

THE NEW PEOPLE

PITTSBURGH'S PEACE AND JUSTICE NEWSPAPER

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On August 26, youth marched through Edgewood and Swissvale against police brutality. See page 4. (Photo: Marie Skoczylas)

Merton Award 2006 to Honor Angela Davis



Angela Davis

On Friday, November 10, the Thomas Merton Center will honor Professor Angela Davis, educator, civil rights activist and anti-prison industrial complex advocate, at the annual Merton Award Dinner. The event will be held at the Sheridan at Station Square on the Southside of Pittsburgh. The social hour will start at 6pm and dinner will begin promptly at 7pm. Entertainment will be provided by local spoken word poet Nathan James and special musical guests.

Raffle prizes include a one-week getaway at a cabin in the scenic Allegheny Mountains, a package of tickets to local entertainment and cultural events and a refurbished bike from Free Ride, Pittsburgh's only recycled bike program. The raffle winners will be drawn and announced at the event so make sure to

purchase your tickets ahead of time! Raffle tickets are \$5.00 a piece.

Dinner reservations are \$35.00 (\$40 for non-members). Space is limited so call the TMC at 412-361-3022 as soon as possible to reserve your seat and purchase raffle tickets. You may also reserve your space online by visiting our website at www.thomasmertoncenter.org.

The Thomas Merton Award has been awarded since 1972 by the Thomas Merton Center. It is named after Thomas Merton and is given annually to "national and international individuals struggling for justice." For a complete list of awardees (including biographical information) visit the http://www.thomasmertoncenter.org/merton_award_2006.htm.

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Home Run for Human Rights

During the last weekend in August low-wage workers, students, human rights organizers, anti-sweatshop agitators and baseball fans from Pittsburgh, Baltimore and Kansas met for the founding of HumanRightsBaseball.org. The purpose of the alliance was to develop an organizational structure that would coordinate and amplify the work of local organizations utilizing the terrain of professional baseball in the United States as a front in the ceaseless battle for dignity, justice and universal human rights. This sense of purpose energized the weekend with an uncommon and strong spirit of solidarity that found powerful expression in the caliber and content of the sessions.

The United Workers Association (UWA), a Human Rights organization led by Maryland's low-wage workers and members of the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign, hosted the founding meeting. Evolving from UWA's relationship with the Pittsburgh Anti-Sweatshop Community Alliance (PASCA), HumanRightsBaseball.Org comes at the end of a summer of solidarity between the two organizations. On June 24, PASCA members traveled to Baltimore for a Freedom from Poverty vigil and march, and on July 11, the UWA lent a vocal presence to PASCA's Anti-Sweatshop Carnival at the Major League Baseball All-Star game in Pittsburgh.

With the founding of HumanRightsBaseball.org both organizations intend to sustain and expand upon a relationship that dates back to 2003, when both independently coined the term iSweatFree Baseball to refer to ongoing local organizing efforts. Other organizations that expressed interest in working with the alliance but were unable to attend the founding meeting include the Upstate General Membership Branch of the IWW, the Fort Wayne Workers Project, Sweatfree Communities and the Los Angeles Garment Workers Center.

(Continued on page 5)

THE THOMAS MERTON CENTER WORKS TO INSTILL A CONSCIOUSNESS OF VALUES, AND TO RAISE THE MORAL QUESTIONS INVOLVED IN THE ISSUES OF WAR, POVERTY, RACISM, AND OPPRESSION. TMC MEMBERS ARE PEOPLE FROM DIVERSE PHILOSOPHIES AND FAITHS WHO FIND COMMON GROUND IN THE NONVIOLENT STRUGGLE TO BRING ABOUT A MORE PEACEFUL AND JUST SOCIETY.

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STANDING COMMITTEES

Open to ALL members of TMC, give input and help set future direction of the Center, prepare reports for Board meetings, at least one staff and one board member on each committee to facilitate communications. To get involved call 412-361-3022 or email: info@thomasmertoncenter.org

Building

Maintenance of 5123-5125 Penn Ave.

Development/Fundraising

Organize events - research grants

Editorial/NewPeople Collective

Plan, produce, distribute *The NewPeople*

Finance

Plan for financial stability of TMC

Membership

Organize gatherings, recruit members

Personnel

Develop policies

Technology Team

Technical advice & assistance

Join a Committee for Special Events

Plan major TMC events in collaborative manner and report regularly to the TMC Board. Works within current budget for event and helps plan future budget for event based on its evaluation.

New Person Awards (May)

Thomas Merton Award Dinner (Nov.)



TMC Open Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Come in and browse through our flyers and other literature during these open hours. To speak with a staff person, please make an appointment ahead of time.

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TMC PROJECTS / CAMPAIGNS

Projects and campaigns of the TMC are offered limited staff time, possibility of interns, financial record keeping, can use TMC name for grants, included in regular reports to Board, inclusion of events on website and *The NewPeople* newspaper, use of TMC facilities.

The Africa Project

412-657-8513, peterokema@gmail.com

Anti-War Committee

412-422-7435 carolemilda@hotmail.com
www.pittsburghendthewar.org

Azania Heritage International

412-363-3385, amaazania@yahoo.com
www.azaniaheritage.worldbreak.com

Book 'Em (books to prisoners)

412-802-8575, bookem@keromail.com

Canaries in the Coalfields

canariespgh@riseup.net, 412-965-0943

Citizens Budget Campaign

412-343-3027, molly.rush@verizon.net
www.mollyrush.com

CodePink (women for peace)

codepinkpgh@aol.com, 412-389-3216
www.codepink4peace.org

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labor_solidarity@hotmail.com, 412-361-3022
www.thomasmertoncenter.org/laborpledge

Conscience

412-231-1581, consciencepgh@yahoo.com
www.consciencepgh.org

East End Community Thrift Shop

412-361-6010, srg@zoominternet.net

Enough is ENOUGH!

Jonny Gammage Video Project
412-441-8400, BillyNommo@verizon.net

Farmers Market Friends

412-576-9355, darcavinee@yahoo.com

Fight for Lifers

412-361-3022 to leave a message
fightforliferswest@yahoo.com

Food Not Bombs

pittsburgh_fnb@yahoo.com
http://fnb-pgh.2ya.com

greenlots

412-244-3435, danae7135@aol.com

Haiti Solidarity Committee

412-271-8414
jrothermel@pittsburghfoodbank.org
www.thomasmertoncenter.org/hsc

Pittsburgh Bill of Rights Defense Campaign

412-244-5410, deangerber1@verizon.net
www.pbordc.org

Pittsburgh Campaign for Democracy NOW!

412-422-5377, sleator@cs.cmu.edu
www.pcdn.org

Pittsburgh Latin American and Caribbean Film Series

filmseries@yahoo.com, 412-687-1855

Pittsburgh Queer Women's Blogging Project

Coming soon...contact info TBA

Pittsburgh to Venezuela Collective

P2Vcollective@yahoo.com

Raging Grannies

412-486-5130, crosen5605@aol.com
www.pittsburghraginggrannies.homestead.com

RESYST (radical queer project)

info@ThomasMertonCenter.org to join d-list
www.thomasmertoncenter.org/RESYST

Roots of Promise (and Stand for Children)

724-327-2767, stand4pgh@adelphia.net

Save Our Civil Liberties

info@saveourcivilliberties.org
www.saveourcivilliberties.org

Save Our Transit

412-361-3022, zeidersamanda@gmail.com
www.saveourtransit.org

School of the Americas Watch of W. PA

412-371-9722, edith.wilson3@verizon.net
www.thomasmertoncenter.org/soa

UPRISE Counter Recruitment Tour

info@UPRISEtour.org

Urban Youth Writers Project

MichelleBurtonBrown@yahoo.com

TMC AFFILIATES and FRIENDS

Groups who financially support TMC and/or regularly co-sponsor events. These are also groups that TMC feels confident enough in to refer individuals to join and/or participate in that group's activities. Although their work is consistent with the mission of TMC, listing as an affiliate is NOT an official endorsement of all the aims, goals and strategies of the organization.

Allegheny Defense Project, Pgh Office
412-559-1364 www.alleghenydefense.org

Amnesty International
info@amnestypgh.org
www.amnestypgh.org

Association of Pittsburgh Priests
Molly 412-343-3027 molly.rush@verizon.net

The Big Idea Bookstore
412-OUR-HEAD, www.thebigideapgh.org

Black Voices for Peace
Gail Austin 412-606-1408

Citizens for Global Solutions
412-471-7852 amy@wlap.org

Citizens for Social Responsibility of Greater Johnstown
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Pennsylvania Peace Links
412-471-0302 peacelinks@aol.com

PA United for a Single-Payer Health Care (PUSH) www.pushnow.org
Molly 412-343-3027, m.rush@earthlink.net

Pennsylvanians Against Handgun Violence/ Million Mom March
Director@PAHV.org www.PAHV.org

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Pittsburgh Cuba Coalition
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Pgh Darfur Emergency Coalition
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www.pittsburghdarfur.org

Pgh Independent Media Center
info@indypgh.org www.indypgh.org

Pgh North Anti-Racism Coalition
412-367-0383

Pgh North People for Peace
412-367-1049

Pittsburgh Organizing Group
pog@mutualaid.org www.organizepittsburgh.org

Pgh Palestine Solidarity Committee
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Religion and Labor Coalition
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Stand for Children (Pgh Chapter)
Wanda 724-327-2767 stand4pgh@adelphia.net

Students in Solidarity
sorc+sis@pitt.edu www.pitt.edu/~sorc/sis

United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE)
412-471-8919 organize@ranknfile-ue.org

Urban Bikers
urbanbikes@yahoo.com

Voices for Animals
voicesforanimals@gmail.com 1-877-321-4VFA

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
Karen 412-521-7187 edith.bell4@verizon.net

TMC MEMBERSHIPS

These are organizations or coalitions the TMC has formally joined, pays dues and fulfills other agreed upon responsibilities as an organizational member.

Abolition 2000: W. Pa. Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
724-339-2242 / danfine@igc.org

Pa. Abolitionists United Against the Death Penalty
412-241-8154, hildebrew@aol.com

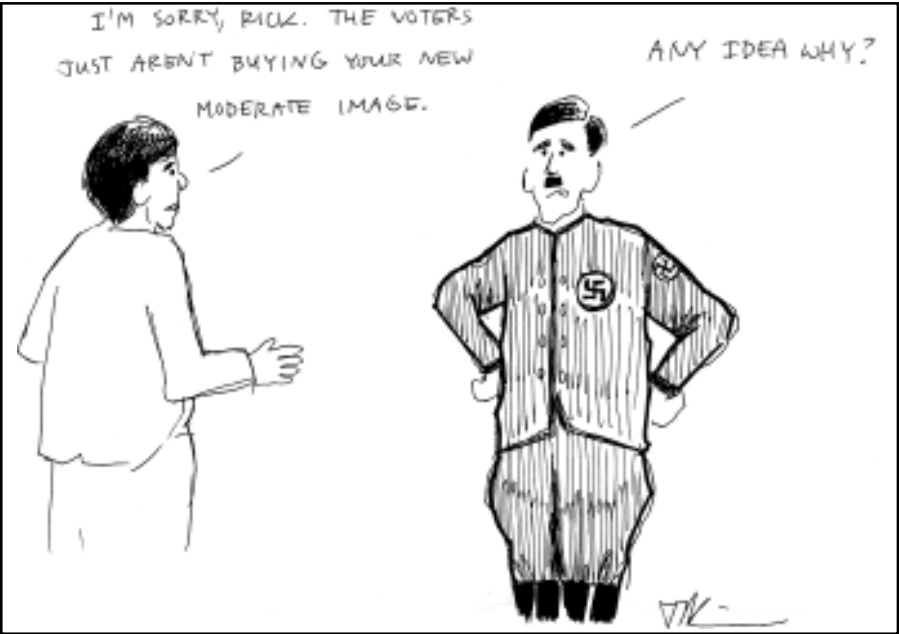
From the Editor

As a monthly peace and justice newspaper of Pittsburgh and the Tri-State area, *The NewPeople* strives to provide a media outlet that reflects the reality of progressive, alternative politics locally, nationally and globally, filling the voids left by the mainstream media. The paper also strives to reflect the big tent which the Merton Center continues to be for a myriad of projects and causes. TMC members are from diverse philosophies and faiths who find common ground in the nonviolent struggle to bring about a more peaceful and just world, working to raise the moral questions involved in the issues of war, poverty, racism, and oppression. But members do not share identical views on such issues as organized religion, Palestine/ Israel, electoral politics or abortion, to name a few. Members of the Center may all agree on the necessity of non-violence to bring about change, though many even define violence in different ways; Some believe that strong language or tone-of-voice is violent while others believe that physical harm to a living being is where the line is drawn. Each month views are expressed in the newspaper which might resonate with some members yet be counter to the wishes of others. And each month, we know that the paper is not going to be a

perfectly balanced snapshot of our diversity. But we hope that you approach the paper, and the work for social change in general, as a work in progress. We know it can be frustrating at times, but we want to continue to reflect the multiplicity of voices that make up the TMC and its mission to the best of our ability. Healthy debate and the airing of opinions seems the best way to function.

So dear readers, this month we're trying something new. We got such an active response from an opinion piece in our last issue that we printed all responses in both the short letters and the longer essays in together in the iCommunity Commentary section in hopes that these conversations can stir up further discussion (see pages 21 to 24). There are so many issues/ tactics/ strategies/ philosophies, etc. we don't agree on (and that's a good thing). We work to change the world for the better knowing that we don't know the one right way, knowing there isn't one right way. Let the paper serve us all as a place to share our experiences and insights, learn from others' experiences and insights, air frustrations, ask questions, get answers and challenge ourselves to grow. Enjoy the issue.

- Marie Skoczylas, Editor



Cartoon by TMC member Josh Bellin

Letters to the editor and article submissions

Please send all letters and/or article submissions to: marie@thomasmertoncenter.org
or Thomas Merton Center c/o Editor,
5125 Penn Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Make sure the submission is clearly marked "letter" or "article."

Questions? (412) 361-3022

* The DEADLINE is the 15th of each month.

For the complete article submissions guidelines, visit: www.thomasmertoncenter.org/The_New_People/guidelines.htm

Local Reports

First Ever TMC Steeler Season Kick-Off Fundraiser Big Success

On September 1, approximately 100 union members, activists and TMC members gathered at the Iron City Brew House in Lawrenceville to raise money for peace and justice and to cheer on hometown heroes, World Champion Pittsburgh Steelers. Attendees of the event enjoyed Steeler trivia games, competed for exciting raffle prizes, sampled delicious treats and dishes donated by local businesses while enjoying three kegs of locally brewed Iron City Beer.

The event was a great success! In a room filled with all of the black and gold, we were able to come together to cheer on the Pittsburgh Steelers while raising money to fight for peace and justice. Ten new people were welcomed into the TMC family when they signed on for memberships at the event. Representatives from the Coalition of Labor Union Women, Pittsburgh Steel Workers, the League of Young Voters and SEIU (Locals 3, 504 and 1199P) all came out to support the Center. With generous donations from Allegro Hearth, the East End Food Co-op, Eat n Park, Jenny Lee Bakery, Paddy Cake Bakery, the Quiet Storm, Pittsburgh Deli Company, Schorin Party Supplies, Paper Mart, WG Grinders, the event was



Jasmine Summer, Khari Mosley, Michelle Burton Brown, Peter Otika Okema and Gina Micco. (Photos: M. Skoczylas)

delectably delightful for all in attendance.

The Development Department at the Thomas Merton Center would like to thank all the businesses, organizations, board members, interns and volunteers who participated, organized and contributed to a fun-filled evening. Here We Go Steelers!

- Rachel Kohan



Board member Patti Dunmire and Barbara White pose with the raffle prizes.



RN Roberta Baylor, Joann O'Malley, Marty B. O'Malley and Mary Ruth Aull at the TMC table.

Advertise in
The NewPeople
Peace & Justice Monthly

We wanted to remind you that you can support *The NewPeople* newspaper by purchasing an ad. Do you have an upcoming event that you'd like to call extra attention to? An advertisement is a great way to do that. As you may remember, prices for ads range from a mere \$15 a month for a business card size ad to \$250 for a full page – with lots of options in between. *The NewPeople* goes out to 4000 people every month (TMC members and various locations all throughout Allegheny county and some in Westmoreland county) and has become increasingly more popular as it is such a valuable resource reflecting the reality of progressive, alternative politics locally, nationally and globally, filling the voids left by the mainstream media. As the paper is an important organizing tool and communiqué for the Thomas Merton Center members, projects and the activist community at large, it is an excellent way to reach people and to support the center. Please consider placing an ad if you can. Below are the prices. The deadline for ads is the tenth of each month.

Advertising Rates

Circulation: 4,000 monthly (joint issue published July/August).

Additional 10% discount for non-profit organizations and faith-based groups.

Size	1 Mo.	6 Mos.	11 Mos.
Full	\$250	\$1350	\$2200
Half	\$130	\$702	\$1144
Qtr.	\$70	\$378	\$616
Sixth	\$50	\$270	\$396
Eighth	\$40	\$216	\$352
Business Card	\$15	\$81	\$132

For specs on sizes and all other questions, contact:
marie@thomasmertoncenter.org or 412-361-3022.

www.thomasmertoncenter.org/The_New_People

Stopping Police Brutality, Racism

Resisting Police Brutality at City Council and in the Streets

Swissvale and Edgewood Youth Stand Up to Police Harassment

Angered by their treatment by the Swissvale and Edgewood Police Departments, several teenagers in those East End neighborhoods have organized a loose group, called iLetis Stand Up,i to respond to police misconduct in their communities. On August 26, around 50 people participated in the groupis first public protest.

Marching behind a homemade banner ñ a bed sheet spray-painted with the words iStop Police Racismî ñ the protest marched from Edgewood Town Center to Regent Square and then back to the center of Swissvale. Protesters



yelling, iRacism means weve got to fight backî and iNo Justice, No Peace; No Racist Police,i attracted a large amount of support from bystanders; drivers honked and held raised fists out of windows, pedestrians ran to catch up.

Ben Johnson, 15, is one of the founders of Letis Stand Up. He said that growing up, he had always noticed differences in the way police treat of people of color. It was an incident at a movie night in a neighborhood park, however, that inspired him to start Letis Stand Up. That evening, said Johnson

i... a group of white kids came over shouting the n-word at a group of black kids . . . the police [then] came over and told the black kids that if they did not get off the field, off the premises, that they were going to be arrested. The white kids, nothing happened to them.i

In another incident, Johnson says he and a group of five or six others were handing out flyers about police misconduct in Swissvale when ithree cop cars pulled up, told us all to sit down [on the curb] and threatened to give us fines and arrests.i

This harassment escalated: shortly before the August 26 protest, Edgewood Police called Johnson and told him to come into the Police Station. There, says Johnson several officers told him i... all the reasons it would be bad for having [the protest] in Edgewood . . . and when I told him we were going to have it anyway, he kept up. Other officers from Edgewood were threatening me and telling me that I would be arrested.i

Despite these and other threats to the young organizers, Saturdayis protest was free of arrests; at least three Swissvale Police cars lurked around the march, but all kept their distance.

At the end of the march, throats sore from yelling, but obviously excited by the success of their first action, several of the Letis Stand Up organizers walked back to Edgewood Town Center, vowing to keep pressure on both the Swissvale and Edgewood Police Departments, iWeire going to keep it going, keep it going, and take the next step.i

- by Morgan, posted to Pittsburgh Indymedia (www.indypgh.org)



On August 26, around 50 people marched through Edgewood and Swissvale to protest police brutality. (All photos: M. Skoczylas)

Residents Speak Out at City Council

On September 19, approximately 60-70 citizens gathered in downtown Pittsburgh in City Council Chambers to give public testimony on the Pittsburgh Policeis conduct toward the public.

Testimony ranged from simple reports of rudeness to stories of blatant disregard for police procedure. The stories came from Pittsburgh residents from all walks of life, including the elderly, teenagers, professional women and men. Several citizens, male and female, broke down in tears as the recounted their frightening experiences with the Pittsburgh Police.

A woman reported that she was roughed up when she encountered the police while celebrating the Steelers Super Bowl win on the Southside of Pittsburgh.

Two teenaged males, 14 and 17 years of age, told of police harassing them for seemingly no reason. They said the police jump out of their cars as they are walking down the street, accuse them of selling drugs and round them up for pat downs.

One grey-haired man from Squirrel Hill said he called the police for help and was treated with such contempt and cruelty that he felt victimized all over again.

A woman, involved in a domestic call, said her encounter with the police left her feeling that the police need diversity and sensitivity training.

Another man spoke of holding peaceful protests while passing out literature. He said the police have arrested him numerous times and have attempted to forbid him to pass out literature in public areas.

A college student from out of town testified that the police presence in the East End seemed excessive and intimidating.

During and after testimony, residents of Pittsburgh issued a litany a complaints about the Pittsburgh Police. The Public Hearing was called by Citizens Police Review Board. Members of the public were each given three minutes to speak. A number of citizens were allowed to speak longer.

The public applauded in solidarity time and time again, as citizens testified about police brutality in the city of Pittsburgh. Based on testimony, the problem appears to be wide-spread, affecting not only urban neighborhoods but other areas throughout the city as well.

Members of the October 22nd Coalition were in the audience passing out literature about an upcoming protest against police brutality (see page 13). According to coordinators of the event, October 22 is the day when people all over the U.S. come together to stop police violence, repression, the criminalization of a generation and the steadily increasing move towards a police state.

Da Button Pusher, music producer and activist, asked the Citizens Police Review Board, iwho is going to protect us from the police?

To contact the Citizens Police Review Board and tell your story, call 412-765-8023.

- Michelle Burton Brown



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5123 Penn Avenue, Garfield
Between Winebiddle and Evaline
(412) 361-6010

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Sunday and Monday: Closed

Sponsored by The Thomas Merton Center, Pittsburgh's Peace and Justice Center



Home Run for Human Rights

(continued from page 1)

The core values of the alliance draw upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to establish a conscious and important distinction between moral, values-based organizing models and transactional models that base their appeal on narrow claims of material self-interest. To this end HumanRightsBaseball.org will act as a coordinating committee limiting its work to sharing information and ideas between human rights organizations to improve strategic analysis; developing leaders within participating organizations; framing professional baseball in the United States as a public utility that needs to be regulated in exchange for the public benefits it receives; challenging sweatshop practices and other human rights abuses of professional baseball teams in the United States by means of appealing to the values represented by the institution of baseball; fostering solidarity and cooperation between human rights organizations and struggles on a global level; amplifying local actions and campaigns and assisting local organizations in networking with other human rights organizations.

This organizational body will take action in accord with resolutions embodied in the soon-to-be adopted Statement on International Solidarity drafted during the founding meeting. Several crucial insights noticeable for their absence in traditional models of labor organizing find voice in the Statement, including but not limited to: recognition that poverty in American cities and

towns does not exist apart from the rest of the world's poverty, and that local struggles fought for ethical reasons of justice and dignity are necessarily global in scope; an explicit admission that traditional labor forces have historically hindered and often undermined organizing efforts of workers outside of the United States, placing nationalism above international solidarity, along with a commitment to challenge such and thereby influence traditional labor practices to struggle for universal application and implementation of human rights standards; that solidarity is not a passive belief but rather an act of sacrifice to advance human rights values for all, encouraging and supporting risk-taking in order to further the struggle; and calling attention to extreme north-south inequality by redirecting the privileges and proximity to power of those based in the United States and other wealthy nations in ways that directly confront global power structures, including an expectation that U.S.-based organizations materially support the organizing efforts of their labor and human rights allies globally. The last point is to be addressed through establishing and supporting systems (and engaging in practices) that distribute resources to global organizing efforts in equitable, democratic, non-paternalistic, transparent and effective ways.

