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BUSH LIED THESE SOLDIERS DIED

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JULY 2005

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The Community Alliance is an independent voice for workers and progressive groups in the Central San Joaquin Valley. The goal of this monthly newspaper is to build a powerful progressive movement that will support social, environmental, & economic justice; immigrant rights; and a living wage for all working people. We seek to expose social and political injustices and to link the diverse network of activists working in our community.

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The Downing Street Memo

This document contains meeting minutes transcribed during the British Prime Minister’s meeting on July 23, 2002

As originally reported in The Times of London, May 1, 2005

SECRET AND STRICTLY PERSONAL - UK EYES ONLY

DAVID MANNING

From: Matthew Rycroft

Date: 23 July 2002

S195 /02

cc: Defense Secretary, Foreign Secretary, Attorney-General, Sir Richard Wilson, John Scarlett, Francis Richards, CDS, C, Jonathan Powell, Sally Morgan, Alastair Campbell

IRAQ: PRIME MINISTER’S MEETING, 23 JULY

Copy addressees and you met the Prime Minister on 23 July to discuss Iraq.

This record is extremely sensitive. No further copies should be made. It should be shown only to those with a genuine need to know its contents.

John Scarlett summarized the intelligence and latest JIC assessment. Saddam’s regime was tough and based on extreme fear. The only way to overthrow it was likely to be by massive military action. Saddam was worried and expected an attack, probably by air and land, but he was not convinced that it would be immediate or overwhelming. His regime expected their neighbours to line up with the US. Saddam knew that regular army morale was poor. Real support for Saddam among the public was probably narrowly based.

C reported on his recent talks in Washington. There was a perceptible shift in attitude. Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy. The NSC had no patience with the UN route, and no enthusiasm for publishing material on the Iraqi regime’s record. There was little discussion in Washington of the aftermath after military action.

CDS said that military planners would brief CENTCOM on 1-2 August, Rumsfeld on 3 August and Bush on 4 August.

The two broad US options were:

(a) Generated Start. A slow build-up of 250,000 US troops, a short (72 hour) air campaign, then a move up to Baghdad from the south. Lead time of 90 days (30 days preparation plus 60 days deployment to Kuwait).

(b) Running Start. Use forces already in theatre (3 x 6,000), continuous air campaign, initiated by an Iraqi casus belli. Total lead time of 60 days with the air campaign beginning even earlier. A hazardous option.

The US saw the UK (and Kuwait) as essential, with basing in Diego Garcia and Cyprus critical for either option. Turkey and other Gulf states were also important, but less vital. The three main options for UK involvement were:

(i) Basing in Diego Garcia and Cyprus, plus three SF squadrons.

(ii) As above, with maritime and air assets in addition.

(iii) As above, plus a land contribution of up to 40,000, perhaps with a discrete role in Northern Iraq entering from Turkey, tying down two Iraqi divisions.

The Defense Secretary said that the US had already begun “spikes of activity” to put pressure on the regime. No decisions had been taken, but he thought the most likely timing in US minds for military action to begin was January, with the timeline beginning 30 days before the US Congressional elections.

The Foreign Secretary said he would discuss this with Colin Powell this week. It seemed clear that Bush had made up his mind to take military action, even if the timing was not yet decided. But the case was thin. Saddam was not threatening his neighbours, and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea or Iran. We should work up a plan for an ultimatum to Saddam to allow back in the UN weapons inspectors. This would also help with the legal justification for the use of force.

The Attorney-General said that the desire for regime change was not a legal base for military action. There were three possible legal bases: self-defense, humanitarian intervention, or UNSC authorization. The first and second could not be the base in this case. Relying on UNSCR 1205 of three years ago would be difficult. The situation might of course change.

The Prime Minister said that it would make a big difference politically and legally if Saddam refused to allow in the UN inspectors. Regime change and WMD were linked in the sense that it was the regime that was producing the WMD. There were different strategies for dealing with Libya and Iran. If the political context were right, people would support regime change. The two key issues were whether the military plan worked and whether we had the political strategy to give the military plan the space to work.

On the first, CDS said that we did not know yet if the US battleplan was workable. The military were continuing to ask lots of questions. For instance, what were the consequences, if Saddam used WMD on day one, or if Baghdad did not collapse and urban warfighting began? You said that Saddam could also use his WMD on Kuwait. Or on Israel, added the Defense Secretary.

The Foreign Secretary thought the US would not go ahead with a military plan unless convinced that it was a winning strategy. On this, US and UK interests converged. But on the political strategy, there could be US/UK differences. Despite US resistance, we should explore discreetly the ultimatum. Saddam would continue to play hard-ball with the UN.

John Scarlett assessed that Saddam would allow the inspectors back in only when he thought the threat of military action was real.

The Defense Secretary said that if the Prime Minister wanted UK military involvement, he would need to decide this early. He cautioned that many in the US did not think it worth going down the ultimatum route. It would be important for the Prime Minister to set out the political context to Bush.

Conclusions:

(a) We should work on the assumption that the UK would take part in any military action. But we needed a fuller picture of US planning before we could take any firm decisions. CDS should tell the US military that we were considering a range of options.

(b) The Prime Minister would revert on the question of whether funds could be spent in preparation for this operation.

(c) CDS would send the Prime Minister full details of the proposed military campaign and possible UK contributions by the end of the week.

(d) The Foreign Secretary would send the Prime Minister the background on the UN inspectors, and discreetly work up the ultimatum to Saddam.



He would also send the Prime Minister advice on the positions of countries in the region especially Turkey, and of the key EU member states.

(e) John Scarlett would send the Prime Minister a full intelligence update.

(f) We must not ignore the legal issues: the Attorney-General would consider legal advice with FCO/MOD legal advisers.

(I have written separately to commission this follow-up work.)

MATTHEW RYCROFT
(Rycroft was a Downing Street foreign policy aide)

Demonstration in Sacramento calls on The Bee to make the Downing Street Memo front page news.

How to End the War

By Naomi Klein

EDITOR’S NOTE: The following essay is adapted from remarks made at the National Teach-in on Iraq sponsored by the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, DC. The teach-in was held on March 24, the 40th anniversary of the first teach-in on the Vietnam War, which was held at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

The central question we need to answer is this: What were the real reasons for the Bush administration’s invasion and occupation of Iraq?

When we identify why we really went to war—not the cover reasons or the rebranded reasons, freedom and democracy, but the real reasons—then we can become more effective anti-war activists. The most effective and strategic way to stop this occupation and prevent future wars is to deny the people who wage these wars their spoils to make war unprofitable. And we can’t do that unless we effectively identify the goals of war.

When I was in Iraq a year ago trying to answer that question, one of the most effective ways I found to do that was to follow the bulldozers and construction machinery. I was in Iraq to research the so-called reconstruction. And what struck me most was the absence of reconstruction machinery, of cranes and bulldozers, in downtown Baghdad. I expected to see reconstruction all over the place.

I saw bulldozers in military bases. I saw bulldozers in the Green Zone, where a huge amount of construction was going on, building up Bechtel’s headquarters and getting the new US embassy ready. There was also a ton of construction going on at all of the US military bases. But, on the streets of Baghdad, the former ministry buildings are absolutely untouched. They hadn’t even cleared away the rubble, let alone started the reconstruction process.

The one crane I saw in the streets of Baghdad was hoisting an advertising billboard. One of the surreal things about Baghdad is that the old city lies in ruins, yet there are these shiny new billboards advertising the glories of the global economy. And the message is: “Everything you were before isn’t worth rebuilding.” We’re going to import a brand-new country. It is the Iraq version of the “Extreme Makeover.”

It’s not a coincidence that Americans were at home watching this explosion of extreme reality television shows where people’s bodies were being surgically remade and their homes were being bulldozed and reconstituted. The message of these shows is: Everything you are now, everything you own, everything you do sucks. We’re going to completely erase it and rebuild it with a team of experts. You just go limp and let the experts take over. That is exactly what “Extreme Makover:Iraq” is.

There was no role for Iraqis in this process. It was all foreign companies modernizing the country. Iraqis with engineering Ph.D.s who built their electricity system and who built their telephone system had no place in the reconstruction process.

If we want to know what the goals of the war are, we have to look at what Paul Bremer did when he first arrived in Iraq. He laid off 500,000 people, 400,000 of whom were soldiers. And he shredded Iraq’s constitution and wrote a series of economic laws that *The Economist* described as “the wish list of foreign investors.”

Basically, Iraq has been turned into a laboratory for the radical free-market policies that the American Enterprise Institute and the Cato Institute dream about in Washington, DC, but are only able to impose in relative slow motion here at home.

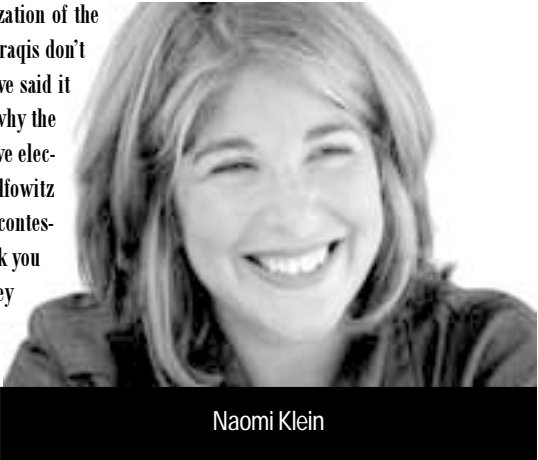
So we just have to examine the Bush administration’s policies and actions. We don’t have to wield secret documents or massive conspiracy theories. We have to look at the fact that they built enduring military bases and didn’t rebuild the country. Their very first act was to protect the oil ministry, leaving the rest of the country to burn, to which Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld responded: “Stuff happens.” Theirs was an almost apocalyptic glee in allowing Iraq to burn. They let the country be erased, leaving a blank slate that they could rebuild in their image. This was the goal of the war.

The big lie

The administration says the war was about fighting for democracy. That was the big lie they resorted to when they were caught in the other lies. But it’s a different kind of a lie in the sense that it’s a useful lie. The lie that the United States invaded Iraq to bring freedom and democracy not just to Iraq but, as it turns out, to the whole world, is tremendously useful because we can first expose it as a lie and then we can join with Iraqis to try to make it true. So it disturbs me that a lot of progressives are afraid to use the language of democracy now that George W. Bush is using it. We are somehow giving up on the most powerful emancipatory ideas ever created, of self-determination, liberation, and democracy.

And it’s absolutely crucial not to let Bush get away with stealing and defaming these ideas; they are too important.

In looking at democracy in Iraq, we first need to make the distinction between elections and democracy. The reality is the Bush administration has fought democracy in Iraq at every turn. Why? Because if genuine democracy ever came to Iraq, the real goals of the war—control over oil, support for Israel, the construction of enduring military bases, the privatization of the entire economy—would all be lost. Why? Because Iraqis don’t want them and they don’t agree with them. They have said it over and over again, first in opinion polls, which is why the Bush administration broke its original promise to have elections within months of the invasion. I believe Paul Wolfowitz genuinely thought that Iraqis would respond like the contestants on a reality TV show and say: “Oh my God. Thank you for my brand-new shiny country.” They didn’t. They protested that 500,000 people had lost their jobs. They protested the fact that they were being shut out of the reconstruction of their own country, and they made it clear they didn’t want permanent US bases.



Naomi Klein

That’s when the administration broke its promise and appointed a CIA agent as the interim prime minister. In that period they locked in—basically shackled—Iraq’s future governments to an International Monetary Fund program until 2008. This will make the humanitarian crisis in Iraq much, much deeper. Here’s just one example: The IMF and the World Bank are demanding the elimination of Iraq’s food ration program, upon which 60 percent of the population depends for nutrition, as a condition for debt relief and for the new loans that have been made in deals with an unelected government.

In these elections, Iraqis voted for the United Iraqi Alliance. In addition to demanding a timetable for the withdrawal of troops, this coalition party has promised that they would create 100 percent full employment in the public sector, i.e., a total rebuke of the neocons’ privatization agenda. But now they can’t do any of this because their democracy has been shackled. In other words, they have the vote, but no real power to govern.

A pro-democracy movement

The future of the anti-war movement requires that it become a pro-democracy movement. Our marching orders have been given to us by the people of Iraq. It’s important to understand that the most powerful movement against this war and this occupation is within Iraq itself. Our anti-war movement must not just be in verbal solidarity but in active and tangible solidarity with the overwhelming majority of Iraqis fighting to end the occupation of their country. We need to take our direction from them.

Iraqis are resisting in many ways, not just with armed resistance. They are organizing independent trade unions. They are opening critical newspapers, and then having those newspapers shut down. They are fighting privatization in state factories. They are forming new political coalitions in an attempt to force an end to the occupation.

So what is our role here? We need to support the people of Iraq and their clear demands for an end to both military and corporate occupation. That means being the resistance ourselves in our country, demanding that the troops come home, that US corporations come home, that Iraqis be free of Saddam’s debt and the IMF and World Bank agreements signed under occupation. It doesn’t mean blindly cheerleading for “the resistance.” Because there isn’t just one resistance in Iraq. Some elements of the armed resistance are targeting Iraqi civilians as they pray in Shia mosques: barbaric acts that serve the interests of the Bush administration by feeding the perception that the country is on the brink of civil war and therefore US forces must remain in Iraq. Not everyone fighting the US occupation is fighting for the freedom of all Iraqis; some are fighting for their own elite power. That’s why we need to stay focused on supporting the demands for self-determination, not cheering any setback for US empire.

And we can’t cede the language, the territory of democracy. Anybody who says Iraqis don’t want democracy should be deeply ashamed of themselves. Iraqis are clamoring for democracy and had risked their lives for it long before this invasion in the 1991 uprising against Saddam, for example, when they were left to be slaughtered. The elections in January took place only because of tremendous pressure from Iraqi Shia communities that insisted on getting the freedom they were promised.

“The courage to be serious”

Many of us opposed this war because it was an imperial project. Now Iraqis are struggling for the tools that will make self-determination meaningful, not just for show elections or marketing opportunities for the Bush administration. That means it’s time, as Susan Sontag said, to have “the courage to be serious.” The reason why the 58 percent of Americans against the war has not translated into the same millions of people on the streets that we saw before the war is because we haven’t come forward with a serious policy agenda. We should not be afraid to be serious. Part of that seriousness is to echo the policy demands made by voters and demonstrators in the streets of Baghdad and Basra and bring those demands to Washington, where the decisions are being made.

But the core fight is over respect for international law, and whether there is any respect for it at all in the United States. Unless we’re fighting a core battle against this administration’s total disdain for the very idea of international law, then the specifics really don’t matter.

We saw this very clearly in the US presidential campaign, as John Kerry let Bush completely set the terms for the debate. Recall the ridicule of Kerry’s mention of a “global test,” and the charge that it was cowardly and weak to allow for any international scrutiny of US actions. Why didn’t Kerry ever challenge this assumption? I blame the Kerry campaign as much as I blame the Bush administration. During the elections, he never said “Abu Ghraib.” He never said “Guantanamo Bay.” He accepted the premise that to submit to some kind of “global test” was to be weak. Once they had done that, the Democrats couldn’t expect to win a battle against Alberto Gonzales being appointed attorney general, when they had never talked about torture during the campaign. And part of the war has to be a media war in this country. The problem is not that the anti-war voices aren’t there; it’s that the voices aren’t amplified. We need a strategy to target the media in this country, making it a site of protest itself. We must demand that the media let us hear the voices of anti-war critics, of enraged mothers who have lost their sons for a lie, of betrayed soldiers who fought in a war they didn’t believe in. And we need to keep deepening the definition of democracy to say that these show elections are not democracy, and that we don’t have a democracy in this country either.

Sadly, the Bush administration has done a better job of using the language of responsibility than we in the anti-war movement. The message that’s getting across is that we are saying “just leave,” while they are saying, “we can’t just leave, we have to stay and fix the problem we started.”

We can have a very detailed, responsible agenda and we shouldn’t be afraid of it. We should be saying, “Let’s pull the troops out but let’s leave some hope behind.” We can’t be afraid to talk about reparations, to demand freedom from debt for Iraq, a total abandonment of Bremer’s illegal economic laws, full Iraqi control over the reconstruction budget; there are many more examples of concrete policy demands that we can and must put forth. When we articulate a more genuine definition of democracy than we are hearing from the Bush administration, we will bring some hope to Iraq. And we will bring closer to us many of the 58 percent who are opposed to the war but aren’t marching with us yet because they are afraid of cutting and running.

Another US War Resister Flees to Canada to Avoid Fighting in Iraq via the New “Underground Railroad”

A Democracy Now! Interview by Amy Goodman

Editor’s note: Below is Amy Goodman’s introduction, followed by an interview with local war resister Ryan Johnson

Last month, Ryan Johnson and his wife, who are from Visalia, California, crossed into Canada to escape serving in the military. Over the past month they have traveled across the United States and then into Canada with help from a new Underground railroad that has formed to help war resisters. During a stop in New York, Johnson joined Amy Goodman in the *Democracy Now!* studio to explain why he is heading to Canada.

As the brutal US occupation of Iraq continues, an increasing number of American soldiers are saying no to war. Military recruitment goals have been down for months, and the Army in particular is facing its biggest challenge to date in signing new recruits.

A growing number of US soldiers are crossing the border into Canada to seek asylum. Some say this is the first echo of the tens of thousands of war resisters who went north more than 30 years ago to escape the Vietnam War.

We go now to Toronto to speak to Ryan Johnson. We are also joined on the line by Rob Shearer of the Toronto Catholic Worker. He is part of a network that is helping Ryan and soldiers like him to seek asylum in Canada.

Here is the June 7, 2005 interview on Democracy Now!:

AMY GOODMAN: Today we speak with US war resister, Ryan Johnson. He recently came to Democracy Now! studios with his wife Jennifer just before heading north to the Canadian border. I began by asking him about his reasons for his decision to leave.

RYAN JOHNSON: Well, I mean, there’s several reasons. I was in the army and, you know, just seeing the things that have been going on. And it was a hard decision for me to go. I just know that after everything that is over with, if I had stayed, it would have been more difficult for me to get a job in the area that I live in. And, you know, I just wanted to start over. Plus, you know, it’s just like a real big political decision. It puts the issue of the war being illegal more international, instead of just being here at home, and there just isn’t enough media about what’s going on with the soldiers.

AMY GOODMAN: When did you decide to enlist?

RYAN JOHNSON: I enlisted November of 2003. I went to basic of March 2004, though. So there was like six months from the time I enlisted to the time that I actually went.

AMY GOODMAN: And why did you enlist?

RYAN JOHNSON: Well, the town I’m from—well, not just the town, the area, the Central Valley, that I’m from, it’s mostly agriculture. And that’s about all that we have is like agriculture, fast food jobs. It’s difficult to get a job there that pays over minimum wage.

AMY GOODMAN: Where do you live?

RYAN JOHNSON: I live in Visalia, California.

AMY GOODMAN: Right near Fresno?

RYAN JOHNSON: Yes.

AMY GOODMAN: And so, how did the military become an option?

RYAN JOHNSON: Well, after two or three years of just like going from one job to another, because I had had like over eight jobs in two years, and none of them had, you know, really been able to sustain any sort of normal life for me. So we happened upon the army Web site and, you know, they promised that it will be a steady job, and you’ll have a place to live and you’ll have food, which all those are things that I hadn’t had yet, so it sounded good at the time.

AMY GOODMAN: And did you meet with anyone, a recruiter, to make your decision?

RYAN JOHNSON: I was actually going to do Army National Guard so that I could, you know, just have pay here, and I went to speak to the recruiters, and I ended up talking to a regular army recruiter, and—

AMY GOODMAN: And what did they tell you?

RYAN JOHNSON: Well, they, you know, they promised everything. They said that, you know, I could get a big bonus for joining, and they have non-combat jobs, so, you know, there’s no—there’s a less likely chance of going to Iraq or anything like that. And—

AMY GOODMAN: Did they say you would go to Iraq?

RYAN JOHNSON: Well, actually my father is deceased, and I told them that, and they said, “Oh, well, you know, since your father’s deceased, you won’t have to go, because there is a clause that says that if you have a family member that is deceased, you won’t have to go.” But that’s only if it’s after you join the military they died and they had to have died in combat. They didn’t tell me that. So I was under the impression that I wouldn’t go.

AMY GOODMAN: And what did you think you would be doing?

RYAN JOHNSON: Well, the job that I was signed up for was warehouse worker, so being a warehouse worker I figured I wouldn’t really be seeing combat in Iraq anyway. That’s how they made it sound.

AMY GOODMAN: Did you get a big bonus for signing?



RYAN JOHNSON: Well, at the time I thought it was good. I got like, what was it?—\$40,000 for college.

AMY GOODMAN: \$40,000?

RYAN JOHNSON: Yeah. Because, you know, one of the things that I had wanted to do was go to college. That’s one of the reasons I joined, and \$40,000 for college sounded really good at the time. After I got in, there was people that had the same job as me that went like a couple days after I went to sign up that had like \$35,000 for college, plus they had choice of duty station and like \$2,000 bonus. There was one guy that had \$7,000 bonus on top of all the other things.

AMY GOODMAN: And so, did you go to college? Did you use, were you given cash to do that or they said they would pay directly to the college if you went?

RYAN JOHNSON: You go through this program. You have to sign up and everything. And your commander has to okay for you to go to college. But no one was being okayed to go to college because we were just so busy with the deployment. By the time that I got out of basic and everything, and all of the soldiers I had talked to, they—none of them had gone to college while they were in. I mean, there’s like a very small percentage of people that actually take advantage of that.

AMY GOODMAN: November 2003, that means the invasion, the occupation, was already on when you signed up?

RYAN JOHNSON: Yes.

AMY GOODMAN: And what was your impression of it?

RYAN JOHNSON: Well, the things that you see on TV and the things that you hear about, it sounded like we were doing like a lot of good things over there. We’re rebuilding and, you know, we’re bringing democracy to the country, because that’s what you hear on TV. That’s what you hear people talk about. That’s all you hear about it. So that was my impression of what was going on.

AMY GOODMAN: When did it start to change?

RYAN JOHNSON: Well, I went through A.I.T. and I had heard some of the stories that the instructors had told us of what was going on over there. And our drill sergeants had impressions of like people that have been taken captive and stuff like that. But then when I got into regular army, I started talking to soldiers that had already gone over there and come back, infantry men and tank drivers and stuff like that, and the stories that they were giving me were just...they were horrifying. One of my sergeants that had gone over there, he was an infantryman, and he was telling me that he doesn’t remember actually killing anybody. He hasn’t—he’s not sure that he has. But watching his friends that were next to him being shot in the face, and, you know, just some of the stuff that he had seen while he was there. He had post-traumatic stress disorder, and he’s over there right now for a second time.

AMY GOODMAN: As you started to ask questions, what did you do?

RYAN JOHNSON: Well, first I just—I wanted to, you know, just find out what I was looking at when I got over there, what it was going to be like, so I would just—people that I met, I would be like, “So I see you have a combat patch. Were you in Iraq?” They were like, “Yeah.” And I would ask them about—I would just ask them like how it was, and some of the people made it sound like it was—they had no problem with being over there. You know, they didn’t have any post-traumatic stress disorder and stuff like that, and they were ready to go back. You know, they wanted to. And I wasn’t—it kind of—that’s the part that kind of started scaring me that, you know, there was people going over there and they were killing people, and they were coming back without any problems. But other people that I was talking to that had, you know, actually come back and been really hurt by it, seen a lot of really bad things and done a lot of really bad things that—that’s what began to get me thinking that it wasn’t the best thing to do.

