature, and our planet.

In Ponca City, Oklahoma there sits a Continental Carbon Company (CCC) plant, at the edge of the Ponca reservation. The Paper Allied-Industrial Chemical and Energy Workers International Union (PACE) which organized many of the workers at the Continental Carbon Company found themselves locked out at this plant during contract negotiations, so they promptly went on strike. During this time period the CCC brought in scab labor. The Ponca people and the PACE trade unionists seeing that this problem could not be solved without confronting the global nature of capitalism sent representatives over to Taipei, Taiwan. These representatives arrived in Taiwan and began a hunger strike in protest of the treatment of the union and the environment by this Corporation’s policies.

These Americans found that they were not alone when Taiwan’s first legal and autonomous national trade union, Taiwan Confederation of Trade Unions (TCTU) came out in support of them. The CSRC which encompassed the CCC, finally relinquished to the alliance of Native Americans, US trade unionists, and Taiwanese trade unionists. Though it was a limited victory, contract negotiations was continued in favor of the workers, and the company promised to implement stricter environmental protection policies, the fact that these three very different groups could come together and confront a huge corporation and win anything speaks to the power of solidarity.

Globalization from Below

On Saturday night (3/23/05) Paul and I headed over to the A-Space to see a presentation on “Globalization from Below”. To be quiet honest I was not exactly sure what the presentation was all about, all I knew was that it involved Native American resistance to globalization. Needless to say I am happy I went.

The Story is as follows:

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This event brought up several questions: what does the globalization of resistance look like? How can we build coalitions and make them last? What can we do here in Philadelphia? How can we connect local struggles to the larger global picture? Is it out of events like these that I find myself once again faced with the fact that in fighting the tentacles of capitalism, the fight itself must be and, in many ways is, globalized.

On March 10, Guatemala’s Congress voted 126-12 to approve the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), creating a trade bloc composed of Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the U.S. Guatemala is the third country to approve the agreement. The Guatemalan Congress circumvented the usual three-step approval process when the major centrist and right-wing parties agreed on March 9 to muster the 105 votes necessary to declare a “national emergency,” which would allow a single vote on the measure. The vote, originally scheduled for March 1 was postponed after large street protests took up the capitol. Protests continued on March 8, when thousands attempted to march to the Congress building in Guatemala City in a demo organized by the Indigenous Campesino Union and Popular Movement (MICSP). Heavy security prevented the marchers from approaching the building. At least 6 people were injured as protests continued on March 9.

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The protest began at the U.S. embassy in Guatemala City, and were greeted by “1980’s style” repression. Police used tear gas and blue-dyed water outnumbered the marchers, who still succeeded in shutting down part of downtown Guatemala City and filling the air with smoke from burning tires.

According to a March 14th phone report from Norma Maldonado of Mesa Global in Guatemala to a member of PGA (People’s Global Action) North America, there was an extremely violent reaction to the national strike declared in response to the Guatemalan Congress approving CAFTA on the 10th. According to Maldonado, over 30,000 people took to the streets of Guatemala City, and were greeted by “1980’s style” repression from the Army and Civilian National Police. The protest began at the U.S. embassy but when protestors arrived at the Parque Central (in front of the Presidential Palace) the security forces arrived and threw an enormous amount of teargas on the protestors. The show of force was so strong that people were forced to flee; many were running through the streets until they arrived at the offices of various civil society organizations, in which many were still barricaded at the time of Maldonado’s call. She said police were roaming the streets detaining people and that they had no information as to what was happening to people in other parts of the city. Many on the streets were injured and warrants were out for so-called leaders of the movement. Numerous protesters, she said, were in the hands of security forces and those trapped inside were greatly concerned for their well-being.
by Paul Walker

As the US tries to crush an upstart Islamic revolution in the East while tightening its control over the region’s indigenous oil and water wealth, the experts seem to agree that the flow of oil will peak sometime in the next 20 years. According to a report by Al Jazeera, output at the world’s largest oil fields may have already peaked. Meanwhile, demand for oil rises.

Meanwhile, demand for oil rises.