Alliance founders anticipate extending invitations to constructively and creatively integrate their efforts with the IWW and United Students Against



On July 11, PASCA held an Anti-Sweatshop Carnival at the Major League Baseball All-Star game. (Photo: Matt Toups, IMC)

Sweatshops (USAS). The IWW's rock solid One-Big-Union internationalist outlook dovetails precisely with the anti-sweatshop movement's challenge of tackling a global apparel union organizing drive. The student role and bargaining experience of USAS in winning sweat-free policy victories is another crucial component of the movement, and it will not be lost on anyone that the IWW is the only union that is actually prepared to offer union membership to students. It was in this spirit that Solidarity Greetings were formally sent to the 2006 General Assembly from the HumanRightsBaseball.org founding meeting in Baltimore and the iFrom Cooperstown to Dhaka Voluntary Assessment Stamp issued by the Upstate General Membership Branch of the IWW was presented and discussed. The work of the International Solidarity Committee of the IWW is seen as another key thread in the movement's fabric.

The International Solidarity discussion largely focused on the National Garment Workers Federation of Bangladesh. The NGWF has substantial worker membership and operates in areas of the world affected by Multi-Fiber Expiration. Challenging and hopeful questions were raised over the necessity of attending a meeting with NGWF in Central America in the coming months. Participants in the alliance recognize new potential for Industrial Organizing to take place when the NGWF model informs a plan for a regional organizing in Central America. Such a coordinated effort has the potential to begin a process of verifying wages reported by companies bidding on apparel contracts in governmental jurisdictions or applying for collegiate and/or baseball licensing agreements requiring wage disclosure.

(continued on page 6)

Pre election emergency public meeting!

HOW TO GET OUT OF IRAQ & WHY ATTACKING IRAN WOULD BE REALLY DUMB

Featuring two intelligence experts: Scott Ritter & Ray McGovern

SCOTT RITTER served as a U.S. Marines intelligence officer and was the Chief United Nations Weapons Inspector in Iraq from 1991 to 1998. He also spent several months of the Gulf War serving under General Norman Schwarzkopf at Marine Central Command in Saudi Arabia. He is the author of *Iraq Confidential* (www.iraqconfidential.com) published by Nation Books (www.nationbooks.org).

RAY McGovern served as a CIA Analyst for 27 years. His duties included chairing the National Intelligence Estimates and conducting early morning daily briefings one-on-one with Vice President George Bush and other senior administration officials. Ray is on the Steering Group of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS). He recently attracted widespread attention when he publicly confronted Donald Rumsfeld about the Secretary's claims concerning weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Video of the encounter and media coverage at <http://youtube.com/watch?v=5NWYZHhZZHc> and http://youtube.com/watch?v=6z_PHmCDiRU.



Invitations to join the discussion will be sent to both senatorial and congressional candidates of the 3rd & 4 congressional districts.

Event Date: Saturday, October 21, 2006 Event Time: 7:00 PM Doors Open at 6:50pm
Venue: Haine Middle School Address: 1516 Haine School Road, Cranberry Twp, PA 16066

For More Info: Contact Kevin 724 831 8795 / kcaridad@yahoo.com

Sponsored by: North Hills DFA, U.S. Tour of Duty

Immigrants Seek Amnesty And Legalization

No bill is better than a bad bill, chanted the Pittsburgh Friends of Immigrants (PFOI) organization, while marching against the bills passed last May and July regarding the legislation of immigrants.

The group, led by Ceci Wheeler, gathered approximately 50 people in the South Side September 3 to join the National Immigration Movement as a way to say no to the Hazleton ordinance and the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act that many criticize for being oppressive and racist.

Even though both the Hazleton Bill and the Comprehensive Reform - S 2611 - were approved, they are delayed now due to the effort of groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

Wheeler fears that possible amendments to the ordinances could be stronger and more oppressive to the undocumented immigrants who claim amnesty all through the country.

Along the march route, from East Carson and 22nd streets to the Allegheny County Jail, people held signs and chanted demanding legalization for all, in protest of the ordinances that marchers say could criminalize undocumented immigrants, block the path to citizenship for many legal permanent residents and deport people for minor crimes, among other considerations.

To Wheeler, it is necessary to demand more effective alternatives of legislation than this one that she says will destroy families and weaken the economic structure in the community. She says many people are going to be criminalized if the immigration law does not change.

Wheeler's organization wants to make the community aware of the discriminating Hazleton ordinance.

Titled the City of Hazleton Illegal Immigration Relief Act, the Ordinance states that illegal immigration leads to higher crime rates, contributes to overcrowded classrooms and failing schools, subjects our hospitals to fiscal hardship and legal residents to substandard quality of care, contributes to other burdens on public services, increasing their cost and diminishing their



On Sept. 3, approximately 50 people marched through the South Side to say "No" to the Hazleton ordinance and the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act. (Photos: M. Skoczylas)

availability to lawful residents, and destroys our neighborhoods and diminishes our overall quality of life. The ordinance, passed by the city council on July 13, makes it a crime to aid and abet undocumented persons, and defines aiding and abetting as hiring or attempted hiring of illegal aliens, providing, renting or leasing real or personal property to illegal aliens, funding, providing goods and services to or aiding in the establishment or continuation of any day labor center or other entity providing similar services. Hazleton's Ordinance is similar to the now-stalled House Resolution 4437; the proposed law that sparked protests drawing millions across the country.

According to Rustbelt Radio, Hazleton Latinos are already being targeted by their neighbors. More than 300 workers have been dismissed and the American Pork processing plant and the VanHoekelen Greenhouse have closed their doors due to a lack of available workers. On the weekend of July 29, an envoy of leaders from the PA Statewide Latino Coalition and Jobs with Justice

found the words "KKK" and racial slurs prominently graffitied in the town. Latinos have had their business vandalized with rocks thrown through their windows and many Latino families report that city employees stopped picking up their trash from the curb three weeks ago. Signs on bar fronts warn that they serve "Legals only" and that customers must "Speak English or Leave."

The bill involves not only undocumented people but also students, tourists and permanent residents, said Wheeler to whom the media is trying to frighten people to talk about rights in this matter.

The protesters heard the speech of activist Tina Gross as well. She talked about the hidden traps in the immigration Bill after highlighting different specifications of the ordinance S 2611 introduced in the Senate by senators Specter from Pennsylvania and Kennedy of Massachusetts, among others, and approved by the Senate on May 25.

Gross said that the legislation tends to encourage police to become immigration agents, makes many immigrant workers ineligible for legalization and could criminalize people for helping immigrants' friends and family members.

Gross embraced the idea of rebuilding the law from scratch because she said this meager legislation program could cause thousands of people to be deported.

According to a *Post-Gazette* article, the northeastern Pennsylvania city of Hazleton agreed September 1 not to enforce the law promoted by the Mayor Louis Barletta at least for now.

However, civil rights groups are worried because Barletta's legal team is reworking the ordinance in order to strengthen it against law suits brought by people who stand for immigrants' rights.

Wheeler observed that it could be risky to have this bill as a model across the nation and mentioned it was already copied by Florida and New Jersey while California is thinking about it. Immigration cases are complex and must be a federal issue, she concluded.

For more information on Pittsburgh Friends of Immigrants, contact PFOIinfo@gmail.com.

- Maria Urbandt

New Round of Immigration Protests Begin

According to Democracy Now, on Sept. 4, activists in Illinois concluded a four-day, 50-mile walk to a suburban Chicago office of House Speaker Dennis Hastert. More than 5,000 people gathered on the National Mall Sept. 7 in support of the rights of undocumented immigrants. The We Are America Alliance rally comes as House Republicans announced they would launch a new effort to pass several border crackdown measures before their recess next month.



The Big Idea Bookstore

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Saturday, October 11 at 7PM
First meeting of the Big Idea Reading Group.
The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy

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Volunteers Always Needed!

Human Rights Home Run

(continued from page 5)

While traditional union models have had no answer for the flexibility and insecurity of a temporary labor market, whether in the global apparel industry or amongst day labor at inner city stadiums, the United Workers Association's Human Rights model has proven successful in organizing workers around an expansive vision of justice that speaks to the shared experiences of poor workers in today's global economy. This model has allowed the UWA to build the substantial community support necessary for workers to win, and organizers from Pittsburgh and elsewhere left Baltimore with every intention of bringing those lessons home.

With this framework the alliance will let it be known that baseball with its roots so deeply entrenched in the mythology of Americana is a legitimate and vital terrain in the struggle against poverty and oppression. While Major League Baseball and teams therein currently operate as a privatized and unregulated utility, HumanRightsBaseball.org members are crying bloody murder and demanding that Major League Baseball be treated as a public utility subjected to regulation that ensures that the values and the high standards for human rights of host cities be upheld by the teams that are granted the privilege of doing business there.

Furthermore the alliance demands that all institutions supporting, governmental or otherwise enforce the high standards of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the law of the land and the planet. Today Major League Baseball operates as a criminal cartel, like virtually all institutions of the powerful, mythology aside, but by reclaiming the values of fair play, teamwork and cooperation, kinship, community, collective struggle and equality HumanRightsBaseball.org will act as a vehicle for those dedicated to reclaiming the collective, shared values of our society that have been unceremoniously hijacked in the crass pursuit of personal profit accrued at the expense of human dignity, honesty and justice.

- by members of the Pittsburgh Anti Sweatshop Community Alliance: Bret Grote, Clark Clagget and Kenneth Miller.



Pittsburgh Friends of Immigrants organizer Ceci Wheeler speaks out at the Allegheny County Jail at the end of the march.

Merton Award 2006 Honors Angela Davis on November 10!

Angela Davis and Mumia Abu Jamal: Warriors in the Battle for Social Justice

For the many people who lived through the tumultuous 1960s and '70s, and for those who later learned of Angela Davis in classrooms on university campuses and libraries, she is a living icon of the civil rights era.

Professor Davis' political activism began in Birmingham, Alabama, and continued through her high school years in New York. Angela's parents enrolled their daughter in the progressive, ahead-of-its-time Little Red School House in Greenwich Village, which exposed her to revolutionary ideologies. Angela's early travel as a young college student instilled in her an appreciation of the global struggle for human rights. It was not until 1969, that she came to national attention. Davis was charged with conspiracy, kidnapping and an accomplice to murder when guns used

in an attempt to liberate James McClain from the Marin County Courthouse, on trial for allegedly attempting to stab a cop, were claimed to be registered in Angela's name. Her flight from authorities while on the FBI's most wanted list, infamous trial and subsequent acquittal by an all-white jury became international news.

Ten years after Angela Davis' acquittal, Mumia Abu-Jamal was sentenced to death row because his political action and personal stance against racism and police brutality placed him, like Angela Davis, in the line of fire. Internationally, a global community has called for a new trial for Mumia, who has been accused of killing a Philadelphia police officer. His battle has become a unifying theme for many social justice groups. Socially conscious celebrities such as Danny Glover, Ossie Davis and Susan Sarandon, world leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Danielle Mitterand (former First Lady of France) and Fidel Castro, members of the British Parliament, and the European Parliament have all called on the U.S. to hold a new trial. Millions of people throughout the world have taken to the streets to protest this travesty of justice and perversion of democracy.

Due to her own personal experience as state property, Angela Davis has become a voice for those who are so often voiceless. Davis remains active in the campaign to free the noted Philadelphia journalist and political prisoner. At the time of his arrest, Mumia Abu Jamal's reporting called attention to what he saw happening to MOVE, a revolutionary organization, which was later the target

of a deadly attack orchestrated by Philadelphia city government.

From a cell on death row, Mumia continues to speak out for those whose oppression stems from the rise of prison populations, police brutality, the death penalty, persecution of political dissent and the continuation of white supremacy and globalization. He has published four books and his weekly columns are distributed throughout the world.

Angela Davis has made the abolition of the death penalty, the release of political prisoners and the destruction of the prison industrial complex the primary focus of her prison abolition campaign. On October 4, 2003 Davis said, while accepting the Medal of Honorary Citizenship of the city of Paris on behalf of Mumia Abu-Jamal: "This is my small contribution to the movement. I consider that a priority in my life. And I know that had people thirty years ago not made my case a priority in their lives I would still be in prison today..."

Angela Davis will be coming to Pittsburgh to accept the Thomas Merton Award. The dinner will be held on Friday, November 10, at 7:00pm at the Sheraton at Station Square. Efforts to have Mumia Abu Jamal introduce and congratulate Professor Davis, via video recording, are in the works. Visit the Web site: www.thomasmertoncenter.org/merton_award_2006.htm. E-mail info@thomasmertoncenter.org or call 412-361-3022.

- Michelle Burton Brown



Angela Davis in court in 1969. (Photo from arushdy.web.wesleyan.edu)



Mumia Abu Jamal (Photo: www.freemumia.org)

Buy raffle tickets!

Raffle prizes include a one-week getaway at a cabin in the scenic Allegheny Mountains, a package of tickets to local entertainment and cultural events and a refurbished bike from Free Ride, Pittsburgh's only recycled bike program.

The raffle winners will be drawn and announced at the event so make sure to purchase your tickets ahead of time! Raffle tickets are \$5.00 a piece. Call 412-361-3022.

You are invited to the
2006 Thomas Merton Award Dinner
honoring

Angela Y. Davis!



Student, teacher, writer, scholar, and activist/organizer, Davis is an advocate of prison abolition and has developed a powerful critique of racism in the criminal justice system. She has received the distinguished honor of an appointment to the University of California Presidential Chair in African American and Feminist Studies.

TMC members will be receiving their invitations in the mail soon.

Friday, Nov. 10, 2006

6:00 Social Hour
7:00 Dinner

Sheridan at Station Square (Southside)
\$35 for TMC members, \$40 for non-members

412-361-3022 for more info

Purchase tickets by:
Check sent to the TMC (5125 Penn Ave, Pgh, 15224)
Credit Card by phone
Online (www.thomasmertoncenter.org)

Please make your reservation early!

The Color of Imprisonment

Angela Davis spoke with Colorlines on masked racism and other reflections on the Prison Industrial Complex. Below is an excerpt.

Almost two million people are currently locked up in the immense network of U.S. prisons and jails. More than 70 percent of the imprisoned population are people of color. It is rarely acknowledged that the fastest growing group of prisoners are black women and that Native American prisoners are the largest group per capita. Approximately five million people -- including those on probation and parole -- are directly under the surveillance of the criminal justice system.

Three decades ago, the imprisoned population was approximately one-eighth its current size. While women still constitute a relatively small percentage of people behind bars, today the number of incarcerated women in California alone is almost twice what the nationwide women's prison population was in 1970. According to Elliott Currie, "[t]he prison has become a looming presence in our society to an extent unparalleled in our history -- or that of any other industrial democracy. Short of major wars, mass incarceration has been the most thoroughly implemented government social program of our time."

To deliver up bodies destined for profitable punishment, the political economy of prisons relies on racialized assumptions of criminality -- such as images of black welfare mothers reproducing criminal children -- and on racist practices in arrest, conviction, and sentencing patterns. Colored bodies constitute the main human raw material in this vast experiment to disappear the major social problems of our time. Once the aura of magic is stripped away from the imprisonment solution, what is revealed is racism, class bias, and the parasitic seduction of capitalist profit. The prison industrial system materially and morally impoverishes its inhabitants and devours the social wealth needed to address the very problems that have led to spiraling numbers of prisoners.

As prisons take up more and more space on the social landscape, other government programs that have previously sought to respond to social needs -- such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families -- are being squeezed out of existence. The deterioration of public education, including prioritizing discipline and security over learning in public schools located in poor communities, is directly related to the prison solution.

Read more: www.colorlines.com



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Intelligence Experts Coming to Pittsburgh for Iraq Forum

In July 2006, nearly 3,400 civilians were killed in Iraq, making it the single deadliest month in the more than three years since the United States invaded Iraq. Nearly 2,700 American soldiers already have died in the conflict.

Contrary to the iprogressi that Bush administration officials have repeatedly said is being made in Iraq, the situation on the ground says otherwise. Indeed, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, considered to be the country's most influential moderate Shia leader, admitted last month that he is powerless to stop a civil war, something which many experts say is already at hand.

Even the military is finally admitting, in secret, what many already know: This conflict cannot be won. As the *Washington Post* reported in September, Col. Pete Devlin, the Marine Corpsi chief intelligence officer in Iraq, concluded in a classified report that the Anbar province, the large province in the west of the country, is all but lost.

It didn't have to be this way.

iThere is a substantial lack of clarity and credible sources on the actual nature of the Iraqi threat to the U.S.,i Scott Ritter, the Chief United Nations Weapons Inspector in Iraq from 1991 to 1998, wrote in a January 2002 editorial in the *Christian Science Monitor*. Had only more politiciansóand Americans, for that matteróheeded his warning.

Ritter, a U.S. Marines intelligence offer, has continued to be one of the most credible and outspoken critics of the Iraq war and the Bush administration's management of it. On Saturday, October 21, at 7pm Ritter will be one of two featured speakers at an important pre-election forum on the Iraq war in Cranberry Township at the Haine Middle School (1516 Haine School Road). He will be joined by Ray McGovern, a former CIA analyst who has accused the Bush administration of manipulating intelligence in its rush to invade Iraq. McGovern gained notoriety nationwide earlier this year when, at a public forum, he confronted Sec. of Defense Donald



Scott Ritter

Rumsfeld about the alleged intelligence manipulation.

Ritter and McGovern will discuss the mistakes that led to conflict in Iraq and how the United States can begin to extricate itself from this foreign policy debacle. They also will review the mounting evidence that the Bush administration, at the urging of leading neoconservatives, now has its sights set on Iran.

Several candidates competing for seats in the U.S. House of Representatives have been invited to attend the forum. Dr. Steven Porter, the Democrat running against one of President Bush's strongest backers in the House, Rep. Phil English (R), in Pennsylvania's 3rd District, has confirmed.

Make plans to attend this important event about one of the most pressing issues facing our country today.

Sponsored by the Western Pennsylvania DFA & U.S. Tour of Duty. For more information, contact Kevin at 724.831.8795 or kcaridad@yahoo.com

- Kevin Caridad

Film Screening “500 Miles to Babylon”

i500 Miles to Babyloni is a one-hour documentary film about Iraq under U.S. occupation. It will be screened at the Thomas Merton Center (5125 Penn Ave. in Garfield) on Monday, October 30 at 7pm. Narrated by filmmaker David Martinez (using footage shot in Iraq during 2003-4), the film addresses the current war not simply as a conflict over petroleum profits or a scheme to fill a company's coffers, but as part of a larger American imperial project.

Through impromptu interviews, glimpses of daily life, still photographs and footage of car-bombs, demonstrations, night-time graffiti artists and the celebrations following Saddam's capture, i500 Miles To Babyloni reveals the situation in contemporary Iraq through a personal lens. More than a simple anti-war movie, i500 Milesi will follow a narrative of disintegration, showing the initial excitement of some sectors of the Iraqi population after the U.S. military toppled Saddam Hussein, their hope eroding as they watched their country sink into chaos and violence in the months that followed.

The film ends with the April 2004 assault on Fallujah, when all of Iraq was rising against the Americans, and includes rare footage from inside besieged Fallujah,

where the filmmaker went with a group of journalists and aid workers to deliver medical supplies and move wounded civilians to Baghdad.

i500 Miles To Babyloni is currently in the final stages of post-production, with an expected completion date of April 2006.

Filmmaker David Martinez is a journalist and filmmaker originally from Texas. He has worked as a video war-correspondent in Aceh, Indonesia, where with William Nessen he was the first to interview the head of the guerrilla organization The Free Aceh Movement (G.A.M.) in 2003, as well as in Iraq where he worked with Prothap Chatterjee covering the U.S. occupation in 2003-4. As a filmmaker he has produced several shorts, including a segment for the 2004 PBS series iVisiones,i executive produced by Hector Galan. Most recently he worked on a film about music in Sumatra, iSumatran Folk Cinema,i for the Sublime Frequencies label. Mr. Martinez currently makes his home in San Francisco.

Discussion with Director David Martinez will follow screening.

For more information on the film, check out the website at graffitifilms.com. For more information about the event, call the TMC at 412-361-3022.

Islamic Center to Sponsor Humanity Day

The Islamic Center of Pittsburgh is pleased to announce its 12th Annual Humanity Day celebration which will be held on Sunday, October 15, from 6pm to 9pm at the Islamic Center of Pittsburgh, 4100 Bigelow Blvd. in Oakland. Every year the Islamic Center of Pittsburgh celebrates Humanity Day during the month of Ramadan, to bring all members of the human family together. The event is designed to help build bridges, foster understanding and nurture mutual respect for one another. The event is free and open to all members of the public. Visitors will get the opportunity to view their Muslim neighbors praying and take part in the opening of the fast at sunset. Along with talks about Ramadan and a recognition award given to a member of the local Pittsburgh community, there will be a talk by Farooq Hussaini on what the

children of Abraham should do in troubling times such as these.

The holy month of Ramadan falls each year in the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar and is identified by the sighting of the new moon. It was during this month that the holy Quran (the sacred book of Islam) was revealed to the Prophet Mohammed by the Angel Gabriel. During Ramadan, Muslims around the world observe fasting by refraining from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual relations from sunrise to sunset. It is a time of spiritual growth and a month where Muslims are to aspire to a higher level of devotion to God, kindness and charity to all of humanity.

For questions about the event, please contact the Islamic Center of Pittsburgh at 412-682-5555 x4 or outreach@icp-pgh.org.

- Nusrath Ainapore

Good News from the ENOUGH! Project

There is good news from the producer/director of the documentary iEnough IS ENOUGH: The Death of Jonny Gammage.i In mid-September, Billy Jackson announced several important developments.

An updated DVD of the one-hour documentary will be released on October 12, the eleventh anniversary of Gammage's death by positional asphyxia (suffocation) at the hands of police during a routinei traffic stop.

Last year the documentary premiered with a scratch track read by Jackson, who never intended to be the narrator. iNow,i says Jackson, iwe're very excited to announce new narration by Danny Glover.i

Glover, who called the documentary iriveting,i also had this to say about his reasons for getting involved: i[What] moved me was the mobilization that I saw around this, where the community would not let it go away. Whether it was people from the media, Black members of the media, young students . . . to see the translation

of what happened into public action and becoming part of the public discourse, and the people fighting, finally, to get a police review board . . . certainly it was one of the compelling examples of how, given certain circumstances, we do find ways to empower ourselves.i

In addition to the new voiceover, the new release includes a revised conclusion with archival film footage of three later cases of police brutality in other parts of the U.S. iOne of the things we wanted to emphasize is exactly what Danny Glover emphasized,i said Jackson. iWe cannot let this go away because it is still going on. Innocent people are still being killed.i

iEnoughi was shown at Boston's Roxbury Film Festival in July, and will be entered in other festivals as part of a nationwide distribution initiative funded by the Maurice Falk Fund and Three Rivers Community Foundation. The funds will be used to ensure the film is seen and used as a resource to motivate audiences to work toward

eliminating racial profiling, improving police training and accountability, strengthening citizen police review boards, restoring elected (not politically appointed) coroners and open inquests, removing investigations from local jurisdiction and making the criminal justice system fair for all.

Also on October 12 the project will have a new online home: NOMMOProductions.com. Visitors to the site will find a short trailer and description of the ENOUGH project, biographies, links to other organizations working on the issues and a special section with outreach resources for screeners. Organizations that purchase the film and arrange a screening will find sample flyers, posters, press releases and programs and how-to advice on following the video with a community forum. Expert speakers also will be available to travel to screenings around the country.