AMY GOODMAN: We’re talking to Ryan Johnson. He came into the Democracy Now! studios with his wife, Jennifer, a little while ago before they headed for the Canadian border. We’re going to speak to them in Toronto in just a minute. They have made it across the border. But first, we will continue with the interview when I ask Jennifer about her husband’s decision.

[break]

AMY GOODMAN: We return now to the conversation with Ryan and Jennifer Johnson, who came into our studio just before they crossed the Canadian border. Ryan, a war resister. I asked Jennifer about being with Ryan every step of the way and joining in this decision. I asked for her thoughts.

JENNIFER JOHNSON: It has been really hard seeing a lot of the stuff that’s happened, and we were just at Pablo’s court-martial. We went down to San Diego, and just seeing what they were going through. It has been a big decision.

AMY GOODMAN: Do you think Ryan’s right in doing what he’s doing?

JENNIFER JOHNSON: Yes.

AMY GOODMAN: Have you supported him all along the way?

JENNIFER JOHNSON: Yes.

AMY GOODMAN: Did you think he should have signed up for the military?

JENNIFER JOHNSON: I was behind it. I was the one that wanted him to go down and check it out. And I thought it was good at the time. They promised us a lot of stuff. But after hearing things, I don’t agree with what’s going on.

AMY GOODMAN: You had been married for a few years?

JENNIFER JOHNSON: Yes.

AMY GOODMAN: You guys are a very young couple. When did you get married?

RYAN JOHNSON: 2001.

AMY GOODMAN: You were 18?

RYAN JOHNSON: I was 18, and Jennifer was 24. Or 21.

JENNIFER JOHNSON: I’m 24 now.

AMY GOODMAN: So about 21.

JENNIFER JOHNSON: Yes.

AMY GOODMAN: You got married right out of high school? Did you graduate, Ryan, from high school?

RYAN JOHNSON: I did not graduate from high school. I dropped out a year and a half before that, before we got married.

AMY GOODMAN: Was that an issue in going into the military. Did you need to have graduated?

RYAN JOHNSON: Yeah, it was, because, well, I went back and got my G.E.D. But even still, it’s really difficult to get a job without a couple of years in college in my area. But that still put me behind the curve, not having a high school diploma.

AMY GOODMAN: Well, it’s been quite a while since you enlisted, November 2003. It has been about a year and a half. When did you decide you’re not going to go to Iraq?

RYAN JOHNSON: We had been thinking about it for like quite a while after I got to my duty station. I had been talking to soldiers and stuff. But the decision wasn’t completely made until—it was the Wednesday before I was supposed to deploy.

AMY GOODMAN: Which was when?

RYAN JOHNSON: What was that? It was January 12 or 13 of 2005. And, yeah, it was January 12 or 13. And we were supposed to deploy January 15.

AMY GOODMAN: You were going to go to Iraq?

RYAN JOHNSON: Yes.

AMY GOODMAN: So what did you do?

RYAN JOHNSON: Well, we just collected like all the information we could possibly get on becoming AWOL, you know, just

off the internet and through talking to people. And I was scheduled to leave at ...I was scheduled to be in my unit at 8:00 AM, so we could deploy at 9:00. And I was—we left at 3:00 AM January 15. So just like four or five hours before I was supposed to deploy.

AMY GOODMAN: Where was the base? Where were you going...supposed to be going?

RYAN JOHNSON: Well, we were going to go to Kuwait, and we were going to spend less than a month in Kuwait, and then we were going to drive the 350 miles down a airport drive to Al Ahmadi.

AMY GOODMAN: Did you talk to other people who were going to Iraq, other soldiers? Did you say you weren't going to go?

RYAN JOHNSON: No, because, well, I had been considered AWOL once before. I didn't actually go AWOL, I was stuck in a snowstorm. And when I got back, I was treated very, you know, pretty badly. I mean, I was—they made me stand in the corner of the room the entire day, which was like eight hours. And, you know, if I said I was tired they would have me do pushups and situps and jumping jacks, and whatnot, which, I mean, which is pretty standard. I mean, but—at one point I had to go outside for formation, and one of my sergeants instructed me to talk to a different sergeant and tell him what had happened. And he was a sergeant, first class, and he was just like, “Okay, I understand you were stuck in a snowstorm, whatever.” Then my other sergeant came outside, and he was like, “Why aren't you doing pushups? Why aren't you still down on the ground?” And I was like, “Well, he didn't tell me. He was alright with the fact that I was gone.” He said, “No, you get down and do pushups.” And I was doing pushups, and he came back and he said, “Did you know that you were considered a deserter because you were considered AWOL?” I said, “Yeah, I guess I could be considered a deserter.” And he said, “I could shoot you right now because of that. Legally, I could shoot you.” He said, “Do you want me to shoot you?” I said, “You have to do what you have to do, sergeant.” And he said, “Well, I'm going to talk to the first sergeant about it.” And he left me outside doing pushups. But, you know, it's—I didn't talk to anybody about it. I just...I left because of that fact, and I just knew that people wouldn't want to—wouldn't want to hear it. You know?

AMY GOODMAN: So, Ryan, where did you go?

RYAN JOHNSON: I went back to Visalia.

AMY GOODMAN: And now, it's been, what, five months?

RYAN JOHNSON: A little over five months.

AMY GOODMAN: How did you end up going to Pablo Paredes's court-martial in San Diego?

RYAN JOHNSON: Well, one of the groups that I was talking to was the G.I. Rights Hotline. And they were organizing things for Pablo Paredes's case, protests and whatnot. And I had heard about it through them, and I decided that it would be a good thing for me to go to just to, you know, see what I might be going through at that time, because I hadn't yet made the decision to go to Canada. And I went, and I was there for like five or six days with Pablo and Camilo and Aidan.

AMY GOODMAN: Pablo Paredes, Camilo Mejia—

RYAN JOHNSON: Pablo Paredes, Camilo Mejia, and—

AMY GOODMAN: Florida Army National Guardsman who was court-martialed and served almost a year in jail.

RYAN JOHNSON: Yes. He was sentenced to a year and ended up doing nine months.

AMY GOODMAN: Aidan Delgado.

RYAN JOHNSON: Aidan Delgado, yeah.

AMY GOODMAN: Also went to Iraq.

RYAN JOHNSON: Yes, who also went to Iraq and became a conscientious objector while he was there.

AMY GOODMAN: And what kind of influence did that have on you?

RYAN JOHNSON: You know, it was really inspiring to be around those people, because, you know, Camilo had already been to Iraq. And he came back, and then he...you know, it took that for him to stand up and say that this isn't right, you know, actually seeing it and being there. And Camilo, he did the same thing. He didn't come back and go through the same things, but he had to see what was going on there to realize that it was—it was not really a good thing to be there and to be going through that, and he stood up to his commanding officer and first sergeant and said, “I'm not going to take part in this. I'll stay here, but I will not take part in the fighting.”

AMY GOODMAN: And so you were at the court-martial. Were you at the court?

RYAN JOHNSON: No, there was only very few people that were allowed to go inside the court. So I stayed outside with all of the protesters and everything. And they would—the people that could go into the court-martial, they would call back with information what was going on, letting us know what the judge was saying and what had been happening.

AMY GOODMAN: Were you concerned about being caught?

RYAN JOHNSON: No. That's—that's one of the least of my concerns, really. I was concerned that if I got caught, they would still try and force me to go to Iraq. That was my only concern. But jail time was not a big deal to me.

AMY GOODMAN: So why have you decided to go to Canada?

RYAN JOHNSON: Well, if I eventually turn myself in, because you can't run forever, eventually you have to build a sustained life and get a job and everything, I would do my time or whatever and I would get out, but then I would have to go back to Visalia, because that's the only place that I would have to live. And then, not only would I be a high school dropout, but I would also have jail time on my record. So there is going to be no way of me getting any sort of decent job there. And I would just...I'd be stuck in the same place I was before. So there was that, and then going to Canada is like—it's a really big political decision you have to make. You have to decide that you want to really get the word out there about what's going on with the soldiers, and this makes like an international type thing. You go there and it gets the word out there a little bit more than just staying at home and going to jail and everything.

AMY GOODMAN: And you're willing to do that?

RYAN JOHNSON: I would love to be able to just show people, you know, that it's not worth it and that this war is illegal.

AMY GOODMAN: Ryan Johnson, a war resister, spoke to us with his wife Jennifer in our studios at Democracy Now! here in New York, then headed north, crossed the border into Canada and is now in Toronto, where he joins us on the telephone. Ryan Johnson with us at the Catholic Worker house, also Rob Shearer, who is with Toronto Catholic Worker, part of a network that's helping Ryan and soldiers like him to seek asylum in Canada. We welcome you both to Democracy Now! Well, Ryan, how was your trip?

RYAN JOHNSON: It was great. I made it to Toronto, obviously. It's nice here.

AMY GOODMAN: How did you get there?

RYAN JOHNSON: We took my car. We drove from California. We went across the—just drove across the border.

AMY GOODMAN: Did you have any problems crossing the border?

RYAN JOHNSON: Not at all. We expected them to ask for ID and birth certificate, and they just asked us a few questions. We said, you know, we were going shopping. They were like, come on in. Went straight through.

AMY GOODMAN: How did you end up at the Toronto Catholic Worker?

RYAN JOHNSON: I was staying at someone else's house, and Jeremy Hinzman advised me to contact them because they might have a place for me to stay a little bit longer term than just couch surfing at different people's houses.

AMY GOODMAN: And Jeremy Hinzman is another US soldier like you who went to Canada. He actually applied for political refugee status and was recently—that request was rejected, and he has appealed the decision.



Ryan Johnson

RYAN JOHNSON: Yes.

AMY GOODMAN: Rob Shearer, can you talk about what you're doing at the Toronto Catholic Worker? What this idea of modern day underground is?

ROB SHEARER: Sure, yeah. I mean, I think it's first of all important to point out that from 1965 to 1973 there were 50,000 draft age Americans who made their way to Canada, refusing to participate in what they considered an immoral war. And so, Canada has always in some ways tried to be a place of asylum for people who want to resist the empire, so to speak. Sorry. So the Catholic Worker is part of a network of organizations and, you know, political organizations, faith-based organizations right across the spectrum saying that we are committed to make sure that if people want to make decisions based on their conscience to not fight in what is an illegal and immoral war, then we will do our best to support them.

AMY GOODMAN: What is the Canadian government's response to what you're doing?

ROB SHEARER: I think in some way the Canadian government is apathetic about it. I mean, we have to remember the majority of Canadians don't support the war, and the Canadian government, in fact, doesn't support this war. I mean, I think basically what the very polite Canadian response is going to be to kind of see it through the courts. I mean, I think we're seeing that with Jeremy Hinzman, who was a soldier in the 82nd Airborne Division, who came over here in January 2004. He was, as you mentioned, he was just rejected on his first refugee hearing. But there's going to be a whole process of appeals and, I mean, many people in the war resistance movement here—and I believe Jeremy himself—are quite confident that when it gets up to the higher levels of the court there's greater chances of success and hopefully buying into that Canadian history of being a place of asylum for people who are trying to escape and make judgments based on their conscience, often out of their faith, as is in Jeremy's case.

AMY GOODMAN: In October we went to Canada to interview Jeremy Hinzman and Brandon Huey. Since they couldn't be in this country, we thought we would go to them and interviewed them at the studios of CBC, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, with their lawyer who was a Vietnam War resister from the United States who is now doing legal work in Canada. Brandon Huey also joined us. He made his case last week appearing at a hearing in a bid to gain permanent asylum as a refugee. Can you talk about his case?

ROB SHEARER: To be honest I'm not that familiar with Brandon's case. I wouldn't want to speak too much to it. I can speak on a broader level inasmuch as I know that there's a good number of people who—of resisters from the U.S. military who have shown up. The last time I spoke to Jeremy, which, you know, was a few weeks ago, there was something like eight or nine families who were seeking refugee status or who had left, and that's only taking into account, of course, the military quotient there. We certainly get calls all the time from civilians in the United States saying that living in the midst of the hysteria and the empire that's there is getting more and more unlivable. And then there's lots of debates about whether it's wise to abandon that and jump ship and come to Canada or not. But we certainly do hear a lot of requests from people.

AMY GOODMAN: In looking at the *Toronto Sun*, they said that the person who heard Huey's case from the Immigration Refugee Board, Brian Goodman, said that Huey's bid for refugee status rests on whether human rights abuses in Iraq by coalition forces are systematic or not.

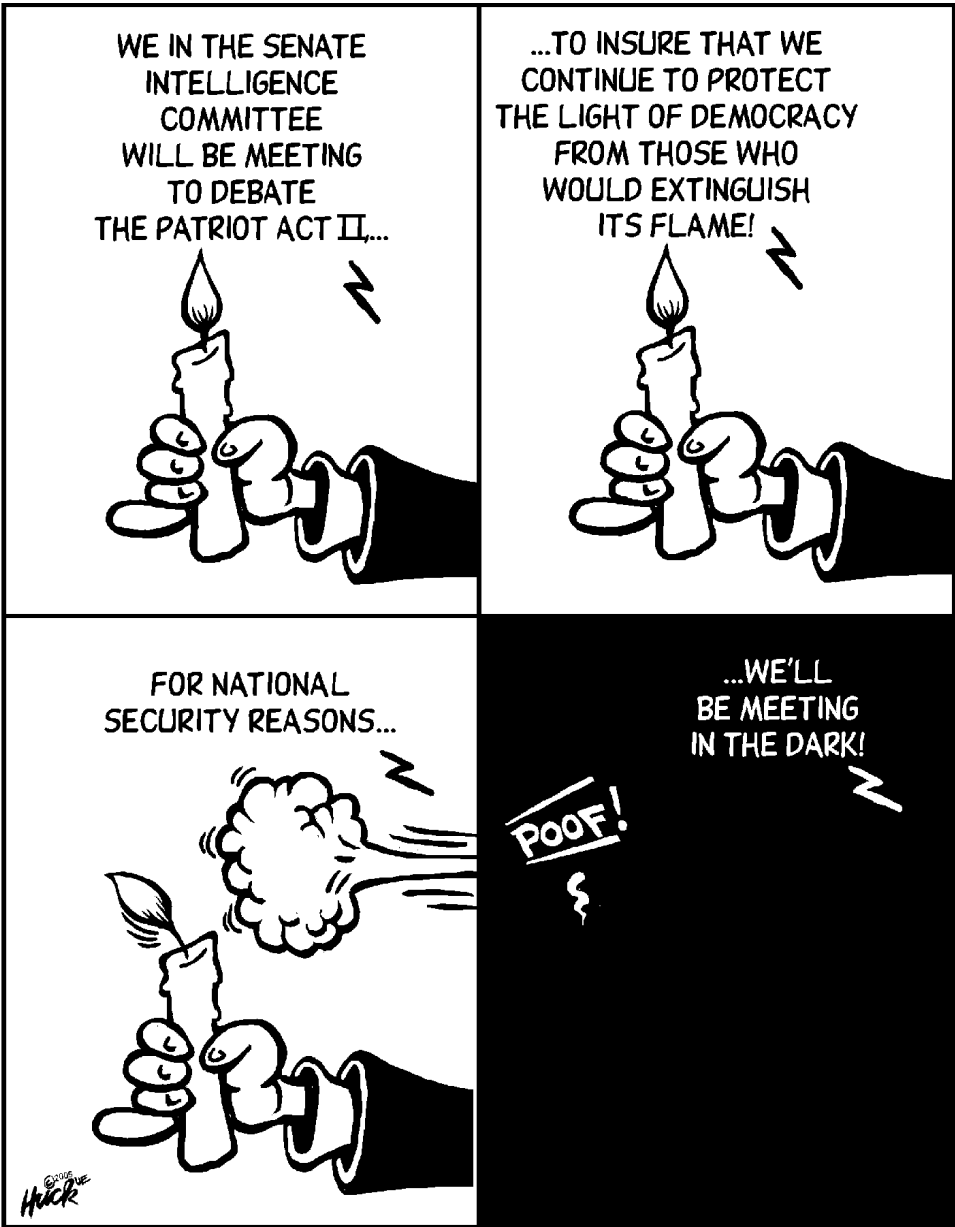
ROB SHEARER: Right.

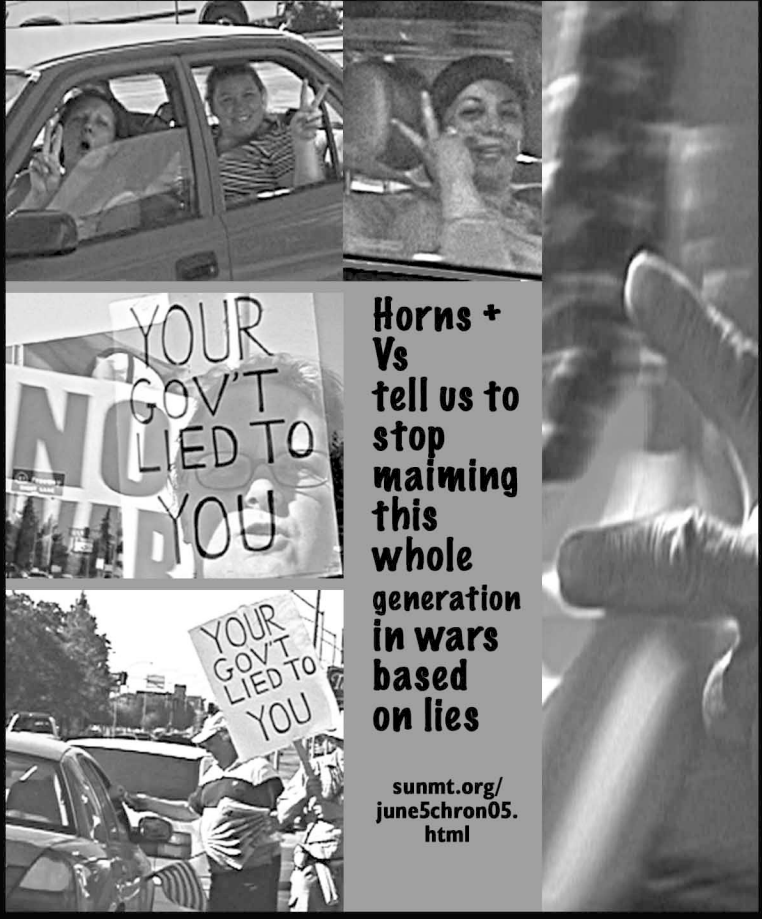
AMY GOODMAN: Let me end with Ryan Johnson. What significance do the people who have come before you who have gone to Canada, like Jeremy Hinzman, like Brandon Huey and the people who have resisted in the United States, like Camilo Mejia, like Pablo Paredes, Aidan Delgado, what impact do they have on you?

RYAN JOHNSON: Well, because of them, I found out about the movement. I found—we found Jeremy Hinzman's site before I went AWOL. And one of our first thoughts was to go to Canada, and we found the GI Rights hotline, and we were looking at that. Then we found stuff on Camilo Mejia, Aidan Delgado, and, you know, it kind of inspired me that people were doing this. It let me know that there were other people like me that weren't wanting to go to the war and that there's people just trying to get it out there to, you know, soldiers and civilians alike, letting them know that they're not the only ones that don't believe in it.

AMY GOODMAN: Well, Ryan Johnson, I want to thank you very much for being with us, again, speaking to us from Canada. He successfully crossed the border with his wife, Jennifer, a U.S. soldier resisting war. Also, Rob Shearer of the Toronto Catholic Worker. Photojournalist Andrew Stern and Rick Rowley of Big Noise Films are both working on documentary projects about Ryan and the new underground railroad that's helping war resisters leave the military. You can reach them at their Web sites AndrewStern.net and BigNoiseFilms.com.

To purchase an audio or video copy of this entire program... call 1 (800) 881-2359.





Progressive Thursday
presents
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Jobs are moving to low-wage countries...is the American worker's way of life at stake?
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Progressive Thursday is hosted by the GROW working group of the Fresno County Green Party. It is a free, wheelchair event open to anyone interested in discussing topics of interest to the progressive community.
Contact Leah Haymond (559) 906- 9702
or
Larry Mullen (559) 227-0293

More Damning than Downing Street

by Paul Rogat Loeb

On 6/15/05 “Common Dreams” -- It's bad enough that the Bush administration had so little international support for the Iraqi war that their “coalition of the willing” meant the U.S., Britain, and the equivalent of a child's imaginary friends. It's even worse that, as the Downing Street memo confirms, they had so little evidence of real threats that they knew from the start that they were going to have to manufacture excuses to go to war. What's more damning still is that they effectively began this war even before the Congressional vote.

With Congressman John Conyers about to hold hearings, coverage of the Downing Street memo is finally beginning to leak into the media. In contrast, we've heard almost nothing about the degree to which this administration began actively fighting the Iraq war well in advance of the March 2003 official attack—before both the October 2002 US Congressional authorization and the November United Nations resolution requiring that Saddam Hussein open the country up to inspectors.

I follow Iraq pretty closely, but was taken aback when Charlie Clements, now head of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, described driving in a Baghdad neighborhood six months before the war “and a building would just explode, hit by a missile from 30,000 feet -‘What is that building?’” Clements would ask. “‘Oh, that's a telephone exchange.’” Later, at a conference at Nevada's Nellis Air Force Base, Clements heard a U.S. General boast “that he began taking out assets that could help in resisting an invasion at least six months before war was declared.”

Earlier this month, Jeremy Scahill wrote a powerful piece on The Nation's website, describing a huge air assault in September 2002,

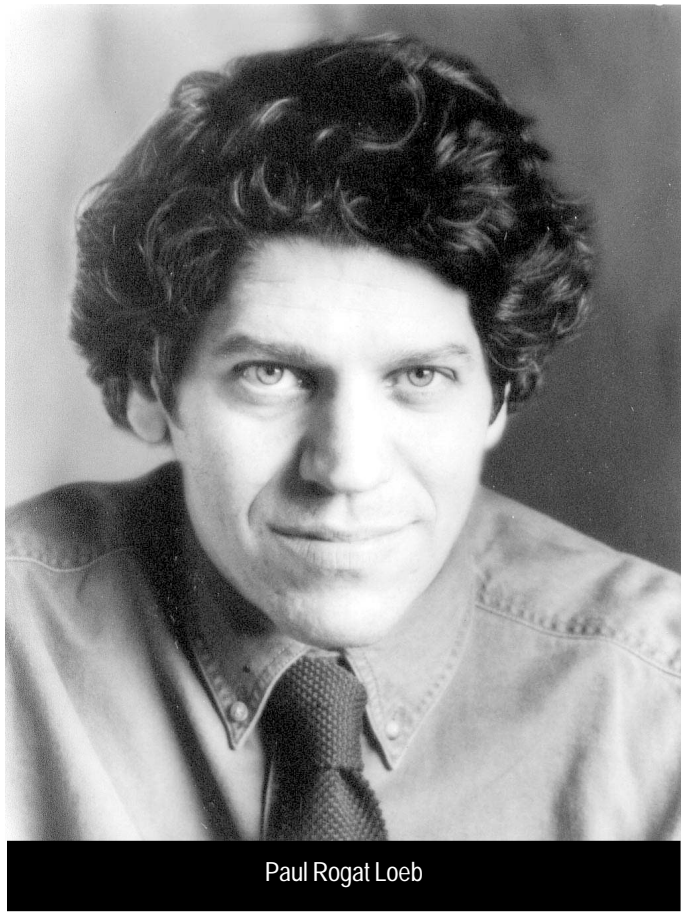
“Approximately 100 US and British planes flew from Kuwait into Iraqi airspace,” Scahill writes. “At least seven types of aircraft were part of this massive operation, including US F-15 Strike Eagles and Royal Air Force Tornado ground-attack planes. They dropped precision-guided munitions on Saddam Hussein's major western air-defense facility, clearing the path for Special Forces helicopters that lay in wait in Jordan. Earlier attacks had been carried out against Iraqi command and control centers, radar detection systems, Revolutionary Guard units, communication centers and mobile air-defense systems. The Pentagon's goal was clear: Destroy Iraq's ability to resist.”