Corporate America, destructive and exploitative though it is, is not thin-skinned, or stupid. Already hybrid cars, running off of gas and electricity, are rolling off of production lines, along with vehicles driven by high-tech fuel cells which convert hydrogen gas into energy, easing the fears of American consumers and ensuring our continued dependence on the capitalist class and their monopolies on technology, resource extraction, and refining tools.

Hydrogen, a potential fuel source being given a lot of attention by the industry and the press, is an abundant element which can be refined from water or fossil fuels at a great expense of energy. While solar power could be used in the refining process (much as it could be used to power our cities and industries today) it probably won’t be. The infrastructure doesn’t exist, nor the will to shift the energy policies of today from hydro, nuclear, and coal power towards more sustainable and environmentally less destructive power sources such as solar and wind power. Even though hydrogen fuel-cells will release water as a by-product, a process sure to widen eyes, the real pollution occurs during the refining process when massive amounts of dirty fuel is burned. In a speech delivered in February 2003, George Bush emphasized the need for more nuclear power plants to meet the coming need for hydrogen fuel refinement.

Here in the US, and abroad, however, an emerging movement of do-it-yourselves are trying to find their way out of the brutality and failure of our consumerist, war-addicted car culture. And what better place to start such a search than at the losing end of the capitalist equation, floating in the waste stream - in the dirty dumpsters and sticky barrels of America’s back-alleys, parking lots and locked dumpster pens; sitting behind local Chinese take-outs, Corporate fast-food joints and fancy sit-in restaurants waiting to be filtered (refilled), preheated and combusted in the engines of yesterday’s diesel school-buses, Volkswagen rabbits and pickup trucks. Veggie grease, or SVO (Straight Vegetable Oil) is really nearer to the peanut oil that the diesel engine was initially designed to run on. Designed in the 1890s by Austrian born Rudolph Diesel, the diesel engine was Diesel’s attempt to improve upon the the efficiency of the steam engine. Designed to run on peanut oil, Diesel envisioned an engine which could be fueled by the labors of his country’s peasantry and agriculturalists. But his untimely death coincided with the emergence of fossil fuels as a cheap energy source and the veggie oil idea was swept under the rug. With some relatively simple modifications however, today’s diesel engines can be modified to burn vegetable oil.

The conversion is fairly simple. A second fuel tank is added which stores the filtered vegetable oil. The system works by starting the vehicle running on regular diesel. At a moment of the existing coolant line is connected to the veggie oil tank, raising it up to a temperature where it can be combusted in the engine.

Without a doubt, there are obstacles on the road to progress. People’s enthusiasm can cloud their vision and many people who are attracted to the idea of converting their vehicles to run on friendly fuels are not experienced car mechanics. While by no means inaccessible to anyone with the desire, mechanics, like all other things, take time to learn, and learning involves making mistakes. I’ve heard the tale (and seen the carcasses) of more than one failed conversion, and leaks, bugs and quickly clogged filters are not uncommon.

The movement doesn’t have the resources of the mainstream behind it and is, like many other environmental technologies, intentionally underestimated. It is improving though. Modified fuel-tanks, fuel lines and filters are being fabricated and tested. Systems, researched and re-engineered, are available for purchase or for use as a model for more ambitious do it-yourselfers.

They don’t serve veggie-grease at the pump - filling up means hitting the streets. Gina Favano, who has spent the last two years exploring the ins and outs of running a small touring school-bus on veggie-grease, has developed relationships with restaurant workers and owners in various cities on the east coast.

The sentiment expressed is one that contributes to the climate where survivors are fearful to come forward with their stories. It creates the air that they will be disbelieved and questioned (as they so often are). It is for the survivor to decide and to expect the support from the people around them, even in the face of that minuscule percentage of false accusations. These situations are rarely clear. We know enough to not think that rape is only when some stranger jumps out of a dark alley
Confessions of an Economic Hit Man

Richard Lord
American Nightmare: Predatory Lending and the Foreclosure of the American Dream

John Perkins
Confessions of an Economic Hit Man
Berret Koehler (2004) $24.95 247 pp

Review by Rafi Rom
A bedrock of the capitalist system is that those with money lend it to those without, guaranteeing major profit to the rich, while forever indebting the poor. The books listed above examine this phenomenon, and how it works within the U.S. domestic system and the international arena.