In the interest of making the film available to everyone, pricing will be on a sliding scale based on the screening organization's annual budget. The

ENOUGH project also will donate 15 percent of proceeds to the Jonny Gammage Scholarship Fund, awarded annually by Pittsburgh's Black and White Reunion to a law student with an interest in civil rights law.

iWe still urgently need donations to cover production debts,i said Jackson, ibut we are moving forward with funds earmarked for distribution. We have a team of consultants and volunteers getting the word out, and three young interns have signed on, giving us renewed energy and optimism.i

For further information, to get involved, make a donation, reserve a DVD or arrange a screening, contact the Thomas Merton Center or call NOMMO Productions at 412-441-8400.

- Tris Ozark

Founding Director of Families, USA, to Speak

Ron Pollack, the Founding Executive Director of Families, USA, will deliver the annual Norman J. & Alice Chapman Rubash Distinguished Lecture in Law and Social Work at the Teplitz Moot Court Room of the University of Pittsburgh School of Law on Thursday, October 19. The lecture is entitled, "The Fight for Universal Health Coverage in America," and will begin at noon and last until 2 pm. Families USA's mission is to achieve high-quality, affordable health coverage for everyone in the United States. Pollack is also the Founder and Chair of the Health Assistance Partnership, an entity that works with health care ombudsman programs across the country to help consumers navigate the increasingly complex U.S. health care system. Families USA has prepared numerous reports and analyses on health coverage for uninsured and underinsured families, public health programs, prescription drug issues, HMO-related consumer protections, long-term care and other health care issues. Those reports and analyses are frequently cited at Congressional hearings, in state legislatures, by the media and by consumer organizations that Families USA works with all across the country.

Pollack is a frequent guest on a variety of television and radio programs, such as "The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer," NBC's "Today" show, ABC's "Good Morning America" and "Nightline," CNN's "Larry King Live" and "Crossfire," NPR's "All Things Considered" and "Morning Edition," and many others, and he is often quoted in such leading newspapers as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Los Angeles Times*.

Pollack obtained his law degree from the New York University School of Law, where he was an Arthur Garfield Hays Civil Liberties Fellow. Prior to his current position at Families USA, Mr. Pollack was Dean of the Antioch University School of Law. He was also the Founding Executive Director of the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), a leading national organization focused on the

elimination of hunger in the United States. In that capacity, Mr. Pollack brought litigation that resulted in the creation of the iWIC Program for malnourished mothers and infants, and he argued many cases in the federal courts including two successful cases argued on the same day in the United States Supreme Court to improve food aid for low-income Americans.

The Rubash Lecture also includes a responding panel of Steven Larchuk, Esq.; Andrea Fox, MD, MPH; Valerie Carr Copeland, PhD, MSW, MPH; and Beaufort B. Longest, Jr., PhD. Larchuk is a Pittsburgh Attorney and Graduate of the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. He is the principal author of the iBalanced and Comprehensive Health Reform Act, a bill that is currently pending before the Pennsylvania General Assembly at HR2722 and SB1085 and which blends universal and single payer health coverage with a no-fault medical negligence system and other reforms. Fox is Associate Professor of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and Medical Director of the Squirrel Hill Community Health Center. Carr Copeland is Associate Professor of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work and of the Graduate School of Public Health. Longest is a Professor of Health Policy & Management and Director of the Health Policy Institute at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health.

The event is free and will be followed by a luncheon reception for attendees. Two hours of Continuing Education credit may be obtained for: LSW/LCSW, LPC, LMFT, CAC NBCC & ACT 48 (CE certification is available for a fee). The program is also approved by the PA CLE Board for two hours of substantive credit for \$25, payable at the door. For more information, contact 412-648-5476.

- Stella L. Smetanka, Esq., Clinical Associate Professor of Law, University of Pittsburgh School of Law, Health Law Clinic

Eyes Wide Open Across Pennsylvania: experiencing the human cost of war

In October, Eyes Wide Open, the American Friends Service Committee's (AFSC) widely-acclaimed exhibition on the human cost of the Iraq War, will be going on the road again around the state (for a schedule of sites see www.afsc.org/pittsburgh). The exhibit features a pair of boots honoring each U.S. military casualty in PA, shoes to memorialize the Iraqis killed in the conflict and a multimedia display exploring the history, cost and consequences of the war.

In the spring it was shown at 14 sites, including Pittsburgh. With the help of more than 300 volunteers we were able to reach over 4,000 people. Below is a description of our Memorial Day exhibit. If anyone is interested in hosting Eyes Wide Open (EWO) PA please contact Scilla Wahrhaftig at (412) 371-3607 swahrhaftig@afsc.org.

Eyes Wide Open at Wal-Mart: Reaching Middle America

"Hold Eyes Wide Open in a Wal-Mart parking lot? There is no way Wal-Mart will agree." That was the response of the AFSC staff in Pittsburgh when the Center for Non-Violent Living in Lewisburg asked us if the location would be suitable. To everyone's amazement Wal-Mart not only agreed but was extremely helpful in identifying the best spot for us to use, just beside the main driveway to the store. We even had a few trees for shade, which on two 90 degree days were a blessing.

In planning the event no one considered the impact of setting up the exhibit on Memorial Day weekend. In fact originally the local organizers had rejected it as a time when few people would come. Nothing could be further from the truth. The impact of the exhibit was multiplied by the increased number of shoppers and the sentiments of the holiday. As one man said to his son, "This is what Memorial Day is all about, remembering people who have been killed in the war."

Throughout the day, cars slowed as they pulled into the parking lot: curious shoppers peering from their windows to figure out what was going on. Many parked and walked over for a closer look. Once there, they pulled out cell phones to call friends with the message, "You have to come see this!" One woman, who received such a phone call, came because of her son, who is still in Iraq. He had told her enthusiastic stories about his commanding officer, Major Michael McLaughlin. "Major Mac died in my son's arms," she said. She left a long note in the Major's boots hoping that his family would see it when EWO will come to their hometown of Mercer. "You are with the army of angels," it says, "Thank you for your caring of our son."

On the second day, a front page article in the *Daily Item* brought more people out to the sun soaked parking lot. These people looked for Nick Berg's boots. Berg was an independent contractor whose story had been featured in the paper. Nick, from West Chester, PA, was working in Iraq when he was captured and beheaded. His father, Michael, had approached AFSC in Pennsylvania and asked if we would display a pair of boots for his son along with the soldiers. Michael drove down from Delaware to be at the exhibit.

Many of the people who came had friends or family in the army. An older couple came up with a little three year old in tow, "His dad is in Iraq at the moment," they said. One volunteer listener was approached by a big burly guy with tattoos on his arms who asked, "What is this?" The volunteer answered, "Did you

see the front page article in the paper this morning?" "I never read the papers," the guy replied. At this point the volunteer was expecting the worst, however when he explained that the display was a memorial to those killed in Iraq, the guy said, "I lost a son in Iraq." Together they went and found his son's boots. He stood a little while and then without saying anything quietly left.

In a number of cases the visitors knew the local people who had died. "He went to school with my son," was one comment. A member of the military visited who had the job of telling families that their children had been killed. He pointed to a pair of boots and said the mom was hanging out the wash when he came to tell her of her son's death. A young soldier, recently returned from Iraq himself, spent a long time with the exhibit trying to find the names of his buddies in the 104th Infantry. He had brought decals to put in their boots. Clearly very moved by the exhibit, he said when he went into the army he was gung ho for the war. Now he is in a very different place. "What is it all for?" he asked sadly.

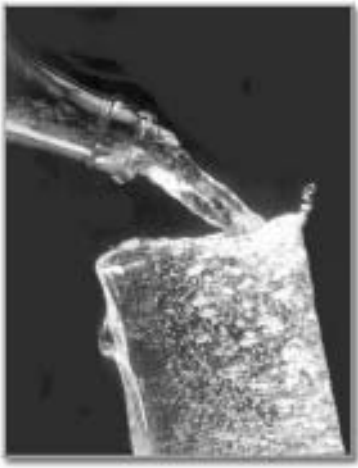
The Iraqi shoes had their usual sobering effect on people. A group of seven teenagers, between fifteen and eighteen years old, were wandering through the boots looking but also goofing around until they came to the Iraqi shoes. Immediately, they became somber and stood for a while working out the numbers and contemplating the little shoes. One father stood by the smallest shoes with his nine year old daughter. After a moment, with tears in his eyes, he hugged her close and told the story of when she was a small child and had asked him, "How can babies die, Daddy?"

As often happens, the impact on those who brought Eyes Wide Open to Lewisburg was just as powerful as the impact on those who came to visit. We were all a little apprehensive about the response of people in small town central PA, shopping at Wal-Mart. At the listening training that we hold for each local sponsor of EWO prior to their exhibit, a number of people asked what they should do if visitors got aggressive or started arguing. This concern was expressed by every group we worked with this Spring, but was intensified by the public exposure of the parking lot and our subconscious stereotypes of Wal-Mart shoppers. Despite expectations to the contrary, many people getting out of cars covered in yellow-ribbon magnets and American flag decals expressed deep gratitude for the memorial and concern about the war. In fact, more people donated to support Eyes Wide Open at Wal-Mart than at any other site, feeling it was one small thing they could do in remembrance to lives lost.

Local organizers could not stop talking about the people they had met and seen at the exhibit. They repeatedly thanked us for how helpful and supportive AFSC had been in making it easy for communities to use EWO. David Young, the first to suggest the Wal-Mart location, said, "I've done many unique things during my life, from taking students to a leper colony, to prisons, or to schools for the blind, but none even came close to how this exhibit impacted the public."

When EWO went to Scranton, Mary Ellen McNish, General Secretary of AFSC, commented that taking Eyes Wide Open state exhibits to small communities around the country would be a key factor in bringing about an end to this war. After spending Memorial Day weekend in a Wal-Mart parking lot we are inclined to agree with her.

- Scilla Wahrhaftig, AFSC PA Program www.afsc.org/pittsburgh



Bottled water urgently needed for New Orleans' 9th Ward

On average Common Ground Relief has from 200 to 250 volunteers gutting houses and working in various areas daily. We also have about 300 families coming to our distribution centers each day as well.

At the pace that we are and should be using water we would need approximately 80,000 bottles of water per month for our volunteers and 90,000 bottles to be passed out through distribution. Unfortunately, we don't have such a supply and we have had to limit distribution to families and volunteers.

With both residents and volunteers suiting up in protective gear, they are essentially cooking themselves while they work inside moldy houses with no form of air circulation. This combined with not enough water to go around is a dangerous combination.

There is a lot of work to be done and with the new hurricane season upon us the work is even more urgent. Call if you can offer any type of assistance.

Will Speaker
Common Ground Relief
504-583-0742 (cell) 504-304-9097 (office)

Our non-profit status is through our sponsor organization Community Futures Collective in California. Their non-profit EIN is 91-2114483.

Local contact: Vincent Scotti/Eirene 412-231-2766

Ruth Poritz, a Grassroots Pittsburgher, Passes

On Sunday, May 28, 2006, artist, playwright, feminist, and civil rights, peace and political activist Ruth Holleman Poritz passed away at the Forbes Hospice after a long illness. Born in her grandparents' house on Lafferty's Hill in the South Hills on December 9, 1915, the daughter of Emma Holleman, née Bode, of Pittsburgh and Charles J. Holleman of Sand Mountain, Alabama, she was widowed by Julius Poritz in 1997 but is survived by son Darwin Poritz and grandchildren John and Julia of Houston, Texas, and by son Noah Poritz and his wife Leona Poritz and grandchildren Wesley and Theodore of Bozeman, Montana.

Her father Charles Holleman was successful in real estate in Pittsburgh and Miami, developing parts of Brentwood in the South Hills and Holleman Park in North Miami. Although he died prematurely in an auto accident in North Miami in 1923, he left adequate resources for Ruth and her mother to spend winters in Florida in the 1920s and '30s.

As Artist

Ruth studied graphic arts at the Ringling School in Sarasota, and subsequently in New York in the early 1940s where she met her husband, Navy Lt. Julius Poritz of Hartford, Connecticut. Her art was greatly influenced by Spanish colonial architecture and Southwest Native American art by a trip through the region in the 1930s. Her early works in the 1950s were mostly large format realist or cubist political statements. In the 1960s, she began experiments in mixed media, collage, and montage using oils and water colors with paper and vinyl on masonite. From the 1970s on, she focused more on montage of cut pieces of wood on wood, both varnished and painted, and etched line drawings on varnished wood, including pieces of a signatures of Columbus, Sitting Bull, Marx, Lenin, Gorky, Helen Keller, Che and others, taking advantage of the natural character of the wood grain and knots. Her later work became more abstract impressionist and expressionist, but nevertheless often made a strong feminist or political statement.

Ruth was a member of the Pittsburgh Society of Artists and exhibited regularly in the Three Rivers Art Festival. She and Julius also operated a gallery briefly on Carson Street, the Rogue Wave, years before Carson Street became hip.

As Political Activist

After World War II in 1946 when the Navy sent her husband Julius to Annapolis to study meteorology, Ruth organized a group of officers' wives to collect relief supplies for refugees of the Spanish Civil War living in France.

After returning to Pittsburgh in the late 1940s, Ruth campaigned for Henry Wallace and the Progressive Party.

In the 1970s, Ruth hosted the sister of deposed Chilean President Allende during her speaking tour here.

For the Iran-Contra scandal, Ruth produced the "Get the Haig Out of Here" poster.

As Civil Rights Activist

Ruth started her civil rights activism in Pittsburgh in the 1950s. She opened her house to civil rights activists needing a place to stay while traveling between North and South. In the 1960s, Ruth organized an art auction at the Hotel Webster Hall that raised \$10,000 for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

In the Fall of 1963, near the end of an eighteen month sojourn in Giles County, Virginia, Ruth went before the school board of this rural district and told them that they were to integrate their schools, single-handedly bringing integration to that county.

In December 1997 only a couple weeks after her husband's death, she demonstrated at the County Building against the racial murder of Johnny Gammage, delivering an eloquent denunciation of the Brentwood police on the local television news.

As Playwright

Ruth also expressed herself through play writing and had two performed. "Closed for Repairs" was staged at Carlow College in the 1970s and is a political satire on the state of the Nixon White House. Another play, "Zip Code," a satire about Christian fundamentalism set at a post office, was performed at the Three Rivers Art Festival in 1990.



Ruth Poritz

She touched the lives of many aspiring playwrights in the Pittsburgh community, bringing them together for the Pittsburgh Playwrights Workshop, becoming known as "The Dean of Playwrights" among the many members. She recruited actors and arranged for readings of finished works in private rooms within local restaurants and lounges, and at Ellis School on Fifth Avenue. Through her untiring efforts, playwrights were able to network with producers for small, experimental theatres in the area and to enjoy the success of seeing their works produced on stage for a wider audience.

As Peace Activist

In the 1960s and '70s, Ruth campaigned vocally against the Vietnam War, both through her art and by demonstrating in Pittsburgh, New York and Washington. Her house became a meeting place for the anti-war movement, and the large parties of 100 or more late into the early morning hours in her home were important for the morale and cohesion of the movement.

For an anti-nuclear demonstration, Ruth painted body outlines of casualties in washable cornstarch based medium on the sidewalk in front of the Pittsburgh Federal Building.

As Feminist

With the growth of the feminist movement, there was a feminist aspect to many of her artworks. This became more pronounced during and after her bout with breast cancer in the late 1980s.

After the passing of her husband in 1997, Ruth was a founding member of the Feminist Thealogy Group at the First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh.

As Person

In many ways, Ruth was a larger-than-life person, difficult for her family, but the source of admiration for so many others, as the following eulogy from a friend in the Feminist Thealogy Group, helps to explain:

"I met Ruth Poritz when she was already in her eighties; I wish we could have been friends forever. She was, intelligent, witty, creative, feisty, fierce, opinionated in the best sense (that is, having strong opinions). She did not suffer fools gladly, and she wanted to know everything: about others and about herself. She was curious about everything: about others and herself.

"I loved the bold statements of her artwork - loved handling the tools she used to make her art: the axes and the mallets and the saws. Ruth held to her convictions passionately and was willing to argue them because she felt what people believe matters. She had nothing to do with hypocrisy or flim-flam; she demanded the genuine and the authentic. Ruth never tired of talking politics with me, and she was a political artist and activist, knowing the truth of what the feminists have always said: the personal is always political.

"I loved the stories Ruth told me of her work in the early civil rights movement when she and her husband Julius were a young couple. I wanted to record her stories, but she didn't think they were important; they were important.

"Ruth was true eccentric, a non-conformist; she went her own way. In my later years, I would like to be as spunky and as passionately involved with living as she remained."

SOCIAL ACTION CALENDAR

Go to [www.thomasmertoncenter.org](http://www.thomasmertoncenter.org/calendar)
calendar of events for updates

OCT

1 SUNDAY

Reading the Signs of the Times: Inspiration from the Catholic Worker Movement series Session 4: Faith on the Margins: Living a Queer Faith, 11am- 1pm. Thomas Merton Center, 5125 Penn Ave. Garfield. The last of the four-part series facilitated by Tim Vining and Stephen Donahue. A five to 15-minute presentation, followed by readings for discussion and lunch. RSVP to Tim to sign up to attend; showing up without doing so is discouraged. Discussions will be small, intimate and insightful; bring your personal experiences on the topics and an open mind. Contact: timvining@verizon.net or 412-802-6542.

2 MONDAY

Discussion with Mumia Abu Jamal and Staughton Lynd on “In the Shadow of John Brown: Toward a Renewed Interracial Radicalism”, 8pm. Carnegie Mellon University, Adamson Wing of Baker Hall, Oakland. Mumia Abu-Jamal activist, journalist, deathrow prisoner (electronically) and Staughton Lynd activist, historian, lawyer (in person) will lead this discussion. For more information contact: demarest@andrew.cmu.edu.

4 WEDNESDAY

Save Our Transit monthly meeting, 6:30pm. United Cerebral Palsy building, 4638 Centre Ave, Oakland. Contact: 412-361-3022 or zeidersamanda@gmail.com.

7 SATURDAY

Counter Recruitment Protest, 11am-1pm. Oakland Military Recruiting Station, 3712 Forbes Ave. (between Atwood and Oakland Ave.) This action is occurring in conjunction with the UPRISE counter recruitment tour. A potluck at Schenley Plaza (rain location tba) will directly follow the protest. For more information contact pog@mutualaid or visit the Web site: www.organizepittsburgh.org.

March for Sustainable Living, 2pm. Starting at the First Unitarian Church, 605 Moorewood Ave at Center Ave, Shadyside, and culminating at Flagstaff Hill, Schenley Park, in Pittsburgh. Sponsored by Pittsburgh chapter of the Association for India's Development (AID) and the First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh and several others. Contact: Ravi Kant 412-683-1315 or sustainability_march@yahoo.com.

UPRISE! Counter-Recruitment Tour Benefit Show, 7pm. Bands/performers include Attentat, Unarmed, Whiskey Smile!, Ryan Harvey and Ryan Williams. Mr. Roboto Project, 722 Wood St, Wilkensburg. \$5 donation (no one turned away for lack of funds), all go toward UPRISE!. Contact: Ryan Williams at 724-331-6000 or satyagrahi@hotmail.com. For more info about UPRISE! visit www.uprisetour.org.

Paul Taylor Dance Company, 8pm. Pittsburgh Dance Council presents highly acclaimed Paul Taylor Dance Company at Benedum Center. Dramatic, uplifting evening features Pittsburgh premiere of Promethean Fire, Company B, Profiles, and Troilus and Cressida (reduced). Music by J. S. Bach and songs sung by Andrews Sisters. “Paul Taylor's pieces are about love, war, dysfunctional families, sexuality, religion, America and its mythology, redemption, fear and the simple joy of movement. They deal with the duality of the human condition, of goodness and evil, of the darkness never very far from the light.” – Inside Arts. For tickets, 412-456-6666; www.pgharts.org Box Office at Theater Square.

8 SUNDAY

Slippery Rock Women in Black monthly Peace Vigil, 10am-11am. Intersection of Main St and Franklin St, Slippery Rock. Women, men, children welcome. Wear black if possible. Contact: Lori at 724-735-4054 or e-mail tchfrch@hotmail.com.

12 THURSDAY

Association of Pittsburgh Priests Fall Speaker Series with Fr. Donald Cozzens, 7:30pm. Kearns Spirituality Center, 9000 Babcock Blvd, Allison Park. Suggested donation: \$12, all are welcome. Contact: Sr. Loretta Jean Schorr at 412-366-1124 or kearnssc@aol.com.

14 SATURDAY

Thomas Merton Reflection: Man, Monk and Mystic, 1pm-4pm. St. Joseph Spirituality Center in Baden. The fee is \$10. To register, contact Sister Marian Mills at 412-571-5441 by October 4.

Remember the Weekly Peace Vigils!

Every Saturday...

Noon: Regent Square Peace Vigil. Corner of Forbes and Braddock (Regent Square)

1pm: Black Voices for Peace Anti-War Pro-test. Corner of Penn and Highland (East Liberty)

1pm: Beaver County Peace Links Weekly Saturday Peace Vigil. Beaver County Courthouse, 3rd Street (Beaver)

Every Sunday...

1pm: Johnstown Weekly Stand Against the War Peace Vigil. Assemble along Theater Drive at entrance to College Park Plaza across from entry to Richland Town Square (Johnstown)

Every Monday...

4:30-5:15pm: North Hills Weekly Peace Vigil Grounds of Divine Providence, 9000 Babcock Blvd. Sponsored by Sisters of Divine Providence, La Roche Peace & Justice Committee, Pittsburgh North People for Peace.

15 SUNDAY

Humanity Day Celebration, 6pm-9pm. Islamic Center, 4100 Bigelow Blvd, Oakland. Contact: outreach@icp-pgh.org or 412-682-5555 x4.

19 THURSDAY

Lecture - “The Fight for Universal Health Coverage in America”, 12pm-2pm. University of Pittsburgh School of Law, Teplitz Moot Court Room. Ron Pollack, Founding Executive Director of Families, USA, to speak at Pitt Law School. The event is free and is followed by a luncheon reception for attendees. Two hours of Continuing Education credit may be obtained for: LSW/LCSW, LPC,LMFT, CAC NBCC & ACT 48. (CE certification is available for a fee.). The program is also approved by the PA CLE Board for two hours of substantive credit for \$25, payable at the door. Contact: Stella Smetanka, 412-648-1947.

20 FRIDAY

Rights and Responsibilities group commemoration of the founding of the Black Panther Party: Reception and art exhibit opening, 5:30pm. Artists Image Resource, Foreland St. “Rights & Responsibilities Presents Panthers: the Story, the People, the Power.” Exhibit entry is free. The film program, which will include an audience dialog and light refreshments, is \$3.00 per person. Contact: Aisha White at 412-661-0496 or aisha19@verizon. or Nia at 412-901-7255 or niaotpor@hotmail.com.

21 SATURDAY

Rights and Responsibilities group commemoration of the founding of the Black Panther Party: Film Showing, 7:00pm. Carnegie Library of Homewood, 7101 Hamilton St. “Black Panthers,” a short film the Black Panthers used to promote their cause. Includes an audience dialog and light refreshments, is \$3.00 per person. Contact:

Aisha White at 412-661-0496 or aisha19@verizon. or Nia at 412-901-7255 or niaotpor@hotmail.com.

“How to Get Out of Iraq and Why Attacking Iran Would Be Really Dumb,” with Scott Ritter and Ray McGovern, 7pm. Haine Middle School, 1516 Haine School Road, Cranberry Twp. Sponsored by: North Hills DFA, U.S. Tour of Duty. Contact: Kevin 724-831-8795 or kcaridad@yahoo.com.