Why aren't we talking about this? As Scahill points out, this was a month before the Congressional vote, and two before the UN resolution. Supposedly part of enforcing “no fly zones,” the bombings were actually systematic assaults on Iraq's capacity to defend itself. The US had never declared war. Bush had no authorization, not even a fig leaf. He was simply attacking another nation because he'd decided to do so. This preemptive war preempted our own Congress, as well as international law.

I don't think most Americans know these prewar attacks ever happened, aside from those who've read Scahill's recent piece, or heard him on Democracy Now. I recall no mainline media coverage at the time, and little in the alternative press. The bombings that destroyed Iraq's air defenses were under the radar for both the American media and public.

If coverage of the Downing Street memo continues to increase, I suspect the administration will try to dismiss it as mere diplomatic talk, just inside baseball. But they weren't just manipulating intelligence so they could attack no matter how Saddam Hussein responded. They weren't only bribing would-be allies into participation. They were fighting a war they'd planned long before. They just didn't bother to tell the American public.

Paul Loeb is the author of *The Impossible Will Take a Little While: A Citizen's Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear* (Basic Books), named the #3 political book of 2004 by the History Channel and American Book Association. See www.theimpossible.org You can read more about the Downing St memo at <http://www.afterdowningstreet.org>



Paul Rogat Loeb



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Angelica Corporation and UNITE HERE Resolve Labor Dispute

UNITE HERE Press Release

ST. LOUIS, Missouri (June 14, 2005) — Angelica Corporation and UNITE HERE have entered into an agreement resolving their ongoing labor dispute. UNITE HERE is the collective bargaining representative for production workers at 23 of Angelica’s 35 laundry facilities across the country.

For more than a year, Angelica and UNITE HERE have been engaged in a dispute with respect to the best way to provide Angelica’s non-union employees a free choice in deciding whether they wish to be represented by the union. Under the agreement, employees at Angelica’s non-union facilities will have a fair selection process through which they may choose whether they wish to have UNITE HERE as their exclusive bargaining representative. The union is expected to soon initiate organizing efforts at the company’s non-union facilities under the terms of this agreement.

In connection with this agreement, the company and the union have negotiated new, tentative collective bargaining agreements covering those facilities where existing bargaining agreements had expired. These facilities include the company’s laundry plants in Antioch, Fresno and Sacramento, California; Batavia, New York; Tampa, Florida; and Dallas and Wichita Falls, Texas.

The settlement agreement is subject to employees at each of these plants voting to ratify the collective bargaining agreements.

Both UNITE HERE and Angelica are pleased that this agreement brings an end to their ongoing dispute and offers Angelica’s non-union employees the opportunity to freely determine for themselves whether they wish to have UNITE HERE as their exclusive bargaining representative. The parties look forward to a collaborative relationship in the future, and the union has pledged renewed focus to assist the company with its continuing efforts to provide high quality services to its customers and to expand its business.

Angelica Corporation, traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol AGL, is a leading provider of textile rental and linen management services to the U.S. healthcare market. More information about Angelica is available at its Web site, <www.angelica.com>.

UNITE HERE is a newly merged labor union of hospitality, gaming, apparel, textile and laundry workers, with nearly half a million members, including more than 40,000 laundry workers.



These Fresno Angelica workers were prepared to go on strike for better working conditions.
Photo by: Mike Rhodes

8th Annual
Celebration of our Diversity Brunch

4th of July

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Boycott Gallo Wine

By Arturo S. Rodriguez, President
United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO

The United Farm Workers invites people of good will to join our second boycott of Gallo wine in 32 years. Together we will convince America’s wealthiest wine making family to stop exploiting and mistreating all of its vineyard workers in Sonoma County.

When Gallo farm workers in Sonoma County voted overwhelmingly for the UFW in 1994, all of them were full-time workers with benefits. Today, 75 percent of them are temporary employees with no benefits whatsoever.

All of the Gallos’ Sonoma County farm workers endure chronically low pay. Yet the Gallos are offering a zero wage increase.

The Gallos deny the overwhelming majority of their workers health coverage, paid holidays and vacations, job security, and grievance rights.

The Gallos abuse, cheat, and deny these workers benefits, job protections, and humane living conditions in the heart of California’s fabled wine country.

We invite you to see the April 14 news story aired by the Bay Area’s Fox television affiliate, Channel 2, and articles in the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*.

It exposed squalid living conditions suffered by 29 workers who labor in the Gallos’ Sonoma County vineyards. Twenty-nine men were jammed into a small three-bedroom, one-bath house in Windsor. These conditions even shocked veteran state and federal authorities conducting the raid the Channel 2 crew witnessed.

The Gallos say they have no responsibility for the miserable conditions endured by their workers.

The Gallos say they have no responsibility for the refusal to provide any benefits or job protections for 75 percent of their Sonoma County work force.

Like so many big institutions in society today, the Gallos deny responsibility for what is being done to farm workers on their behalf, on their land, to produce their product and to help make their money.

The Gallos may not have a union contract. But they have a social contract—with all the workers whose labor produces their wine and with the public whose patronage sustains their profits.

Through this new boycott, people of goodwill everywhere can have a say. They can say, “No Gallo!”

Cesar Chavez liked to say boycotts are better than elections because the polls never close and you can vote more than once.

We will let people “vote” in some new ways.

When we kicked off our boycotts during the 1960s and 1970s, including the first boycott of Gallo wine in 1973, we sent farm workers on the road to cities across the U.S. and Canada.

Today a virile campaign begins against Gallo. We are launching into cyberspace the news stories on living conditions and the invitation for people of good will to join our boycott.

We will distribute them to the expanding United Farm Workers listserv, which now reaches tens of thousands of committed farm worker activists nationwide.

We are taking our appeal to allied and sympathetic organizations such as Union Voice and Working Assets, to name a few. These and other key listservs will target minority, women’s rights, and environmental groups with millions of good people—plus every Democratic officeholder and like-minded organization.

We will send the news stories and our boycott invitation to all of these people, asking that they spread them to their friends, colleagues, and loved ones wherever they live across America and in the other 85 countries where Gallo wines are sold.

These people will become our advertisers. They will do for us what millions of dollars in TV commercials do for the Gallos.

In addition, we will use all of these contacts to distribute our posters, bumper stickers, and buttons.

There will be traditional boycott activities and events as well. We will solicit and obtain endorsements and support from a long list of individuals and groups encompassing people from every walk of life.

We will rely upon the Internet, other avenues and forums and the reputation the union of Cesar Chavez has built over four decades to reach throughout California and into thousands of distant places.

We will ask millions of people of good will to respond to an appeal for them to act constructively by convincing the Gallos to do the responsible thing.

And in the end, we will succeed.

Boycott these Gallo Labels

Anapamu	Gallo Vermouth	Peter Vella
Andre	Gossamer Bay	Rancho Zabaco
Ballatore Spumante	Indigo Hills	Rancho Zabaco Winery:
Bartles & Jaymes Coolers	Indigo Hills Blanc de Blancs	Red Bicycleette
Bella Sera	Liberty Creek	Redwood Creek
Black Swan	Livingston Cellars	Tott’s
Boone’s Farm	Louis M. Martini	Turning Leaf
Bridlewood Winery	MacMurray Ranch	Turning Leaf Coastal Reserve
Burlwood	Marcelina	Whitehaven
Carlo Rossi	McWilliams Hanwood Estate	Wild Vines
Cask & Cream Caramel Temptation	Mirassou	William Wycliff
Cask & Cream Chocolate Temptation	Napa Valley Vineyards	
Copperidge		
Da VINCI		
E & J Gallo Twin Valley		
E&J Cognac		
E&J Gallo Vineyards		
E&J VS Brandy		
E&J VSOP Brandy		
Ecco Domani		
Ernest & Julio Gallo Twin Valley Vineyards		
Frei Brothers		
Frei Brothers Reserve		
Gallo Estate		
Gallo Fairbanks		
Gallo Livingston Cellars		
Gallo of Sonoma		
Gallo of Sonoma County Series		
Gallo of Sonoma Estate Series		
Gallo of Sonoma Single Vineyard		
Gallo Sheffield Cellars		



The United Farm Workers call for a boycott on Gallo Wine.
Photo by: David Bacon

Five Leading Unions Form New Coalition To Rebuild American Labor Movement

Press Release from the Service Employees International Union

The leaders of five of the largest unions in the AFL-CIO—Teamsters, UFCW, UNITE-HERE, Laborers, and SEIU—announced on June 16, 2005, the formation of the Change to Win Coalition, a new alliance devoted to creating a large-scale, coordinated campaign to rebuild the American labor movement.

At a meeting with 50 top officials from the unions, the Coalition approved a Constitution and Bylaws that would promote the coordination, cooperation, and collective action of their affiliated organizations to boost union strength and improve workers' lives.



“Our goal is to empower the tens of millions of American workers who face the daily challenge of making ends meet and whose voice has been silenced by the overwhelming power of large global corporations and their representatives in Washington,” the five presidents said in a joint statement.

“The basic principle that brings us here today is that American workers cannot win a better life unless more workers belong to unions, and unless those unions have the focus, strategy, and resources to unite workers in their industry and raise standards for pay, health care, pensions, and working conditions,” they continued.

While the founding unions hope their proposals are passed by the delegates to the AFL-CIO Convention, it will put them into practice immediately through the structure and activities of the Change to Win Coalition. Regardless of the agenda adopted in Chicago by the AFL-CIO, the Coalition will move forward with its reform program after the Convention.

The union leaders said today that they welcome other labor organizations into the Coalition. They said, “In the Constitution and Bylaws we adopted today, we pledged mutual support and solidarity, no raiding, and no retaliation for those who may choose to leave the AFL-CIO. We seek to change the face not only of what organized labor does, but how it does it.”

The Coalition unions have pioneered new organizing techniques. Each member union is contributing funds to the Coalition to take those techniques to a new level by cooperatively organizing non-union workers in key areas of the private sector.

The Coalition launched its Web site today: <www.changetowin.org>.

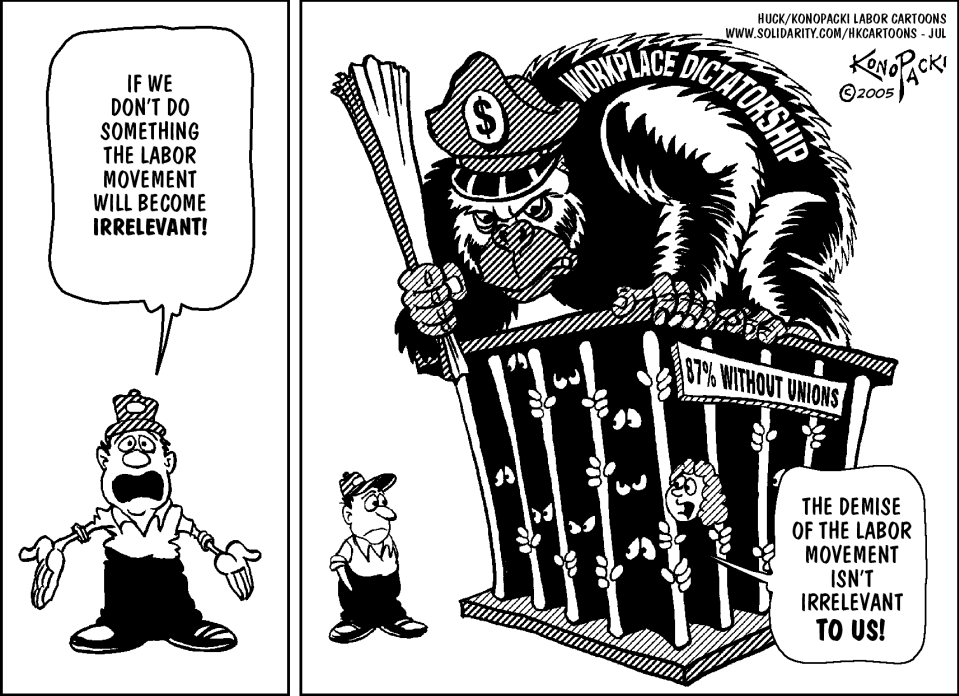
“The world is nearly unrecognizable from what it was a generation ago. The stakes could not be higher. If the labor movement doesn’t adopt dramatic changes today to cope with the new economy it will find itself marginalized into oblivion. We come together today to prevent that,” the union presidents said.

The union presidents are:

- Terence O’Sullivan, President, Laborers’ International Union of North America
- James P. Hoffa, President, International Brotherhood of Teamsters
- John W. Wilhelm, President/Hospitality Industry, UNITE-HERE
- Joseph Hansen, President, United Food and Commercial Workers Union
- Bruce Raynor, President UNITE-HERE
- Andrew Stern, President, Service Employees International Union



Big changes are taking place nationally within the labor movement.



Statement on the Governor’s Announcement of a November Special Election

By Art Pulaski, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the California Labor Federation

Arnold Schwarzenegger’s decision to call his taxpayer-funded special election is bad for politics and bad for California. Schwarzenegger ran for office as a non-partisan, non-political reformer. In two years he has devolved into a Bush-lite conservative politician who breaks his promises and sells out working people to satisfy his special interest corporate donors.

The special interests who support the special election are the governor’s friends: pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies, energy companies, and Wall Street brokers. They have helped him raise \$26 million in campaign contributions: more political money than any governor in history. In exchange, the governor vetoed legislation that would have reduced prescription drug costs, banned offshoring of US jobs, and prevented energy blackouts and price gouging. Instead of working together to solve our state’s problems, the governor has chosen confrontation again. He has proven that he is unable to broker compromise solutions and is no longer trusted to keep his promises.

The special election will cost California taxpayers \$80 million. Our state could better spend the \$80 million dollars on hiring teachers, providing new textbooks for our schools, helping seniors afford their prescription drugs, and hiring enough nurses to staff our hospitals.

The governor’s decision to move forward on this special election bullies our real-life action heroes—nurses, teachers, firefighters, and police officers—and the people they serve. He is declaring war on those who are the first to enter a burning building; those who teach our children; who care for our loved ones when they are injured or ill; and who risk their lives to keep our communities safe.

The governor is out of touch with regular working people. He cannot even face the voters to tell them about the special election. He will be making the announcement from behind a desk, in the seclusion of his office, isolated from the protests of teachers, nurses, and firefighters who have challenged his bullying.

We will fight this attack on our real-life action heroes in our streets, on the airwaves, and at the ballot box. We will fight for the firefighters who risk their lives to save us. We will fight for the teachers who teach our kids. We will fight for the police officers walking the beat. We will fight for the nurses tending to the sick, injured, and infirm. We will fight to win and we will never give in.



Censorship in Bakersfield

By Dan Waterhouse



A series of articles about gay Bakersfield high school students won't be published, if at all, until next school year.

A Kern County superior court judge denied an emergency petition filed by members of the East Bakersfield High School newspaper staff, several queer students, and the Gay Straight Alliance on May 25, 2005, the day the last issue of the school year was to go to press.

Judge Arthur Wallace said a full hearing was needed to explore all the facts.

According to the students, serious and sometimes controversial subjects have been covered in the Focus section of the *Kernal*. In December, a series of articles appeared discussing virginity and rape among “straight” teens.

Despite the highly controversial nature of the stories, no attempt was made by school administrators to censor them.

The editorial board of the paper decided to focus on homosexuality for the April issue. “We almost decided not to write about sexual orientation because it seemed too controversial,” Focus editor Maria Krauter said, “but in the end we all decided it was a really important issue that students needed to discuss openly.

“We discussed the way that religion, relationships, and research all factor into the way people feel toward the subject,” Krauter commented. “We started by thinking about the most common questions that people have about homosexuality. What does the Bible say? What do people with gay family and friends experience? What makes people gay? We wanted the Focus section to answer these questions as thoroughly and with as much sensitivity as possible.”

Staff writers wrote articles on the following topics: whether sexual orientation is biologically determined; parents of gay children; a Christian East Bakersfield High student and community pastor who oppose homosexuality because of their religious beliefs; and “out” East Bakersfield High students.

Two days before the paper was due to be laid out and sent to the printer, students say Principal John Gibson and Assistant Principal John Davis demanded to see the articles. The following day, the editorial board met with school officials for three hours to discuss the inclusion of the stories in the paper.

During the meeting, Davis claimed that printing the articles would endanger the gay students. Davis could not describe any specific incident toward them or any other gay student at East Bakersfield High.

According to the students, Davis said the articles could be published if the gay students’ identities were hidden. They said Davis did not make the same demand, (i.e., hiding the identities) of the Christian student or the pastor.

Although they felt removing the names and photographs would lessen the impact of the articles, the editorial board assented to the request.

Then while the paper was being laid out on the evening of April 27, Gibson told the editorial board the articles could not be published at all, and implied that the school would confiscate all copies of the paper immediately if the articles appeared.

Staffers say Gibson claimed he had received a vague report about the transgender student identified in one of the stories. The student later told Krauter there had been no threats toward him. According to GSA’s Central Valley coordinator Robin McGehee, “The students interviewed in the articles were already out on campus—which is an indicator that there is some safety in the climate. These students felt safe enough to be out.

“Some of these students have felt pretty accepted and safe at the school, while others have faced some harassment and it’s been dealt with...and hasn’t escalated,” McGehee said.

At the May 25 court hearing, John Szewczyk, the district’s lawyer, affirmed there supposedly had been several incidents on campus in April and May that led administrators to worry about the queer students’ safety.

Szewczyk told Judge Wallace that information about the incidents was vital to having a full and fair hearing.

Gay student Rudy Cachu (who was one of the students interviewed for the *Kernal* series) told the *Bakersfield Californian* that while he was disappointed the articles would not run before the end of this school year, he feels “like we kind of won in a way. Our story is already out.”

Reporting on gay issues in high school newspapers in California has become tricky. The Bakersfield incident is the second case of censorship in recent months.

The Student Press Law Center reported that Ann Long, the editor of an Orange County high school student newspaper, was fired in January 2005 after school officials claimed she had violated a section of the California Education Code that officials said requires written consent from parents before questioning students about their homosexuality.

Her article featured candid personal quotations from three student members of her high school’s Gay Straight Alliance.

Officials claimed that Section 51513 of the Education Code, which reads, “No test, questionnaire, survey, or examination containing any questions about the pupil’s personal beliefs or practices in sex, family life, morality, and religion...shall be administered to any pupil in kindergarten or grades 1 to 12...unless the parent or guardian of the pupil is notified in writing” applied to the article.

The students featured in the article were 15, 17, and 18 years old.

Assistant Principal Joseph D’Amelia and newspaper adviser Georgette Cerrutti told Long her article violated the code.

D’Amelia and Cerrutti fired Long on January 24. She was told that because she had violated the code’s guidelines she had a choice: resign or be fired. D’Amelia and Cerrutti said this was the “only way” the situation could be solved, Long said. They told her she was being removed for failing to do her job.

However, critics of the decision say section 51513 does not apply. A representative for the state Department of Education said that section 51513 has not been cited before in cases involving student newspapers. The representative said the law applies to the district asking questions of students.

The executive director of the Student Press Law Center, Mark Goodman, also says section 51513 was wrongly applied.

“This law has nothing to do with students talking to other students,” he said.

Goodman added that other sections of the Education Code protect the free press and free expression rights of high school students.



The GBLT community is not happy with Juan Arambula
Photo by: Dan Waterhouse

Assemblyman Arambula Rejects LGBT Equality

By Jay Hubbell

In a close vote in which conservative Democrats allied themselves with the Republican right, Assembly Bill 19, the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act, authored by Assembly Member Mark Leno (D-San Francisco), Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez (D-Los Angeles), and 30 co-authors fell short by just four votes on June 2.

Key to the defeat of this landmark civil rights bill were the votes of three Central Valley Democrats: Juan Arambula of Fresno, Nicole Parra of Hanford, and Barbara Matthews of Tracy. Arambula spoke to the press following the vote and explained that he voted against equal protection of the law for members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community for “religious reasons.”

Tearing down the walls of separation between church and state has long been the clarion call of the religious right. Now, it seems that anti-gay religious fundamentalism is spilling over into the legislative venue of Democratic politics.

But, Arambula and Parra are clearly running against the tide. The California Democratic Party and the Fresno County Democratic Central Committee had unanimously endorsed AB 19. Thousands of Arambula and Parra’s constituents had written, phoned, faxed, and sent emails urging them to support equal protection of the law for everyone.

Only days after this historic defeat for civil equality, the Central California GLBT community celebrated the fourteenth annual Pride Day in the Fresno’s Tower district. However, many of us were in no mood to celebrate anything except our commitment to continue the struggle for full civil equality for all.

When I marched with the Fresno Stonewall Democrats contingent in the parade I carried a sign that said “Robin McGehee for Assembly.” The crowd roared their approval. Most know and deeply respect Robin and her long commitment to the struggle for full equality through Equality California and her Love Welcomes All Conferences. But I did not stop there. I made sign-up sheets available at the Equality California and Stonewall booths. Without even trying, we quickly registered more than a hundred people to volunteer to work for her campaign should she decide to run.

Equality California believes that Central California is ripe for organizing for equal rights. To this end they are committed to backing a “Power Summit” to be held on the weekend of July 16 and 17, 2005. They will bring to Fresno activist organizers from across the nation to inspire and educate the local activist base.

I once heard Assembly Member Jackie Goldberg comment that the one thing an incumbent fears the most is a primary election challenge. This is especially true in California where the districts are stacked to favor either the Democrats or the Republicans. This is undoubtedly why legislators like Parra and Arambula can vote against the Democratic position without fear of being held accountable to their Democratic base.



Odds always favor incumbents because they often accumulate a huge war chest of donations from the special interests—especially business interests. But Arambula may yet rue the day he decided to foist his sectarian beliefs on his constituents and deny them the justice of equal protection and human dignity that all human beings—regardless of the gender of their partner—deserve.

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Grassroots Profile

By Richard Stone

You probably haven't seen her picture in the paper before today. Ingrid Carmean is a grassroots activist who does her work behind the scenes—or a more apt metaphor might be “behind the shrubbery.” Ingrid is a specialist in Integrated Pest Management (IPM), and much of her work is dedicated to reducing the toxicity in our environment (and especially in our schools) from chemicals used to “attack pests.”