In “Confessions...”, John Perkins recounts his life as an “economic hit man.” He and his colleagues “build a global empire. “We are an elite group of men and women who utilize international financial organizations to foment conditions that make other nations subservient to the corporatocracy running our biggest corporations, our government, and our banks.” The book demonstrates how developing countries are stripped of their natural resources by being conned into taking loans they will not be able to pay back.

“American Nightmare” exposes a different sort of forced dependency, known as predatory lending. Richard Lord, a journalist for a local paper in Pittsburgh, offers a detailed account of how major financial institutions—like Citigroup, PNC, and Ameriquest—make a killing by backing loans sold to poor people with incredibly unfair terms and interest rates. Unlike loans and mortgages determined by income offered to middle and upper class white people, “subprime” loans are based on the value of one’s home, not on their ability to pay the loan back.

Both types of loan are a sort of double-wammy. The Hit Man’s motivation for getting IMF-like loans is that big amounts of money will go to (usually U.S. owned) contractors to build new energy systems such as dams or natural gas drilling sites - the money to do the work goes right back into U.S. pockets via contractors, and then the interest goes there too. So all the income basically leaves the country’s borders.

In the US, home repair loans work in a similar manner. Local contractors go door to door selling home repair, and then promise potential customers to get them a good deal on the loan to pay for it. Contractors get paid up front for work (that oftentimes does not get done or is done terribly), and a finder’s fee. The lender collects on the interest for as long as possible, and then gets the house if the person can no longer afford the loan. This happens, since interest rates go up, and many of these loans have a balloon payment built in, which means at a certain point the entire balance—now greatly larger—due to years of interest adding up—is immediately due.

Unfortunately, Perkins spends much more time lamenting about his past misdeeds, than actually describing them. A good chunk of this book is therefore wasted on making the author look better. For instance, rather than really explain how his actions crippled Indonesia, he offers a lot of anecdotal evidence of how, unlike other EHM’s, he was at least interested in the culture he was there to destroy.

As a local newspaper journalist Lord’s style relies more on hard “facts.” He goes over in minute detail how Predatory lending works, which is very similar to international lending, only on a much smaller scale. The collateral in these loans are homes, the bedrock of any family’s life. Loans are made to poor, often elderly and disabled Americans, often in conjunction with some bogus home repair scheme or life insurance. Credit cards—which are unsecured—are added to the mortgage to beef up the amount, as are unexplainable fees. The interest rates are double the going rate for “conforming” loans, which basically makes it impossible to ever pay off the loan.

In both instances, the lender knowingly misrepresents the ability of the borrower to pay back the loan. As Perkins’s Indonesia segment illustrates, by wildly exaggerating how infrastructure building would boost the country’s GDP, he offered the justification needed for this exploitative transaction to take place.

Small time brokers in the US use a host of deceptive tools - like padding the income of borrowers - to make loans unaffordable to trapping people.

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continued p.15
Darfur, the Sudan, Africa and a Broken System

by Kitty Bryant

Darfur translates into “the land of the blacks,” a name originally applied to a cross-strip of land from Eritrea on the Red Sea to Dakar on the Atlantic coast. The Darfur in the news today is a great kingdom that comprises the western region of the Sudan. The largest country in Africa, equivalent in size to the United States east of the Mississippi, Sudan is a nation blessed (or is it cursed?) with rich resources including gold and oil. Forty million Sudanese are divided among different tribes who speak different languages and dialects, and among contrasting religions, cultures, ecosystems (desert, grassy plains, swamps and rain forest) and economies.

The Sudan can be broadly divided into three regions: the great kingdom to the north, which is Islamic; the great kingdom of Darfur, to the west, which is also Islamic, and the southern Sudan which has always been separate, dominated by cattle and camel herders and under the influence of Christianity. As a whole the country is approximately 15% Muslim and 15% Christian, with the remainder following traditional African practices. Since the era of Ottoman rule, the Sudan has been governed from Khartoum, its capital and largest city, which lies near the center of the country, at the confluence of the White and Blue Nile rivers.

The area that became the Sudan was conquered for Egypt in 1820 by Ali Pasha (who was an Ottoman Albanian Muslim) to extract gold and capture slaves. The Sudanese successfully revolted in 1881 against Egyptian rule under the leadership of a Muslim who named himself al-Mahdi (meaning “the guide”), but in 1898 it was reconquered by a combined Egyptian and British army, becoming like Egypt a colony of the British Empire. The British ruled out of Khartoum for more than fifty years, until January 1, 1956 when the Sudanese declared their independence.