22 SUNDAY

March Against Police Brutality, 12pm-2pm. Meet at Friendship Park (behind West Penn Hospital). March ends at East Liberty Police Station. Contact: pog@mutualaid.org or visit www.organizepittsburgh.org.

O22nd Coalition Event Against Police Brutality, 3pm. Freedom Corner in the Hill District (the corner of Centre Avenue and Crawford Street). Contact: Celeste Taylor at taylor.celeste@gmail.com or 412-670-0937.

25 WEDNESDAY

Just Harvest annual Harvest Celebration Dinner, 6pm. Omni William Penn Hotel, Downtown. Keynote: Frances Moore Lappe. Seeds of Justice Awards to George and Jane Becker. Silent Auction, dinner at 7pm. \$40. Contact: 412-431-8960.

27 FRIDAY

“The Story of Rachel Corrie: A Death in Rafah,” dramatic reading about the 2003 death of an American activist in Gaza, 7:30pm. First Unitarian Church, 605 Morewood Avenue, Shadyside. Tickets cost \$10 for general admission, \$5 for students and seniors. To order, call 412-621-8008, extension 314. Proceeds will benefit Committee for Justice in the Middle East at First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh. Moderated discussion to follow.

30 MONDAY

Film Screening of “500 Miles to Babylon” with director David Martinez, 7pm. Thomas Merton Center, 5125 Penn Ave, Garfield. Film website: graffitifilms.com. Contact: 412-361-3022.

NOV

7 TUESDAY

Association of Pittsburgh Priests Fall Speaker Series with Sr. Christine Vladimiroff, OSB: “How Can the Church Be Prophetic in the 21st Century?” 7:30pm. Kearns Spirituality Center, 9000 Babcock Blvd, Allison Park. Suggested donation \$12, all are welcome. Contact: Sr. Loretta Jean Schorr at 412-366-1124 or kearnssc@aol.com.

10 FRIDAY

TMC Annual Merton Award featuring Angela Davis, 7pm. Sheraton Hotel, Station Square, South Side. Tickets: \$35 members, \$40 non-members. Contact: Thomas Merton Center at 412-361-3022 or info@thomasmertoncenter.org or visit www.thomasmertoncenter.org.

11 SATURDAY

Soul Soldiers: African Americans and the Vietnam Era display, 12pm. Heinz History Center, Smallman Ave, The Strip District. This multi-media exhibition will tell the story of the impact of the Vietnam War on African American life and culture by examining Vietnam and the Civil Rights Movement. This exhibit will run through October 2007. Contact: Sam Black at 412-454-6391 or swblack@hwsf.org.

16 MONDAY

YWCA Greater Pittsburgh Celebrates Fifteenth Annual Racial Justice Awards, 7pm. Westin Hotel and Convention Center, Downtown. \$65, the reservation deadline is November 2. Contact: Center for Race Relations at 412-364-3844.

November 17-19, Close Down the SOA! Converge at the gates of Fort Benning, Georgia to close down the School of the Americas. A local contingent from Pittsburgh may be going this year. For more information, contact Edith at 412-371-9722 or edith.wilson3@verizon.net.

Get your event listed in the monthly calendar!

Just send the listing to info@thomasmertoncenter.org clearly marked as a calendar item or call 412-361-3022 by the 15th of the month before the event.

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October 22: Resistance Against Police Brutality

Join the struggle, fight back! On October 22, wear black! Freedom Corner, 3pm

We resist so that we will not be crushed. Our resistance gives other people courage. The work of the October 22nd Coalition over the last ten years has shown that when we expose what is happening and drag the police officers' crimes out into the light of day, it puts the checkpoints back on them!

On October 22, we remember those whose lives have been stolen from us. Through our actions, we bring out the stories that have been buried. Families speak out and tell the truth about so many cases that too many people haven't even heard of: Virginia Verdee, 12 years old, run over and killed by Bronx police; 15-year old Brandon McCloud, shot by Cleveland police on his way to school; Samson Bounthisane, an 18-year old shot and killed by Seattle sheriff's deputies; Michael Ellerbe, 12 years old, shot in the back by PA State Troopers; and many thousands more all over this nation.

October 22 is the day when people all over the country come together to stop police violence, repression and the criminalization of a generation. Across the country, in different cities and through different means of expression, we raise a resounding *inoi* to the steadily increasing moves towards a police state. Locally, on Sunday, October 22, we are gathering at 3pm at the traditional civil rights meeting point at Freedom Corner in the Hill District (the corner of Centre Avenue and Crawford Street). Link up to the nationwide protests through the

October 22nd Web site. Visit, www.october22.org.

Why isn't the escalation of police brutality and murder in recent years headline news? Perhaps because these images don't comply well with the need to project images of police as defenders against terrorism. Since September 11, 2001, law enforcement agents (including border patrols) have been given greater license to increase and broaden repression. Steps were even taken to grant more worth to a police officer's life, with the heroes law enacted in New York State, in which the governor originally called for a death sentence for anyone who shoots a cop. At the same time, the cop who killed African immigrant Ousmane Zongo in New York, after a rare conviction (criminally negligent homicide), was sentenced with probation and community service. Torture, brutality, detentions, domestic spying, profiling and other attacks on human and civil liberties have been made part of the routine of daily life that we are asked to accept without question. At airports, subways, transportation centers and more we are asked to welcome bag searches, checkpoints, invasion of privacy, stripping away of civil liberties, all in the name of national security. Attempts to further criminalize immigrants are being pushed by lawmakers. Demonstrations and political protests are increasingly penned in, attacked, spied upon, videotaped and outright denied by authorities. Protesters in support of LGBT rights and reproductive freedom in Pennsylvania were charged for violating the USA PATRIOT Act after being beaten and arrested by police. General Michael Hayden, who headed up some of the

government's most secret and controversial domestic spying under the NSA, was rewarded for his work by being made head of the CIA. A former NSA intelligence agent, Russell Tice, warned that the nation was decaying into a police state. The war abroad has its corresponding part in the war on people at home, where law enforcement agents step up their harassment and criminalization of certain neighborhoods and populations.

For more information about the local October 22 action, contact Celeste Taylor at taylor.celeste@gmail.com or 412-670-0937. To contact the Pittsburgh Citizen Police Review Board, call 412-765-8023. Also, visit <http://october22-ny.org/national/> and <http://stolenlives.org/>.

- Celeste Taylor

March Against the Criminal Injustice System in the East End! Friendship Park, noon

Join Pittsburgh Organizing Group (POG) and locals from Garfield, Bloomfield, Friendship and East Liberty for a rally and march against police brutality, racism and political repression on Sunday, October 22. The rally starts in Friendship Park (in Bloomfield) at noon and the march will leave shortly thereafter, winding through Garfield and East Liberty, with stops at relevant places along the route, and ending at the East Liberty Police Precinct.

We'll have, and we encourage others to bring, signs, banners, drums, flags and a piñata. Speakers so far include: Renee Wilson, Alex Bradley and Etta Cetera in addition to representatives from groups working to change the criminal justice system and survivors of police assault and repression. The radical cheerleaders will make an appearance and local poet Jeremy Shenk will perform.

This country is at war with much of the world and much of its own people. Our already limited rights erode, our prisons fill up and many families grow temporarily smaller. New laws are passed, new weapons are made and new systems of control are tested. New enemies are created day by day in a country where fear is power.

This is America and the police department, the prison system, the legal system, the entire criminal justice complex works day by day in an orgy of stolen lives and shattered dreams. Each year on October 22 people around the United States take action to call attention to some of these systems of oppression. In Pittsburgh, many of you know all too well why we mobilize on this day and why you should join us.

Perhaps you're one of those who've been directly affected by the police since the war started; the 150 arrested, 40+ pepper sprayed, dozens hit-choked-beaten, two tazered, two hospitalized and countless other people harassed for seeking to resist a war that is nothing less than an obscenity upon our conscious.

Maybe you're one of those who have become all too familiar with the names of cops like Bielich, Kaplan, Bristow. Maybe you've heard about or witnessed first-hand how the state has handled public dissent in the streets of Seattle, Quebec City, New York City, Philadelphia, Miami, Washington DC, Pittsburgh and everywhere else that people have risen up in opposition to the actions of their government, in an effort to change the things that make their lives unbearable.

Maybe you're one of those who has experienced injustices on your dignity and your humanity simply due to the color of your skin, the neighborhood you live in or political beliefs you hold. Maybe you're one of those who've learned a lesson on the role of the police in maintaining a system of inequality and injustice not through your personal choice to join a social movement, but rather due to the position society has assigned for you. Do you remember Gammage, Rogers, Hall, Ellerbe, Dixon, Umphrey, Jordan, Hunter?

To remember is to work to see that the list does not grow longer.

Maybe you understand that the policies and structure of our current system is in fact responsible for much of the violence and crime it then uses to justify violence and oppression against less privileged communities and political resistance movements.

One rally and march may not look like much until you consider the context. In a system where criticism of the police is rarely heard, where the worst cops are protected by a blue wall of silence, where they are accountable only to themselves or entities like the DA's office that are friendly to them, where the corporate media which reports on them is beholden to them for access to the information they need to profit, where most so-called community organizations accept legalized brutality and oppression as necessary evils to clean up and purify the neighborhood, one single march means simply that those who have been wronged and those who choose to resist are not alone.

We are all part of a common struggle for justice in this country and around the world. In this fight no movement can go it alone and everywhere injustice is allowed to exist, our collective hope for change is diminished. On one day a year people in the United States stop to gather and remember that this system is broken and that many are suffering from its means of control.

Please join us at noon on October 22, in Friendship park to stand together, determined that someday this world will give birth to a new age of justice and dignity. A place where a small number will not hide behind a rigged system and a shiny badge, with our lives in their hands, our friends in their jails and a part of our human family in their graves.

For more information, visit our website at www.organizepittsburgh.org/ or email us at pog@Mutualaid.org.

- Pittsburgh Organizing Group

Pen Pals

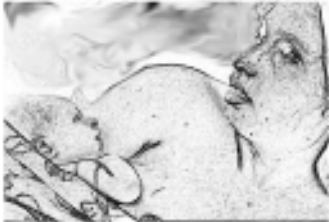
Derrick Parker
#EZ8344
PO Box 999
1120 Pike St.
Huntingdon, PA 16652

William Lancaster
#FD1902
PO Box 999
1120 Pike St.
Huntingdon, PA 16652

Ronald Andrew Brown
#EV0364
P.O.Box 256
Waymart, PA 18472

If you are incarcerated or know anyone who is incarcerated and would like to be listed as a pen pal in *The NewPeople*, please send us their addresses. Those listed above were referred by Kenneth Sible, volunteer worker at Immanuel United Methodist Church Center on Pittsburgh's North Side.

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**Paul Taylor
Dance Company**

Sat. October 7, 2006
Benedum Center

Random Dance

Sat. November 4, 2006
Byham Theater

**Hubbard Street
Dance Chicago**

Sat. February 10, 2007
Byham Theater

**The Joffrey
Ballet**

Fri. March 2 &
Sat. March 3, 2007
Benedum Center

**Sydney
Dance Company**

Sat. March 24, 2007
Byham Theater

Emio Greco | PC

Sat. April 14, 2007
Byham Theater

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06/07



Sydney Dance Company photo: Stephen Ward

California Assembly Passes Universal, Single Payer Health Care

Good news, not only for California but also for efforts in Pennsylvania to pass a similar measure that's been introduced in the State Legislature (Senate Bill 1805, House Bill 2722).

The California Assembly has moved the issue of single payer health care front and center with its passage of SB840 that would provide full coverage including comprehensive medical, dental, vision, hospitalization and prescription drug coverage to every California resident.

Its passage undermines three arguments that we hear regarding the PA bill: iIt will never pass; the insurance companies are too powerful,i iIt would cost too much,i iWe should concentrate on federal legislation,i eIncremental change is more practical.i

The California bill creates a single-payer system of i comprehensive health insurance benefits for all Californians that guarantees free choice of doctors and hospitals,i said Sen. Sheila Kuehl. iIt creates access for all Californians by steeply reducing administrative overhead and emphasizing preventative and primary care instead of endlessly cutting coverage and access to care or increasing consumer spending.i

The legislation would: eliminate private health insurance plans and create the California Health Insurance System; provide health care insurance for all Californians; guarantee patients the ability to choose their own doctors and hospitals; and pool funds now being spent on health insurance and save money by reducing overhead and using leveraged buying power for things like prescription drugs.

It would combine all state and federal funds, along with business contributions and participant payments and co-payments. A commissioner and a blue-ribbon commission would examine how the structure would work. Funding could come through an 8 percent payroll tax and a 3 percent individual income tax.

iWhere there are no cost controls at all now, and enormous administrative overhead and profit for insurance companies, there would have been a transparent system that actually would succeed in making health care coverage affordable in California,i said Kuehl.

SB840 allows California to use its purchasing power to negotiate bulk rates for prescription drugs and durable medical equipment, such as wheelchairs, thus realizing an additional \$2 billion in savings.

An analysis commissioned by Health Care for All California, a nonprofit group that favors universal health insurance, estimates that universal coverage could have cost an extra \$17 billion, but the state will save \$25 billion through bulk purchasing of drugs and eliminating the multiple bureaucracies now required for hospitals and private insurance companies. The report was prepared last year by the Lewin Group, a Virginia-based healthcare consulting firm.

The bill would provide every California resident with health insurance through a system controlled by a new entity called the California Health Insurance Agency. It would create one public insurer, known as a single payer, to replace the existing network of private companies. Private doctors and hospitals would remain, but would have their rates set by the new state agency.

Health insurers and business groups opposed the measure, which was supported by dozens of unions and consumer groups and some local governments, including the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors.

Eliminating health insurance plans would eradicate the groups that have the most experience with getting people insured and to doctors, said Chris Ohman, president and CEO of the California Association of Health Plans. He said insurance companies are in the best position to manage costs. iIf there isn't the focus and drive for advancing preventative programs, the sky is the limit in terms of what the costs will be,i he said. iThat's what health plans do.i

In a published article, Schwarzenegger wrote that iI must veto [the bill] because I cannot support a government-run healthcare system.i

iWe think a governor should take bold steps, and when it comes to the health of Californians, our governor is faint of heart,i said Rose Ann DeMoro, executive director of the California Nurses Association, which supported the bill. iHe's in the pocket of the drug companies and the insurance companies and the healthcare companies.i

Pennsylvania is positioned to follow California's lead. It is up to you and me to make it happen. For more information contact me at molly.rush@verizon.net or sandyatpush@yahoo.com.

- Molly Rush, PA United for Single-Payer Healthcare (PUSH). Sources: Associated Press 9-5-06 and the San Francisco Chronicle 8-29-06.

Study: 9 in 10 Unable to Buy Health Insurance

Democracy Now reported that a new study says nine out of ten Americans who've tried to buy their own health insurance have been unable to do so. According to the Commonwealth Fund, one in five uninsured were turned down because of an existing medical condition. Nearly 60 percent went without health insurance because they could not afford the price. (9/15/06)

Democracy Now: Press Clippings

All press clippings are from Democracy Now (www.democracynow.org) unless otherwise noted.

Exxon-Mobil Posts Record Profit — \$10.4 Billion in this year's second quarter

The total was the second biggest ever reported by a U.S. company. In first place — Exxon's \$10.7 billion dollars in the fourth quarter of last year. (7/28/06)

Las Vegas Sued Over Ban on Feeding Homeless

The American Civil Liberties Union has filed suit to strike down a new law that makes it illegal to feed the homeless in public parks. City council approved the measure in July. Violators will face a fine of up to \$1,000 dollars and as many as six months in prison. Three people have already been arrested for the offense. City officials say they've enacted the law because soup kitchens have kept people away from visiting public spaces. The lawsuit was filed on behalf of the group Food Not Bombs, which provides free vegetarian meals to the poor. (8/3/06)

PR Company Tied To Online Video Mocking Al Gore

A new video has appeared online mocking Al Gore's fight against global warming and his film "Inconvenient Truth." In the short video Gore appears as a sinister figure who brainwashes penguins and bores movie audiences by blaming the Mid-east crisis and Lindsay Lohan's shrinking waist size on global warming. The video is purportedly the work of a 29-year-old video-maker in Beverly Hills. But the *Wall Street Journal* has revealed the video appears to actually be the work of the public relations and lobbying company DCI Group. The company's clients include Exxon Mobil. (8/8/06)

Florida Police Chief Sorry For Laughing At FTAA Shooting Victim

A police chief has apologized after he was caught on tape laughing about a demonstrator who had been shot in the head. The shooting occurred during the Miami protests against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas in November of 2003. The demonstrator, Elizabeth Ritter, was hit by police rubber bullets and struck again in the forehead as she lay on the ground. On a newly-released police training video taped the following day, Broward County Major John Brooks is seen telling cheering colleagues: "I was so pumped up about how good you guys were." Another officer is seen imitating the moment Elizabeth Ritter was shot. The officer says: "I don't know who got her but it went right through the sign and hit her smack dab in the middle of her head." There are six pending lawsuits against the Miami police department for its conduct during the FTAA protests. (8/11/06)

The Dirty Dirty...Mid-Atlantic Region

Southwestern Pennsylvania is home to two of the nation's "50 Dirtiest Power Plants," and another in Clearfield County has been ranked as the fifth-dirtiest in the nation. The Environmental Integrity Project, a Washington, D.C., environmental organization that advocates better enforcement of environmental laws, released the results of their study in late July. The EIP based its list on U.S. EPA emissions data for sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide and mercury. Two Allegheny Energy Inc. plants, located in Greene County and Armstrong County were ranked 20th and 26th dirtiest respectively. Reliant Energy's Shawville Generating Station in Clearfield County — is listed as the nation's fifth dirtiest. All three plants were among the top 10 worst sulfur-dioxide polluters. Shawville also is listed as the second and Armstrong as the fifth-worst mercury polluter in the nation. The state of Texas, along with PA, is among the nation's worst mercury polluters. Also, last year PA had five plants among the nation's top 10 with the highest sulfur dioxide emission rates. (Pittsburgh Indymedia Rustbelt Radio 7/31/06)

Vicente Fox Blocked From Giving State of the Union Address

On Sept. 1, protests extended into the national assembly where outgoing president Vicente Fox was scheduled to deliver his final state of the union address. But before Fox arrived, lawmakers from Lopez Obrador's PRD political party stormed the podium and seized control of the proceedings. They began chanting "Vote by vote." When Vincente Fox arrived he announced he could not give the address. (9/5/06)

Report Finds Wide Gaps in Mortality Rates Inside U.S.

An African-American man living in a high-crime city can expect to live 21 fewer years than a woman of Asian descent in the U.S. The man's life expectancy, in fact, is closer to that of people living in West Africa than it is to the average white American. According to the *Washington Post*, the study found that the U.S. is pocked by places where millions of adults face a risk of premature death like that in Angola, Mexico and

Nigeria. The study found Asian women to have the longest life expectancy — just over 87 years. African-American men living in urban areas have the shortest — just under 67 years. (9/12/06)

NJ Animal Rights Activists Given 4-6 Year Terms

Three animal rights activists have been sentenced to terms that will send them to jail for between four to six years. The activists took part in campaign to stop a British scientific firm called Huntingdon Life Sciences from conducting lab tests on animals. They were convicted of targeting Huntingdon workers and shareholders, as well as companies that provide services to Huntingdon, by posting personal information about employees and their families on its Web sites. The activists were also ordered to pay restitution of one million dollars. (9/13/06)

Rights Groups Decry Pakistan Rape Law

Women's activists and human rights groups are condemning a so-called "compromise" on plans to change the country's rape laws. Under current law, rape victims are liable to be prosecuted for adultery unless they can produce four male witnesses. An effort to change that law was set back after the government accepted demands from religious conservatives to keep rape under Islamic law rather than strictly the criminal system. Asma Jahangir, chairwoman of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, said: "They have hoodwinked women into believing that this is a law for the protection of women. It is a law for the protection of religious extremists." (9/14/06)

Chicago City Council Fails To Override Veto of Living Wage

On Sept. 13, Chicago city council failed to override Mayor Richard Daley's veto of an ordinance that required "big-box" chains such as Wal-Mart to pay workers at least ten dollars an hour plus benefits by the year 2010. Daley's veto came following a wave of retail opposition. Wal-Mart announced the wage meant Chicago was "closed for business." Target announced it would halt planned stores while it waited to see if the ordinance became law. The original ordinance was passed with thirty-five votes — one more than was needed to override Daley's veto. But the meeting saw three council members switching their votes. One of the three said she changed her mind after Wal-Mart expressed interest in building a store in her district. Proponents of the living wage say the issue will not go away. Alderman Joe Moore, who helped lead the effort, says members will present a revised proposal at the council's next meeting. (9/14/06)

Activists Walk Out of Meeting With IMF-WB Officials

In Singapore, a group of activists walked out of a meeting with IMF and World Bank officials on Sept. 15 in protest of the barring of 28 colleagues. Singapore has barred the activists during the annual International Monetary Fund - World Bank meetings. A handful of activists staged a protest in the official demonstration zone. They were forced to scan bar-coded identification cards before entering the area. They were outnumbered by surrounding media and security personnel. Even World Bank head Paul Wolfowitz is criticized the barring of the activists. (9/15/06)

FCC Ordered Destruction of Report Critical of Media Concentration

A former lawyer at the Federal Communications Commission has revealed the agency ordered staff members to destroy all copies of a draft study that warned against concentration of media ownership. The lawyer, Adam Candeub, says the destroyed study suggest greater concentration would harm local television news coverage across the country. The report put forward figures showing local ownership adds almost five minutes of total news to broadcasts and more than three minutes of "on-location" news. Those findings contradicted the FCC's arguments when it voted to liberalize media ownership rules three years ago. Candeub says FCC commissioners wanted "every last piece" of the report destroyed. (9/15/06)

Rallies Worldwide Demand Darfur Intervention

Tens of thousands of protesters rallied around the world on Sept. 17 in a global day against the genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan. In New York, organizers estimated over 30,000 people gathered in Central Park. Demonstrations and vigils were also held in Berlin, Dubai, Dublin, London, Melbourne, Paris, Seoul and Stockholm and dozens of other cities. The global day of protests was organized to coincide with the start of the United Nations General Assembly debate on Sudan. (9/18/06)

Largest-Ever AIDS Conference Is Setting For Protests And Disruptions

Last August's 16th International Conference on AIDS in Toronto was the setting for a torrent of angry protests by a broad spectrum of groups and individuals, ranging from grandmothers from Zimbabwe to injection drug users from Toronto to sex workers from Thailand. The five-day conference, which drew more than 20,000 people from 170 countries, brought together researchers, government officials, celebrities, pharmaceutical executives, care providers and people living with HIV/AIDS themselves. But ever since ACT UP first protested the Third International AIDS conference in Washington DC in 1987, these now biennial gatherings have also been the target for street protest or outright disruption, as the people most affected by AIDS generally regard the response from government, the pharmaceutical industry and the medical industry to be woefully inadequate. This year marked the first return of the International AIDS Conference to North America since the 1996 conference in Vancouver. The last conference to take place in the U.S. was in 1990 in San Francisco, which was also the setting for some of the largest and most disruptive AIDS protests in history. Since then, no conference has taken place in the U.S, which also has a policy of denying visas to HIV-infected people. The Toronto conference protests began Sunday morning with a march through the streets that included celebrities, UN officials and 100 grandmothers from 13 African countries who've been forced to raise their grandchildren since their children died of AIDS. The following day more than a thousand demonstrators swarmed downtown Toronto to demand that women and girls become more of a priority in AIDS policies and programs. Then on Wednesday about 500 protesters blocked Toronto intersections to demand that the Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper continue that country's safe injection sites exemption from federal drug laws that is due to expire next month. Protests and disruptions took place inside the conference as well. On Wednesday, over 200 people marched through the conference halls into the press room to demand an end to U.S. Free Trade Agreements in 12 developing countries that have expanded the scope of pharmaceutical patents and prevent countries from importing drugs from countries where they are cheaper. Chanting "FTAs kill people with AIDS," activists draped a large banner over the press room that said "FTA: Death Under Patent." Later in the day, U.S. activists took over the stage prior to the speech of Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institutes for Allergy and Infectious Disease, challenging him to use his influence with President Bush to prioritize genuine HIV prevention and treatment access. Activists held signs saying "U.S. Gov: Sex and Drugs Cause AIDS" while chanting "Condoms and needles are under attack." Chanting "Sex Workers' Rights: Time to Deliver," sex workers also held a rowdy protest through the vast Toronto conference center to demand recognition of their frontline role in the war on AIDS, as well as a place at the conference and in their own societies. Cracking whips and wearing tight blue tee-shirts with ribbon silhouettes drawn on them, they drew numbers from more than 20 nations. Finally, on Thursday, South Africa's exhibit was stormed by members of the Treatment Action Campaign to protest their government's reluctance to make anti-retroviral drugs more available. South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki does not believe that HIV is the cause of AIDS, which claims lives of almost 1,000 people every day in his country. Globally, 25 million have died from AIDS since the start of the pandemic 25 years ago. As many as 50 million are believed to be living with HIV. The next conference will be held in Mexico City in 2008.