Ingrid's concerns are fed from several sources. One is her knowledge of the extreme toxicity of the chemicals typically used in pest control, and how easily they are ingested by humans on site and spread by the wind or through the eco-system. It is this understanding that led Ingrid to Fresno Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (FRESCAMP). At FRESCAMP Ingrid has worked with some of her closest allies (and mentors) like Joan Poss and Rose Rowe. She herself—thanks to her academic training in science and her professional experience in pest control—has become the in-house technical expert. She began working as a FRESCAMP lobbyist at Fresno Unified, leading to her current position as member of the IPM Committee of FUSD, at the directive of the school board. More recently, she has been hired by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation to teach classes around the state so personnel at school districts can learn about reducing toxic exposure for children. (She comments, “And to my amazement, the classes are always full.”)

Ingrid's second source of motivation is a bit different: “I like bugs.” Even as a child she was fascinated by insects, and kept three hives of bumblebees. At college, she got her degree in entomology, and after some false starts, found her niche in the real world doing pest control with minimal reliance on chemicals. “It began,” she recalls, “when a tree trimmer working in my yard told me there were red ants and I'd need to spray before they got into the hose. But to me, there wasn't a problem.” The light bulb came on. She realized she knew more than many people looked to as experts; she could dispel myths and spread good information. “I kept remembering what E. O. Wilson said—he's a world famous entomologist. Someone asked him what to do about ants in the house, and he answered, ‘Watch them, feed them, don't step on them.’”



Grassroots Activist, Ingrid Carmean

IDENTITY BOX

Birthplace: San Mateo, CA
Religious affiliation: Quaker background
Political affiliation: Democratic
Most frequented areas: Clovis Unified School District, Fresno High area
Sources of inspiration: Joan Poss, EllieBluestein, Margaret Hudson, Polly Victor, her two daughters.
Motto: “There's that of God in every man.”
Unlikely interest: Baking bread

Contact info, via FRESCAMP:
Phone: (559) 227-6134
E-mail: ilsasso2003@yahoo.com
Web site: <www.1000friendsoffresno.org/pesticide>

For information about landscaping with native plants—suggested for minimizing introduction of new varieties of unwanted insects—Ingrid recommends Intermountain Nursery in Prather.

Ingrid says she's surprised that people are so afraid of even one bug in the house that they submit to monthly spraying of serious poisons over an entire home or building. “Some people view insects as foreigners, and their property as a homeland with borders to be maintained at all costs.” (In response, I mentioned that a favorite example I use to show our society's reliance on violence is our instant resort to Raid to exterminate any ant that may appear.)

Ingrid is also disturbed that the bugs are often maligned as blameworthy (and in need of eradication) when often the chief problem is that the building is not constructed to keep bugs out. “If you have a slab foundation, there will be cracks for the bugs to come in through.” She also notes that the kind of landscaping used can dramatically impact what kind of critters you deal with. Some people, too, may be put off by fear about cost and the time that alternative remedies take; but in the long run you can typically get the effects you need, more cheaply, without the toxicity.

The third source of Ingrid's social involvement—leading to activity with WILPF as well as FRESCAMP—is a strong opposition to war, deriving from her Quaker upbringing. “War is not the answer,” she says with determination. Not with humans. Not with bugs.

FBI seeks Muslims' help to win the war against terrorism

By Genie Baranoff and Dan Yaseen

Approximately 100 people, mostly Muslims, gathered at the Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno (ICCF) on Friday night, June 17, 2005, to participate in a community forum with law enforcement agencies. The two speakers were Fresno Chief of Police Jerry Dyer and Tom Knowles, Supervisory Special Agent of the Central California Joint Terrorism Task Force, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The forum participants included leaders and members of the Muslim community, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, the Mennonite community, the College Community Congregational Church, Peace Fresno, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). Kamal Abu-Shamsieh, director of the ICCF was the moderator.

The questions and comments of the audience focused on a variety of issues:

- the feeling and belief that Muslims are being targeted as “foes”
- perceived racial profiling by law enforcement,
- media indictment of the Muslim community in Lodi,
- comments by an ex-district attorney, perceived by some as inappropriate, concerning the Wesson murders
- the Patriot Act
- the perceived bias in mainstream media against Palestinians and for Israel

Neither speaker spoke about the recent allegations or actions against members of the Pakistani Muslim community in Lodi because there is an open investigation.

Jerry Dyer assured the audience that the Fresno PD does not practice racial profiling. However, he didn't explain how to file a complaint. He encouraged the audience to check out the police Web site, which contains “voluntary” data on all police actions, including the race, gender, and age of people stopped for traffic issues crime mapping; and data on crime and use of force. He stated that the goal of his organization is to be “an open and transparent organization.”

Chief Dyer encouraged the audience to participate in police activities such as the Citizens' Advisory Board, the Citizens' Police Academy, and the Chaplaincy Program. He spoke of his organization's cultural diversity training, which includes the “dos and don'ts” to avoid offending people from different cultures, including the Sikh, Muslim, and Arab communities.

Tom Knowles, in his remarks, suggested how the Muslim community can help win the war against terrorism:

1. He said the Muslim community must cooperate with the FBI and other law enforcement agencies. On the first hint of suspicion, they must turn in their family members and friends to the FBI. He surmised that's how Italian Mafia was defeated; Italian Americans came to the FBI and informed on their families and friends.
2. He cautioned Muslims to be very careful while donating to any Islamic charities. The FBI is watching Muslim American donations to Islamic charities because of a suspicion/belief that they are financing terrorism. However, the FBI will not release a list of “safe” charities for Muslim donations. [Author's note: Muslims have the religious obligation of *zakat*—donations to help the poor.]

These remarks by Tom Knowles are very telling, in light of complaints of intimidation and harassment by the FBI from several members of the Pakistani American community in Lodi. The ACLU Northern California has filed a Freedom of Information Act request, seeking records of procedures

and policies used during the questioning and detention of dozens of Muslims in Lodi.

“We appreciate and respect the need of the FBI to conduct investigations of possible criminal activity; however any investigation needs to be done in a way that respects individuals' rights,” said Mark Schlosberg, Police Practices Policy Director of the ACLU Northern California.

Knowles said that the Central California Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) adheres to the California Attorney General guidelines that protect the rights and privacy of California citizens. He said, “If you're not crossing that line (violence), the JTTF should be the farthest thing from your mind.” He described a system of “checks and balances when they open a JTTF case. First it goes to Sacramento, and is reviewed by legal counsel, then it goes to Washington DC and is reviewed by the Department of Justice (parent organization) for probable cause.”

Knowles' style was to illustrate via stories versus answering questions directly. He also had a disarming habit of initially making statements such as, “I couldn't agree with you more.” His stories were descriptive and he seemed determined to come across as “folksy,” humorous, and caring.

One of his stories seemed to somewhat backfire. He spoke of working as an undercover cop in east or central Los Angeles. He pointed to his face, saying how he looked like a “Yuppie rich boy.” After driving around a neighborhood block looking for an informant, he was stopped by the area police. The police allegedly ” bounced his head off the trunk” when they discovered his gun under the front seat. When he said he was an FBI agent, they said, “yeah and we are Santa Claus”. His point appears to have been that they stopped him because “he didn't fit the situation” or that they thought he was lost or needed help before he got himself into trouble in such a rough neighborhood. This story was in response to a comment about racial profiling. Was he therefore saying that Muslims, especially those dressed in traditional clothing might be stopped for not “fitting into the situation” (or the neighborhood), or that they might be lost or in need of help?

Both Dyer and Knowles seemed to be obliquely requesting the audience to trust them and their organizations. Dyer stated that he is “a man of faith,” and that he “won't compromise anything in (his) relationship with God.” Knowles reiterated “...if you're a good person, don't worry about us...”

Those of us in Peace Fresno, quite “good,” peace-loving people, know that just being “good” doesn't stop the Joint Terrorism Task Force from apparently violating the California Attorney General Guidelines, not to mention the California Constitution.

And what was FBI Supervisor Knowles's goal in telling his audience that terrorist attacks will occur in the United States in the future, more catastrophic than anyone can imagine? He said the “paranoia isn't there [at the FBI/DOJ] any more like post 9/11.”

Our concern is that the message appears to be, “You'll be okay if you inform on your community. Allow the FBI to snoop into anyone's records because the ends (winning the war against terrorism) justify the means. Consider it your own fault if you are racially profiled (hey—maybe you're just in the wrong place with the wrong color skin). And recognize that the United States is not trying to squash the Muslim world.”



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CHANGING THE WORLD ONE PAIR AT A TIME

By Richard Stone

Would a Jew be willing to meet with a Muslim to talk about Israel? If you felt ill at ease with handicapped people, would you ask to be introduced to one? If you were heterosexual and had never talked seriously with a gay person, would you agree to do so?

The Pairs Project was initiated at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence last fall in the belief that there were individuals who would want to do such things—who would even be eager to go outside their comfort zone, knowing how crucial that act is to quieting the fears and anxiety that breed violence.

We didn't find crowds of volunteers, but we did locate twelve; and of these six mismatched pairs, four completed the six-month program we'd agreed to, and came to a culmination meeting to discuss their experiences.

What follows is an edited rendering of that evening's conversation, organized around two central themes, the first being "What were your expectations and were they met?"

PAIR 1: Lydia Flores with Ed & Toni Eames. Lydia is a veteran educator who left behind the prescribed roles of a Catholic Mexican-American woman of her era and became a leader in her profession and in several progressive organizations. Ed & Toni are both blind, and are internationally recognized advocates for assistance-dog users and the rights of the disabled. Meeting someone handicapped was one of Lydia's expressed interests on her application.

Lydia: I requested a handicapped partner because I realized how little experience I've had and how awkward I've felt when I have been with someone with a visible disability. I've been amazed to find how independent Toni and Ed are, how much they do for themselves. For instance, Toni does beautiful knitting—I wouldn't have thought it possible.

I think a lot has to do with their attitude of not feeling victimized by life, but instead of facing the challenge of doing what's possible. I see also how easy it is to project our own fears and limitations on those with disabilities—we show how readily we let difficulty circumscribe our own lives. Even today when I transported Ed & Toni for the first time, I became anxious worrying how their dogs would fit into my car. But it was all easy—it was just new to me, and I was afraid of potential difficulties. This has been a wonderful eye-opening experience for me.

Ed: We agreed readily to participate in the project because we're always looking to go outside our natural network of people dealing with disabilities. But Lydia was a surprise to us, too, because our previous encounters with women of her age and background had been almost stereotypical. The women stayed in the background and took care of the husbands. Lydia is not like that at all, and as we heard her stories about overcoming expectations of dependency and silence, we realized she had dealt, really, with a lot of the same issues we face.

It was also great fun meeting Lydia in public. People were always coming up to say hello to her; she seems to know everyone.

Another interesting thing for us—before moving to Fresno, we lived in New York City in an area with a lot of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans. So we presumed we knew something about Hispanic culture. Lydia helped us see how wrong that is, how different the Mexican experience and culture is from the Caribbean and Central American.

Toni: Lydia was a refreshing change from the passive, caretaking type we expected. We were fascinated by her history of activism and breaking with tradition. She has a spirit we've come to admire very much.

PAIR 2: Linda Corrales and Valta Pointer. Linda is a student in the FCC Drug & Alcohol Abuse Counseling Program, a single mom, and a proclaimed Christian. Valta is in her late 70s, a long-time activist for fairness and human rights, and a free thinker who divorced herself from a Catholic upbringing.

Linda: I have to admit I didn't want to be thrown together with someone different from me. I did it only to get extra credit for a course I was taking. But as soon as I met Valta I fell in love with her.

Even though I disagree with her a lot, I value hearing her point of view...she's older and more experienced. We especially have different religious understandings, but she filled a big gap in my life. I was a grandma's girl and her loss was devastating. Valta fills an emptiness, and I'm so glad to have met her.

Valta: I've really enjoyed getting to know Linda...maybe because we both like to blab. I respect her drive to get her education and better herself, and it's been a pleasure to see what a good mother she is.

I joined the project because I think so much of the violence in the world would be overcome if people got to know those different from themselves. I don't know how to persuade more people to do it. But, like in gangs, maybe they wouldn't be so ready to harm others if they did things like this.

PAIR 3: Richard Stone and Angel Fernandez. Richard is of Jewish heritage; he works with FCNV and the Community Alliance, and has been in a 30-year gay relationship. Angel is a native of Spain; he was raised Catholic but now follows a variety of spiritual practices; he is an engineer with Caltrans.

Richard: I was paired with Angel without any specific differences, only we were the last two left. Of course our growing up was in vastly different cultures, and we speak English with different accents. But although our political values and interests are similar, at first we had a hard time making sense of each other. How we enter into the situation of meeting is itself tremendously different. I'm inquisitive and trying to understand people's goals and motives, and at first Angel wouldn't or couldn't answer my questions. I thought, "What's wrong with this man, what's he hiding?" It took a while to realize there's nothing wrong; he simply gets his satisfaction from different things. Now I see him as quite wonderful in his way.

Angel: I'm very centered in emotions, and I was perplexed by meeting someone who has to analyze everything. I'd make a remark and he'd say, "What do you mean?" and I'd say, "There's nothing to understand, it's just a feeling that comes from the heart. Or I'd enjoy our silence and he wanted to talk and ask questions when I had nothing I was moved to say. He's more tangible, maybe, and I'm more abstract: it was an interesting challenge, but I felt it as part of the deal.

Sometimes I think if enemies could be arranged to share a small space together for a few weeks, they'd come out not being enemies.

Richard: There's a song called "In The Bath" about that—it says the world's problems could be solved if leaders of opposing countries would just take a long hot bath together. Actually for Angel and me, we found our best time was taking walks together.

Angel: Yes, indeed.

PAIR 4: Marsha Warnick and Sara Al-Hashimi: Marsha is a long-time educational administrator. Her Jewish upbringing is an essential part of her identity, but she is deeply distressed by the violence in Israel and the Middle East. She requested a Muslim counterpart. Sara is a young woman who was born in Iraq, who works as a youth director at the Islamic Cultural Center.

Marsha: I grew up very sensitive to being Jewish and protective of my culture. Israel has been important to me, but in light of what's going on there I felt a need to make contact with a Muslim, to prove we don't have to be enemies. It's so disturbing to see hatred and violence—the very things my Jewish family values taught us not be—being played out in Palestine.

I've done a lot of reading about Islam, and I have respect for its teachings. Meeting Sara was a great opportunity to express my unhappiness about how she and other Muslims might perceive me. Then when we first met I thought, "What can such a young woman have in common with me?" But from the start we talked nonstop. Now I've gotten to know not just her but other Muslims and her family. I've concluded Muslims and Jews should be best friends—what's happening is a terrible mistake. We have a similar religious basis, and similar heart.

I've come away from my meetings with Sara and visits to her home and the mosque feeling fulfilled and whole. Now I'm becoming courageous in saying to other Jews, "What are we doing? You say things about Muslims and you've never even met one. Your ideas come from TV and demagogues."

I'm so grateful for the project. My experiences reinforce that I'm on a right path, and I'm going to stay on it. Sara and I will always be friends.

Sara: I'm very thankful for being paired with Marsha. I've had Jewish friends, but we just shared our common interests and activities. With Marsha I've been able to talk about things that matter a lot to me, like religion and politics. I've felt for a long time that being Muslim in America is really weird...with Marsha I could say it and get feedback. Again, thank you.

WHAT PROBLEMS AROSE?

Lydia: At one of our meetings, Toni and Ed had to finish exactly at a certain time but hadn't warned me. Suddenly I was told, "You have to go." I was confused and left, but on the way home I got angry. I felt like I'd been kicked out and wasn't needed. Within a few minutes I realized that old feelings had been triggered from my childhood when I'd been abused, but I still needed to get clear right away. So I wrote a note saying, "We can't do this." They called and thanked me, and it was fine after that.

Toni: I didn't remember being quite so abrupt, but I understood how Lydia felt, and I admired her for being clear so fast. Often people just harbor resentment, and back off.

Richard (to Ed and Toni): Is there something in the way you as blind people have to arrange your lives that contributed to this? I've seen how you rely on knowing exactly where things are; and having to depend on others, you do whatever you can not to inconvenience helpers—like being ready when a reader comes or someone's picking you up.

Ed: Organizing is our way of life!

Toni: Usually when Lydia came we'd meet at 10 for just an hour, but that day we drifted on past 11. I heard our 11 o'clock reader at the door, and I blurted out, "We really have to end now." I didn't mean to be rude, but certainly I should have forewarned Lydia.

Richard: And of course you can't read people's expressions.

Toni: Actually, we were leaving the next day on a trip and I didn't want to cancel with Lydia but I was feeling pressed for time. I was counting on our routine to just continue...it was silly not to have said something in advance.

Lydia: This is the importance of having ongoing relationships, getting to see how people organize themselves and react to situations differently, then learning to adjust and respect each other's boundaries.

Richard: You remind me of the time with Angel that he arranged a meeting but he gave me the name of one restaurant and the location of another, so we missed each other. It was no big deal to me, but I was surprised that he was so apologetic. I didn't understand why, for a simple mistake. Was it a cultural difference—or emotions versus logic?

Angel: It was a mistake of communication, and that is very important to me. Maybe I feel it too much. I was embarrassed at inconveniencing you and also at having made such a stupid mistake.

Marsha: When I told friends I was doing the project, they said, "Are you crazy?" People said, "Jews and Muslims have always been enemies, why do you think it will be different for you?" But I know that's not true. For years prior to the establishment of Israel, Jews and Muslims lived together peacefully in a lot of countries. But that is not what the public understands, thanks largely to the media. What I know is that with Sara, and with the other Muslims I met, I never felt conflict. So I know it doesn't have to be that way.

Toni: We have a friend who's lived in Israel for 25 years. She teaches at a school for handicapped children, and she comments how the Israeli and Palestinian mothers get along beautifully, with the common goal of helping their children. Why can't that filter up to politics—we all have the same love for our children and the same basic needs? It's our fears that keep us apart.

Valta: In 1948, I was so happy for Jews that the state was created, but I forgot completely about the Palestinians living there. I used to keep both an American and an Israeli flag in my window. But now I've taken them both down.

Richard: A general question—should we be amazed that eight people were willing

to do this project, or astounded that so few were? Are we who did this the exceptions to the rule?

Valta: I saw it as a wonderful opportunity.

Lydia: People are afraid of the unknown—friends look at me as if I'm weird.

Toni: Lydia's told us how difficult she found it to involve people in the projects she's undertaken over the years, and that completely reflects our experience with the handicapped community. People seem to want someone else to do the work. It's a problem to get anyone to do anything.

At this point, the conversation turned to thoughts about how to engage people for a future Pairs Project. Those of us who participated were all appreciative of the experience and concurred that getting past fears and preconceptions is crucial to creating a more peaceful world. Anyone else interested?

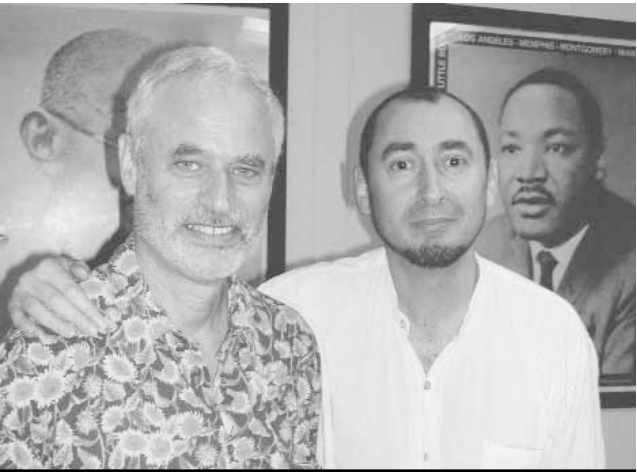
If any readers would like to join us in the fall, or know of a group interested in participating, please contact us: leave a phone message for the Pairs Project at the Center for Nonviolence (237-3223) or e-mail us at FCNV@sbcglobal.net.



Lydia Flores with Ed & Toni Eames
Photo by: Libby Bevens



Linda Corrales and Valta Pointer
Photo by: Libby Bevens



Richard Stone and Angel Fernandez
Photo by: Libby Bevens



Marsha Warnick and Sara Al-Hashimi
Photo by: Libby Bevens

Ellie Bluestein: Outstanding Advocate for the Common Good

Editor's note: This is the speech Ellie gave as she received the first Carl and Esther Robinson Award for the Outstanding Advocate for the Common Good

Thank you to all who are honoring me in the name of Esther and Carl Robinson, whom I greatly respect and admire for their actions on behalf of the common good. I deeply appreciate the recognition which you are giving me tonight. But I have to quote my friend Louise Erickson. When WILPF (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom) presented her with a Life Membership in this organization of which she had been such a loyal, hardworking member for many years she said, "Why should I be rewarded for doing what is important to me with the people I love the best?" That really says it all for me too.

I feel very privileged. I have loving and supportive family and friends, a great house with a good, hybrid car, adequate health insurance, Social Security and retirement income on which I can live comfortably, no debt. When I sit in my beautiful garden, smelling the flowers and listening to the birds, I think of the billions of people around the world who are dying for lack of food and water, fleeing refugees who have no permanent place to stay, people at the mercy of unbelievable violence, torture, oppression, and war, war war!

And I know that the world has such abundance that every single person could be able to live the way I do.

About 10 years ago Pat Wolk and I did a series of interviews and photographs of 20 Fresno women committed to change. We asked them why they were willing to risk in order to bring about changes and why they thought other people were not willing to do so. The word *greed* was mentioned. Here's what Ernestine Leas said: "I believe that everyone is entitled to food and shelter and education and medical care just because they're breathing, and that we ought to find some kind of an economic system where these things would be available to everyone. I would hope that we could begin to feel that none of us needs to amass great fortunes and want to have more and more, that we would get more pleasure out of seeing everyone having the good life. But I think that's one way the United States has gone wrong. We've got mass culture that says you're supposed to work as hard as you can to get absolutely as much as you possibly can, and you're supposed to protect it from everyone else. The conniving that's done in that area is to get ahead of the next person, especially the have-nots."

Marcia McLane put it this way, "I have been so blessed during my lifetime, that I need to share this. It is fulfilling. Most of the things that I have done, there was a need. I guess I'm the kind of person who responds to crises. I never thought of them as risks. I guess part of it is I'm not so attached to things. There are some things that I would feel bad if they were ever taken from me, maybe family pictures. But I don't have any gold candlesticks. I have a lot of silver, but these things were given to me. If other people need them more than I do they should have them. Maybe other people don't do things they could do because really they're guarding their personal possessions."

I joined WILPF 53 years ago, when I was pregnant with my first child. I remember nursing him, later feeding him in his high chair, feeling total responsibility for the life and survival of this helpless human being. And at times tears streamed down my face when I thought how awful it would be to not have enough food for this child, knowing that many mothers around the world were faced with this horrible reality. I felt an incredible bond with mothers all over the world whose circumstances prevent them from nurturing and protecting their children. I still feel this strong bond, and that is one thing that has kept me in WILPF, which is an international organization, with sections on each continent, in 38 countries, and I have met women in many of these sections who struggle in the same way that I do for peace and justice.