The boundaries of the Sudan were established by the British in negotiations with the French. The borders were drawn with the intention of splitting tribal lands and weakening local rulers. Particularly between Sudan and its western neighbor Chad (then ruled as a colony of France), these artificial boundaries fueled land disputes and encouraged border encroachments.

The media tends to reduce the complex competing interests in the Sudan into simple-minded formulas, such as a “clash of civilization” between Arabs and Africans. This is a false dichotomy in a mixed population where Arabs and Africans commingle and intermarry. An endemic conflict in the Sudan arises between farmers and herders, and tribal customs developed to judge and enforce claims for compensation. But the current government has worked alongside foreign nations and global corporations to destroy the bases for the old tribal mechanisms of conflict resolution. Modern conflicts have flooding the country with weapons and increased the power of warlords and mercenary militias.

The violence in Sudan cannot be understood as the result of any single factor, but rather as the outcome of long-standing grievances and natural political divisions. From the beginning the newly independent nation was torn by a colonial heritage of undemocratic practices and a plunder economy. The British as well as the other big powers, from behind the scenes, have used the consequent political instability to their own advantage. Russia has been eager to sell the Khartoum government Russian fighter jets to the tune of $ 300 million dollars, while China launched into oil development in southern Sudan by clearing tribal land of its native inhabitants.

The current regime, the National Islamic Front, came to power in a coup in 1989. and adopted the goal of transforming the Sudan into an Islamic Arab country. It escalated the war against the rebel movements in the south into a jihad war against Christian and pagans. To fight this jihad, the government disbanding the national army (whose soldiers did not support the coup or the jihad) and funded in its stead war lords, the “big powers” who extract oil and profits - and leaves the poor behind. In this very central way, the crisis of Darfur is not an African problem, but instead a global problem, less about genocide and more about an international system of power (political and economic) that exacerbates inequality as it fails act in favor of human development and democracy.

The rhetoric of genocide has been a diversion rather than a serious engagement with the sources of misery in Darfur. (This is not in any way meant to diminish the horror of the thousands of deaths due to ethnic cleansing, etc., but to question more deeply the roots of existing conflicts). It was the height of hypocrisy for the US, through its top diplomat Secretary of State Colin Powell, to charge the Sudanese government with genocide, then to follow this charge up with exactly nothing, by way of action. The African Union (reformed three years ago) has been a convenient forum for the international community to delegate responsibility to, but it has neither the money nor the experience nor the troops to bring security to Darfur.

The failure to address the suffering in Darfur threatens to spread across the Saharan region. From the perspective of Africa we can see a continent of 53 countries suffering from poverty and lacking in democracy. From a world perspective we can see nations like Indonesia, Egypt, Pakistan, Colombia and Afghanistan suffering from poverty and lacking in democracy, governed by elitist authoritarian regimes propped up by US and European aid and investments. We see governments spend billions on weapons systems and mercenary militias in lieu of education and development projects. We also see competition between the big powers on the UN Security Council undermining, rather than promoting, solutions that would put more power in the hands of local people.

Readers Note: My source for much of my information and points-of-view is a talk given by Omer Ismail on January 15, 2005 at a Crisis in the Sudan Program held in Camden at the Bridge of Peace Community Church, sponsored by the African American Coalition for Peace in the Sudan. Mr. Ismail, a native of Western Sudan, helped manage international relief programs until he fled following the 1989 coup by the National Islamic Front. He now lives as a refugee in the United States. In Washington, D.C. he helped found the Sudan Democratic Forum and The Darfur Peace and Development Program.
Target Iran, cont.

were, in many ways, more brutal than the Shah) social justice and an end to economic and cultural corruption all of which appealed to the urban poor. Such appeals, no matter how false, which seem to have replaced the call of revolutionary Marxism, partly explain the power of Islam as the world’s fastest growing religi-

The U.S., while unhappy with the fall of its puppet, saw an Islamic republic as a different kind of threat than communism (which was closer to the goal of the Iranian left) and, in the early 80’s turned to the more secular Ba’athist Saddam Hussein for support (Khomenei was Shi’a). After the fall of the Shah Saddam became the new “pal” of Britain and the U.S. in the Middle East. Additionally, Saudi emirs and sheiks were fearful of the Islamic revolutionary spirit infecting their people (interfering with the power of the Saud monarchies) so they gave support (money and arms) to Hussein, along with the U.S., essentially promoting the Iran/Iraq war (which lasted almost 10 years and caused over 1 million deaths).