- David Meieran

Daggy Youth/ Student Scholarship

The International Thomas Merton Society sponsors scholarships so that young scholars can participate in its bi-annual conference, "Wide Open to Heaven and Earth: Contemplation, Community, Culture," June 7-10, 2007 at Christian Brothers University, Memphis, Tennessee. It covers all costs except transportation. Applicants must submit a statement saying why they are interested in learning more about Merton and how they might benefit from attending the conference and a recommendation from a teacher, pastor, youth or campus minister or other qualified adult. For information contact ITMS, Bellarmine University, 2001 Newburg Rd., Louisville, KY 40205, 502-452-8177, www.itmsdaggysscholars.org. It was a great spiritual blessing for me to have shared this faith affirming experience with such a diverse crowd, people also interested in what Merton was so successful at doing in his own life: transforming the deep silence of faith into real, audible and tangible action. Rob Peach, Philadelphia PA. I...the Daggy scholars...simply astounded me with their abilities and their concern for the world. No more intriguing and inspiring group of young people have I been a part of. David W. Golemboski, Louisville KY.

- Molly Rush

Blue October: Water is a Right, Not a Commodity!

Today, one in six people lack access to safe, affordable water, and two in five lack access to adequate sanitation. The United Nations expects these numbers to rise unless we act now. Amid this crisis, some of the world's wealthiest corporations are looking to profit, often at the expense of the poor. A vibrant international movement is challenging the corporate control of this precious resource and protecting water as a public good and an inalienable right. Blue October is an international month of action to challenge corporate control of water and to protect water as a shared natural resource available to all. On October 31, 2004, the people of Uruguay voted to amend their constitution to recognize this fundamental right. The Constitution now guarantees that piped water and sanitation be available to all Uruguayans, and it bans for-profit corporations from supplying this public good. Blue October celebrates this historic move by challenging corporate control of water through global action! To commemorate the event, Food and Water Watch is organizing house parties across the country to screen the film "Fuera! (Out!)," about corporate abuses by Suez in Bolivia and the movement for water justice there. Suez is a global conglomerate and one of the largest private water services companies in the world. In the 1990s, supported by the World Bank, Suez won large showcase water privatization contracts in the Philippines, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Bolivia, Indonesia and elsewhere. The company has refused to invest in the rehabilitation, maintenance and extension of the water system in Bolivia. After campaigns failed to pressure Suez (called *Aguas de Illimani* in Bolivia) to end its policy of intentionally excluding people from being served and reduce its fees to an affordable level, the Bolivian government has decided to end its relationship with Suez and are negotiating the company's exit. Now, Suez is threatening to sue Bolivia. The house parties will build support for the movement and generate over 400 handwritten letters to the Director of Suez, telling the company to leave Bolivia without filing a lawsuit. Our allies in Bolivia will deliver the letters to Suez, and hold a press event putting pressure on the company to leave quickly. All around the world, throughout Blue October people will be taking local action for a global movement. We invite you to join in the action! Just contact Sara Pfannl at spfannl@gmail.com or 202-797-6556 for more info. We'll supply you with the new film "Fuera! (Out!)," We'll also hook you up with a House Party kit that includes fact sheets, a party-planning guide, easy actions

to support the campaign in Bolivia and giveaways such as magnets and postcards. You supply the friends and neighbors! Throwing a house party is a fun, easy way to get educated, take action and build a movement. Read more about Suez in Bolivia at: www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/la-paz-el-alto-2013-suez-must-leave-residents-demand-water-rights

- Robin Alexander

GI Resistance Continues to Grow

The GI resistance movement continues to grow in the U.S. GI resistance, along with civilian support, has the power to stop the war. Please support these resisters today!



Suzanne Swift (Photo: www.suzanneswift.org)

Agustin Aguayo goes AWOL rather than face a forced deployment to Iraq

On September 2 Agustin Aguayo, a conscientious objector (CO), went AWOL after the U.S. military attempted to deploy him from Germany to Iraq by force. Aguayo is the first U.S. soldier stationed in Germany to publicly refuse deployment to Iraq, joining a growing group of U.S. military personnel who have refused to deploy. According to his wife, Helga Aguayo, Agustin plans to turn himself in as soon as it is feasible. Aguayo had already served a year in Iraq beginning in February, 2004. He applied for conscientious objector status and release from the Army shortly after he first arrived in Iraq. Despite an initial favorable review of his CO application by Army interviewers, the Army denied his CO application in August, 2004. In November, 2005, Aguayo filed a civil court case in the U.S. District Court in Washington, DC, to challenge the Army's rejection of his CO application. After stating that, on the grounds of conscience, he would not deploy to Iraq again, he received an order to deploy to Iraq for a second time. On the morning of September 2 Agustin turned himself in to military police at the Schweinfurt military base ready to accept a court martial for his refusal to deploy, but the military attempted to deploy him by force. I stand by my husband because I know he is sincere. I stand by him because I know he is right. God created all people, Christian, Muslim, Black, White or no one has the right to decide when it is time to kill someone. When the unit tried to take him by force to Iraq, what was he to do? If he is truly a conscientious objector than the only thing he could do was resist. He is a conscientious objector, but the Army forced him to become a war-resister. Helga Aguayo, Agustin's wife. For background info and to donate to Agustin's legal defense visit: <http://www.aguayodefense.org/>

Army Specialist Mark Wilkerson Refuses War on Moral Grounds

In one of the latest cases of a young man from within the military taking a powerful stand against the war in Iraq, Army Specialist Mark Wilkerson turned

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Zimbabwe and the Pan-African Movement

An interview with Netfa Freeman, Director of the Social Action & Leadership School for Activists

Netfa Freeman is a dedicated and clear thinking political activist who works primarily on issues related to Africa and the African Diaspora. He is also an organizer in the No War on Cuba Movement and an advocate for anti-imperialism.

What is the Social Action and Leadership School for Activists (SALSA) and what is your role in the organization?

I am the Director of the Social Action & Leadership School for Activists (SALSA), but SALSA is not an organization unto itself. SALSA is actually a program of the larger Institute for Policy Studies (IPS). Since 1963, IPS has sought to transform ideas into action for peace, justice and the environment by linking and strengthening social movements. IPS is a Washington D.C. based non-profit, multi-issue Think Tank that has been working on social movements since the U.S. Civil Rights era.

I've been with SALSA and IPS since 2000. SALSA is a skills training program that offers classes or workshops in various aspects of social justice activism and organizing. Secondly, SALSA offers free political education forums on various issues. We generally refer to the forums in the political education category as our 'policy' forums. These forums tend to reflect my own ideological leanings, which are, for the most part, more revolutionary.

Frankly, although IPS and my colleagues at IPS often refer to themselves as liberal, I'm not a liberal. Personally I'm definitely more left than liberals tend to be. In fact the organization I voluntarily belong to, which better reflects my affinity for, and commitment to Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular is PALO, the Pan-African Liberation Organization. Instead of a philosophy, PALO regards 'pan-Africanism' as an objective, which is the total liberation and unification of Africans on the continent and in the Diaspora under scientific socialism. This is in line with the practical and theoretical contributions of the late President Kwame Nkrumah.

Kwame Nkrumah's revolutionary theory continues to be an inspiration for the pan-African movement, and many regard Zimbabwe as the focal point of that struggle. What are your thoughts on the role of Zimbabwe in the pan-African movement?

As Africa herself must be the land base for the pan-African Movement, it's crucial for there to be at least one beacon of revolutionary progress and resistance against imperialism for Africa's people, who are scattered and suffering around the world. Zimbabwe's anti-imperialist stance makes her that beacon. Nkrumah referred to such bases as liberated zones and urged pan-African revolutionaries to protect our liberated zones at all costs.

Zimbabwe has a very pivotal role in this neocolonial phase of the pan-African Movement for several reasons. Not the least of which are the land reforms that have boldly swept the country. Nowhere on the continent have Africans taken as radical a measure toward land reform as we have in Zimbabwe. Another thing that makes Zimbabwe pivotal is its role regarding our sister states: such as aiding Mozambique against the foreign inspired counter insurgency of RENAMO; military assistance for

SWAPO's liberation struggle in Namibia; recently helping the Congo to secure its borders against CIA backed incursions; and lending troops to the AU mission to stabilize Sudan. No other African state is upholding such a cooperative position at this time. Zimbabwe even strategically held off on its land reforms at the request of South Africa and other Southern African states, so as not to strengthen the belligerence of white settler colonialists in those countries. And they did this at great cost to the integrity of their own struggle. These actions are concrete expressions of pan-African cooperation.

Furthermore, President Mugabe is not afraid to speak of socialism at a time when no other African leader dares utter the word. President Mugabe openly condemns imperialism with the boldness and clarity we have only come to expect from leaders such as Fidel Castro or Hugo Chavez. No other African leader is doing what he is doing right now, and because he is, Zimbabwe stands as an inspiration to African people the world over.

Tell us about your recent visit to the Ujamma Youth Farming Project in Zimbabwe?

An integral part of any genuine social justice movement or revolution is the empowerment of the working class, the women in society and the youth. The Ujamma Youth Farming Project (UYFP) was established in June 2005 by a group of Zimbabwean university students who saw Zimbabwe's land reform as a means to empower youth. The project is an African youth-led farming cooperative that has secured a 100-acre plot in the central city of Gweru under the government's A1 resettlement program and is registered under the Ministry of Youth, Gender and Employment Creation. The organization's mission is to empower African youth through gainful farming initiatives so that they're able to get the essential skills necessary to function as lifelong productive citizens in Africa's development.

I began working with the UYFP from here in the U.S. in August of 2005, serving as U.S. liaison to help raise mostly pan-African support for it. Since the formation of UYFP we've learned that our biggest challenge has been in mobilizing resources to kick-start the project. So that has been my main role: to secure resources and promote the project.

My purpose for visiting the project was to finally see first hand what I've been supporting since last year and also to get first hand experience of Zimbabwe's political situation; the effects of U.S. and British sanctions, etc. As you're well aware, there is an intense propaganda assault of misinformation and lies being waged against Zimbabwe, and many people only respect what someone has to say about a place when the person has been there. So I went there, to do a site visit of the farm and to see what else I could learn about the political situation.

There is indeed an unrelenting propaganda campaign by Western governments and media. You saw a good deal of the country while you were there. As an eyewitness to the current situation in Zimbabwe, how does what you saw compare with reports in the corporate media? I am also interested in your assessment of the impact of Western sanctions on the nation.

Well, there is no short answer to that question but I'll try. Yes, we did see a good deal of the country, my partner and I. We were able to travel from what is basically the northeast of the country to Harare and into the center provinces where Gweru is, further south to Bulawayo, then up toward the northwest to the great Mosi-oa-Tunya Falls (what the settlers renamed Victoria Falls), then back through all those areas to Harare again.

Politically, Zimbabwe is in an intriguing situation that is grossly misrepresented by the Western World and even by too many so-called progressives, Africans alike. As you say in your book, Greg, complexity and context are neglected in the analysis/information that is readily available about Zimbabwe. The police and the state news media (at least TV news) consist overwhelmingly of young people, below the ages of 30, and many women. Now in my view, youth and women are generally the sectors of society that are too zealous about justice and too courageous to be in the majority in carrying out the maintenance of a repressive state. Claims of an atmosphere of repression and volatility that are propagated by British and U.S. media are pure lies. From what we saw, life is relatively peaceful. The police don't even carry guns, as they all do in the U.S. What kind of dictator or repressive government is it when the police don't even carry guns? In fact, we barely saw any uniformed police presence in the cities we visited. They were mostly on the main roads where they had checkpoints trying to catch smugglers of currency and foreign exchange.

The sanctions have exacerbated a shortage of foreign exchange and also, as a result, instigated a black market in exchange of Zimbabwean currency for foreign currency. This is reaping crippling effects on the economy, making foreign currency that much more scarce for the government and banks, which they need to conduct business in the international economy. Because the Zimbabwean currency had become too physically cumbersome to carry and complicated to calculate, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe introduced a new currency while we were there. They were phasing in this new currency while phasing out the old. The measure isn't expected to reduce the hyperinflation but merely to make currency more manageable.

Western reports regularly imply that there is repression of news media that is not state-owned. But we saw opposition papers being sold openly on the streets by vendors and we saw people reading them. However, more people seemed to be reading the *Herald* and the *Sunday Mail*, the state's papers. The state-owned news on TV or print is also reports on corruption among government officials. So the suggestions that the state's news institutions are less reliable simply on the grounds that they are state-run is bogus in my view. It is the content of the news that should be the gauge of reliability, not just the source.

The effects of the illegal and immoral sanctions are evident. I refer to sanctions as 'war without guns or bloodshed.' Only the imperialist powers have the ability to enforce sanctions and are therefore always exempt from them. Because of this reason sanctions are always immoral. It is a blatant lie that the sanctions are confined to travel and financial assets of government officials. In fact maybe I should not say it is a lie because those imposing the sanctions publish public information that would easily dispel such a misrepresentation. Basic needs such as gasoline have become scarce, making it susceptible to



exploitation on the black market. While the black market offers national currency at much lower than official rates, it offers gasoline for triple, sometimes four times, the official market price. People need gasoline, so if they have the money, they pay it. Almost everywhere we went there were power outages. Because the country imports electricity the outages are a means of conserving energy. In spite of all these things the people seemed to adjust to the challenges and for many sanctions seem to harden them with either animosity and/or the resolve to oppose the governments of Britain and the U.S.

The fuss over Operation Murambatsvina is another propaganda ploy. Western news hasn't ceased mentioning the government's demolition of shantytowns in Zimbabwe last year. But what is always neglected is Operation Garikai, which I've seen with my own eyes. This noble operation is rebuilding brand new homes for all those displaced by Operation Murambatsvina that are of course far better than their previous homes. You can see that construction of the homes has been interrupted by sanctions, but why does no one even talk about it? I've taken video footage of them. Is it ignorance or intentional omission? I tend to believe the latter because when I've presented these facts to so-called progressives they all but physically run from them. We cannot let the enemies of Africa and enemies of all humanity dictate how we see the world or Africa. They've become very sophisticated in how they advance their misinformation so we must become that much more sophisticated in how we get ours.

How does Western policy against Zimbabwe relate to the invasion and occupation of Iraq? And finally, is there anything else you would like to add about the pan-African Liberation struggle?

This is a complicated question that is directly related to ideology. On the one hand there is the class in the West that is reflected by governments and business corporations, and which are incestuous in many ways. We can refer to this as the capitalist class. This class has the power to imbue society with its ideas and values, fooling much of society into believing that they share the same economic and political interests as the capitalist class.

More simply put, Western policies against both Zimbabwe and Iraq are not motivated by a desire to see democracy or justice for the people of those countries. They are in fact motivated by the need to dominate and exploit the labor and resources of those countries. Because the West is so much less than democratic or just, exploitation is the only thing that can motivate its policies. Yet many on the Western Left cannot accept this fact. Even though all facts and history reveal this, they cannot accept that the

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Zimbabwe and the Pan-African Movement

(continued from page 17)

ideas and values of democracy and justice are complete hypocrisies and lies on the part of these governments and corporations. On some level they acknowledge the injustices of the policies but on another level they believe these are isolated incidents or merely the result of shortsightedness. If they didn't believe this, then they would have to reassess their understanding of reality in general. For example, often we hear from those among the Western Left denouncing such things as the U.S. blockade against Cuba, saying it's a failed policy; it has failed to bring freedom and democracy to Cuba, as if the policy is really to bring those things to Cuba. Moreover they would not dare consider that Cuba is already a democracy. Even when this Left doesn't accept Western policies against a country, they generally do accept some degree of demonizing propaganda, whether true or false. We can see this with Zimbabwe, Cuba and even Venezuela to an extent.

A practical reason is that most of this Left works through non-profit organizations or NGOs. And because most get their funding from, either their government, a corporate foundation, or some rich individual(s) with no interest in seriously challenging the system or world order, the West has effectively co-opted the Left by funding its activities. They then are torn between biting the hand that feeds them or that is, speaking complete truth to power or acquiescing to merely an acceptable level of protest against them by speaking only select truths to power.

So more to the relationship between policies toward Zimbabwe and Iraq, you also have varying factors at work such as the racial stereotypes and what the people will put up with. The Arab world is effectively stereotyped as fanatical terrorists that have irrational hatred for the West and everyone in it. They can be bombed and outright invaded because the outcry will not garner enough support to effectively stop it. Yugoslavia was and still is to a large extent unknown by the masses in the U.S., so bombing that nation was not such a big deal; especially since some of the blame can be shared with NATO and there is no obvious racism that would upset anybody. But for Africa it is a different story. While most Africans/Black people around the world are politically disorganized and too imbued with Western values and ideas to take an effective stand against Western policies toward Africa, the easiest way to get us organized and energized around Africa would be for the West to bomb or invade her. Somalia did not go well or last long and Zimbabwe stands out more as a Black Liberation struggle against racist settler colonialism. So instead they use covert operations by mercenaries and the fostering of internal de-stabilization. So in short, policies toward all these countries are essentially the same: to maintain Western hegemony over countries that refuse to dance to its tune.

The final thing I would like to add about the pan-African Movement is that revolutionary pan-Africanism recognizes the interconnectedness of humanity. All just people around the world must recognize the value in a United Socialist Africa. I'd like to quote Ho Chi Minh of Vietnam who said simply, "The Liberation of Africa is the Liberation of man."

- by Gregory Elich. This is an edited reprint from the September 6, 2006 edition of GlobalResearch.ca. Gregory Elich is the author of "Strange Liberators: Militarism, Mayhem, and the Pursuit of Profit."

For further information, contact:

The Social Action and Leadership School for Activists
<http://www.hotsalsa.org/>
The No War On Cuba Movement
<http://www.nowaroncuba.org>
The Ujamma Youth Farming Project
<http://ujammafarming.org/>
The Pan-African Liberation Organization
panafricanlib@yahoo.com

To make a donation to the Ujamma Youth Farming Project
<http://ujammafarming.org/donate.htm>

GI Resistance Continues to Grow

(continued from page 16)

himself in to Fort Hood, Texas after more than 18 months spent AWOL from the Army.

Prior to turning himself in, on August 31, Wilkerson held a press conference at Camp Casey in Crawford, Texas.

There comes a time in a person's life when they must do the right moral decision for themselves, doubtless of how popular that decision is in others' eyes, or what others feel about it...I am not willing to kill, or be killed, or do anything else I consider morally wrong, for reasons I don't believe in, and now today, I am turning myself in to face the consequences of my actions.

Twenty-two year-old Wilkerson was deployed to Iraq in March 2003, and after returning to the States immediately applied for Conscientious Objector status. With his CO claim still in process, Mark's unit was informed they would deploy to Iraq in January 2005.

In November of 2004, two months before scheduled deployment, his CO claim was denied, and Mark was told by his superiors that his rebuttal would not be considered until his return from Iraq, more than 16 months away.

It was at this point that Wilkerson made the decision to go AWOL, for what he describes as ipolitical, spiritual and personal reasons.

Wilkerson is now at Fort Hood, Texas, awaiting review of his case. He faces potential court martial or other legal repercussions.

For breaking news and to donate: <http://markwilkerson.wordpress.com>

Sgt. Ricky Clousing Charged with Desertion

Sgt. Ricky Clousing, who served as a U.S. Army Interrogator in Iraq in 2004 and 2005, has been charged with desertion by the Army and will face court martial charges. He was charged with desertion despite turning himself in to military custody.

Clousing left Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he was stationed in 2005, after returning from Iraq with the 82nd Airborne Division. He had been AWOL until August 11, 2006, when he called a press conference in Seattle, Washington coinciding with the annual Veterans for Peace national convention.

At the press conference, Clousing went public with his stand, and later turned himself in to Fort Lewis military police.

In response to charges related to his 14 months absent without leave, Ricky stated: "Since I left the army I have known that being court martialed was a possibility I could face. I am at peace with my decision. I followed my conscience and, if need be, I will feel honored to join the ranks of others who have been prosecuted for doing the same."

The United States Army has opened two parallel investigations into disclosures made by Sgt. Clousing about the abuse of power and lack of accountability of the U.S. Military in Iraq.

Clousing does not claim to be a conscientious objector, as is defined by the U.S. military. He is opposed to the war and occupation of Iraq based on his firsthand experience in country, which brought him to the conclusion that the Iraq war is a war of aggression that has no legal basis to be fought. Desertion charges can carry up to a two year jail sentence.

Find out how you can support Ricky today: <http://www.sdmcc.org/rickyclousing/>

- From *Courage to Resist* newsletter. For more information about *Courage to Resist*, visit www.CouragetoResist.org or e-mail them at courage@riseup.net.

Anti-War Groups Win Pledge For Suzanne Swift Investigation

Swift is the Army Specialist who has been arrested and confined to base for going AWOL after her charges of sexual harassment and assault went un-addressed by the military. On Sept. 12, attendees of the gathering Camp Democracy won a pledge from Oregon Congressman Peter DeFazio to initiate a congressional investigation into Swift's case. DeFazio made the pledge after a planned action that saw the activists visiting him personally and constituents flooding his office with phone calls, e-mails and faxes in support of Suzanne Swift. In a statement, Iraq Veterans Against the War said: "Congressman DeFazio has taken an important step toward ending military sexual violence despite the military's unwillingness to follow its own procedures and regulations. This a good first step toward making sure there is never again another Suzanne Swift." (Democracy Now: 9/13/06)

The Rising Costs of the Endless War

"Coalition" Troop Totals in Iraq: 152,000
U.S. troops: 133,000 (active and reserves)
Other troops: 19,000

The Insurgency's Toll
U.S. troops wounded: 20,113
U.S. troops killed: 2,671
Coalition troops killed: 233
Iraqi police killed: 5,375
U.S. Contractors killed: 349
Foreign Nationals kidnapped in Iraq: 288

** Above information from the Brookings Institution Saban Center for Middle East Policy (www.brook.edu/iraqindex.) As of Sept. 14, 2006, these are the latest figures available.*

The U.S. refuses to track civilian deaths. Other organizations' attempts to ascertain the number of deaths have resulted in numbers that range from 30,000 to 100,000+.