I have no great philosophical or spiritual wisdom to impart, so I just wanted you to know the simple basis for my values and actions. And I'd like to end with a poem.

But first I'd like to recognize some special people. My children, Evo and Juliana, Jemmy, Cordia, Masha and Isaiah. My cousin Nina Youkelson who came from San Francisco to be here tonight. Two friends from Minnesota, where all my children were born, who happened to visit us at this time, David and Barbara Tilsen. I also want to thank Jack Osterhaus for presenting me with this beautiful corsage, and again, each and every one of you who is here with me tonight. Special thanks, of course, to the committee who chose me for this award, and who helped expedite the event. David Roy has been the main force behind the planning and carrying out of this wonderful evening's program, publicity, mailings, all that good stuff. I appreciate all the work he did and have really enjoyed getting to know him.

And now the poem:
"The World is a Beautiful Place"
by Lawrence Ferlinghetti

The world is a beautiful place
to be born into
if you don't mind happiness
not always being
so very much fun
if you don't mind a touch of hell
now and then
just when everything is fine
because even in heaven
they don't sing
all the time

The world is a beautiful place
to be born into
if you don't mind some people dying
all the time
or maybe only starving
some of the time
which isn't half bad
if it isn't you
Oh the world is a beautiful place
to be born into
if you don't much mind
a few dead minds
in the higher places
or a bomb or two
now and then
in your upturned faces
or such other improprieties
as our Name Brand society
is prey to
with its men of distinction
and its men of extinction
and its priests
and other patrolmen

and its various segregations
and congressional investigations
and other constipations
that our fool flesh
is heir to

Yes the world is the best place of all
for a lot of such things as
making the fun scene
and making the love scene
and making the sad scene
and singing low songs and having inspirations
and walking around
looking at everything
and smelling flowers
and goosing statues
and even thinking
and kissing people and
making babies and wearing pants
and waving hats and
dancing
and going swimming in rivers
on picnics
in the middle of the summer
and just generally
"living it up"
Yes
but then right in the middle of it
comes the smiling
mortician



Ellie Bluestein is an Outstanding Advocate for the Common Good. All photos by: Howard Watkins

The Carl and Esther Robinson Award
For the Outstanding Advocate for the
Common Good

Inaugural Honoree
Eleanore Bisberg Bluestein

June 5, 2005
Hope Lutheran Church
Fresno, California

Founding Sponsors
Fresno Metropolitan Ministry
Interfaith Alliance of Central California
Fresno Ministerial Association

Program for *The Carl and Esther Robinson Award for the Outstanding Advocate for the Common Good* event.



Evo and Jemmy Bluestein sang songs of joy and peace.



After the program, Ellie Bluestein is surrounded by her family.



Carl and Esther Robinson honored Ellie Bluestein as the first recipient of the Outstanding Advocate for the Common Good award.

Ellie Bluestein and Fresno City Councilwoman Cynthia Sterling. June 5, 2005 was proclaimed Ellie Bluestein day.

LOCAL ACTIVISTS DEMAND RESPECT FOR IMMIGRANTS

13 COMMUNITY ALLIANCE JULY 2005

By Eduardo Stanley

In California's Central Valley, during the harvest season, the presence of immigrant workers is crucial for the economic success of agriculture. In exchange for low salaries, the almost 350,000 agricultural workers—many undocumented—generate an estimated \$18 billion of wealth annually. In fact, while the federal government establishes the poverty line at \$19,350 annually for a family of four (data updated February, 2005), some rural families in the Valley earn less than \$16,000—as they stated to this reporter.

Even so, there are those who argue that immigrants are an economic burden for society, because they consider only the amount of taxes paid by these workers and not their real contribution to the economy. For example, say a construction worker helps build a \$500,000 house for a \$10,000 salary over three months. If 10 workers do the whole job, that means each contributes \$50,000 dollars to the economy—besides their \$1,500 dollars each for taxes. If the crew works all year round and builds four houses, each worker contributes \$200,000 to the economy, plus \$6,000 in taxes. Their work also helps others to make money and pay more taxes.

This simple example illustrates that a worker's contribution to the economy is more complex and rich than people imagine, and can't be measured only by the amount of taxes paid. This rule applies to all workers. In the case of farmworkers, those numbers may be more complicated to figure out, but the same principle still applies.

Still, critics state that immigrants receive more than what they pay. The anti-immigrant campaigns constantly repeat this argument, and similar beliefs are widely held in the general population. No wonder so many politicians also use these arguments.

On May 26 Fresno's mayor, Alan Autry, came up with his own anti-immigrant statement during his annual speech on the State of the City. Autry said it was necessary to stop the flow of "illegals" for two years until a new law on this issue is passed. He called for an international summit on this issue, to be held in Fresno. He also said that the city was "flooded" with undocumented immigrants and that this represented a burden for the local economy.

Without wasting time, a group of activists for immigrant's rights met to discuss how to face this situation, especially considering the anti-immigrant climate of the country. The activists requested a meeting with the mayor for an open dialogue, preferring this to a more confrontational approach.

The meeting took place Monday, June 6, and lasted 90 minutes. Some 25 activists and representatives from community-based organizations presented Autry with a five-point agenda:

- (1) The mayor was asked to apologize for the use of the word *illegal* when referring to undocumented immigrants. Members of the coalition explained to the mayor the connotations of such language, and they emphasized the importance of the economic and cultural contribution of immigrants.
- (2) Autry was asked to focus on the city's real problems. For example, the activists criticized the police for placing vehicle checkpoints in areas heavily populated by Latinos. Another problem mentioned was inadequate access to health, education, and other services for the area's low-income residents.
- (3) Activists requested a representative of their coalition be included in the organizing committee of Autry's proposed summit.
- (4) The activists asked to be represented in the City's Human Relations Commission.
- (5) Future meetings were requested, in order to discuss some issues in more detail.

Autry responded that the media had distorted his words. "I know what it is to work in the fields. My family came from Oklahoma to California in the thirties looking for work," said the mayor. "How could I be able then to despise the peasants?" Then he assured the group that he is very concerned about those crossing the border illegally. "The system wants to maintain the status quo at the border. I am not attacking immigrants but the system of abuses against them."

Autry refused to apologize for the use of the word *illegal* because, according to him, it is not incorrect: the laws exist and until they are modified, the expression is still valid. He said that he is planning to invite Mexico's president and the US president to his proposed summit, as well as the governor of California. He criticized harshly the "coyotes" and gangs that attack and rob immigrants at the border. "We should stop this human catastrophe, modify the laws so that people can come to work with proper visas."

Although Autry accepted points (3) and (4), his answers to the other demands were not clear. "It was a good beginning but his position of a 'compassionate conservative' doesn't convince me. He is saying 'poor immigrants' but at the end he wants a new Bracero Program," said Leonel Flores, an activist of Fresno.

The coalition will meet soon to analyze the outcome of this meeting and to discuss the agenda for future meetings with the mayor. "This is a historic dialogue in the Valley, but it is just the beginning," said Myrna Martinez, a member of the coalition. At least, this time both parties left the door open for further dialogue.

A statement made by the mayor of Fresno, considered offensive by immigrant activists, caused their reaction, resulting in a historic meeting.



Fresno mayor Alan Autry says undocumented workers are a burden to the local economy.
Photo by: Eduardo Stanley



A coalition of local groups meet with mayor Autry, demanding dignity and respect for immigrant workers.
Photo by: Eduardo Stanley

THE PATRIOT ACT HAS GOT TO GO

By Jay Hubbell

The American Civil Liberties Union has taken the lead in opposing the Patriot Act. They point out that:

Safeguards were enacted in the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), passed in 1978, which imposed certain evidentiary requirements and created a special, top-secret intelligence court for intelligence investigations. The primary function of the problem sections of the Patriot Act was to weaken this oversight, which makes it more likely that the government, either accidentally or deliberately, will abuse its authority.

Among the sections that could expire by the end of this year if not specifically renewed by Congress are those that have expanded wiretap-eligible federal criminal offenses, given new wiretap authority related to alleged computer crimes, and allowed dissemination of information gathered in investigations, including wiretaps, to intelligence, immigration, and other officials of the Bush regime. It has enabled roving wiretap authority for a year, and expanded the duration of physical search orders.

Our Bushist government can now demand records and content from communications providers without consent, notice, or judicial review and can obtain telephone call records and Internet routing information and "substantive content" of the communications with only minimal judicial review by secret FISA courts.

The Bushists can use the FBI or a secret FISA court order to seize any "tangible thing," such as an individual's personal medical, library, business, and travel records. They can also intercept any Internet communications without any judicial review as long as they designate it to be an "emergency."

There are other Patriot Act provisions not set to expire that also violate our civil liberties including "sneak and peek" delayed-notice search warrants, seizure of Internet usage information such as Web site links, and addressing information.

The act has expanded the grounds for deportation and exclusion of immigrants simply on the basis of unproven allegations of support of terrorist groups or causes. The government may now arbitrarily imprison any non-citizen without charge for a week and may continue to imprison non-citizens indefinitely subject only to a six-month judicial review.

Our Bushist-controlled government may now seize our personal financial, Internet, credit, telephone, and student records without having to so much as articulate a suspicion that the target of their spying is any kind of threat.

The so-called "domestic terrorism" designation now includes "any act that is intended to influence government policy or coerce a civilian population." The obvious potential of this clause is to target anyone who dares to express political dissent. Under the PA this regime's torture-advocating Attorney General can now set his own "requirements and priorities" for domestic spying on anyone's lawful activities.

We must tell our legislators, such as Representatives Costa, Nunes, and Radanovich and Senators Feinstein and Boxer, that the Patriot Act has got to go.

Bills Got Paid

By Gary Dennis

AIDS advocates are happy with recent state legislation: AB 1142 (the African American Statewide Initiative on HIV/AIDS) and AB 1677 (permitting public health agencies and nonprofits to distribute condoms in prisons) were passed; meanwhile, SB 235 (making it a crime to engage in unprotected sex without informing a partner of one's HIV-positive status) was defeated.

An extra bonus was the passage of AB 550, a prison rape enforcement bill that would crack down on and hopefully control rape in California prisons. While AB 550 was not specifically directed toward controlling HIV, prison rape is an issue that the executive director of CHAANGE/San Joaquin Valley feels is important to address, in order to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in the prison system. This legislation, along with AB 1677, will hopefully result in a decrease of HIV infection rates among those being released from prisons, which now stands at a shocking 20% (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

These legislative successes demonstrate that HIV advocacy does work when a community comes together, and gets educated about and empowered by the facts and by what our government is doing. This is why CHAANGE/San Joaquin Valley keeps a watchful eye and keeps you informed on the latest happenings. Our ongoing talk show format of our monthly meeting called HIV Today is continuing to provide wonderful information on what services our community has to offer here in Fresno.

For instance, the issue of needle exchange came up in last month's meeting. Although the state has passed legislation to allow for needle exchange in California, each county is required to approve it individually. Fresno County has not approved needle exchange. Understanding that IV drug use is one of the main routes of HIV transmission, we believe that needle exchange is an important tool to prevent the spread of infection.

In our next sessions, we hope to have guest from Central California Legal Services, Fresno Parole, and the City of Fresno, Council District 3, to just name a few. If you know of someone we should be talking with, or if your organization would like to be a guest, please contact us at (559) 268-1969. Our HIV Today/monthly meetings are the first Thursday of every month, 2 PM-4 PM here at our office (inside the Fresno Center For Nonviolence). Our next meeting will be held July 7, 2005. Come on down and join in the fun!



WOMEN’S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WILPF Fresno, PO Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755
Vickie Fouts, Editor, (559) 658–8260 or socialjustice@sti.net

WILPF DATES:

Wednesday, July 6, Noon:
Women in Black
Fresno County Courthouse Breezeway

Thursday, July 14:
No WILPF Business Meeting
Summer break

Thursday, August 11:
No WILP Business Meeting
WILPF Congress

Wednesday, August 10, to Sunday, August 14:
WILPF Congress
CSU San Francisco

Thursday, September 8:
No WILPF Business Meeting
WILPF Annual Retreat

Save the Date:
WILPF Annual Retreat September 17
More info to come

Fresno WILPF Founder Honored

Ellie Bluestein was honored as the initial recipient of the Carl and Esther Robinson Award for the Outstanding Advocate for the Common Good on June 5, 2005, at a dinner and program held at Hope Lutheran Church. The sponsoring organizations—Fresno Metro Ministry, the Interfaith Alliance of Central California, and the Fresno Ministerial Association—chose Carl and Esther Robinson for the naming of the award and Ellie as the first recipient: three special people who have dedicated consistent effort for decades to improve the quality of life for all who live in the Central Valley.

The aim of this award is to refocus the community’s attention on the important value of the common good. The idea of the common good has roots in virtually all of the world’s major religions as well as in the founding documents of the United States. However, there are many strong social, commercial, and political forces that have seriously eroded concern for the common good. Thanks to Ellie, Carl, and Esther for their work to stop that erosion.

New Branch Board

As of our June meeting, we have a new WILPF board. Officers consist of President, Vickie Fouts; Secretary, Ruth Obel-Jorgensen; Secretary, Eve Hudson; with the Vice President position open. The Committee Chairs are: Program, new interns; Legislative, Rose Rowe and Natasha Fouts; History/Herstory, Marilyn Byrne; Membership, Open; Literature, Marilyn Byrne; Publicity, Laura Fultz; Newsletter, Vickie Fouts; Telephone Tree, Ellie Bluestein and Lynn Graham; and Fundraising, Open. Members-at-large are Jean Kennedy, Joan Poss, and Jan Slagter. Please think about helping fill our open positions. Our success depends on a full board.

WILPF Graduates

We wish to congratulate four WILPF members on their graduation from CSUF. Last year’s WILPF interns, Catherine Garoupa and Ruth Obel-Jorgensen, received their Masters in Social Work. Natasha Fouts received a BA in Philosophy Pre-law and Morgan Young received a BA in Anthropology. Congratulations to Jean Kennedy who received her Doctor of Psychology from California School of Professional Psychology. We wish them the best on their new paths.

WILPF & FCNL

Thanks to Polly Victor, we had a guest from the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) in Washington, DC, at our June meeting. Ruth Fraser gave us information on a project they are working on called Iraq Sensible Transition to Enduring Peace Resolution, or the Iraq STEP Resolution. It asks Congress to pass a resolution declaring: **“It is the policy of the United States to withdraw all US military troops and bases from Iraq.”** We voted to sign onto the Iraq STEP Resolution at the meeting. You can learn more about it and FCNL at www.fcnl.org. Feel free to ask other organizations to sign on.

New WILPF Sponsors

On WILPF’s 90th Anniversary, April 28, US WILPF announced and welcomed four new sponsors: Congresswoman Barbara Lee (CA) and Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX) and authors Julia Alvarez and Sandra Cisneros.

Representative Barbara Lee, a former social worker, was first elected as a representative from California’s 9th Congressional District in 1998 to fill the seat of retiring Congressman Ronald V. Dellums (a previous WILPF sponsor). Representative Lee on September 15, 2001, cast the lone dissenting vote against the US Congress resolution authorizing President Bush to use “all necessary and appropriate force” against anyone associated with the terrorist attacks of September 11. The measure passed 98-0 in the Senate and 420-1 in the House.

Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson is a Democratic Congresswoman who represents the 30th District of Texas. She was the first woman and the first African American ever to represent Dallas, Texas, in Congress. She has held many national and international peace discussion forums to promote the exchange of ideas and experiences among women all over the world. Regarding her sponsorship of WILPF, Representative Johnson notes, “I am honored that WILPF has chosen to recognize my contributions to the cause of peace and freedom. I am delighted to have my name listed as a sponsor.”

Julia Alvarez is an influential writer in many genres including novels, poetry, and young reader’s books. Her most famous novels are *In the Time of the Butterflies* and *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*. A native of the Dominican Republic, many of Alvarez’s works focus on the struggles of immigrants and the people of Latin America under dictatorships. Alvarez recently noted, “My characters are WILPF women.... Traditionally there have always been women who didn’t want their sons to be used as cannon fodder for wars, and who don’t want villages burned and fields destroyed and landmines put in the ground that should be used for growing food.”

Sandra Cisneros is the author of many works in different genres—poetry, short stories, novels, and younger reader books—as well as being a performance artist. Born to a Mexican father and Mexican-American mother in Chicago, her 2002 book, *Caramelo* was selected as notable book of the year by several journals including the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Seattle Times*. In addition to becoming a WILPF Sponsor, Sandra Cisneros joined as a Life Member.

These four powerful women join our existing list of powerful, peace loving sponsors: Elise Boulding, Vinie Burrows, Rep. John Conyers, Jr., Blanche Wiesen Cook, Frances Farenthold, Dolores Huerta, Yolanda King, Elizabeth McAlister, Holly Near, Grace Paley, Suzanne Pharr, Betty Reardon, Sonia Sanchez, and Alice Walker

Quote of the Month:

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”
— the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.



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The Foreign Language of Choice

By George Lakoff

The emphasis on framing and language is not a covert attempt to push women’s issues that are controversial—be it abortion or contraception—off the progressive agenda. Quite to the contrary, it is a refusal to accept the conservative definition of the issues involved, and put forward a positive vision, based on deeply progressive values and moral perspective. Many of the feminist organizations have come to the conclusion that the word “choice,” and the concept of choice, is a bad idea. Deborah Tannen, who is one of the best-known linguists in the country, observed over a decade ago that the word “choice” is taken from a consumer vocabulary—as compared to the word “life,” which is taken from a moral vocabulary.

Morality beats consumerism every time.

Moreover, the word “choice” versus “decision” is a bad idea because “choice” is less serious a word than “decision.” From a linguistic perspective, “choice” was in itself a bad choice. The word “abortion” is also negative—the word “abort” as in “abort the mission,” as if something has gone terribly wrong. Now you can’t just immediately change a word like that to something that’s more positive, and in fact, abortions are not situations where things have gone right. The situation is an unwanted pregnancy, un-wanted, negative.

If you use the word “abortion” at all these days, what you’re doing is playing on the right’s turf, where they have defined the issues to suit their interests, using their words.

What is necessary is a redefinition—what I will call a “reparsing”—of the issue. There are four different types of reparsing that are required, and each expresses a powerfully moral idea grounded in a progressive moral perspective.

Let’s begin with the two ideas that Howard Dean talked about in his interview with Tim Russert. First, Dean reparsed the issue in terms of personal freedom. He brought up the case of Terry Schiavo, where many Americans felt that this right-wing administration was interfering in the personal freedom of the families involved. They did not want government interference in this most important decision in people’s lives. This idea is crucial to American democracy and it was at stake in the Schiavo case—and most people recognized it as such. Dean was saying, and rightly so, that this is one of the ways we should talk about cases of unwanted pregnancies. These are medical decisions where the government should not be making decisions for any individual or family.

The second reparsing that Dean did in that interview was to take up the question of unwanted pregnancies itself. No one wants unwanted pregnancies, and there’s no reason why we should have them, since we have the means to prevent these pregnancies. A very high percentage of the unwanted pregnancies are among women and girls who have been denied sex education and contraception. And yet the right wing has been denying sex education to students, and in many cases, even denying contraception through its abstinence-only programs. Now we also face “vigilante pharmacists” who are not just imposing their own will on these women and depriving them of their personal freedom, but also their access to much-needed contraception. In other words, the right wing is actually creating unwanted pregnancies.

I would take this analysis further and argue that we should not allow the right wing to take ownership of the value of life—that is our value. And the first place we have to start talking about the value of life is on the issue of infant mortality. The United States has the highest rate of infant mortality in the industrialized world, and there’s no excuse for it. We have the medical care to prevent these deaths. The reason we continue to experience such high rates of infant mortality is that poor women are being denied prenatal and postnatal care, adequate health insurance, adequate food for their children—and all this because of the attitude and policies of the conservatives.

Conservatives have been killing babies—real babies have been born and who people want and love. They have been responsible for the death of children in this country at an astounding rate—and we should discuss this situation openly.

In addition, by denying access to contraception—by stopping the distribution of condoms, for Example—the right wing is exposing people to AIDS, and therefore, again, supporting death. Furthermore, by refusing to implement policies that would lower the incidence of toxins in our environment, conservatives are actually threatening the health of newborn babies. There are about a hundred toxins, including mercury, in mothers’ breast milk, which means that there are a hundred toxins in newborn babies—all thanks to right-wing anti-environmental policies. In short, the right wing is imposing a culture of death on this country and we shouldn’t stand for it. Progressive values and politics are committed to preserving and nurturing life.

Finally, I’m not sure of the exact numbers, but approximately 28,000 women in this country each year become pregnant as the result of a rape. That’s a huge number and it occurs all over America. Here is the question that we must raise: should the federal government force a woman to bear the child of her rapist?

By denying a rape victim access to family planning, to contraception, and to medical operations to end a pregnancy, the conservatives are, in effect, in favor of forcing rape victims to bear the children of their rapists. In Colorado, for example, the governor recently vetoed a bill that would have permitted rape crisis centers to inform rape victims of the effectiveness of the morning-after pill. Now this kind of counseling is the very minimum that a rape crisis center ought to be doing for rape victims. This is an outrage. This is an outrage against victims of rape who ought to be protected, not further exploited.

So rather than trying to respond to some discussion about “abortion,” we should actively, positively, put forward these four ideas—personal freedom, zero tolerance for unwanted pregnancies, taking back life as a value, and protecting rape victims in this country from being forced to bear the children of their rapists.



Martha Burk is right in saying that the Democrats have been too afraid to address women’s issues directly. But the failure is deeper and more extensive. Democrats have been slavishly adhering to polls that have been shaped by Republican framing, Republican language. As a result, they have not been raising the most important issues in our society, be it with regard to women, the environment, or peace.

George Lakoff is the author of *Don’t Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* (Chelsea Green). He is professor of linguistics at the University of California at Berkeley and a Senior Fellow of the Rockridge Institute.



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POETRY CORNER

Anidelle Flint has submitted this poem, written by her 14-year-old grandson, Mason Hershenow. Mason’s poem won the award for second place in 8th-grade poetry in a Berks County, Pennsylvania, contest. Anidelle notes, “Grandmotherly pride aside, I think the poem is a powerful indication that kids like Mason have thought seriously about their cultural environment... Makes me hopeful for the future!”

ZERO

His two eyes, neither moves
In his mind, nothing moves
The whole world could move
But to him, nothing would
Because he is in a different world
Made of pictures and sound
That add up to zero
A day on the couch in front of the TV
Is the life of Americans
A life that equals the empty number
That’s lonelier than one
Zero



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THE WELCH REPORT

By Jack H. Welch, M.D.

PASSING THE BUCK

Administrative expenses for health care in the US take about 15 percent of the money paid to private health insurance companies, but only 4 percent of the budgets of public insurance programs, Medicare and Medicaid. Because we rely more heavily than other countries on private insurance, our total administrative costs are much higher. "The higher costs of private insurance are due mainly to the extensive bureaucracy required to assess risk, rate premiums, design benefit packages and review, pay or refuse claims." The providing of medical care to those denied private insurance is paid by Medicaid, out of pocket or on the charity of public hospitals.