Iran still has hostility towards the U.S. Britain for feeding Iraq weapons and military intelligence (with the intention of containing Iran as a different kind of political force than its earlier Cold War enemies). Two Middle Eastern countries fighting and killing each other, in the view of U.S. strategists, was better than one (or both) becoming a force against the West. Many question why Hussein was not taken out at the end of the Gulf War, but again, U.S. strategists preferred Hussein’s strong-arm secular brutality to the rise of an anti-U.S. Islamic nation. The U.S. mili-

tary paused just short of Baghdad not allowing Hussein’s anti-U.S. Islamic nation. The U.S. military decision that ensures everyone’s priorities – in the C.I.A., the D.O.D., the E.R.I., and even the Department of Homeland Security – are discussed. The most insid-
iousof U.S. strategists, was better than one (or more) of their resources and institutions to the privatizing glob-

In Globalization and Its Discontents, another confes-
sional book written by the former President of the World Bank, Joseph Stiglitz talks about how loans are linked to “capital account liberalization.” In other words, in order for countries to get loans they must expose all of their resources and institutions to the privatizing glob-

‘Rumsfeld will no longer have to refer to the War on Terrorism in order to make himself look ‘tough.’ or ‘What are your priori-
ties?’ Now he can keep all of the mattress mice out of it.”

The anti-war movement had a long lead up time before the War on Iraq started and we still lost. Given the increasingly secret strategy of geo-politics and war, it’s hard to know where and when the next bomb will drop. An increased call and pressure for an end to the occupation of Iraq, successful count-
er-recruitment goals (against an increas-
ingly strapped military) and serious pres-
ure on the corporations profiting from the war (and who would stand to profit from ongoing wars) are tactics that must be pursued more vigorously by move-
ments in the U.S. if we hope to stop the madness of the coming wars.

Confessions..., cont.

Herein lies the way capit-
nalism forever indebted poor people. Yet things are even worse. These debts have terrible impacts on the environment and community. Perkins, now an environmentalist, offers horrifying examples of how dams, canals, and other infrastructure changes have decimated the environment. And subprime loans do the same to the local community. Houses are left in disre-
tinction, re-recruitment goals are foreclosed, and communities evacuate. Thus the glut of empty homes in Philadelphia.

Open Letter, cont.

Our demand is that members of our community un condi-
tionally support survivors and work to ensure that survivors’ demands are followed through.

d) Folks claim to be allies, but do so in a way that undermines the validity of other survivors’ experi-
ences.

This follows along with the above responses, oftentimes validating the demands of a particular survivor but question-
ang another’s. This further plays into multiple power dynamics:
1) An individual, or community having the ability to “choose” whether to believe someone or not, based on their personal experiences.
2) the re-traumatization of a survivor having to deal with their assault in a public manner,
3) the initial posturing of the perpetrator having to deal with their assault in a public manner,
4) the initial power the perpetrator had over the survivor and the power that the perpetrator still has.

Emptying the space to make room for survivors is a huge, monumental task. The response to sexually assault is an act of violence. By limiting the possible responses to sexual assault, we are limiting the possibilities for survivor and our community.

We demand that the focus be on the sur-

vivor’s needs and on our community’s need for transformation into a place where sexual assault is not acceptable.

We submit these demands based on our individual and group experience working with survivors of sexual assault. We submit these demands based on the hurt and trauma that our community members have suffered at the hands of malicious and malingering responses to their experiences of sexual assault. We submit these demands based on that we, as a community, are strong enough to autonomously deal with our problems, even those that are contributed to and shaped by outside forces. We submit these demands based on our hope that one day survivors will be able to safely name their perpetrators and receive the support they need.