Financial Costs:
Cost of the war so far: \$315.11 billion
Pittsburgh's share of the war cost so far: \$233.32 million

** Above information from the National Priorities Project (www.costofwar.com). As of Sept. 14, 2006.*

War of Terror

The U.S. and its allies continue to wage a war of terror on other nations around the globe as well as their own people. The following press clippings are from Democracy Now.

UK Government Considers Ethnic, Religion-Based Airport Screening that would include identifying passengers by their ethnic or religious background. (8/16/06)

The Marine in charge of the unit accused of slaying 24 Iraqis in Haditha was subsequently recommended for a medal. In a memo written weeks after the massacre obtained by the *Washington Post*, Sgt. Wuterich's commander calls him "an outstanding squad leader" deserving of a medal for his actions at Haditha. (9/1/06)

The Pentagon revealed that the **number of Iraqi casualties soared by more than 50 percent** in recent months. (9/5/06)

Soldiers accused of detaining three Iraqi men during a raid in May in the province of Salahuddin and then allowing them to be released before shooting them **are being recommended for the death penalty** by an Army Investigator. (9/5/06)

58 percent of Americans oppose Bush foreign policy according to the annual Transatlantic Trends poll. In Europe, the level of opposition is at 77 percent. (9/7/06)

Baghdad morgue triples August death count. Officials have revised the toll from 550 dead to more than fifteen hundred. (9/8/06)

Pentagon says roadside bombings at record levels. Around 1200 improvised explosive devices were set off in August – four times more than in January of 2004. IEDs are the leading killer of U.S. troops in Iraq. (9/8/06)

Chief of Intelligence marine report admits U.S. has been defeated in Anbar, Iraq. (9/11/06)

Israeli Military Fired 237,000 Artillery Shells During Lebanon War (9/11/06)

The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* has published an interview with an IDF commander who has confirmed the Israeli military used phosphorous shells during the war even though they are widely forbidden by international law. The commander also estimated that the IDF fired about 1,800 cluster bombs, containing over 1.2 million cluster bomblets. **The Israeli commander said, "What we did was insane and monstrous,** we covered entire towns in cluster bombs." (9/12/06) Monitors say unexploded cluster bombs have killed at least eighty-three Lebanese civilians since the August ceasefire. (9/18/06)

The UN Reports: Up to **350,000 Unexploded Cluster Bombs in Lebanon.** David Shearer, the UN humanitarian coordinator in Lebanon, says **unexploded bombs are killing an average three people every day.** And that figure could rise. (9/20/06)

The *New York Times* reports an influential federal panel of medical advisers has recommended that the **government pharmaceutical companies begin conducting tests on prison inmates.** The practice was all but stopped three decades ago after revelations of abuse. (8/14/06)

Air Force Secretary calls for testing non-lethal weapons on U.S. citizens. (9/13/06)

U.S. Soldiers Wounded in Iraq Reach 20,000 (9/20/06)

The UN Reports: **6,600 Iraqi Civilians Killed in July & August.** The overwhelming majority of the casualties died of gunshot wounds. Hundreds of bodies also showed signs of severe torture and execution-style killing. (9/21/06)

Relocation and Replacement: Phase One of Garfield Heights Development Plan

While artists, entrepreneurs and sizable corporations snatch up property or build new structures along Penn Avenue in Garfield, residents in Garfield Heights are preparing for relocation and replacement. On September 7, approximately 50 residents met in the multi-purpose room of the Commons at North Aiken to learn about Phase One of the development plan for Garfield Heights. KBK Enterprises, a development company from Columbus, Ohio, won the bid to implement Phase One, which consists of relocation, demolition and replacement housing. The Housing Authority of Pittsburgh posted the request for bids.

Roxanna Pearson, a member of the design team and 30-year resident of Garfield Heights, believes the proposed plans will benefit the community. From what I've learned at meetings, it sounds like a good plan. As a long-time resident of Garfield Heights, Pearson's role on the team is to provide a voice for residents and include members of the community in the decision-making process. Pearson was elected by the residents of Garfield Heights. Pearson said both existing services and new recreational amenities that enhance communities like a skate and bike riding park, gardens and basketball courts are part of the proposed plan. We've discussed services and amenities in meetings with KBK Enterprises and made it clear that activities for our kids and families are important.

Fulton Meachem, Jr., newly hired executive director of HACP, said the proposed replacement housing will be made up of mixed-income, town-house style units with one through five bedrooms. The two-story rental properties will include a percentage of Section 8, market rate and accessible housing units. Meachem said plans are still on the table so nothing is yet set in stone.

Although, KBK Enterprises' base-of-operations are in Columbus, Ohio, the company isn't just another out-of-town developer cashing in on the building boom in Pittsburgh. The group has ties in the community. Both president Keith B. Key and project manager David Scott grew up in Garfield and still have family members who reside in the area. Based on published reports, KBK Enterprises was formed in September, 2004, to provide real estate development services in specific urban markets throughout the U.S. Keith B. Key is the founder of KBK Enterprises, and according to the company's website, KBK is a multi-dimensional corporation, strategically positioned to develop real estate in urban America.

The Garfield Heights project will be divided into three phases. KBK Enterprises will head up Phase One of the project. The proposed 90-unit replacement housing plan will set aside 50 homes for displaced residents. The remaining 40 units will be mixed-income housing. Residents were made aware by Housing Authority representatives that they would receive written notices in the near future to vacate their homes in order for the relocation and demolition phase to begin. After receiving notice, residents have 90 days to find temporary or permanent housing.

Residents were encouraged to visit the Housing and Urban Development website to learn more about relocation assistance. Relocation assistance for tenants displaced from their homes is mandated by federal law. Under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, tenants displaced from their homes, which includes any family or individual that must move as a direct result of rehabilitation, demolition or acquisition for a project in which Federal funds are used, are entitled to relocation assistance. Typed brochures outlining relocation assistance and contact numbers are also provided by the Housing Authority.

Former Garfield Heights residents, who now reside in the Commons at North Aiken, where the meeting was held, relocated two years ago when the senior high rise in Garfield Heights was razed. Two of those residents, who asked to remain anonymous, cautioned those who are about to relocate. According to these residents, none of the amenities that were available at the high-rise like a doctor's office, a food bank or exercise room - followed them to their new homes. They showed us Oak Hill, in the Hill District. They said we would have a housing plan set-up like that. Instead, we now have to pay a fee to use the activity room, one former senior high rise resident claims. In addition to the fee, residents said they must have special certification to use the kitchen in the activity room.

Dr. Edwards used to have an office and examination room at the old high-rise on Fern Street, but the room they offered him here at Aiken Commons,

was too small for him to provide medical care in privacy and with some dignity. There is no longer an exercise room. Our equipment was donated to the new Kingsley Center. We even lost our food bank, another displaced resident added.

Oak Hill management charges a fee for the use of its multi-purpose room, but there is no fee required to use the kitchen facilities. Oak Hill has a health clinic, exercise room, sauna and a food bank. Residents at Aiken Commons said their housing complex is under the management of a religious group. They said they feared reprisal if they revealed their names.

Affirmative Investments, a development firm located in Boston, MA, worked with HACP to develop the Commons at North Aiken as replacement housing for former residents of Garfield Senior High Rise. According to Affirmative Investments website, the team worked closely with the residents from three converging neighborhoods on the design of the building exterior and interior. The company's supportive service program depends upon available funding, and if funding is in place, they provide meals, transportation and a range of personalized services for relocated residents.

David Dennis, one of the General Partners of North Aiken Commons, said they recently had the residents at North Aiken respond to a survey and the results were very positive. I am not sure that the residents that you quote are a fair sampling of resident opinion, he said. There are no fees charged for the use of the activity room or the multi-purpose room - the use is open to all residents. For organized meetings, a security deposit is required, but that is promptly returned if the room is left in good condition. The commercial kitchen is licensed and requires that it be used by personnel who are Food Service certified. We recently began our affordable meal program, using the commercial kitchen as intended. All residential units have full kitchens and we also have a common country kitchen area for supervised resident activity use. We are concerned about expectations that were not met, but feel that we were clear in what the new facility would offer.

Despite the cautionary tale, many residents remain confident in the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh. Cecelia Davis said this is her second relocation and she utilized the services of the Housing Authority to relocate in the past and things turned out well. Louise Jenkins, HACP relocation specialist, received praise from Davis, and several other residents at the meeting, for her work on behalf of the community. She does just what she says she going to do. She does her job very well, said Davis.

The wild and hilly terrain of Garfield Heights might prove a challenge for Phase One developer, KBK Enterprises. Steep hillsides and vacant lots, with deteriorating foundations that descend into levels of dirt, wood and concrete, must be cleared, filled and leveled to make the land usable. Though the lush terrain is a lovely example of Mother Nature's handiwork, the encroachment of wild vegetation all over Garfield Heights, puts the neighborhood in immediate need of the services of a team of environmentally friendly horticulturists. The crumbling city steps that elementary school-aged children use at all hours of the day are nearly obscured from view by overgrown trees and large bushes, creating potential safety and environmental concerns.

Meanwhile, down along Penn Avenue, development has experienced an upswing, due in part, to the relocation of Children's Hospital and the Children's Home of Pittsburgh. The shops, restaurants, businesses and galleries that offers a variety of goods and services along the Penn Avenue corridor include Dance Alloy, The Quiet Storm and Edge Studio. Friendship Development Associates recently announced that Councilman Bill Peduto and Project Elm Street granted a combined \$50,000 to plant trees and preserve existing green space in Friendship. Neither Councilwoman Carlisle nor a representative from her office were at the Garfield Heights relocation meeting.

In addition to other services, relocated residents will receive \$940 towards moving costs, as mandated by federal law. They will also be given a Relocation Certificate, which means that the government will supply a subsidy to the cost of housing while they are awaiting their return to Garfield Heights. The certificate will be good for a period of two years (the amount of time that it is expected to take to build the new homes). The apartments or houses residents relocate to must be comparable in size and cost to the previous residence. Relocation certificates cannot be used towards the purchase of a home, as Section 8 certificates can. However, if the resident qualifies, they may apply for a



Garfield Residents Meet at Aiken Commons to plan relocation. (Photo: Michelle Burton Brown)

Section 8 and then use that certificate for the purchase of a home. All displaced residents are not expected to return to the new housing community once it is complete - some may choose other options. For more info, contact the Western PA office of the Housing Alliance at 412-441-3080.

A rash of Section 8 evictions in Lawrenceville prompted an article, entitled "Street Sweeper," in the *City Paper* back in July. According to the article, Section 8 tenants who are deemed undesirable, have become the target of a local community group, Lawrenceville United (LU). The *City Paper* reported that at a hearing before District Justice Ron Costa, state Senator Jim Ferlo stood inside, trying to pay the court fees to start a Section 8 eviction procedure while beside him, 20 members of LU crowded into Costa's chambers to hold a completely unofficial, non-hearing hearing before the magistrate without the resident even being present.

Federal rules prohibit any drug-related activities on or near premises of Section 8 renters. The article said that even without a conviction, arrests are damaging and that accused tenants can have their Section 8 vouchers revoked. Loretta Millender, a former LU board member, said she believes the attention to Section 8 properties is suspect. Contact Fair Housing Partnership if you have questions about your rights as a Section 8 voucher holder at 412-391-2535.

When asked if her family will return to Garfield Heights when new housing is completed, Pearson's voice became inaudible and she visibly struggled to control an array of emotions as she contemplated the question like an indication of her uncertainty about the future. She is pleased to have a successful firm, headed by two native sons of Garfield, involved in the replacement housing plan. She also said that she hopes it will make a difference in how the residents who live in Garfield Heights are treated throughout the relocation process. She views the presence of community members on the design team as an opportunity for KBK Enterprises and the Housing Authority to really hear what both relocated residents, and the eventual influx of new residents, want in their new neighborhood.

- Michelle Burton Brown. Contact her at: michelle@thomasmertoncenter.org

TMC Wishlist

The Thomas Merton Center gladly accepts in-kind donations. Currently, we would make great use of:

*** A Humidifier for our musty, dingy basement where countless volunteers pack and ship books to prisoners each week.**

Call 412-361-3022 or e-mail info@thomasmertoncenter.org for more information.

The Rebirth of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)

A small kitten scampers up the steps of ivy-laden Cobb Hall at the University of Chicago. Nearby, a mohawked student attempts to spear a stale, idumpstered,î bagel mid-air with a PVC pipe. Heís surrounded by dozens of other young radicals mingling in the schoolís immaculate green courtyard, chatting about music, activism and revolution. Just inside the hall, a complicated and exasperating argument rages over national organization and the delicate challenges surrounding differences in race, sex, class, sexual orientation and gender identity. Welcome to the 1st National Convention of the reborn Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).

The New and the Old

Held August 4-7 and attended by an estimated 200 students and activists from as far away as Washington State, Vermont and Arizona, the convention was the first national event held by SDS since its re-inception just seven months ago on Martin Luther King Day. The original SDS of the 1960s, before it collapsed into various competing factions (the final, disastrous convention in 1969 was also held in Chicago), is remembered as part of a powerful movement that funneled thousands of young students Southward to the front lines of the struggle for Civil Rights, and as one of the first and steadiest voices demanding the unconditional withdrawal of U.S. troops from a place called Vietnam. Forty years later, while the nation is embroiled in a conflict over the civil rights of immigrants, and the American military is trapped in yet another foreign quagmire, a sentiment of disinterested cynicism, even hopelessness, has thus far maintained a firm grip on much of Americaís youth. Meanwhile, the national organizations leading the fight against the rising tide of imperialism have been a regrettable combination of internet-based lobby groups soliciting funding from wealthy donors, along with sectarian groups stuck in the mid-60s strategy of massing bodies to clog city streets for one afternoon.

Pat Korte, one of the founders of the new SDS, says it was his experience with these îinherently undemocraticî organizations that dominate the American Left that pushed him and other students to talk about restarting SDS last fall, while Pat was still in high school. îWe wanted a multi-issue organization in which the membership would have power over defining the organization, in which youth and students especially would be encouraged to have input, and which would build bridges between students and non-students in a democratic framework.î

SDS, especially the ideals embodied in the 1962 Port Huron Statement, presented an option for a different kind of organizing, îbased on participatory democracy.î So Pat went about finding and contacting former members of the original SDS and received their permission to give the organization another try.

One person contacted early on who proved to be instrumental to the groupís success was Tom Good, a gray-haired Wobbly who had been too young to join the original SDS. When Tom got on board with the new SDS, he set about creating a website (newsds.org), listserv, and other networking tools to bring together SDSers from around the country. The internet proved itself as a îterrific organizing tool,î and the groupís membership exploded. Within six months over 1,000 members had joined SDS via

the website, representing 150 chapters around the country. Many of those who initially joined were former members of the original group during the Sixties, while most others were inspired by the groupís history from the Sixties. As Tom put it, îthe name recognition [of SDS] is huge.î

Yet, the history of SDS is a troubled story, and inheriting that legacy means resuscitating old challenges, along with some new ones. Would the new SDS be able to avoid making the mistakes of its predecessor, for example, white leadership and male dominance? Is the internet the best tool for organizing students located on campuses around the country, who had no previous face-to-face connection, and how could this be done in a îdemocratic,î înon-hierarchicalî manner? Finally, could the new SDS manage to be a powerful voice for radical change without falling victim to factionalism, government infiltration and a narrow, anti-war focus?

It was exactly this intriguing mix of hope and doubt which drew me halfway across the country to observe this convention and find out whether the new SDS is the îReal Deal.î

I journeyed to Chicago in a carpool with students I had contacted via the helpful Ride Board set up on the SDS website, and slept at a welcoming co-op house which I found on the equally helpful Housing Board. But when I arrived at the convention Friday afternoon, an hour before registration was scheduled to begin, there were no signs indicating where to go, and the only information I had was from the incomplete îTentative Scheduleî that was still posted on the website, the first indications that the weekendís event had been organized in a hasty fashion. While hanging around and waiting for someone informed to arrive, I met Bruce Rubenstein, who kept me entertained with stories of his days in the Weathermen, who turned to property destruction when they believed nonviolent protest had failed to end the Vietnam War.

Across the Age Barrier

One of the first, most unique features that one notices about the new SDS is its intergenerational character. In every SDS gathering, amidst the students and youth you will find a healthy representation of îfirst-generation SDSers,î friendly people who insist they are not trying to guide or lead the new organization, but are present to provide help and experience whenever necessary. In fact, SDS is organized into two distinct components, the student and youth component, Students for a Democratic Society, and MDS, or Movement for a Democratic Society, which is a vehicle for original SDS members and other non-students. The two groups appear to coexist harmoniously, as the older folks, while providing much-needed financial aid and some lengthy motivational speeches, seemed content to spend most of the convention manning tables and occasionally leading panel discussions, while largely allowing the younger members to be the loudest and most decisive voices. Save a few examples, most members, young and old alike, viewed the intergenerational nature of SDS as a strength.

Al Haber, founder of the original SDS and drafter of the Port Huron Statement, headlined the îOpening Plenaryî Friday night and received the most thunderous applause of the evening (and a standing ovation). According to Al, at age 70, heís now îofficially done with the 60s.î

Strengths and Weaknesses

On Saturday the workshops began, with such diverse topics as îNew Orleans: Organizing to Rebuild,î îClass Privilege: A Burden or a Tool?î îBuilding the Palestine Solidarity Movement,î îThe Modern Sex Workersí Rights Movement,î and îCreating and Sustaining an Anarchist Revolution.î

The best workshop I attended was entitled îDirect Action on Campus,î in which everyone participated in a mock confrontation between students and administrators (I was selected to play a bewildered police officer). Not only were theoretical and strategic considerations reviewed, but the participants were given a hands-on application of their newly-learned skills.

Not all of the convention ran so smoothly. The schedule as drafted allotted time for caucuses to meet, including a îQueer/Trans Caucus,î a îPeople of Color Caucus,î a îFeminist Caucus,î an îEnvironmental Caucus,î and both îAnarchistî and îMarxianî Caucuses as well, but they were all scheduled for the same time. Therefore people who self-identify as, for example, a person of color and queer, would have to choose which caucus to attend and which identity to represent.

Upon noticing this oversight, several students hastily organized a re-scheduling of the caucuses, spreading them out over the weekend, but some caucuses met with low attendance because they were pushed back to Monday, and the Anarchist and Marxian Caucuses still gathered at conflicting schedules, on opposite sides of the hallway. Meanwhile, the People of Color Caucus was scheduled to meet Sunday during breakfast, but when they arrived at Cobb Hall they found the buildingís doors locked and were forced to wait until lunchtime (concurrently with the Anarchist and Marxian caucuses ó ensuring a white audience for the ideological gatherings).

But it was Sunday afternoon when some of the inherent contradictions facing the new group became painfully evident. Clearly the most important workshop of the convention, called îNational Structure Discussion,î had been slotted just one and a half hoursí time and located in a room capable of handling no more than 35 people. Of course, over 70 showed up, and the three facilitators found themselves completely unable to manage and focus the conversation on topic. Instead, what began as a calm brainstorming session on the relative merits and dangers of creating a national structure quickly devolved into a frustratingly disorganized and strident argument, such that reinstating a functional meeting structure itself became the focus of debate, complicated by subtle fears that if any individual was given excess authority over the running of the meeting it might lead to the creation of an authoritarian structure for SDS itself. Therefore a desperate chaos ruled, and the shouting soon silenced all non-male voices . . . something that was eventually pointed out by a woman.

Just when worry of repeating the original SDSís sexism hit everyone in the face, the knockout blow walked right into the room. Through the doorway emerged the People of Color Caucus, wearing sullen faces and armed with a devastating statement. By this point, the Structure meeting had been going on for over an hour and a half, yet the 15 members of the POC Caucus had not been present the entire time, and in fact had been meeting next door for the last 3-4 hours, to



A new SDS chapter in New York City (Photo: www.studentsfordemocraticsociety.org)

apparently no oneís recognition. When ashamed and confused murmuring in the white audience subsided, the People of Color delivered their statement. îAs People of Color, we have witnessed that being at this conference was an alienating experience. . . .î They were discouraged by the conventionís white-dominated atmosphere and expressed the worry that SDS was making the same mistakes which have divided and crippled the progressive Left of the U.S. for the past 40 years. They demanded to know whether SDS would be yet another white radical organization, or if it would actively strive to be multiracial and all-inclusive, not only sensitive of racial lines, but gender and sexual orientation lines as well.

There could be no adequate response. Beyond applause, each member of the white-dominated audience struggled and squirmed to find some way to reassure the People of Color of their good intentions while admitting their failures and mistakes. In truth, the kind of conscious, sensitive, and reflective discussion that the white members of SDS need to do around this difficult issue simply could not occur immediately following the statement, especially after such a demoralizing set of events. No one knew what to do next.

At this point the panelists whose scheduled workshops were now more than one hour past their starting times demanded that the next session begin immediately, because they had to travel home before Monday. The room buzzed with confusion and people began to file out the door en masse, while some still shouted desperately that no decisions on national structure had been made.

The convention gasped and nearly choked; all feared the new SDS was stillborn.

Solidarity Building

Yet, walking around the campus, it was clear that life was slowly breathing back in, simply through relaxed and friendly discussions that united the scattered students. Whatever animosity had existed in that room dissipated as the young radicals casually hung out together in Chicago.

This points to what was undoubtedly the most positive thing to come out of the convention: all the personal connections made. For the students to meet one another and share their experiences of how theyve struggled in their own communities and campuses, trying to tackle problems which face all of us, was not only self-affirming but points to the real possibility that a national organization can affect change simply by bringing people together.

On Monday, the final day of the convention, with only 60 of the original estimated 200 attendees still around, the convention ended positively. In the first plenary of the day, entitled îResisting Empire from Within: SDS and the Antiwar Movement,î SDSers brainstormed plans for a week of action this coming Fall semester called îIraq Week,î hoping to spur the campuses to once again become hotbeds of militant resistance to what currently appears to be an endless war in Iraq and the Middle East. According to the panelists, this would be accomplished through idirect actions on campus and beyond [that] boldly illustrate the connections between educational

SDS continued...

institutions, war profiteers and political elites within the imperialist establishment. Finally, the Closing Plenary functioned as a concluding and unifying discussion, in which, with the help of a clearly designated facilitator, note-taker and stack-keeper, along with rules decided upon at the outset, some clear decisions could be made by consensus. Perhaps most important among the resolutions passed was an answer to the previous day's drama, an affirmation that SDS will strive to insure that people of color, women, LGBTQ and all other oppressed groups have a direct role in decision-making, such that not only is the leadership of SDS representative, but that the atmosphere is welcoming to everyone.

It was also decided that SDS will be a national network tying together chapters, but that real power lies at the grassroots level in local campuses and communities. The next SDS conventions will be regional rather than national, so that people can meet one another without traveling across the country. It was suggested that each area should hold two regional conferences within the next year, with the second being focused on determining goals for a potential SDS constitution. Decisions regarding that constitution will then be confirmed at the 2nd National Convention, to be held next summer, location TBD.

When the discussion ended with unanimous agreement, there was a little applause and a very big sense of relief.

High Expectations

Looking forward, conventioners that I talked to felt that the weekend, with all its ups and downs, had been a success. A female student named Iwi pointed out: It is not likely for a first national convention to run very smoothly. . . . Anyway we should be able to argue and have dissent, that is what ultimately makes an organization stronger.

Another young member calling himself Scribbler pointed out that we are just beginning to stand up again and noted that it will take more than one weekend to build a unified radical student Left in this country.