The uninsured are about three times as likely as the insured to postpone seeking care, fail to get needed care or skip recommended treatment. "Between two and three million Americans are employed by insurers and health care providers not to deliver health care, but to pass the buck for that care to someone else... Decades of indoctrination in the virtues of market competition and the evils of big government have left many Americans unable to comprehend the idea that sometimes competition is the problem, not the solution."

A PRIVATE OBSESSION

American health care is unique among advanced countries in its heavy reliance on the private sector... We spend far more per person on health care than any other country, yet many Americans lack health insurance and don't receive essential care." A study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation estimates that 20 million working Americans are uninsured; in Texas, with the worst record, more than 30 percent of the adults under 65 have no insurance. Lack of insurance leads to inadequate medical attention. Over a 12-month period 41 percent of the uninsured were unable to see a doctor or other health care "provider. The well-organized interests having power to block reform are exemplified by the "Harry and Louise" ads that helped doom the Clinton health plan. Those ads were paid for by the Health Insurance Association of America, an industry lobbying group that liked the health care system just the way it was.

The US is ruled by conservatives who have a private obsession that more privatization, not less, is the answer. Their faith persists even when the evidence points to a private sector gone bad. The main message of the 2004 Economic Report of the President is that US health care is doing just fine. "Never mind the huge expense, the low life expectancy, the high infant mortality; it's a market-based system so it must be good." The President's economists had one criticism of the system: insurance is too comprehensive, encouraging overconsumption! Their answer is the creation of private accounts, now the answer to all problems, including unemployment insurance and Medicare.

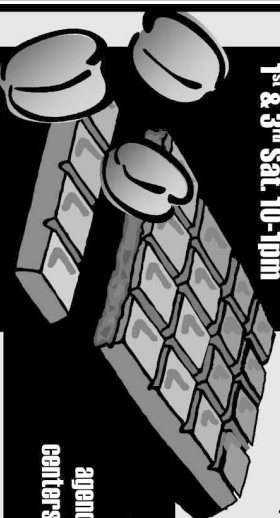
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ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE!

Another world would require covering all Americans and protecting individuals from the economic hardships that can result from catastrophic illness. It would require ensuring quality health care as a human right, a moral value; and it would require that affordable health care was accessible to everyone... This must be embedded in our core values, and we must strive to live out this conviction as a society.

"The proposed push to dismantle Social Security has implications for the future of health care reform. It would doom efforts to expand other social programs, especially Medicare and Medicaid, and ultimately stand in the way of affordable health care for all... Health care reform cannot get lost in the Social Security debate.

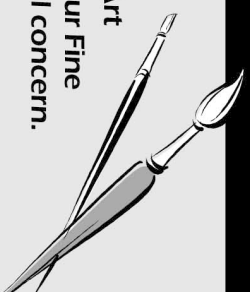
"The US needs health insurance that is universal, affordable to families, sustainable for society, and able to enhance health and well-being by promoting access to high-quality care that is effective, safe, timely, patient-oriented and equitable.

"Universal health insurance coverage will only be achieved when the principle of universality is embodied in federal public policy... The President and Congress should develop a strategy to achieve universal insurance coverage and to establish an explicit schedule to reach this goal by 2010." (Source: "The Healthy Voice", Justice and Witness Ministries, The United Church of Christ, May-July, 2005).

*This report reflects personal opinion but is consistent with the
agenda of the FCNV. It is based upon mail from peace and justice
centers around California, and at times upon other print sources.*

In Memoriam:

Friend of the Center Enrique Lopez
died last month at the age of 50. Enrique, whose Art
Box Gallery had just opened, donated wonderful prints to our Fine
Art Raffle. We will miss his great spirit, creativity and social concern.



GROUPS THAT MEET AT THE CENTER:

- Youth Link
- Peace
- Rondalla
- Fresno
- CHANGE
- WILPF
- MECA
- FACTS
- Death Penalty Focus
- Central California Institute
- Prison Moratorium Project

JULY 10, 2005

Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba

Cuban Pat-Luck: 6:00 pm
Cuban Music -
Patricia Wells on piano: 6:30 pm

Five **caravanistas** will be present, along with Richard Becker, Western Regional Coordinator of the International ANSWER.- Act Now to Stop War and End Racism-Coalition. He was also co-leader of the third Iraq Sanctions Challenge with people from 5 other nations which delivered life-saving medicines worth more than \$2 million to Iraq. He has also led fact-finding missions to Palestine in October 2000 and May of 2002.

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SHOWING JULY 13:

"Global Dimming"

This documentary by the BBC explains why predictions about the Earth's climate will need to be re-examined. Scientists looked at five decades of sun light measurements and reached the disturbing conclusion that the amount of solar energy reaching the Earth's surface has been gradually falling. Paradoxically, the decline in sunlight may mean that global warming is a far greater threat to society than previously thought.

60 min. 7:30 P.M. Discussion to follow.

Chanah Cossman, CNM
Nurse-Midwife
Prenatal and Newborn Care

Enfermera Partera
Cuidado Prenatal y de Bebé



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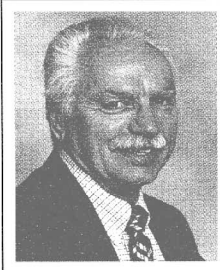


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Circuses: Three Rings of Abuse

By: People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

see: http://www.peta.org/mc/factsheet_display.asp?ID=66

Although some children dream of running away to join the circus, it is a safe bet that most animals forced to perform in circuses dream of running away from the circus. Colorful pageantry disguises the fact that animals used in circuses are captives who are forced, under threat of punishment, to perform confusing, uncomfortable, repetitious, and often-painful acts. Circuses would quickly lose their appeal if more people knew about the cruel methods used to train the animals; the cramped confinement, unacceptable travel conditions, and poor treatment that they endure; and what happens to them when they “retire.”

A LIFE FAR REMOVED FROM HOME

On its Web site, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus boasts that it “cross[es] the country 11 months out of the year, logging more than 25,000 miles.”(1) Because circuses are constantly traveling from city to city, access to basic necessities such as food, water, and veterinary care is often inadequate. The animals, most of whom are quite large and naturally active, are forced to spend most of their lives in the small barren cages used to transport them, where they have only enough room to stand and turn around. Most are allowed out of their cages only during the short periods when they must perform. Other animals, like elephants, are kept in leg shackles that only allow them to lift one foot at a time. The minimum requirements of the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) are routinely ignored.

Climatically, the circus environment is quite different from the animals’ natural habitats, and temperature extremes cause misery and sometimes death. A lion cub named Clyde died in a sweltering boxcar as a Ringling Bros. train crossed the Mojave Desert during the middle of the day when temperatures exceeded 100°F. Clyde’s caretaker told the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that his supervisors refused to stop the train, even when he warned them that the lions were in danger.(2) The King Royal Circus lost its license and paid a \$200,000 fee after an elephant named Heather died in a trailer in an Albuquerque parking lot where temperatures reached 120°F.(3) The Suarez Bros. Circus kept polar bears in hot, humid Puerto Rico in 8-foot-by-7-foot cages without air-conditioning or a regular chance to swim before U.S. officials finally ordered that the bears be confiscated and sent to a more suitable climate.(4)

Veterinarians qualified to treat exotic animals aren’t usually present or available at circuses, and many animals have suffered and died as a result of a lack of proper medical attention. For instance, even though Kenny, a 2 1/2-year-old elephant, was obviously ill, he was forced to perform in two Ringling Bros. shows, entering the ring three times. He subsequently died later that evening.(5)

During the winter off-season, animals used in circuses may be kept in traveling crates or barn stalls; some are even kept in trucks. Such unrelieved physical confinement has very harmful physical and psychological effects on animals. These effects are often indicated by unnatural behaviors such as repeated head-bobbing, swaying, and pacing.(6) A study of circuses conducted by Animal Defenders International in the United Kingdom “found abnormal behaviors of this kind in all of the species observed.” Investigators witnessed elephants who were chained for 70 percent of the day, horses who were confined for 23 hours a day, and large cats who were kept in cages up to 99 percent of the time.(7)

BEATEN INTO SUBMISSION

Physical punishment has always been the standard training method for animals in circuses. It is standard practice to beat, shock, and whip animals to make them perform—over and over again—tricks that make no sense to them. The AWA does not prohibit the use of bullhooks, whips, electrical shock, or other devices used by circus trainers. Trainers drug some animals to make them “manageable” and remove the teeth and claws from others.

Video taken during a PETA undercover investigation of Carson & Barnes Circus revealed Carson & Barnes’ animal care director, Tim Frisco, viciously attacking, yelling and cursing at, and shocking endangered Asian elephants. Frisco instructed other elephant trainers to beat the elephants with a bullhook as hard as they could and to sink the sharp metal bullhook into the animals’ flesh and twist it back and forth until they screamed in pain. The videotape also showed a handler using a blowtorch on an elephant’s skin to remove hair and chained elephants and caged bears exhibiting stereotypic behaviors caused by mental distress.

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus has failed to meet minimal federal standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). Ringling paid \$20,000 to settle U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) charges of failing to provide veterinary care to a dying baby elephant. The USDA has also cited Ringling for failure to possess records of veterinary care, failure to provide animals with sufficient space, failure to provide animals with exercise, and endangering tigers who were nearly baked alive in a boxcar because of poor maintenance of their enclosures. In less than two years, two baby elephants died, a caged tiger was shot to death, a horse who was used despite a chronic medical condition died during Ringling's traditional animal march, and a wild-caught sea lion was found dead in her transport container. Of the 60 elephants touring with Ringling and kept at its Florida compounds, 44 were captured in the wild. At least 18 elephants have died since 1992. Contact PETA for documentation.

Clyde Beatty-Cole circus has been cited repeatedly by the USDA for violations of animal care. According to congressional testimony provided by former Beatty-Cole elephant keeper Tom Rider, “[I]n White Plains, N.Y., when Pete did not perform her act properly, she was taken to the tent and laid down, and five trainers beat her with bullhooks.” Rider also told officials that “[a]fter my three years working with elephants in the circus, I can tell you that they live in confinement and they are beaten all the time when they don’t perform properly.”(8)

The lives of baboons, chimpanzees, and other primates used in circuses are a far cry from those of their wild relatives, who live in large, close-knit communities and travel together for miles each day through forests, savannahs, and hills. Primates are highly social, intelligent, and caring animals who suffer when deprived of companionship. Like all animals used in entertainment, primates do not perform unless they are forced to—often through intimidation, abuse, and solitary confinement. After watching video footage of baboons performing in a traveling circus called Baboon Lagoon, Dr. Robert Sapolsky, a research associate with the Institute of Primate Research in Kenya, said, “[T]raining most baboons to do tricks of the sort displayed is not trivial ... it is highly likely that it required considerable amounts of punishment and intimidation.”(9)

The tricks that animals are forced to perform—bears balancing on balls, apes riding motorcycles, elephants standing on two legs—are physically uncomfortable and behaviorally unnatural. The whips, tight collars, muzzles, electric prods, bullhooks,

and other tools used during circus acts are reminders that the animals are being forced to perform. These “performances” teach audiences nothing about how animals behave under natural circumstances.

ANIMALS REBEL

These intelligent captives sometimes snap under the pressure of constant abuse; others make their feelings abundantly clear when they see a chance. Tyke, an African elephant with Circus International, ran amok in Hawaii, killing her trainer and injuring 13 others before police shot her to death.(10) Five days earlier, Elaine, another elephant with the same circus, pinned eight children and their parents under a fence that separated the first row of spectators from the circus rings.(11)

As Florida Officer Blaine Doyle, who shot 47 rounds into Janet, an elephant who ran amok with three children on her back at the Great American Circus in Palm Bay, noted, “I think these elephants are trying to tell us that zoos and circuses are not what God created them for ... but we have not been listening.”(12) Since 1990, PETA has documented 65 human deaths and more than 130 injuries attributable to captive elephant rampages. Please visit www.circuses.com/attacks-ele03.asp for more information.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

As more people become aware of the cruelty involved in forcing animals to perform, circuses that use animals are finding fewer places to set up their big tops. The use of animals in entertainment has already been restricted or banned in several U.S. localities—such as South Carolina and Orange County and Pasadena, California—as well as in cities around the world, like New Delhi, Belfast, and Rio de Janeiro. The council of the Chester-le-Street district in the U.K. banned events in which animals perform as “a relic of a bygone era.”(13)

Don’t patronize circuses that use animals. PETA can provide literature to pass out to patrons if the circus comes to your town. Find out about state and local animal protection laws, and report any possible violations to authorities. Contact PETA for information on ways to get an animal-display ban passed in your area.

Take your family to see only animal-free circuses, such as Cirque du Soleil or the Pickle Family Circus.

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RINGLING BROS. CIRCUS PROTEST 2004/2005:

A REVIEW & A RESOLVE

by Fresno Voices
for Animals

WEDNESDAY
JULY 13 AT 6:30 PM

THURSDAY
JULY 14 AT 6:30 PM

FRIDAY
JULY 15 AT 10:00 AM AND 6:30 PM

SATURDAY
JULY 16 AT 10:30 AM, 2:30 PM, AND 6:30 PM

SUNDAY
JULY 17 AT 2:30 PM AND 4:30 PM

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OR WWW.PETA.ORG

“We speak for them because they cannot speak for themselves. We speak for them because their cries and their deaths go unheard and unnoticed. We speak for them because we are compassionate toward all species -- not just our own. WE CHOOSE BECAUSE THEY CAN’T!”

-Fresno Voices for Animals

As families crowded into the line for the Ringling Bros.Circus at the Selland Arena last July in Fresno,a small group of local activists walked up and down,handing out informational fliers to patrons and engaging them in conversations on the realities of captive life for circus performing animals.The weather was hot and the reception was not altogether friendly, but the subject remained important to the members of Fresno Voices for Animals —a group that had formed in response to issues like Measure “C ” and travelling animal acts.

The five days of scheduled performances moved along, and so did FVA, gaining support each day from other local activists, animal rights groups, and concerned citizens. Two days into the protest, we learned that Clyde, a two-year-old lion with the Ringling Bros. Circus, had died in a sweltering boxcar while moving across the Mojave Desert on his way to the Fresno show. The heartbreaking news sealed our resolve, increased our support, and finally earned us media attention from mainstream sources that had previously ignored our efforts.

FVA remained active for the length of the Fresno shows, joined by activists f rom Modesto, Bakersfield, and numerous local community members. Some people dressed as clowns and handed out balloons and stickers with animal-friendly messages; some held posters with quotes from celebrities that have spoken out against the injustice of forced animal “entertainment ”; some donned animal masks and wore chains to symbolize the captives inside the Selland Arena; some drummed on buckets and chanted or passed out fliers and specific information on Clyde, the dead lion; some fought for our legal rights to speak out and voice our support for animals. Everyone mobilized in the recognition of the inhumanity of animal circuses and the resolve to stop the violence and exploitation.

Unfortunately, despite worldwide recognition of the wrongs of captive animal “entertainment ” and the growing opposition to these shows, Ringling Bros.Circus will be back in Fresno this month. Please join Fresno Voices for Animals and all compassionate people by protesting this circus. Please, never patronize cruel and unnatural captive animal acts. Support instead forms of entertainment that do not rely on animal exploitation for human enjoyment. Write a letter to local papers and other media about the horrors and hazards of forced animal acts. Educate your family and f riends on this issue. And meet us in front of the Selland Arena to make a stand for animals.



COMMON: BE

(g.o.o.d./Geffen records)

by Rick Petinak

SOMETIMES, AN ARTIST WHO HAS SURVIVED AN INDUSTRY AS SIMULTANEOUSLY fickle and cutthroat as the record business hits the proverbial *wall*. It happens even to the best of them, and Chicago born emcee Common (originally known as Common Sense, until he lost a copyright suit to a reggae band of the same name) is absolutely among the best of a very dreary modern Hip-Hop landscape. In Common's case, he hit the wall on his last album, *The Electric Circus* (2002). Some attribute this deviation from an otherwise stellar career, then five albums strong, to his newfound romantic relationship with singer Erykah Badu, and the subsequent soul-searching mission he apparently embarked upon that may have led him to record such an eclectic but inconsistent and downright bad album. Common may have been thinking, as many artists often do, that he was taking the genre to virgin territory and new creative heights. Faithful fans did not concur. *Circus* tanked, and many doubted his ability or motivation to rebound.

Common's newest effort, *Be* (2005), is proof that he is most definitely back. He even makes reference at one point on the album, a bit in self-jest, to a photo spread with Badu featured in *Essence* magazine a couple of years back, saying, "...they said the *crochet pants and sweater was wack/saw The Corner and said 'that n*ggas back...* ". Whatever it was that provoked Common to return to his tried and true formula of gritty urban dialogue set against the soulful melancholy of South Chicago, fans should consider themselves blessed. He has produced in *Be* a classic work of unbridled emotion, insight, love and hate all rolled into eleven tracks produced mostly by fellow home-town hero Kanye West, with two songs contributed by Jay-Dee of Slum Village. The first single from the album, the aforementioned *The Corner*, features West and The Last Poets. A haunting soul vocal clip, signature West, strings together the stripped-down but pinpoint percussion track with enough harmony to allow Common to weave another of his trademark street tales of stark realism tempered with the empathy of one who has received both his talents and tribulations from the ghetto, as evidenced in lines like this: "...Now I rolled in a Olds with windows that don't roll/down the rows where cars get broke in and stole..." Common branches out his commentary on *Be* to cover the intricacies of love and lust on the plush groove of *Go*, and his contempt for hypocritical and sub-par colleagues on the standout *Chit-City*. Equally impressive is *Testify*, an intriguing tale of courtroom drama and deceit with a brilliant surprise finale.

A bonus treat here is the inclusion of Common's live performance with West of *The Food*, from the second season of The Dave Chapelle Show, where fans first got a hint that Com was back. He seems fully cognizant of his dynamic return, rhyming on *They Say*, again with West and also John Legend, "...they say my life is comparable to Christ/the way I sacrificed and resurrected twice..." In fact, to this point, Com's best album may have indeed been his sophomore release *The Resurrection* (1994). Certainly, it will always be the favorite of many fans, as it brought us one of Hip-Hop's greatest individual songs, *I Used to Love H.E.R.* But *Be* is a force to be reckoned with in its own right. The maturity of Common, born Lonnie Rashied Lynn, is evident here and adds a depth across the whole album previously only glimpsed on 2000's *Like Water for Chocolate*. Fans who abandoned Com after *Circus* and unfamiliar ears alike should appreciate this gem. The album cover photo, certainly intended to evoke memories of Marvin Gaye's masterpiece *What's Going On?*, signals the achievement of another great work...if not a masterpiece, a damn good album to say the least.

RATING:



SUSTAINABLE IS ATTAINABLE, CLEAN ENERGY NOW!

-by Shawn Putnam



A PROFESSOR SHOWS HIS SUPPORT AT THE ROLLING SUNSHINE TOUR.

DURING THE SPRING '05 SEMESTER AT FRESNO STATE University, the Renew CSU collective was formed. It was the result of a successful teach-in followed by a student convergence at Chico State University. The collective is working within the statewide fight for a strong sustainability policy for the entire CSU system. As a result of lots of persistence, hard work and dedication, there were many accomplishments throughout the semester for the collective as well as long term coalitions built for the future.

WHAT IS THE RENEW CSU CAMPAIGN

The Renew CSU campaign is working on implementing a sustainability policy that would set standards for clean energy, green building and energy efficiency. The clean energy policy asks for a commitment to obtain at least

25 percent of total electricity from renewable sources by 2014 and 50 percent by 2024. Of this, the equivalent of a half megawatt of renewable energy per CSU would begin by 2010. The Green Buildings Standard requests that all renovated and newly constructed buildings be designed and constructed using green building guidelines equivalent to the LEED silver standards developed by the U.S. Green Building Council. The Energy Efficiency Policy requests that energy use per student should be reduced by 20 percent by 2014 and 40 percent by 2024.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE FRESNO STATE RENEW CSU COLLECTIVE

Throughout the entire semester, the FSU Renew CSU collective had lots of reasons to celebrate. In March, the Greenpeace Rolling Sunlight tour paid a visit. The daytime festivities included free solar-powered slushies for handwritten letters to President Welty. The evening concluded a free potluck, two live DJ's and a screening of *The Fourth World War*. The event was very successful for creating awareness of our campaign to not only other campus groups but also professors and members of the progressive community.

In April, students celebrated Fossil Fools Day, an international day of action advocating for the need of independence from fossil fuels. Students celebrated first by holding a massive work party to assemble props for one of the two days of action. On the first day of action, students bolted into classrooms with dinosaur masks on yelling "Don't be fooled by Fossil Fuels" as they turned the classroom lights off and taped an informational flier to the light switch. One

professor thanked collective members later and said he left his lights off for the remainder of the day in solidarity. Later in the week, students assembled at the free speech area to collect more handwritten letters, gather petition signatures and make phone calls to Chancellor Reed's office urging him to support the Renew CSU campaign. Also in April, students joined up with the Recycling Club and the Campus Peace and Civil Liberties Coalition for tabling on Earth Day.

WHERE THE CAMPAIGN IS AT NOW AND WHAT DIRECTION WILL IT TAKE THIS FALL...

The semester ended with the 100+ hand written letters and hundreds of petition signatures collected throughout the semester being delivered to President Welty asking for his endorsement of the campaign.

A week after the semester ended Welty announced his support with a letter to Chancellor Reed. At a statewide level starting July 1st the CSU system will purchase 15 percent of their electricity load from renewable sources. This is the largest contract for renewables from any institution of learning and double the current largest purchaser's contract. On July 19th the CSU system will announce the results of their final feasibility study on clean energy. On September 20th Cal State will announce their goals for clean energy, energy efficiency and their new guidelines for green building.

Renew CSU's Campaign Goals:

•**CLEAN ENERGY:** The CSU should make a commitment to obtain at least 25 percent of its total electricity demand from renewable sources by 2014 and 50 percent by 2024. Of this, the equivalent of 1/2 megawatt of renewable energy per CSU campus should begin construction by 2010.

•**GREEN BUILDINGS:** All renovated and newly constructed buildings should be designed and constructed using green building guidelines equivalent to the LEED Silver standards developed by the U.S. Green Building Council.

•**ENERGY EFFICIENCY:** Energy use per student should be reduced by 20 percent by 2014 and 40 percent by 2024.

When school gets back in session you can expect lots of work from this group. We are planning on conducting lots of teach-ins on sustainability and clean energy to build a larger group. We will be participating in Energy Actions Campus Clean Energy Challenge (www.energyaction.net) - a multi national student lead fight for clean energy. One of the main local campaigns we will start is for a Strategic purchasing contract for Fresno State to purchase more environmentally safe products. It is also our hope to start a Sustainability group at Fresno City College.

SUSTAINABLE IS ATTAINABLE. CLEAN ENERGY NOW!

Shawn Putnam, Fresno State Renew CSU Collective
For questions and comments please email shawn@energyaction.net

For more information on the Renew CSU campaign visit www.renewcsu.org

Are Corporations Putting Profits Before Our Children’s Health?