In Solidarity, Philly’s Pissed, Philly Stands UpContact us at phillypissed@safe-mail.net or phillymen@riseup.net
April 2nd - Saturday
Ozma Yoleti Callejotac performing traditional Aztec Contemporary Dancing at the Philadelphia Art Museum at 6pm.

Sat. April 2
8pm at the Rotunda An evening of surreal and Avant Garde films in honor of artist Salvador Dalí and the Dalí exhibit at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Featuring work (shown on DVD) by Russian film maker Yevgeniy Yufit, and others.

Sun. April 3
7pm at the Rotunda Rising Sons This is the 3rd edition of Rising Sons. These awesome men bring poetry and performing arts to another level. Just James, EB Benard, Kinyon Linear and more to be announced.

April 4th-20th
14th Annual Philadelphia Film Festival at the Ritz East, Ritz Bourse, Prince Music Theatre, The International House, and The Bridge, more info, schedules, etc: www.phillyfest.com

April 8th-Friday
There Should Be Justice: Documentary Screening on Palestinian, British, Human rights lawyer in Belgrano @ A-Space, more info: phillyjacs@taitget-shorts.net

April 10th-Sunday
Defenestrator Homebrew Benefit 2pm till night at 4833 Walton Ave. (half a block down from Baltimore Ave.) more info:rosa@defenestrator.org April 15th-17th
Washington DC- World Bank and IMF
Demonstrations (check out www.indymedia.org for links to DC groups organizing and updates on activities)

April 23rd-Saturday
Harlem, N.Y. Mumia’s Birthday Demo and Celebration, meet 12pm at Marcus Garvey Park info: (212)330-8029

April 23rd-Saturday
Seedling Swap at A-Space 11am-1pm. Get ready for Gardening, bring seeds, clippings, seedlings, etc. to trade and share.

May 14th-Saturday
20th Anniversary of the Move bombing rally and demonstration, as well as freedom for the MOVE 9 political prisoners. Assemble at 63rd and Osage Sts. (W.Philly) at 10:30am for rally-11:30am march to Malcolm X Park at 52nd and Pine Sts. for Demonstration. more info call (610)496-9799 or (215) 687-1147 or email: onamove11ja@aol.com

May 21st-Saturday
Families to Abolish Life Without Parole Conference at Temple University Main Campus, Ritter Hall (13th and Cecil B. Moore Ave) for more information or to register call (215)432-0620 www.reconstruciton.org/conference2005

June 18th-21st
Biodiversity Conference Philadelphia. more info: http://bioediv.org

ACT UP!
Weekly Meeting Every Monday from 6:00 pm - 9:30 pm
St. Luke’s Charles 300 S. 10th St. (between Pine & Spruce) Email: actupphilly@crpath.org for more info.

Food Not Bombs
In a country hungry for war, that bombs countries hungry for food...join Food Not Bombs Every Sunday at 3:00 PM; 20th St. and The Ben. Franklin Parkway For more information: foodnotbombsphilly@yahoo.com, and at 6pm at Cedar Park 50th St. and Baltimore Ave. West Phil Vigil to Support Israeli Voices of Peace Every Friday from 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm Israeli Consulate; 15th & Locust Streets Sponsored by Jewish Mobilization for a Just Peace. Email: njnl_philly@yahoo.com for more info.

Honk for Mumia - small demonstrations to distribute informationand show support 2nd and 4th Saturday of every month 2pm at 52nd and Market

Independent Media - www.phillyimc.org Document resistance, record change, Be the Media! Self-publish audio, video, photos or text articles: http://www.phillyimc.org/submit.pl

SE Chapter PA Abolitionists Monthly Vigil First Thursday of every month from 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm OutSiders Governder Relloni's Office 2005. Broad St. Calling for an end to executions in PA. info: visage5@hotmail.com for more info.

Women's Anti-Violence Education (WAVE)
Monday drop-in classes every Monday night from 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm Friends.s Center 1501 Cherry Street Phone: 215-241-5720 for more information WAVE offers a drop-in, self-defense, class every Monday night. There is a sliding scale fee of $5-$20 (pay what you can). Women of any age, size or physical ability will benefit. Can’t make it Monday? Call us about our full length self-defense courses offered regularly.