It should be expected that an organization assigning itself such an audacious goal as shutting down imperial ambitions, and inheriting such a difficult legacy as SDS, should suffer a few birth pangs upon its first meeting. After all, these are difficult and strained times, and as Al Haber pointed out, We haven't had a national interracial movement since the mid-60s. But many members I talked to felt that SDS is re-emerging at just the right time, to help a new generation of American radicals find their voice and strengthen what thus far has been a fragmented and ineffective movement for peace and justice in America.

On Monday afternoon, with the convention ended and people beginning the long trips back to all parts of the country, one got the feeling that what Pat Korte called an experiment in participatory democracy has an awful lot of potential, but to fulfill that potential will require a lot of patience, understanding and determined effort in order to achieve the ambitious goal of creating a more democratic society.

- By Alexander Knight, a recent graduate of Lehigh University, where he achieved a Master's degree in Political Science. He is currently working on writing and activism around the issue of peak oil and will soon be traveling and working in Venezuela for the next six months. He can be reached at this address: activistalex@gmail.com.

Community Commentary

The "Community Commentary" section is the op-ed section of The NewPeople. The views expressed are solely those of the author and are not a reflection of the ideology of the Thomas Merton Center or an endorsement by the TMC.

Property Damage - Tool For Social Change – Or Distraction?

DeiAnna Caliguirri (Sept. *The NewPeople*) uses Daniel and Philip Berrigan's draft file burning during the Vietnam War and the Plowshares 8 action against nuclear weapons as examples of doing property damage as a means of resistance. She links these actions to two recent attempts to burn down military recruiting stations.

And she suggests that The lunch counter sit-ins in the civil rights era and any march through the streets are means of disruption, and in part are means of this disruptive element. Then, to justify damaging property she cites Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s statement that Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such creative tension that a community that has consistently refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored.

I wish I were writing this in defense of a riot, she writes, instead of the breaking of a single corporate store window, the tossing of some street signs and a relocation of a dumpster to the middle of an intersection in an emergency march...

...Ask people who support certain acts of property damage and they will tell you it is not about destruction for destruction's sake any more than sitting in at a lunch counter was about disrupting the lives of people who just wanted a meal...

...property damage and other forms of disruption need to be respected as legitimate forms of protest and dissent; they play a role just as relevant as myriad other tactics necessary for a movement that seeks results, and they shift the political landscape to aid in the creation of a crisis which can't be ignored.

Where to begin?

Dan and Phil engaged in rigorous retreats and self-examination prior to their actions. They took personal responsibility for them and they did not implicate others. They spent years in jail. They had no illusions that they could expect immediate results; these were acts of conscience. They did inspire thousands of people because their acts, both symbolic and concrete at the same time, shed light on terrible reality and touched hearts. In damaging draft records and nuclear weapons the message was that property is meant to be proper to human life. In contrast, first strike nuclear weapons are the hammers of hell, as Dan put it during the Plowshares 8 trial.

The college students who took part in the lunch counter sit-ins were clear in their courageous challenge to segregation, knowing that in acting they were taking their lives in their hands. Their commitment to nonviolence is reflected in the SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) founding statement: i...By appealing to conscience and standing on the moral nature of human existence, nonviolence nurtures the atmosphere in which reconciliation and justice become actual possibilities.

To engage in civil disobedience is to act on one's beliefs, that is, taking on the responsibility for making change. CD is a form of communication aimed both at individuals who are part of unjust and immoral institutions that are the target of

protests, as well as to those sympathetic to the cause. And, of course, for the public, providing information, clarifying the issues and inviting support.

Educating, organizing, mobilizing and strategic planning are essential. This requires that we listen, engage in self-criticism and encourage creativity. It is all about building community to help sustain one another for the long haul. There are seldom any shortcuts.

Rioting or breaking windows may get the headlines but be ineffective and can even obscure the message by handing the media an easy hook. How in the world does moving a dumpster convey a message about the horror of militarism, racism or oppression? When carried out as part of a larger protest it is likely to deflect attention from the real issue at hand.

The 1500 people who lay in the streets on a freezing day in January 2003 risked arrest to dramatize the real story of the coming war in Iraq, death and destruction. Those who did not wish to take part did not. Communication with the police in this case actually strengthened the protest and avoided an overreaction.

Yes we need to risk, escalate, create, confront, and try every nonviolent and effective means at our disposal. We need to study both the success and failures of the past. Gandhi and King, the Gene Sharps and Howard Zinns have much to teach us. We can learn from the nonviolent movements in our own time that are proving to be more effective than violent revolutions - from the Mothers in Black in Argentina to the many civil rebellions that are overturning oppressive systems and breaking the cycle of violence.

I try, in facing my own anger and frustration, to remember the advice of two very different, very wise men:

I do not depend on the hope of results. When you are doing the sort of work you have taken on, essentially an apostolic work, you may have to face the fact that your work will be apparently worthless and even achieve no result at all, if not perhaps results opposite to what you expect. As you get used to this idea, you start more and more to concentrate not on the results but on the value, the rightness, the truth of the work itself. - Thomas Merton

The only kinds of fights worth fighting are those you are going to lose, because somebody has to fight them and lose and lose and lose until someday, somebody who believes as you do wins. In order for somebody to win an important, major fight 100 years hence, a lot of other people have got to be willing - for the sheer fun and joy of it - to go right ahead and fight, knowing you're going to lose. You mustn't feel like a martyr. You've got to enjoy it. - I.F. Stone, now-deceased muckraker who exposed corruption at the highest levels of government during his lifetime.

We are people from diverse philosophies and faiths who find common ground in the nonviolent struggle to bring about a more peaceful and just world. We work to raise the moral questions involved in the issues of war, poverty, racism, and oppression.

- Molly Rush

Mirroring the World We Hope to Build

I am concerned about the Community Commentary article in last month's *The NewPeople* in Consideration of Property Damage as a Tool for Social Change written by DeiAnna Caliguirri.

The Peace Movement in Pittsburgh has seen the positive energies of the hundreds of people who have assembled in the streets to challenge the war makers. Their energy often embodies an infectious hopefulness that could change the dynamics and stop this and future wars. They have been both life-affirming and hope-regenerating to the participants in that they could play a serious role in helping us remember that reality as portrayed by the media and by the government is only their reality, and that there are millions of people determined to shape another reality.

Unfortunately, the creative and lovingly anarchic energies brought by the demonstrators has not been matched by those who have rushed to position themselves in the way DeiAnna defends. It was disturbing to read this ideology of tactics and strategy where understanding does not include love and generosity, or the flow of social energies from fear to hope.

The language used in this article is only the flip side of the economic-reductionism and power orientation of those in the administration that we seek to challenge. It is possible to articulate a positive vision that can elevate and inspire those who are not already part of the anti-war movement. It is possible to mirror the kind of world we hope to build.

Civil disobedience, if carried out in a spirit of good humor and moral centeredness, can be a powerful way to communicate to the larger society that this war that is intruding on all lives and the life of this planet. Yet it is critical that we systematically and in a principled manner reject any attempts to manipulate this movement into violence or sanctioned property damage.

Our goal is non-violence and our means must be non-violent. But let our message be clear. There is only one way for America to be safe: let it be perceived as the leading force in the world for ending poverty and hunger and disease and the vast global inequalities of wealth; as the world's leading force for ecological sanity and repairing the damage done to our biosphere by the past 150 years of industrialization, and as the force that embodies a new bottom line of generosity and caring for others. If that is our message, we actually have a chance to turn this disastrous situation to something of long-term benefit to humanity. When we demonstrate for peace, we are not just demonstrating against war, but for a positive vision of healing the planet.

Perhaps we should encourage more serious talks that present a variety of different analyses and strategies. I know we will not all agree on strategy but we need a place in which serious disagreements can be aired in respectful and loving ways, modeling the kind of society we seek to build, as long as we share the positive life-affirming and love-oriented vision that is the core of what we are trying to demonstrate as members of the Thomas Merton Center.

- Wanda Guthrie, *Roots of Promise, a project of the Thomas Merton Center/ Network of Spiritual Progressives Pittsburgh*

Floating Out to Sea

DeiAnna Caligiuri's article about property damage as a tool for social change raises many disturbing questions related to the vision of the Thomas Merton Center, the efficacy of property damage in promoting change, and the extent that the philosophy and ethics of non-violence have not been communicated to a new generation of activists.

Caligiuri is quite right in pointing out that those who promote social change should have a strategic plan on how to bring about change and that a variety of tactics should be used. However she flows out to sea when she tries to make a case for idisruption of everyday life can be part of strategy to win. Suggesting that moving dumpsters, breaking random windows, is within the tradition of Martin Luther King's non-violent direct action or the Greensboro students who sat in at lunch counters, is an insult to the memory of these principled non-violent activists. More importantly it misses the point. The Greensboro sit-ins were not random acts of destruction or disruption. The students were exercising their rights and doing so in a dramatic way that brought the issue of segregated lunch counters to the public in all of its raw savagery.

Similarly, King's marches were not designed to disrupt or bring society to its knees -although that sort of disruption may have resulted. The March on Washington was designed to communicate issues, not to close down the government. Its message was targeted to specific grievances, not just a sounding off of how angry we are that everybody does not agree with us.

We believe that a half-century of experience in nonviolent direct action has revealed some guidelines to effective strategy. Nonviolent direct action is a form of communication and should be tailored to drive home a clear message. It is a form of communication that is used when normal existing communication channels are not functioning. If no one would listen to statements that segregated lunch counters are wrong, then use direct action to show them it is wrong. It is also only undertaken after much deliberation and with an open understanding by all participating in the event that it will happen.

And where is the Thomas Merton Center on this issue? Why was the article featured as a full page spread? Perhaps this situation constitutes a teachable moment. Could TMC initiate a conversation on the nature, philosophy and ethical issues of non-violent activism? That could be done through the pages of *The NewPeople*, TMC website or even face to face.

- Paul Wahrhaftig, American Friends Service Committee, PA Program Committee member

Note from the Editorial Collective: Members of the editorial collective chose to publish the piece as a way to initiate a conversation on this very timely, hot-button issue on the left, just as you suggest, Paul. We are excited to use the newspaper as a forum for constructive debate on this and other issues.

Destruction into Construction

As an organization strongly committed to non-violence, and one of the projects of the Thomas Merton Center, Conscience, was deeply concerned by DeiAnna Caligiuri's article in September's *The NewPeople* advocating property destruction.

The article was printed without any rebuttal or statement that it did not represent the official position of the Thomas Merton Center. This is troublesome for two reasons. First, because it will be used as evidence that the Thomas Merton Center is a front for violent groups. Second, because the argument is so easily refuted. Not doing so is a disservice to the peace community.

There are many ways to refute the argument; we will present only one.

The article attempts to connect acts of vandalism at a protest on June 7 to famous acts of civil disobedience, namely the peaceful sit-ins at diners practicing segregation in the South, the destruction of draft records by the Berrigans, and the damage to missile components by the Plowshares 8.

First, the peaceful sit-ins at diners should not be denigrated by being compared to vandalism. Those participating were not engaged in vandalism in any way; they were simply requesting service. Had they been

served, they would have eaten, paid their bill, and left. Their acts were perfect examples of the use of civil disobedience in direct protest against unjust laws.

The other acts do involve property damage, but that is all they have in common with the June 7 protest. They differed in these ways: (a) They were thoughtful. Before committing the property damage, the protestors considered their targets carefully. They did not attempt to justify their choice after the fact. (b) They were responsible. The protestors took full responsibility for their acts, and were punished. They did not hide in a crowd. (c) They were careful. They took care not to risk hurting people other than themselves. They did not throw a brick at a window, possibly injuring people in the store and on the street. (d) They were focused. They did not damage property other than their target. (e) They were trained. Non-violent protest is hard to learn and practice.

Because of these differences, the Berrigans and the Plowshares 8 were able to use their acts of property destruction to further their cause. They turned a destructive act into something constructive.

Thomas Merton wrote, I am against war, against violence, against violent revolution, for peaceful settlement of differences, for nonviolent but nevertheless radical changes. Change is needed, and violence will not really change anything: at most it will only transfer power from one set of bull-headed authorities to another. The Thomas Merton Center is at a cross-road. It is an important peace organization in this community and is respected around the country. It is vital that the Board make clear that they are following the non-violent teachings of Thomas Merton and do not condone violence in any form. Conscience looks forward to being part of the discussion that will make this clear.

- Signed, Conscience, www.consciencepgh.org

Note from the Editorial Collective: The article was printed without an accompanying rebuttal because we do not regularly pair opinion pieces with rebuttals. We don't currently have the capacity to quickly commission writers to submit a counter-point article on demand. Additionally, there has not been a fair policy proposed to ensure specific issues can only be discussed if a variety of views are available. As usual, the following issue prints critiques, concerns and counter arguments.

Also, please note that nothing in the paper is an organizationally-endorsed statement unless specified as such. We are now including a statement each month in this section to more strongly denote that it is our op-ed section (see above).

Opening a Chance for Dialogue

The September issue of *The NewPeople* was excellent. In particular, I was overwhelmed to see DeiAnna Caligiuri's article regarding the tactic of property destruction. So rarely do we here such voices and opinions in our community. I think it is a shame that Caligiuri's article had to be published in defense of something as minor as some broken glass.

Nonviolent acts like property destruction have been, as Caliguri points out, staples of movements for progressive change. This tactic can have a beneficial effect on the oppressed and/or a detrimental effect on oppressors. As Caliguri points out, the Berrigans' destruction of draft records achieved both of these things. They helped the Americans whose names were on those cards and the Vietnamese who they might have killed. It also hurt the government and the army; it denied them a few more troops and the act served to show that people were willing to go beyond a simple march to stop this war that they knew in their hearts wasn't right.

I think one of the best things about this article is that it is opening up a chance for dialogue about this as a tactic. In my experience, many in the greater activist community these days have a very negative reaction to property destruction. It is strange to hear many of the same people who supported the Berrigans talking negatively about property destruction. The main difference I see is the type of people committing and advocating it today. People of faith have, by and large, failed to confront this war head on and have, by and large, allowed themselves to become complicit. I find this very saddening. Instead, younger generations are rising to this challenge and are being abandoned because of their passion and dedication. Too often, acts of property destruction are dismissed as hissy fits or foolish acts of youth. Too often, it is forgotten that the decisions of these young activists to commit

acts of civil disobedience and property destruction are thought out responses to a system of terror and destruction, one that does far worse than smash a window or burn some paper. They believe these acts can and will put some small dent in that terror and destruction. Didn't the Berrigans believe the same thing? Were the Berrigans wrong in that belief? I don't think so, and I hope others do not.

I am sure that this article has made many unhappy and I hope that *The NewPeople* can be an outlet through which this debate can continue. Again, thank you to the Editorial Collective for publishing this wonderful article and allowing that debate to begin.

- Mitchell Bauer

Hey Son!

Dear son,

It was great hearing from you and thanks for sharing so much with me (September issue of *The NewPeople*, Hey Mom in Community Commentary). I am so proud of you, respect you and agree with you on so much. It's been an education and privilege walking the peace and justice path with you. I have many of the same concerns and questions and as I look around I too wonder where everyone is. I mostly question where I can be most effective. I am sometimes overwhelmed with all of the injustices from illegal wars to animal abuse, to police violence, domestic violence, corporate greed, corporate media, a one-party system of government, global warming and many environmental issues. When I began my activism, I was consumed with the anti-war movement and civil rights, and then what an education learning of so many of the above injustices as well. As I continue the peace and justice path, I find so many of these issues important and which one takes priority? So in my travels and my wondering of where is everyone else, I have found them in the Green Party, Sierra Club, Voices for Animals, Allegheny Defense Project, home schooling their children, serving on boards of various activist organizations, Free Speech TV, LINKTV, thrift shops and others working on bringing a just health care system to us. I also have to admit that I am fearful of getting arrested and giving up control of my life to the system. If I am in jail, how can I be effective in continuing my activism? You may not see me or the others, but many of us are at your side in spirit and in our own choice of activism. I believe if we had our sacred connection with all of the universe we would never experience the violence we do to the earth, one another and other species. Please know that I continue to support you and appreciate you.

- Love, Mother Merton

Poetic Justice

Tones of Humanity

May the Lord continue
To stand behind all
People who are pigmented
Because the sun's rays
Blessed them with colors
Of Earth's various landscapes,
Brownish yellow like sand,
Black like earth's soil,
Dark brown like mountains,
Wheat like earth's clay,
Yellow like the sun,
Red like a sunset,
Along with more variations
Of people with shades
Spanning the color spectrum.

We people who are
Tinted darker than clouds,
Are beautiful, no matter
What anyone else says.
Let no man convince
Us into thinking we
Are savages and aliens,
Animals and devils,
Or non-human and uncivilized,
For we were made
As reflections of God's
Diversification of human beings.
In God's eyes, we
Are all made equally,
No less than another

- Shawntaye Scott

Confronting Theofascism in the USA

In the Republic of Gilead, a Christian fundamentalist theocracy exists in the place of an elected secular government. The state regulates nearly every aspect of public and private life. The foundation of the regime is the control of sex and sexuality: They execute gays and lesbians; they destroy pornography and sexual clothing; they kill abortion doctors; they outlaw divorce and second marriages; and they even prevent women from learning how to read. Martial law has been declared as ihordes of guerrillasî jeopardize the stability of the Republic ñ though the threat may be greatly exaggerated.

Thankfully the Republic of Gilead does not exist. Gilead is Margaret Atwood's dystopic vision of a totalitarian American theocracy, exhaustively detailed in her 1985 novel, iThe Handmaid's Tale.î

In Atwood's narrative, Christian fundamentalists resort to military force to implement their vision of a theocratic state. Real-life Christian fundamentalists, however, are not so sanguine about the prospects of the U.S. being overthrown by a pro-fundamentalist military coup. Instead they put their energy into electoral politics ñ from electing school board members, senators and presidents to passing legislation and ballot initiatives.

Influenced mainly by the Christian backlash against feminism, Atwood's book came out a few years shy of the all-out iculture warî that erupted when the Christian Right decided to take on homosexuality, which was in turn a backlash against lesbians and gays and the apparent political gains of that community in the late 1980s. Pat Robertson, Patrick Buchanan and Gary Bauer each ran presidential campaigns in which homosexuality was at the top of the list of campaign issues. Although they lost, Christian Coalition darling Rick Santorum won his senate bid in 1994.

More pernicious was 1992 when the Christian Right mounted two groundbreaking grassroots campaigns to modify state constitutions. In Oregon, Ballot Measure 9 would have, among other things, eliminated civil rights protections for lesbians and gay men and required the state to teach that homosexuality was iabnormal, wrong, unnatural, and perverse.î The measure was narrowly defeated. Colorado voters, however, passed the less draconian Amendment 2 to their state constitution, which would have banned protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation. Amendment 2 was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1996, which ruled that it violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Though legislatively unsuccessful, the 1992 campaigns did accomplish three things for the Christian Right. First, they mobilized millions of voters, many of whom donated generously to such groups as the Oregon Citizens Alliance, Focus on the Family and the Christian Coalition. Second, they put GLBT activists on the defensive and exacerbated pre-existing tensions in the movement over strategy and tactics. And third, they created an atmosphere of bigotry and hatred that fueled unprecedented violence against GLBT people, which had the intended effect of driving many back into the closet or into ireparative therapyî programs.

Regarding that last point - it is important to note that the correlation between antigay bigotry expressed by institutions and physical acts of violence committed by individuals is more than theoretical. For example, during the Ballot Measure 9 campaign in 1992, reports of gaybashing skyrocketed to such an extraordinary degree that the Portland Police had to open up a special crime unit. And it wasn't simply a quantitative problem ñ as the Yes-on-9 campaign heated up and copies of the Christian Right's anti-gay propaganda video, iThe Gay Agenda,î were distributed far and wide, the character of the violence became more wicked. One month before the election, a group of skinheads firebombed the basement apartment of a lesbian and a gay man in Salem, Oregon. The two were burned alive in the middle of the night.

In any event, having failed in their attempt to legislate broad-based anti-gay discrimination, the Christian Right focused their energies on same-sex marriage, where they found success. In the 2004 elections, 11 states passed initiatives banning same-sex marriage.

Now Focus on the Family and other leading Christian Right groups are gearing up for the November elections by hosting iStand for the Familyî rallies intended to mobilize iChristian voters.î They are once again demonizing homosexualityóalong with abortion, feminism, Darwinism and immigrantsóas threats to Christian America. At the same time, these rallies appeal to nationalist pride, Christian love and family values while advocating an even stronger military to safeguard our values and borders. The rallies kicked off in Pittsburgh on September 20 at Mellon Arena.

Simply put, these events are Nuremberg-style rallies aimed at advancing a dangerous Christian fundamentalist political agenda. The one in Pittsburgh featured some of the leading charismatic figures in the Christian Right:

The main speaker was James Dobson, who along with his group Focus on the Family, is the most powerful force in the Christian Right today. Some say Dobson delivered Bush his victories in Ohio and Florida. He has been the chief architect of the Christian Right's political strategy to bolster power through legislative gaybashing, starting with his own state's Amendment #2 in 1992. Asserting that iit is our Christian duty to go to the voting booth and to vote our values,î Dobson's voice reaches tens of millions through an expansive network of radio and TV stations and Focus on the Family's ten magazines.

Dobson was joined by Gary Bauer, Chairman of American Values and the Campaign for Working Families. As President Reagan's Domestic Policy advisor, Bauer can be credited with that administration's genocidal AIDS policies. As a member of the Project for the New American Century, Bauer lobbied for pre-emptive war on Iraq, support for Israel's war on Hezbollah, and more and more money for the military. Bauer, who holds that anti-war protesters are more damaging to America than terrorists, says we should ire-arm the hearts and souls of our children ... by teaching them to love God, to cherish this good and decent land, and to appreciate the spilled blood and the patriot graves.î

Also appearing at the rally was Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, whose group went on the attack after a Hindu priest offered an invocation at Congress in 2000: iOur Founders expected that Christianity ó and no other religion ó would receive support from the government...They would have found utterly incredible the idea that all religions, including paganism, be treated with equal deference.î Perkins has himself said that iThe [Supreme] Court has become increasingly hostile to Christianity. It represents more of a threat to representative government than any other force ñ more than budget deficits, more than terrorism.î

Another speaker at the rally was Seattle-based Pastor Ken Hutcherson (iGod does not condone homosexuality and neither will weî), who authored iBefore All Hell Breaks Loose: Preparing for the Coming Perilous Times,î in which he explains that the Second Coming of Christ is imminent.† And before he can be dismissed as fringe, consider that Hutcherson was able to get Microsoft, arguably one of the most powerful corporations in the world, to reverse its support (albeit temporarily thanks to their workers' outcries) of a Seattle bill that banned the dismissal of workers due to their sexual orientation.

Dobson and company are members of what some commentators call ithe American Talibanî: advocates of a Christian *Dominionist* philosophy that pervades the Christian Right.

As author Sara Diamond, who studies the Christian Right, explains, the general Dominionist idea, is that iChristians alone are Biblically mandated to occupy all secular institutions until Christ returns.î Dominionist thinking precludes coalitions between believers and unbelievers, but that creates a contradictory tension. iThe Christian Right wants to take dominion,î says Diamond, but also wants to work within ithe existing political-economic system, at the same time.î

Dobson and his cadre of Christian Dominionists ihave to operate, for now, in the contaminated environment of the secular, liberal state,î according to another author, Chris Hedges. They have learned, therefore, to sanitize their more frightening rhetoric, ispeak in code,î and iseize power incrementally.î The power they seize is located in school boards, legislatures, corporate boards, city councils and in the hearts and minds of children, youth and adults all across the country.