By Judy Stege

Last month a front-page *Fresno Bee* story reported the misuse of a heartburn medication by pediatricians. Propulsid (cisapride) was developed for adults, but the cherry flavor made it acceptable to children. Apparently the FDA had told Johnson & Johnson in January 1995 that “without studies showing that the drug worked in children, it would not receive approval for pediatric sales.” So the company chose not to apply for FDA pediatric approval, already having general FDA approval . But doctors were free to prescribe it, and despite an FDA warning not to “directly promote Propulsid for children,” the FDA rules allowed the company to “support educational efforts” to finance programs encouraging pediatric use. Say what??? The FDA allowed Johnson & Johnson to “teach” doctors about a medicine that eased stomach discomfort, ignoring the evidence that children taking this medication were developing heart problems?

Three years later, “dozens had died and more than 100 patients had suffered serious heart problems.” However, Johnson & Johnson might have lost \$250 million if label changes were made, so the “FDA agreed to simply state that the safety and effectiveness in pediatric patients have not been established,” ignoring many clinical trials which showed it was not safe for infants. Company documents showed that 90% of the drug went to children, and a survey showed that 20% of the babies in neonatal intensive care were being given the drug, which could interfere in the heart’s electrical system.

After five years of negotiations about labeling with the FDA, and five years of continued use by pediatricians, the company pulled the drug off the market in 2000, before a government hearing would have exposed the “long, largely hidden, record of trouble.” Johnson & Johnson saved money for their shareholders, because they only had to pay “up to \$90 million to settle lawsuits” involving claims that 300 people died and 16,000 were injured from taking Propulsid.

How could this happen?
If we look at recent news about Bt corn we are again shocked at the FDA’s unwillingness to act on behalf of children and the health of the American public. Remember the Bt corn, which is toxic to the corn-loving caterpillar? (By the way, most of the corn sweeteners and thickeners in our processed food and drink are made from this corn. Do we have “clinical trials” to study the effects? Maybe we should look at the health statistics of Americans who eat processed food.) The EPA had approved Bt 11, but not Bt 10, even though the EPA declared that the proteins used were identical and therefore, in EPA-think, perfectly safe.

But why did the US government keep it secret for three months when Syngenta, the company that developed both genetically modified corn seed types, disclosed that it had accidentally sold Bt 10 corn seed over a period of four years to American and overseas farmers?

One of six centers within the FDA is the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, so this agency is involved with genetically engineered products. Now the FDA and the EPA have “coordinated efforts to determine the safety of genetically engineered Bt 10 corn in food and feed.” The FDA “has concluded that the presence of Bt 10 corn in the food and feed supply poses no safety concerns. Thus, ... there are no further requirements under the US regulatory process for Bt 10 to be legally present in the United States food and feed supply. However, it is not legal for Bt 10 to be planted in the United States.” Say what??? Since the remaining seeds were “destroyed or isolated” they could drift into the food supply again, legally or not. Who is doing clinical studies of people who ingested the unregulated corn to find out if it truly is safe? According to the GE-Free New Zealand website < www.gefree.org.nz/press/04042005.html > a small amount of Bt 10 corn may have been exported as animal feed or processed food to Australia during the period between 2001 and 2004. This is an opportunity for health officials there to track increased health problems, especially diabetes, thyroid, and auto-immune diseases. Of course, without labeling, there is no proof, just suspicion

The good news, we hope, is that our federal government (here quoting from the Web site <http://usbiotechreg.nbii.gov/>) “has a coordinated, risk-based system to ensure new biotechnology products are safe for the environment and human and animal health. The government agencies responsible for checking biotech products are the US Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS), the EPA, and the FDA. Depending on its characteristics, a product may be subject to review by one or more of these agencies.”

The bad news is that these agencies may use “coordinated efforts” to support each other against the growing number of groups who are concerned about the misuse of medicines, pesticides, and GMOs.

For more information:

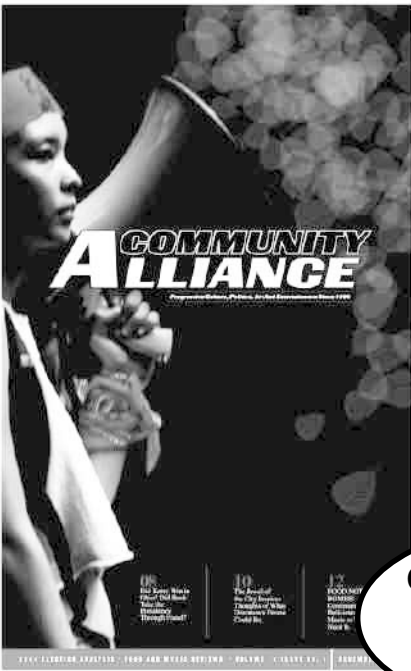
Harris, Gardiner, & Eric Koll. “Heartburn drug illustrates risks behind the label.” *Fresno Bee*, June 10, 2005.

Borenstein, Seth. “Unapproved corn was sold to farms; EPA calls it safe.” *San Jose Mercury News*, March 23, 2005.

<www.gefree.org.nz/press/04042005.html>

<www.cfsan.fda.gov/~lrd/biobt10.html>

<<http://usbiotechreg.nbii.gov/>>



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Community Alliance

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PROGRESSIVE COMMUNITY GROUPS ACTIVE IN THE FRESNO AREA:

ACORN

3636 N First #139 • Fresno Ca 93726
Ph (559) 222-9013 • Fax (559) 222-9159
caacornfro@acorn.org

Black Political Council

PO Box 11716 • Fresno, CA 93774-1716

Books Not Bars

344 40th Street • Oakland, CA
510-428-3939 x231 • 510-428-3940 (fax)
Local contact: (559) 709-5831
www.booksnotbars.org

Californians for Justice

2014 Tulare Avenue Suite 718 • Fresno, CA 93721
Ph: 443-1394 • Fax: 433-1343
bernardo@caljustice.org • www.caljustice.org

California Prison Moratorium Project

623 N Harrison • Fresno, Ca. 93728
Ph (559) 444-2188
pmpvalle@pacbell.net • www.prisonactivist.org

California Rural Legal Assistance

2115 Kern St, Ste. 370 • Fresno, CA 93721-2100
Ph. (559) 441-8721
http://www.crla.org/

Center for Immigrant and Workers Rights

280 N Van Ness Ave • Fresno, CA 93701
(559) 443-1317 • fax: (559) 443-1318
nancymarsh@yahoo.com

Central California Alliance

Post Office Box 16422 • Fresno, California 93755
Ph (559) 265-7117
speechadvice@yahoo.com • www.ccafresno.org

The Central California Institute

1584 N.Van Ness • Fresno Ca 93728-1941
(559) 455-0821
centralcalinstitute@riseup.net

Central California Criminal Justice Committee

559-229-9807
http://www.fresnoalliance.com/ccjc/

Central California Legal Services

1999 Tuolumne St., Suite 700 • Fresno Ca 93721
Ph. (559) 570-1209
fresno@centralcallega.org • http://www.centralcallega.org

Central Valley Progressive PAC

P. O. Box 5845 • Fresno, Ca 93755
(559) 559-444-2204
info@cvppac.org • www.cvppac.org

Centro Azteca de Información en Fresno

Franco Duarte
2203 Norris DR W • Fresno, CA 93703
(559) 485-0944 • Fax (559) 459-0744
centroaztecafresno@hotmail.com

Centro La Familia Advocacy

2014 Tulare St., #717 • Fresno, CA 93721
Ph. (559) 237-2961 • Fax (559) 237-2968

CHAANGE/ San Joaquin Valley

The California HIV/AIDS Advocacy Network Grassroots Evolution

1584 N.Van Ness • Fresno Ca 93728-1941
http://www.chaange.org/

Coalicion por los Derechos de los Inmigrantes del Valle de San Joaquin

328 N. Fresno • Fresno, CA 93701
Ph. (559) 498-6033 • Fax 497-0206
leonflor5@aol.com

Community Alliance for a Fair Economy (C.A.F.E.)

PO Box 4496 • Fresno, CA 93744
Ph. (559) 445-0887
nancymarsh@yahoo.com

Community Alliance newspaper

P.O. Box 5077 • Fresno, CA 93755
Ph. (559) 978-4502 • Fax (559) 226-3962
AllianceEditor@Comcast.net
http://www.fresnoalliance.com/home/

Community Link

PO Box 4959 • Fresno, CA 93744
Ph. (559) 266-5465 or 226-5377 • Fax (559) 486-3464
clinkinc@aol.com • http://www.communitylinkfresno.org/

Death Penalty Focus

Families & Friends of Prisoners Support Group
1917 S. Chestnut Ave., #13-G • Fresno, CA 93702
Phone/Fax: (559) 255-9492
maria.telesco@att.net • http://www.fresnoalliance.com/focus/

El Colegio Popular

Cathedral Education Center
2839 Mariposa Street • Fresno, CA 93721
Ph. (559) 441-7131 • Fax (559) 441-7155
http://www.citizenship.net/about/orgs/partners/ecp.htm

El Comité No Nos Vamos

328 N. Fresno • Fresno, CA 93701
Ph. (559) 498-6033
IWAPGH@aol.com

El Com. Para Bienestar de Earlimart; Californians for Pesticide Reform, Central Valley

P.O. Box 10725 • Earlimart, CA 93219
Ph. (661) 849-0669 • Fax: (661) 849-2205
teresahbd@adi.com

El Concilio Immigration Project

1532 Fresno St • Fresno, CA 93706-1627
Ph. (559) 485-0679
http://www.fresnoalliance.com/ElConcilio/

Fresno Area Congregations Together (FACT)

4674 E. Church Ave • Fresno, CA 93725
Ph (559)456-9392
factorganizer@yahoo.com

Fresno County Bicycle Coalition

P.O. Box 218 • Clovis, CA 93613
(559) 444-2065
info@fresnobike.com • www.fresnobike.org

Families Against California to Amend California's Three Strikes (FACTS)

Ph (559) 960-5300

Food Not Bombs (Saturday)

2925 N Jackson • Fresno, CA 93703
Ph. 452-0277 (ask for Dallas)
fresnofnb@yahoo.com • www.fresnoalliance.com/FNB

Frente Indigena Oaxaqueno Binacional

(Office)
2014 Tulare Street, Suite 223 • Fresno, CA 93721
(Mailing Address)
P. O. 106 • Fresno, CA 93707-0106
Ph. (559) 499-1178 • Fax (559) 268-0484
lvasquez@sbcglobal.net • http://www.fiob.org/

Fresno Barrios Unidos

4403 E Tulare Ave • Fresno Ca 93702
Phone: (559) 453-9662 • Fax: (559) 453-9548
ssfbu@aol.com • http://barriosunidos.net/

Fresno Center for New Americans

4879 E Kings Canyon Road • Fresno Ca 93727
Ph. (559) 255-8395 • Fax. (559) 255-1656
silascha@fresnocenter.com • www.fresnocenter.com

Fresno Center for Nonviolence dedicated to peace and social justice

1584 N.Van Ness • Fresno Ca 93728-1941
Ph. (559) 237-3223
info@centerfornonviolence.org
www.centerfornonviolence.org

Fresno County Bicycle Coalition

P.O. Box 218 • Clovis, CA 93613-0218
Ph. (559) 277-2693
Fresnocobike@aol.com • http://www.fresnobike.com/

Fresno County Green Party

PO Box 4501 • Fresno, CA 93744
Ph. (559) 265-3647
fresno@greens.org • www.fresnogreens.org

Fresno Folklore Society

P.O. Box 4617 • Fresno, CA 93744
Ph. (559) 229-8808
ckjohns@pacbell.net • ckj12@csufresno.edu
http://home.pacbell.net/ckjohns/

Fresno Metro Ministry

1055 N Van Ness Suite H • Fresno, CA 93728
Ph. (559) 485-1416 • Fax (559) 485-9109
metromin@fresnometmin.org
http://www.fresnometmin.org/

Fresno Free College Foundation/Radio station KFCF

P.O. Box 4364 • Fresno, CA 93744
Ph. (559) 233-2221 • Fax (559) 233-5776
Studio, Call-in Line: (559) 266-8888
office@kfcf.org • http://www.kfcf.org

Habitat for Humanity

2219 San Joaquin • Fresno, CA 93721
Ph. (559) 237-4102 • Fax (559) 237-1451
habitatfresnotm@hotmail.com
http://www.habitatfresno.org/

Health Care for All

c/o Larry Trullinger
2070 S. Willow #3 • Fresno, CA.97327-5139
Ph. 559-251-5662
larrytrullinger@sbcglobal.net
also contact:
lynnj@csufresno.edu • Ph. (559) 434-0427 or
edperez57@yahoo.com • Ph. (559) 261-2423
www.healthcareforall.org

The Interfaith Alliance of Central California

P.O. Box 9122 • Fresno, CA 93790
Ph. (559) 225-1438
iaccfresno_1@hotmail.com

KNFS

(A Progressive Low Power FM radio station in the South Valley)

693 E. Kern Ave. • Tulare Ca 93274
knfs@comcast.net
http://www.knfs.org (Under construction)

Latino Issues Forum (LIF)

Fresno Regional Office
550 E. Shaw Ave, Suite 240 • Fresno, Ca 93710
(559) 241-6561 (Office) • (559) 241-6563 (Fax)

Maria Leon

559-241-6572
rleon@lif.org • http://www.lif.org

League of Women Voters

1345-A East Bulldog Lane • Fresno, CA 93710
Ph. (559) 226-8683 • Fax (559) 268-1930
info@fresno.ca.lwvnet.org • http://fresno.ca.lwvnet.org/

League of Mexican American Women

PO Box 686 • Fresno, CA 93712-0686

The Living Room

601 E. Belmont • Fresno, CA 93701
Ph. (559) 485-3667 • Fax (559) 485-3669

Living Wage Committee

PO Box 4496 • Fresno, CA 93744
559-222-5240
fsivak@msn.com

The Merced Labor Party

P.O. Box 1136 • Merced, Ca 95341
(209) 631-6461
ssandovala@comcast.net

Mexican American Political Association:Fresno Chapter

Chapter Chairperson: Ben Benavides
Voice: (559) 442-0380
Madera Chapter
Chapter Chairperson: Guadalupe Guterrez
Voice: (559) 673-4033

Migrant Photography Project

P.O. Box 651 • Three Rivers Ca 93271
Voice: (559) 561-4610
ssturdevant@mindspring.com
www.migrantphotographyproject.org

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

Fresno Chapter
P.O. Box 11811 • Fresno, CA 93775-1811
Voice: (559) 485-5778 • Fax: (559) 485-5783
naacp41038@aol.com

National Action Network

Ph. (559) 288 - 0828 • Fax: (559) 266-5828
xyfloyd@aol.com • http://nancal.org

Pan-Valley Institute

1440 W. Shaw Ave., Suite A • Fresno, CA 93711
Ph. (559) 222-7678 • Fax (559) 222-7682
mnateras@afsc.org • www.afsc.org

Parents & Friends of Lesbians/Gays

1343 E Barstow • Fresno, CA 93710-6399
Ph. (559) 434-6540

Peace Bakersfield

1906 18th Street, Apt. 24 • Bakersfield, CA 93301
Ph. (661) 633-2930
peacebakersfield@sbcglobal.net
http://www.geocities.com/bakproactnet/peacebakersfield.html

Peace Fresno

P.O. Box 16133 • Fresno, CA 93755
Ph. 559-487-2515
president@peacefresno.org • www.peacefresno.org

People with Power

Ph. (559) 255-2139
peoplewithpower@yahoo.com
http://www.peoplewithpower.org/index1english.html

Planned Parenthood Mar Monte

633 N.Van Ness • Fresno, CA 93728
Ph. (559) 488-4913 • Fax (559) 488-4940
http://www.pppmarmonte.org

Plant A Row for the Hungry (PAR) UC Cooperative Extension

1720 South Maple • Fresno, California 93702-4516
(559) 456-4151/mailbox#2

Proyecto Campesino

208 W Main St Suite U-2 • Visalia, CA 93291
Ph. (559) 733-4844 • Fax (559) 733-2360
gmartinez@afsc.org
http://www.afsc.org/pacificmtn/visalia.htm

Radio Bilingue - KSJV 91.5

5005 E. Belmont Avenue • Fresno, CA 93727
Ph. (559) 455-5777
mariax@radiobilingue.org • http://www.radiobilingue.org/

The Relational Culture Institute

3485 West Shaw Ave • Fresno, California 93711
Ph. (559) 276-2304 • Fax (559) 276-2304
keith@relational-culture.com
www.relationalculture.org

The Sleeping Bag Project

4618 N. First St., #183 • Fresno 93726
Ph. (559) 226-1356
jeanchipp@sbcglobal.net
http://www.fresnoalliance.com/sbp/

South Valley Peace Center

17206 Avenue 296 • Visalia, CA 93292
info@syvc.info • http://www.syvc.info/

St. Benedict Catholic Worker

4022 N Cheryl • Fresno, CA 93705
Ph. (559) 229-6410 • Cell. 977-3648
LizaOSB@yahoo.com • www.sbcw.org

Stone Soup

1345 East Bulldog Lane, Suite 4 • Fresno, CA 93710
Ph. (559) 224-7613 • Fax (559) 224-2981
stonesoupfresno@yahoo.com
www.stonesoupfresno.org

Stonewall Democrats

c/o Chuck Krugman
1530 E.Vassar apt.S. • Fresno, CA. 93704
Ph. (559) 226-3717
ckrugman@sbcglobal.net • fresnostonewall@mangen.com
http://www.mangen.com/stonewall/

Students for Social Justice - Merced College

Jason Flores (president)
5740 E Olive • Merced Ca 95340
wizmo16@hotmail.com

Sun Mt

35751 Oak Springs Dr • Tollhouse, CA 93667
Ph. (559) 855-3710
mail@sunmt.org • http://www.sunmt.org

Tehipite Chapter Sierra Club

P.O. Box 5396 • Fresno, CA 93755
Ph. (559) 229-4031
http://www.tehipitesierraclub.org/

United Black Men

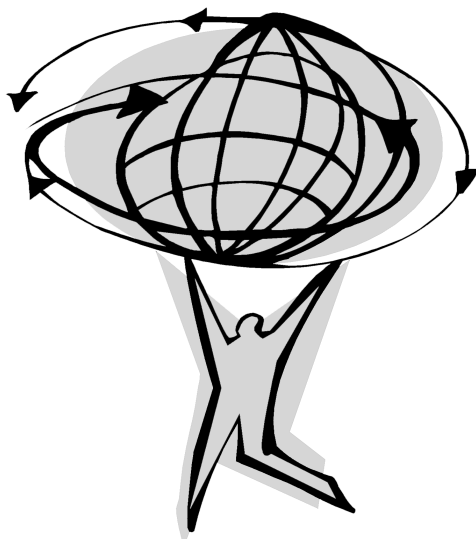
1929 E. Church Ave • Fresno 93710

The Wheelchair Project

5205 E Washington • Fresno, CA 93727
Ph. (559) 251-3814
wheelchairbusproject@juno.com
http://www.fresnoalliance.com/wheelchairproject/

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

P.O. Box 5114 • Fresno, CA 93755
Ph. (559) 658-8260
socialjustice@sti.net • http://www.fresnoalliance.com/wilpf/



COMMUNITY ACTION

Calendar of Events

Friday, July 1 • 6:30-8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents the Movie *Fidel: The Untold Story*. Fidel Castro is one of the most influential and controversial figures of our time. This documentary film by Estela Bravo, FIDEL, offers a unique opportunity to view the man through exclusive interviews with Castro himself, historians, public figures and close friends, with footage from the Cuban State archives.

Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7 pm. This event is sponsored by the Reedley Peace Center and will be held at the Fellowship Hall of First Mennonite Church, on ‘L’ street between 12th and 13th streets in Reedley. Admission is free. Contact Don Friesen by email at dfriesen@telis.org

Monday, July 4 • 9 AM - 1 PM

The 8th annual 4th of July Celebration of our Diversity Brunch will be held at O’Neil Park (CSUF campus on Barstow Ave between Chestnut and Maple). Honoring the racial and religious pluralism that makes America great!
For more information call (559) 227 - 6146.

Friday, July 8 • 5PM and 8PM

Fresno Filmworks presents “Up and Down” at the Tower Theatre. This year’s Academy Award nominee from the Czech Republic deftly blends hilarious satire with tragic melodrama to give us a sharp, yet compassionate look at contemporary Czech society. Tickets can be purchased at the Tower Theatre Box Office, 815 E. Olive Ave., The Movies, 1435 N. Van Ness Ave., the Fig Garden Bookstore in Fig Garden Village, and at the door, for \$10; \$8, for students and seniors. For more information call the FFW info line, 221-0755, or go to www.fresnofilmworks.org

Friday, July 8 • 6:30-8:30

The Reedley Peace Center presents the Movie *Fidel: The Untold Story*. Fidel Castro is one of the most influential and controversial figures of our time. This documentary film by Estela Bravo, FIDEL, offers a unique opportunity to view the man through exclusive interviews with Castro himself, historians, public figures and close friends, with footage from the Cuban State archives.

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Saturday, July 9 • 10:00 AM to Noon

Counter-Recruitment Coalition Meeting, Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. (SE corner Van Ness and McKinley Aves.). A coalition of progressive groups & churches is getting organized to do counter-recruitment, to oppose the military recruitment of our kids on high school and college campuses. More groups and people need to get involved. For more information contact Dan Yaseen, 559.432.3445 or e-mail danyaseen@sbcglobal.net.

Sunday, July 10 • 6 to 8:30 PM

FREE Event: PASTORS FOR PEACE Caravan to Cuba will be at the Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness. Potluck at 6 PM. Cuban music by Patricia Wells at 6:30 PM, and speaker Richard Becker at 7 PM. Richard Becker is the Western Regional Coordinator of the International A.N.S.W.E.R. - Act Now to Stop War and End Racism - Coalition. Since 1992, Richard Becker has been active in the U. S. - Cuba Friendshipment Caravans organized by Pastors for Peace. In November, 2000, he was a delegate to the Second World Solidarity Conference in Havana. All members of the public and media are invited. FREE. For information call the Center at 237-3223 or Angela at 435-6383.

July 11 - 15

Healthy Kids Healthy World. Caring for Ourselves, Each other and the Planet. Summer Day Camp at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno. Highlights include yoga and movement, conflict resolution with drama, and an environmental field trip. For more information please call Aubree Smith 227-6146 or www.uucfresno.org (scholarships are available).

Wednesday, July 13 • 7:30 PM

FREE — Monthly Video Series - Second Wednesday of Every Month - At the Center The film “Global Dimming” will be shown. This documentary, produced by the BBC, explains why predictions about the Earth’s climate will need to be re-examined. Scientists looked at five decades of sunlight measurements and reached the disturbing conclusion that the amount of solar energy reaching the Earth’s surface has been gradually falling. Paradoxically, the decline in sunlight may mean that global warming is a far greater threat to life on earth than previously believed. Discussion will follow. For information call the Center at 237-3223 or Angela at 435-6383.

*NOTE: There will be one showing only, at 7:30 PM. Noontime showing will NOT be held during summer months.

Friday, July 15

Deadline for articles and calendar items to the August, 2005 Community Alliance newspaper. Send information to AllianceEditor@Comcast.net

Friday, July 15 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents speaker: Bladimir Pizano, History and Latino Studies teacher at Reedley High School. NAFTA and its Effect on the Economy of Mexico.

Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7 pm. This event is sponsored by the Reedley Peace Center and will be held at the Fellowship Hall of First Mennonite Church, on ‘L’ street between 12th and 13th streets in Reedley. Admission is free. Contact Don Friesen by email at dfriesen@telis.org

Thursday, July 21 • 6:30 - 9:30 PM

Progressive Thursday presents the movie *American Jobs*. Jobs are moving to low-wage countries...is the American worker’s way of life at stake? Round Table Pizza, 5763 N First Street (SW corner of 1st and Bullard). Progressive Thursday is hosted by the GROW working group of the Fresno County Green Party. It is a free, wheelchair accessible event open to anyone interested in discussing topics of interest to the progressive community.

ONGOING WEEKLY ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

Every Sunday • 4 PM

Sunday Food Not Bombs serves free food at Courthouse Park to anyone who is hungry. They start cooking at 1 PM and serve the food at 4 PM (meet at the Tulare side of the park). If anyone would like to donate or help cook, they should contact Becky Asami at 304-3409, or email her at Littlejap@csufresno.edu

Every Tuesday • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Fresno River Zen group meets in Horsley Hall at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N. Millbrook, Fresno. This group welcomes all who wish to seek clarity, compassion, and harmony with oneself and the world through mindful meditation. Emphasis is on bringing peaceful actions from personal experience in meditation to healing the world. Teaching and practice in the spirit of the Suzuki Roshi Lineage is led by Grace Schireson, an ordained Zen priest. For more information, call Grace at (559) 877-2400 or email her at grace@emptynestzendo.org.

Every Tuesday and Thursday • 7–9 PM

The St. Benedict Catholic Worker serves a meal to the homeless, working poor, and visitors and released inmates in front of Fresno County Jail (corner of Fresno and M streets). Volunteers are needed to help prepare and serve the meals. For more information contact Liza Apper at (559) 229–6410 or liza.apper@sbew.org ; or visit their Web site: < www.sbew.org >.

Every Tuesday • 7 PM

Peace Fresno meets at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence at 1584 N Van Ness, south of McKinley. If you want to help stop Bush’s endless war against the world, come to this meeting! For an up-to-the-minute listing of all peace actions in the Fresno area, call the Fresno Center for Nonviolence at (559) 23PEACE (237–3223). For more information about Peace Fresno, call 487–2515 or visit their Web site at www.peacefresno.org.

Every Friday • 7 PM

Reedley Peace Center holds it weekly peace meeting at the Fellowship Hall at Reedley’s First Mennonite Church, 1208 L Street, Reedley. Programs vary, but the focus is always on peace issues: local, state, national, international. The contact is Carol Krehbiel: (559) 637–9098 or krehbiel@cvip.net. The meeting is free, open to the public, and accessible to the handicapped.

Every Saturday • 1–2 PM

Food Not Bombs feeds the hungry near the Olive Ave entrance to Roeding Park. The location for cooking on Saturday is at the Wesley United Methodist Church, 1343 E Barstow, between First and Cedar, starting at 9 AM. They are always in need of servers at the park. For more information call Dallas: 452–0277, or e-mail fresnofnb@yahoo.com. Visit the Food Not Bombs Web site at <www.fresnoalliance.com/FNB/>.

Every Saturday • 1 PM until the last patient is served

Medical clinic for the homeless, actively injecting drug users, and prostitutes. You can find them near the Olive Ave entrance to Roeding Park. Staffed by Dr. Marc Lasher and volunteers. Accepting financial donations. Contact: 266–0444.

Every Saturday • 1–3 PM

Fresno Free Bicycle Repair Clinic. Most Saturdays. Donations of bicycle parts, inner tubes, and blinky lights welcome. Volunteers needed to help with minor repairs. The bicycle clinic is near the Olive Ave entrance to Roeding Park, beside Food Not Bombs. For more info and to arrange donations, e-mail fresnofreebikeclinic@yahoo.com.

ONGOING MONTHLY ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

1st Sunday of every month • 1 - 3 PM

The South Valley Peace Center <<http://www.svpc.info/>> has peace demonstrations at the northwest corner of Mooney and Walnut in Visalia. Come out and demonstrate for peace. Bring a sign with your favorite peace message.

2nd and 4th Sunday of every month • 1 PM

South Valley Peace Center meets at the Visalia Friends Meeting House, 17208 Ave. 296, Visalia. Contact: info@svpc.info <http://www.svpc.info>

2nd Sunday of every month • 3 -5 PM

Fresno Stonewall Democrats meeting at Java Wava, 1940 North Echo across from Fresno High is open to the public. Stonewall Democrats’ focus is on social and political issues of interest to progressives in general and progressive and liberal Democrats in particular. For more information contact Jay Hubbell at (559) 292–4905, e–mail <fresnostonewall@mangen.com>, or visit the Web site <www.mangen.com/stone-wall/>.

3rd Sunday of every month • 10 AM–12 Noon

World Meditation Day is observed to promote peace within oneself and harmony in the world. Held at 7319 N Fourth St, Fresno. Program includes guided meditation followed by discussion and light refreshments. Call Veena Kapoor, (559) 435–2212, for more information.

3rd Sunday of every month • 1 PM

Humanists of the San Joaquin Valley meet at Horsley Hall at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 N Millbrook. For info call June: 645–1719, or visit their Web site at <fresno.humanists.net>

2nd Monday of every month • 5:30 PM

The Living Wage Committee will meet at the SEIU 250 office, 1279 N Wishon. Community Alliance for a Fair Economy (CAFE) is taking the lead in this effort. We are in the research and planning stages of development. Further information contact Frances Sivak: (559) 222–5240 or fsivak@msn.com.

1st Tuesday of every month • 6 PM

The San Joaquin Valley Coalition for Immigrant Rights meeting at 328 N Fresno Street. For more information call (559) 498–6033.

3rd Tuesday of every month • 12:30 - 2 PM

The California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) a progressive coalition of community, church and labor organizations have their monthly meeting at the Fresno Senior Resource Center located at 2085 E. Dakota in Fresno. It is an open meeting to all with concerns on local, state & federal issues that matter to seniors, voters, taxpayers....call Gene Roza at 559-905-3521 for information.

3rd Tuesday of every month • 7 PM

The Fresno Free College Foundation (owner and operator of KFCF 88.1 FM) Board of Directors meet at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N Millbrook, Fresno. The public is invited. For more information call (559) 233–2221, e-mail kfcf@kfcf.org , or visit www.kfcf.org.

1st Wednesday of every month

12 Noon–1 PM

Women in Black— Silent Vigil at the Fresno County Courthouse entrance. Show your support for PEACE and for negotiated settlements of US current military actions! Meet downtown at the Fresno courthouse, and stand silently, advocating for PEACE. For more info, call 278–7140 or 225–2850.

1st Wednesday of every month • 7 PM

The Fresno County Democratic Central Committee meetings are held in the State Building Assembly Room. The address is 2550 Mariposa Ave. Call Steve Haze, Chair — 855-8844 stevehaze@psnw.com or Jay Hubbell, Secretary - 292-4905 / jayhubbell@comcast.net for more information.

1st Wednesday of every month • 7:30 PM

Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N Millbrook, Fresno.

2nd Thursday of every month • 5 PM

The Human Relations Commission meetings are open to the public. Regular meetings are usually scheduled on the second Thursday of each month in Meeting Room 2165N of City Hall. Any person who wants to place an issue before the Commission should first contact the HRC staff at 621–7770.

2nd Thursday of every month • 7 PM

Monthly meeting of the Fresno County Green Party, County Council, at the California State Building in downtown Fresno. The address is 2550 Mariposa Ave., and is located between O and P streets and Fresno and Tulare. Enter through the main door along the pedestrian mall just off P Street. Call (559) 265–3647 or go to www.cagreens.org/fresno for more information.

2nd Thursday of every month • 7 PM

Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom meeting, 1584 N Van Ness, south of McKinley. For more information e-mail socialjustice@sti.net.

3rd Thursday of every month • 6–8 PM

Fresno County Bicycle Coalition, monthly meetings to provide a forum for bicyclists to organize, discuss common concerns, and influence public policy. If you are interested in helping Fresno County become more bike-friendly, you are invited to join this group. We meet at the Revue Café, 620 E Olive (at Lucerne) in the Tower District. Please call (559) 444–2065 for more information.

3rd Thursday of every month • 6:30 PM

Central California Criminal Justice Committee is meeting at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1564 North Van Ness (Southeast corner of McKinley and Van Ness).

3rd Thursday of every month • 7 PM

Families & Friends of Prisoners Support Group. Affiliated With the Fresno Coalition for Prison Reform And Abolition of the Death Penalty. Unitarian-Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 N. Millbrook (1/2 block south of Ashlan). Everyone Welcome.

Families and Friends of Prisoners - Former Prisoners Abolitionists - Reformers - Social Justice Activists Come and share your concerns with us in a safe, supportive & confidential environment. Individual Peer Counseling Available by Appointment. Completely Free - No Dues or Fees.

A project of the UUCF Social Justice Committee. For Information Call: Donna 456-4974 Maria 255-9492 Patty 299-8194

1st Friday of every month • 4:30–6:30 PM

Peace Fresno is at Shaw and Blackstone Avenues to protest the occupation of Iraq and other harmful domestic and foreign policies of the Bush administration. Peace Fresno advocates alternatives to war and social and environmental justice. For more information go to <www.peacefresno.org>.

1st Friday of every month • 7–9 PM

Dances of Universal Peace. Sacred Circle Dances from Around the World at the First Congregational Church, Van Ness and Yale.

1st Saturday of every month • 9:30 AM

Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley meets at Denny’s Restaurant at Abby and Divisidero. Call 439–8140 for more information.

1st Saturday of every month • 3–5 PM

Women of Spirit—a gathering of women rediscovering their own spirituality and enabling others to do the same. You are invited to join the circle of women the first Saturday of each month, at 7319 N Fourth St, Fresno. Beginning and closing meditation, discussion and activity, light refreshments after closing. The event is free. Both men and women are welcome. Contact: Veena Kapoor, (559) 435–2212.

2nd Saturday of every month • 9:30 AM

Fresno Center for Nonviolence monthly meeting at 1584 N. Van Ness, south of McKinley. For more information about the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, see their Web site <www.centerfornonviolence.org> or call 559–23PEACE (237–3223).

2nd and 4th Saturday of every month
3:30 - 5 PM

General meeting of the Central Valley Progressive PAC. The meeting will take place at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence which is located at 1584 North Van Ness (at McKinley Ave.), All are welcome. For more information see www.cvpac.org

Holding Corporate Media Accountable

By Jeff Perlstein, executive director Media Alliance
www.media-alliance.org

Is the corporate media’s madness getting you down? Is your community or organization being misrepresented or ignored?

You’re definitely not alone. The crisis in our media system today is deep and affects everyone.

But for some in our communities, this media failure is more than an issue of principle, it is truly a life-and-death issue — an issue of justice. We know from years of this work, our day-to-day experiences and numerous studies that communities of color, youth, immigrants, and low-income people are underrepresented and misrepresented — and thus disproportionately impacted. We have all seen the very real and damaging results from public policies that derive legitimacy from skewed public perceptions created by such coverage.

This isn’t news. But it is news to many people that community-based organizations around the country have successfully organized to change media policy and media coverage. This organizing is on the rise, including here in California, where there are some timely opportunities coming up.

Read on to learn more about the precedents for such organizing, some exciting examples, upcoming opportunities and tried-and-true strategies for increasing media accountability [in your community].

Don’t mourn, organize!

From Jackson, Mississippi to Grand Rapids, Michigan, and from Brooklyn to Oakland, community members have organized to increase media outlets’ accountability to the needs of the local communities in which they operate. With roots in the Civil Rights movement of the 1960’s, this work has focused on both governmental media policy and corporate media policy in order to make meaningful changes in media coverage.

But why should we expect corporate media owners to meet our community’s concerns?

Unlike other types of businesses, Radio, TV and Cable companies are subject to higher standards of public accountability and governmental oversight because they use our public resources in order to distribute their “product”. Cable companies dig up our city streets to lay their wires and Radio and TV companies broadcast over airwaves that are owned by all of us.

Yes, you and I own the airwaves that broadcasters “rent” and use. Just like we are the owners of the trees in the national forests, the radio and TV airwaves are public resources. Similar to the Forest Service’s mandate, the Federal Communications Commission is the federal agency charged with managing these public resources “in the public interest”. Radio and TV broadcasters must apply to the FCC for a license to use a channel on the airwaves and Cable companies must negotiate “franchise agreements” with every city and town where they operate, as well as abide by FCC regulations.

In return for use of these public resources, these media owners are subject to “public interest obligations” — for example, a certain amount of public affairs and children’s educational programming - as well as ongoing evaluation of their contracts or licenses. Unfortunately, over time, the intense lobbying of corporate media moguls has gutted most public interest obligations and greatly watered down the FCC’s oversight of broadcasters’ licenses. Likewise, there is now a relatively narrow scope of obligations local communities can ask for in contract negotiations with massive Cable companies.

[It’s worth noting that newspapers are not subject to “public interest obligations” and thus have very limited governmental oversight, as they are operated and distributed with private - not government — infrastructure.]

The Dual Strategy

Savvy media organizers have proved most successful by using aspects of governmental accountability mechanisms and linked them with tried-and-true corporate accountability campaigning strategies.

Like all corporations, media owners today are subject to “market” pressures — including the interests of consumers and advertisers — and are vulnerable to organized campaigns that impact their public image and disrupt their sales and revenue. Witness the successful “anti-corporate campaigning” in other sectors — such as Rainforest Action Network’s coalition victories against Citibank and Home Depot.

Intensive media organizing to affect corporations’ “bottom line” has resulted in changes in stations’ policy and coverage, through “Turn off the Radio” listener outreach campaigns in New York to advertiser boycotts in Oregon and numerous other cities. We’ve seen positive results first hand in the SF Bay Area, through Media Alliance’s joint campaign with the Youth Media Council that pressed Clear Channel Hip Hop station KMEL for more airtime for local artists and youth organizers’ voices.

In 2005 and 2006, Californians are faced with a rare opportunity to build on these recent successes around the country and take media accountability work to another level.

It’s Accountability Time — License Renewals in ‘05 and ‘06

It’s not every day that all the radio stations in California have their licenses to broadcast up for renewal. In fact, it’s only during a three month window every eight years, and 2005 is the year. In 2006, all the TV stations in the state will also face renewal — and potential challenges by the public.

Sometimes referred to as “a license to print money” because they’re limited in number and so profitable, the public receives little in exchange for broadcasters’ use of these public resources but a measly \$3000 license fee per year and a pledge: to use the licensed frequency to broadcast “in the public interest”.

Now, in 2005, it’s accountability time. It’s time for the FCC to take public input and assess whether California’s radio and TV stations have lived up to their public interest obligations to the communities in which they broadcast, and whether they’ll be granted a license renewal. With more people in the U.S. still citing the local evening news as their main source for information, and the corporations’ profits in the balance, the stakes are high on all sides.

Challenging TV and Radio License Renewals — The Precedent

We can trace the precedent for communities’ standing in broadcast license renewals to the civil-rights struggle of the 1960s. Traditional civil-rights organizations and community groups had difficulty getting their stories out due to structural racism. Grassroots groups felt they had little leverage when it came to affecting what was and wasn’t shown on TV.

In 1964, the Rev. Everett Parker, a United Church of Christ minister and Yale Divinity School lecturer took a group of students to Jackson, Mississippi to monitor local TV

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This “Dog Arnold” protest was held outside the KMJ studios on June 24, 2005. KMJ is owned by Infinity Broadcasting.

Corporate Media continued from page 27

stations’ coverage of issues related to race. They discovered a virtual absence of news about civil rights. The stations blocked transmission of network shows about the movement and interviews with leaders like the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. African-American ministers seeking to air their concerns could not even buy time, while members of the racist White Citizens Council were given free airtime for editorials.

Parker and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People challenged the stations’ broadcast licenses but were rebuffed by the Federal Communications Commission. Parker sued the agency in federal court and won. The 1966 opinion by future Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger noted that the Jackson stations were not adequately serving the full community, which was 45 percent black, and established the right of local groups to petition the FCC to revoke broadcast licenses.

Reality Check – One, Two...

[All that said,] it’s essential that we understand the limitations of the FCC’s official renewal process in order to be positioned to actually win much-needed accountability from local stations. In the SF Bay Area, we intend to leverage the visibility the official process provides to increase public awareness and involvement in the ongoing, and far more fruitful, media monitoring and direct corporate accountability work taking on local stations and their owners.

Truth is, the FCC’s renewal process has been watered down so severely over the years by corporate lobbyists and compliant politicians that it’s now largely a formality. Despite some license renewal challenges brought by listeners and public interest groups — and with plenty of deserving candidates for revocation - no station has had their license pulled in at least a decade. In the industry it’s even referred to as a “postcard renewal” — just lick the stamp and it’s a done deal.

In sharp contrast to the FCC’s inactivity over the last ten to twenty years, well-organized community monitoring and accountability campaigns have won a variety of meaningful concessions from broadcasters during the same period by directly confronting them in cities from Baltimore to San Antonio and Detroit to San Francisco. Noteworthy gains include increased public affairs programming, youth-run shows on topical issues, more programs featuring local artists, empowered community advisory boards and more.

We see the license renewal process as an opening, a hook, an opportunity — hardly the solution, in and of itself. It’s an opportunity to publicly discuss these concerns with a wider populace, to expose the misbehavior of broadcasters and the inaction of the FCC, and to grow the principled and powerful coalitions that can work longterm to win accountability directly from the broadcasters. Building such an actively engaged base of people, an infrastructure for this work locally and in regions around the country, is crucial to the work to create a more just and accountable media system.

How-To?

We think we’ve found the answer for media accountability work: Organize, organize, organize. Applying core community organizing and corporate campaigning principles is key, with the welcome difference that the targets are going public with their behavior every single day. Make the most of this opportunity by documenting their



KMJ 580 AM broadcasts right wing talk shows like Rush Limbaugh, Jaz McKay, and Ray Appleton. Will community groups petition the FCC to deny KMJ a license when they re-apply this year?



Clear Channel owns all of these local radio stations.

egregious behavior and devising a press and action strategy to bring pressure that can’t be denied.

At Media Alliance, our work with the Youth Media Council focusing on Clear Channel station KMEL is looked to across the country as a model for accountability work. Our recent ElectionWatch project further refined the tools and processes for participatory monitoring that we used in the KMEL campaign. Volunteers from MA, Grade the News, Common Cause and The League of Women Voters tracked over 1100 news stories from the two main newscasts of five Bay Area TV stations, nightly over a 3 week period, to make the case clearly to the public that changes at the stations were necessary.

We suggest the following campaign components:

Research – Doing our Homework

As in any campaign, mapping is crucial to understand the relationships amongst key players and decision makers at the media outlet, in the community and in government. Understanding who owns what, who’s loyal to whom, who are the advertisers and listeners, and who really calls the shots, are all necessary to mapping strategy.

Data gathering and Documentation – Public File Visits and Monitoring

Establishing a clear and irrefutable record of abuse and misbehavior is necessary to file a “formal complaint” to the FCC to revoke a station’s license. We’ve found this data crucial in making the case to the press, public and advertisers, whether in a renewal period or not. Both monitoring of broadcast content and review of the station’s Public File is strongly recommended. A number of guidelines exist for

Additional resources, linked at the Media Alliance website:

License Renewal Guide: A Community Guide for Public Input, by Grand Rapids Institute for Information Democracy – GRIID

“Is KMEL ‘The People’s Station?’” by the Youth Media Council

Media Reform Action Guide, by Free Press

what must be included in the Public File (see GRIID below), and the absence of said materials itself constitutes a violation of FCC rules. Anyone can visit a station during weekday work hours and must be presented with the Public File upon request. Media Alliance and several partner organizations have developed participatory monitoring procedures, which have proved invaluable for public education and data gathering.

Strategy Development – Actions and Asks

Informed by good research and data gathering, groups develop action strategy and “asks” that will bring pressure on decision makers from a variety of angles: in the press, usually the alternative press; from listeners, advertisers and the community at large who are newly informed of misbehavior; from government officials who’ve received complaints.

Be sure to plan an appropriate “arc of escalation”: present research and demands, file complaints, do a delegation visit, meet with community groups, only try an advertiser boycott after lots of groundwork!

Public Education and Base Building

Once the general strategy is in place, publishing a report on findings and conducting community workshops on the campaign is important to expand the base of support

amongst individuals and organizations. Many groups will be thrilled to know someone is developing a plan to address the coverage they’ve been experiencing. Consult the resources below and Media Alliance for suggestions on curriculum.

Press strategy

While it can be very difficult to get mainstream media outlets to break rank and “expose” each other, sometimes rivalries between mainstream outlets or across media have been successfully exploited, using good strategy. Creative, snappy messaging and framing is crucial. Clearly, the alternative and independent media are great allies in getting the word out: the damning results of community monitoring projects have run as cover stories in “alternative weeklies” in Austin, San Francisco, Monterey and Manhattan. Well-prepared community spokespeople can be very compelling interviews for friendly media and quickly help “ripple up” the stories to larger independent outlets.

Filing Official Complaints– Formal and Informal

Informal complaints can and should be filed anytime by anyone who has a concern with programming on a station. No special forms or lawyers are needed. Build a team of people who will regularly write down their concerns, send to the station with correct contact information, and request to be contacted with a response. Be sure to keep a dated copy, all these are legally supposed to be kept in the Public File and their absence can be cause for license review. Filing formal complaints for license revocation are very important and should be filed during the upcoming widnows in consultation with a lawyer and following review of the resource guides listed below.

Public Hearings

Way back when, from the 1940’s to 60’s, each station used to be required to hold a public hearing to gather input and present the testimony to the FCC to renew their licenses. While this requirement doesn’t exist anymore, activists have found public hearings with local elected officials, academics and community organizations to be very fruitful in generating community and governmental interest. The unprecedented 2003 hearings on media ownership in 12 cities blew open the public debate on that issue and resulted in the defeat of the FCC’s proposed rule changes.

Action!

Be creative and make use of the variety of tactics organizers have used across sectors to impact their “targets”:

- phone and email blasting
- launch a postcard campaign to advertisers
- create a basic “Stop So-and-So” Website (see StopSinclair.org)
- rally in front of the station or Board member’s home or business
- schedule a delegation visit, including high-profile community members
- cultural events with local artists
- Boycotts — the final stage, don’t escalate too quickly!!

Evaluation leading to Ongoing Monitoring and Campaigning

Whether or not all your “asks” are met, be sure to evaluate the campaign at regular intervals with your partners and to assess how to re-approach the targets. Ongoing monitoring will be necessary to determine whether the station is making change or merely saying so. Issuing an annual report and calling for a community hearing or Roundtable has worked well for the Youth Media Council and others.

To get involved in the license renewal process and ongoing media accountability work, please visit the Media Alliance website and contact us at the Media Alliance office, by email at: information@media-alliance.org or by phone at (415) 546-6334 x300.



The McClatchy Company owns The Fresno Bee, which is the daily newspaper in town. McClatchy also owns and operates The Clovis Independent, Merced Sun Star, Atwater Signal, Chowchilla News, Livingston Chronicle, Los Banos Enterprise, Sierra Star, Vida en el Valle (the local bilingual newspaper), Neighbors City View, Visalia City View, and Get Out. All photos by: Mike Rhodes