Saturday Afternoon Self-Defense for Women class taught by women 1-4pm at the Friends Center. 1501 Cherry St., $20 full fee but pay what you can, no one turned

Philadelphia Social Forum
First Sunday of each month at 3PM Robin's Book Store, 108 S. 13th Street

Philadelphia Gender Changers Academy
Female to Female Trans Technology
Womens’ computer classes on Wednesdays 6:30pm-9pm ($10-$25 cost for materials) info@philgcrga.org

Philadelphia Green Party
General membership meets the fourth Monday of every month at the Ethical Society on Rittenhouse Square, 1506 S. Rittenhouse Sq. at 6:30pm.

Philadelphia United to Support Public Schools
Every Monday from 5:15 pm - 7:45 pm United Way 1st floor; 21st & Ben Franklin Pkwy. E-mail: jor-dancoyc@hotmail.com for more info.

Philadelphia Regional Anti War Network
Meetings Thursday nights at 7pm 2200 N. Broad, 2nd Floor Susquehanna and Broad phillypraw.org

Philadelphia Anti-War Forum Cafe
3rd Thursday of each month at the Rotunda, 4014 Walnut St. more info, phone: (215)727-0882 box 3 Radio Vista http://radiovista.org A project of the Philly indymedia center, broadcasting since 2000. Vista continues to grow, featuring over 30 hours of live programming and ten hours of syndicated news each week. Get involved: vista@phillyimc.org

Open Mic Poetry
Every 3rd Friday at the A-Space at 7:30pm, free donations appreciated, a presentation of Poems not Prisons

Dissent in America Teach-ins
Every Friday at 3:30pm at Temple University Main Campus, History Department Lounge (Glasfeller 914), a variety of topics still to come The Weather Underground and Red Army Faction. A Soldiers View of Iraq, and Making the World Safe for Starbucks: Globalization of Yuppie Culture. For more info and schedule: www.temple.edu/history/Teach%20Ins.html

After School Art Club
Every Monday and Thursdays 4:15-5:30pm @ A-Space Join the young gardeners from Pentridge St. for exciting craft projects and open art studio sessions. A healthy snack provided, Adult volunteers and snack and art supplies donations needed, call Erin (215)726-0263 box 8

Weekly Meeting of Phila. County Coalition on Prison Health Care
Every Tuesday from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Philadelphia Fight Office, 1233 Locust St., 2nd floor. For info, contact Laura McTighe: 215-380-5556

Books Through Bars
Packaging Cafe Every Tuesday from 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm The A Space, 4722 Baltimore Ave. E-mail: info@booksthroughbars.org for more info

International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia
General Meetings: First Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm at American Friends Service Committee building (15th and Cherry Sts.). People of color for Mumia Meetings: Third Wednesday of the month at Tom’s Place of Africa (between 5th and 6th on South St) Phone: 215-476-5416 or email: ICFF-MAJ@aol.com for more info.

Philadelphia Anti-War Forum
Meeting Third Sunday of every month from 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm A-Space, 4722 Baltimore Ave. E-mail: cla-narchy@prodigy.net

4124 Lancaster Ave - A conspiracy from the fanatics at the defenestrator, the Philly Independent Media Centre, Radio Vista, the detailer collective, the Unconvention and others comes this new project: a radical community centre in the heart of West Philly. We bought a building, now we need your involvement! info: 215.387.6155 or space@phillyimc.org * defenestrator.org/space

Open A-Space - a collectively run anarchist gallery and meeting/community space. Events are free and generally start at 7:30pm unless otherwise noted. Accessible by the 34 trolley. Plenty of parking for cars and bikes. They pass the hat to cover rent.

Wise Women’s Center
Open Wed 10am-2pm, Thu 4-8pm, Sat 10am-3pm 735 S. 50th St.
215-729-WISE

The Spiral Q Puppet Theater
3114 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104 spiralspriral.org
215-222-6979 Fax: 215-222-7002

Women’s Anti Violence Education
1501 Cherry St., Phila, PA 19102 (215) 241-5720

The Rotunda
4041 Walnut St. Puts on a variety of community, political, musical, and more events, all for free or donation based

Robin’s Bookstore
108 S. 13th St. Center City, (215) 735-9600, www.robins-bookstore.com. Lots of great events and readings, check the website for scheduled events