One tendency within the Dominionist movement, Christian Reconstructionism, is more explicit about its intentions. According to Diamond, the Reconstructionists icall for the imposition of an Old Testament style theocracy, complete with capital punishment for offenses including adultery, homosexuality and blasphemy. Dobson and Perkins now try to distance themselves from Reconstructionists, but Dobson supported a Reconstructionist presidential candidate in 1996 and Focus on the Family continues to sell their books. Meanwhile, Bauer is occasionally identified as a ileader of the Christian Reconstructionist movementî on Pat Robertson's 700 Club.

Whether a reformist slippery slope or the deliberate Reconstructionist program, the political end result of Christian Dominionism would be theocratic fascism (or theofascism).



A group of people protest directly outside a gate at Mellon Arena when Focus on the Family visited Pittsburgh in Sept. (Photo: David Meieran)

Attempts to compare the evangelical Christian Right to fascists often draw criticisms of hyperbole and political immaturity. But in Christian Dominionism we are facing a movement that ultimately seeks to dominate our minds and our bodies with the power of the state, the authority of God and the sluice of hate-filled propaganda.†The defining features of the movement are charismatic leaders who propel a unifying religious ideology and transcendent cause, an idealized citizenry based on sectarian values, and a religious ideology to direct government policies; in short, the same characteristics that political scientists use to describe 20th century fascism.

Once the Christian Dominionism is seen for what it isñan authoritarian movement that seeks to control and regulate our morals, our beliefs, and our bodiesññ how can we challenge it in a manner that matches the seriousness and importance of this threat?† A message must be sent to Friends of the Family, Dobson, Bauer and their followers that their authoritarian vision and has no place on our air waves, on our television screens, in seats of illegitimate power, or in our cities.

But what form should that imessageî take? That question prompts different ideas from different movements who oppose the Christian Right. One approach regards the Christian Right leaders and their followers as simply misguided, but not necessarily bad people. They need to be ishown the lightî rather than fought. The Christian Right's rhetoric plays a big part in this perception. They frequently use the word iloveî as a motivating emotion for actions and ideas. Seeing and hearing a man with a big smile talking about the love of the Lord and the need for Christian compassion can be very compelling, especially for Evangelical Christians.

Indeed, many in the rank and file of this movement can be very sweet, caring people. Someone who truly loves his or her family and also loves God is hard to denounce as a fascist, especially for other Christians. Yes, many of these believers are well intentioned, but as the proverb goes, the road to Hell is paved with good intentions. Historically, many monstrous movements have been made up of nice enough people who ijust love their country.î This movement is similarly made up of nice enough people who also ilove their countryî ññ and itheir Lord.î

Noam Chomsky said in the film iThe Corporationî that it was possible to have a slave owner who was very benevolent, nice to the slaves, and an overall good person. But that person is ultimately still part of a monstrous institution.

One strategy is to try to change these nice folks' minds using Christian reasoning and compassion. While not unheard of, turning people's hearts away from this ideology is extremely difficult as their support for it is often tied into their fundamental beliefs about religion, their socio-economic position and their very identity. The iappealî approach is also potentially problematic because it seeks to gain approval instead of liberation and self-determination. One must question its efficacy and also its morality; After all, can there be a middle ground between liberation and oppression, especially when lives are at stake?

Another approach to challenging the Christian Right is to employ more confrontational and militant tactics such as same-sex kiss-ins, outright disruption (doing something in the middle of an event to deny attention and momentum), sabotage (directly disrupting the organization of an event), confrontational blocs (such as the one on September 20) or blockades (preventing participants or speakers from entering an event). These kinds of tactics are used in many different movements but are seen less nowadays among LBGTQ activists.

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Commentary
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Confronting Theofascism
(continued from page 23)

However, militant tactics were once an integral part of the queer activist landscape, beginning, of course, with the Stonewall riots in 1969 and the rapid proliferation of Gay Liberation Front chapters in its wake. Two decades later, ACT UP, Queer Nation, the Lesbian Avengers and other direct action groups grabbed the headlines and scores of volunteers who were willing to put their bodies on the line. Some queer theorists say that these activists did more to increase lesbian and gay visibility, change public policy and save lives than others wearing neckties and being polite.

For example, in 1990 gaybashing in New York reached epidemic proportions. The police remained indifferent and in some cases were themselves responsible for that violence. In response, activists formed the Pink Panthers to patrol the streets of the gay ghettos. Violence dropped almost overnight. In another classic example, ACT UP compelled pharmaceutical giant Burroughs Welcome to dramatically lower the price of AZT (which at the time was the only available anti-retroviral) after a year-long campaign of creative direct action that involved everything from shutting down the New York Stock Exchange to people living with HIV barricading themselves inside an office in the corporation's headquarters in North Carolina.

Ironically, radical efforts led to gay men and lesbians being offered a seat at the table and steadily throughout the Clinton years the movement switched from direct action and confrontation to irespectable activities like lobbying politicians and building large national organizations with well-paid professional staff. Radical efforts also made it possible for more iconservative lesbians and gay men to come out of the closet and infuse the LGBTQ movement with their values. Radical queer groups, who typically embraced the counter-cultural vision of liberation of the Stonewall riot and early gay rights movement, were eventually eclipsed by an iassimilationist tendency that prioritized same-sex marriage, hate-crimes legislation and reversing the ban on gays in the military.

Assimilationist politics yielded reformist tactics as reformists argued that the direct action groups were too young and angry. One commentator once wrote that Queer Nation i discredits the efforts of more responsible gay men and lesbians for a step-by-step rapprochement with straight America in the areas of equal rights and equal justice.

Therein lies the fundamental ideological mismatch between the two tendencies. Assimilationists stress similarities between LGB (and sometimes T) people and their heterosexual counterparts as they mirror images of straight marriage and consumer culture. Queer nationalists stress differences and chant iwe're here, we're queer, we're not going shopping. Whereas reformists seek equal access to marriage by removing barriers in state regulations and church policies, radicals strive to completely eliminate the state and the church's involvement in all matters relating to sexuality and gender. Reformist tactics are predicated on the assumption that the system works; radicals see that it is broken.

To illustrate the tactical divide between reformist and radical responses to the Christian Right and how much the movement has veered away from in-your-face tactics consider the (in)famous iStop the Church demonstration at St. Patrick's Cathedral that took place in 1989. Organized by ACT UP and WHAM! (Women's Health Action Mobilization; Queer Nation formed a year later), the premise for the action was that the Church's attacks on queers, women, reproductive rights and the AIDS community needed a dramatic and collective response; if the church was going to infringe on and jeopardize our lives, then we were going to intrude on the church. And so in 13-degree weather one December morning, as many as 5,000 activists surrounded St. Patrick's Cathedral as it readied for Sunday mass. Dozens went inside and disrupted the service through a diversity of tactics, ranging from a die-in in the Cathedral's isles to a personal protest involving a communion wafer. By the end of the day, 111 were arrested. Meanwhile, a 10th year iStop the Church anniversary action in 1999 drew fewer than thirty people.

Some would argue that while education, vigils, dialogue and other ipeaceful gatherings have their place, they are not enough. Key to the direct action strategies is the belief that if we are to stave off an atmosphere of bigotry that fuels violence and intolerance, we need to reclaim public spaces and demonstrate to people that they will pay a price for their hatred and bigotry.

- David Meieran and Mike Avallone

Arts in Action
The Big Idea
Bookstore's Radical Review:
Derrick Jensen's iWalking on Water: Reading, Writing and Revolution (Chelsea Green 2004), 226 pp.

Best known for his impassioned defense of the environment and radical critique of modern industrial civilization in works such as iA Language Older than Words, much of Derrick Jensen's most important work and activism takes place in a rather surprising locale: the classroom. iWalking on Water originally written with the less obscure working title of iHow to Not Teach is a mosaic of his experiences and insights gleamed from years of writing and of working as a creative writing instructor at both a small university and a state prison. Part autobiography, part pedagogical manifesto and part call to revolution, it is an inspiring and instructional look at the problems and possibilities of an empowering, liberatory education.

Ironically, the weakest point of iWalking on Water is its stale and unoriginal critique of the American educational system which i destroys students' souls in the process of training them to be cogs in the industrial machine. Yet Jensen more than makes up for this with his impassioned vision of an alternative pedagogy. iIf modern industrial education and more broadly industrial civilization requires "the sublimation of the individual," that is into a pliant workforce, then the most revolutionary thing we can do is follow our hearts, to manifest what we really are. This means helping students to learn rather than teaching. iThe foundation remains the same for both college and prison, which is to respect and love my students into becoming who they are. Jensen insists on praising his students' strengths rather than criticizing their weaknesses and allowing them to explore their own interests and passions. However, this is far more than merely a touchy-feely approach to students. As Jensen notes, iI cannot control what my students want or are able to learn, and I have no desire to. To attempt to control any of these would be to reproduce in my own classroom the bureaucratic model that is killing the world, a model that values standardization over individuality, preconception over presence, and what I want, or believe I want, over what the student actually needs.

Undoing this model in the classroom is a step towards undoing it outside of the classroom. iWe must, if we care about our own lives, and if we care about the life of the planet, begin to remember how to think critically, how to think for ourselves. Jensen does not, of course, claim that a radical approach to teaching is sufficient to address the fundamental problems of our age many of which he has laid out in great detail in his other works and is insistent on the need for deep systemic change which will not come easily. Yet we must do everything we can, however small, to bring us closer to that goal. iWithout a revolution the planet is dead, but if we simply wait for the revolution the planet will still be dead before the revolution comes. iIt all boils down, according to Jensen, to a question of power. iIf I've got power or authority over someone, it's my responsibility to use that only to help them. It's my job to accept and praise them into becoming who they are. But if I see someone misusing power to harm someone else, it's just as much my responsibility to stop them, using whatever means necessary.

As Jensen relates, however, attempting to create an anti-authoritarian learning environment within inherently authoritarian institutions has its limits, and even the best-intentioned experiments in the classroom may flop spectacularly. He recounts the good along with the bad, sometimes self-aggrandizing anecdotes of clever exercises along with self-deprecating ones of failure. In his most soul-searching moments, Jensen reflects on his own role in unintentionally perpetuating the very system he rails against, and he rejoices when his students call him out on it. But the lessons of this book are not merely of interest to teachers and students; they are for anyone who recognizes that something is terribly wrong with the world in which we live and faces the awesome challenge of trying to remain a descent human being within it.

- Reviewed by Kenyon Zimmer for the Big Idea. iWalking on Water and other works by Derrick Jensen are available at the Big Idea, your friendly neighborhood radical bookstore, on 504 S. Millvale Ave. in Bloomfield. Call 412-687-4323, e-mail books@thebigideapgh.org or visit www.thebigideapgh.org.



September TMC
Notable Events

The following events throughout September were organized by TMC projects, affiliates or friends of the Center:

9/1 Thomas Merton Center holds Steeler Season Kick-Off fundraiser at the Iron City Brew House in Lawrenceville.

9/3 Pittsburgh Friends of Immigrants rallies to say "No!" to Anti-Immigrant Policies in the Southside.

9/4 The TMC Labor Solidarity Project marches in a community contingent in solidarity with labor at the Labor Day Parade.

9/9 Benefit concert for New Orleans/Katrina Relief. Proceeds went to the New Orleans Women's Health & Justice Initiative for their new clinic, the Women's Health Clinic & Apothecary.

9/9 Voices for Animals protests Victoria's Secret's ongoing destruction of forests.

9/10 TMC members Tim Vining and Stephen Donahue host session 1 of a four-part series, "Reading the Signs of the Times: Inspiration from the Catholic Worker Movement": Introduction to Liberation Theology.

9/10 Pittsburgh Islamic Center hosts "Faith in America: Spirituality, Culture, and Politics. A Bad Mix or a generous Opportunity?" Video showing and discussion.

9/12 Save our Transit and other community groups pack the room to give written and oral testimony in the presence of the Transportation Funding and Reform Commission Downtown.

9/15 Voices for Animals and PETA protest Burberry Fashion Show's continued use of fur, Downtown.

9/16 Voices for Animals protests against big Burrito Group's Bill Fuller at Meltdown 06 Event as part of their Foie Gras Campaign, Pittsburgh Glass Center.

9/17 Voices for Animals screens "Peaceable Kingdom" about "the interconnected life journeys of farm animals, former farmers and animal rescuers struggling against an out of control industrial system."

9/17 Pittsburgh Darfur Emergency Coalition traveled to New York City to call on world leaders to deploy a United Nations force into Darfur to end the genocide.

9/17 Coalition of local peace and social justice groups "Stand for All Families" in a week of events in response to Dr. James Dobson and Focus on the Family Action's arrival in Pittsburgh.

9/17 TMC members Tim Vining and Stephen Donahue host session 2 of a four-part series, "Reading the Signs of the Times: Inspiration from the Catholic Worker Movement: Anarchism- Taking Personal Responsibility to Build a Better World."

9/19 TMC members Tim Vining and Steve Donahue and Ammon Ripple speak on the importance of their personal love, growth in their life ministries and the importance of a nurturing church and community at the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer.

9/21 Islamic Center holds International Peace Day Open House.

9/21 Code Pink "Pauses for Peace" on International Day of Peace and joins with nurses from Allegheny General and SEIU in support of a fair contract.

9/24 TMC members Tim Vining and Stephen Donahue host session 3 of a four-part series, "Reading the Signs of the Times: Inspiration from the Catholic Worker Movement: Houses of Hospitality and Building Community".

9/25 TMC monthly membership gathering.

And every weekend: Black Voices for Peace anti-war protests in East Liberty, vigils in Regent Square and Beaver County (with Beaver County Peace Links) and Johnstown weekly stand against the war vigils.

Mark Twain, “The War Prayer”

It was a time of great and exalting excitement. The country was up in arms, the war was on, in every breast burned the holy fire of patriotism the drums were beating, the bands playing, the toy pistols popping, the bunched firecrackers hissing and sputtering on every hand and far down the receding and fading spread of roofs and balconies a fluttering wilderness of flags flashed in the sun daily the young volunteers marched down the wide avenue, gay and fine in their new uniforms the proud fathers and mothers and sisters and sweethearts cheering them with voices choked with happy emotion as they swung by nightly the packed mass meetings listened, panting, to patriot oratory which stirred the deepest deeps of their hearts and which they interrupted at briefest intervals with cyclones of applause, the tears running down their cheeks the while in the churches the pastors preached devotion to flag and country and invoked the God of Battles, beseeching His aid in our good cause in outpouring of fervid eloquences which moved every listener.

It was indeed a glad and gracious time, and the half-dozen rash spirits that ventured to disapprove of the war and cast a doubt upon its righteousness straightway got such a stern and angry warning that for their personal safety's sake they quickly shrank out of sight and offended no more in that way.

Sunday morning came and next day the battalions would leave for the front the church was filled the volunteers were there, their faces alight with material dreams and visions of a stern advance, the gathering momentum, the rushing charge, the flashing sabers, the flight of the foe, the tumult, the enveloping smoke, the fierce pursuit, the surrender! and then home from the war, bronzed heroes, welcomed, adored, submerged in golden seas of glory! With the volunteers sat their dear ones, proud, happy, and envied by the neighbors and friends who had no sons and brothers to send forth to the field of honor, there to win for the flag or, failing, die the noblest of noble deaths. The service proceeded a war chapter from the Old Testament was read the first prayer was said it was followed by an organ burst that shook the building, and with one impulse the house rose, with glowing eyes and beating hearts, and poured out that tremendous invocation and God the all-terrible! Thou who ordainest, Thunder thy clarion and lightning thy sword!

Then came the long prayer. None could remember the like of it for passionate pleading and moving and beautiful language. The burden of its supplication was that an ever-merciful and benignant Father of us all would watch over our noble young soldiers and aid, comfort, and encourage them in their patriotic work bless them, shield them in His mighty hand, make them strong and confident, invincible in the bloody onset help them to crush the foe, grant to them and to their flag and country imperishable honor and glory.

An aged stranger entered and moved with slow and noiseless step up the main aisle, his eyes fixed upon the minister, his long body clothed in a robe that reached to his feet, his head bare, his white hair descending in a frothy cataract to his shoulders, his seamy face unnaturally pale, pale, even to ghostliness. With all eyes following him and wondering, he made his silent way without pausing, he ascended to the preacher's side and stood there, waiting.

With shut lids the preacher, unconscious of his presence, continued his moving prayer, and at last finished it with the words, uttered in fervent appeal, Bless our arms, grant us the victory, O Lord our God, Father and Protector of our land and flag!

The stranger touched his arm, motioned him to step aside and which the startled minister did and took his place. During some moments he surveyed the spellbound audience with solemn eyes in which burned an uncanny light then in a deep voice he said:

I come from the Throne and bearing a message from Almighty God! The words smote the house with a shock. If the stranger perceived it he gave no attention. He has heard the prayer of His servant your shepherd and shall grant it if such shall be your desire after I, His messenger, shall have explained to you its import and that is to say, its full import. For it is like unto many of the prayers of men, in that it asks for more than he who utters it is aware of and except he pause and think.

God's servant and yours has prayed his prayer. Has he paused and taken thought? Is it one prayer? No, it is two and one uttered, the other not. Both have reached the ear of Him Who heareth all supplications, the spoken and the unspoken. Ponder this and keep it in mind. If you beseech a blessing upon yourself, beware, lest without intent you invoke a curse upon a neighbor at the same time. If you pray for the blessing of rain upon your crop which needs it, by that act you are possibly praying for a curse upon some neighbor's crop which may not need rain and can be injured by it.

You have heard your servant's prayer and the uttered part of it. I am commissioned by God to put into words the other part of it and that part which the pastor, and also you in your hearts, fervently prayed silently. And ignorantly and unthinkingly? God grant that it was so! You heard these words: Grant us the victory, O Lord our God! That is sufficient. The whole of the uttered prayer is compact into those pregnant words. Elaborations were not necessary. When you have prayed for victory you have prayed for many unmentioned results which follow victory and must follow it, cannot help but follow it. Upon the listening spirit of God the Father fell also the unspoken part of the prayer. He commandeth me to put it into words. Listen!

O Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth battle and be Thou near them! With them, in spirit, we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe. O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it and for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love, and Who is ever- faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts. Amen.

(After a pause) They have prayed it; if ye still desire it, speak! The messenger of the Most High waits.

It was believed afterward that the man was a lunatic, because there was no sense in what he said.

- Mark Twain. When Harper's Bazaar received the typescript of "The War Prayer" and a response to U.S. military intervention in the Philippines and editors rejected it as unsuitable, leaving Twain to remark that since only the dead are allowed to speak the truth, it would never be published in his lifetime. It wasn't. That was in 1905, but the intervening century seems to have changed little. Undoubtedly, the American classic is relevant as ever.

DUBYA



Cartoon by John Kichi

Don't Forget!

The Annual Thomas Merton Award Dinner honoring Angela Davis is coming up on Friday, Nov. 10 (see page 7). Did you remember to:

- * Reserve your seat at the dinner (\$35 for members, \$40 for non-members)
- * Buy raffle tickets (only \$5 a piece for a chance to win one of three amazing prizes!)
- * Buy an ad in the program book (see www.thomasmertoncenter.org/merton_award_2006_adform.htm)

www.thomasmertoncenter.org 412-361-3022 info@thomasmertoncenter.org

Dylan's Poem

We've traveled to foreign land before,
wiping salty sweat from the eyes that
will witness faithless crimes
and the ears that will hear innocent screams
and the fingers that with one bend will end lives.

We've invaded these homes before,
arriving in helicopters to play the Domino game
and leaving in them to go back to the states to have
your loved ones look over you in a wooden box.

We've cried these tears before,
letting go of our sons and daughters yet again
in hopes that there is truth in the recruiting officers' promises,
while losing a minute of sleep for every life lost because of them.

We've swallowed these lies before,
attaching ourselves to the media's strings
and becoming a chorus of puppets, who won't speak out,
finding silence especially hard when My Lai Massacre-like events are reported.

We've used these excuses before,
explaining that Communism will indeed spread
and terrorists will in fact bomb again, keeping the nation on Red alert,
to birth fear and hatred that is necessary for war.

We've fought this war before,
our nation has again been divided,
no longer by Hawks and Doves,
but simply The Cruel and The Peaceful.
As smiles and nakedness once acted as our protest,
we now join together to walk with our banners
and raise up our signs.

And Dylan's question still fails to be answered,
for the cannon balls still fly,
people still die,
and until that wind blows on through our Administration,
we will continue to oppose war,
because we've sung that song before.

- Daniella Maggio
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Edith Wilson: TMC Administrative and Volunteer Director

Edith Wilson is the newest member of the Thomas Merton Center staff, but she is no stranger to staff and many TMC members. She officially joined staff September 1, as the Administrative and Volunteer Director, but has been volunteering at the center two to three days a week and serving as a board member since she retired in 2005, after working for eighteen years as a teacher aide with children with special needs. While on the board, she enthusiastically supported the board and staff transition to a non-hierarchical structure functioning primarily by consensus. Edith says it was at national School of the Americas Watch meetings that she became familiar with and interested in these concepts, as members and national staff grappled with implementing consensus model decision-making and a non-hierarchical organizational structure, to enhance grassroots organizing and more closely model the kind of world they (and most of us?) wish for; one that is just, peaceful, democratic, non-oppressive. As a board member Edith volunteered her time during the summer transition to the new structure. She had already started performing some of the membership administrative tasks and assumed a greater role.

Edith first walked into the Merton Center in 2000 to attend a meeting organizing a trip to attend the annual School of Americas protest at Ft. Benning, Georgia. At that time she was involved with the Pittsburgh chapter of the Labor Party and became active in both the Alliance for Progressive Action Living Wage Campaign and the movement to close down the School of Americas. A registered member of the Green Party and a dues paying member of the Socialist Party USA, Edith is currently an

active member of Code Pink, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Western PA School of Americas Watch, the Anti-War Committee of the TMC and the Palestine Solidarity Committee. She attends labor rallies and Save Our Transit events when she can. Edith says she recognizes the connection of owning a car to environmental degradation, wars for control of diminishing oil resources, and our first-world, materialistic lifestyle causing worldwide poverty so she is contemplating getting rid of her car.

Edith offers the following reflection: I was walking to the bus one morning thinking about what I could possibly say for an article in *The NewPeople* about me. The word *change* came to mind. (I always did like the song *Ch-ch-ch-changes!*) I certainly have changed over the years! I was raised in a Republican family and the first time I voted I voted for Barry Goldwater. I was apolitical for years. I used to drool over men in military uniforms. I was shy. I thought I was middle-class. I was married. I thought Marxism and anarchism were evil. I was materialistic. I retired. I was a mother of four dearly loved adult children, and still am, but I was not a grandmother of a beautiful 15 month old grandson and now I am. As I walked along I also thought about how a few bumper stickers, some of which are on the broken down car I still own, give a pretty succinct picture of who I am today. Some of my favorites are: *Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor ñ it must be demanded by the oppressed,* *War never decides who is right, only who is left,* *If you want peace, work for justice,* *Question Authority,* and *Bread Not Bombs.*



Edith Wilson

Through all those changes I evolved into the person I am today, passionately committed to working for a more just and peaceful society, and so very happy and honored to be working at the Merton Center that supports the efforts of so many awesome people who also want a more just and peaceful world. I pondered, as I neared the bus stop, the changes that the Merton Center has experienced through the years, is experiencing now and will continue to experience as it works to instill a consciousness of values, and to raise the moral questions involved in the issues of war, poverty, racism, and oppression. As we strive for this better world we envision I hope we remain as creative, cheerful, committed and respectful as we seem now.

Edith Wilson can be contacted at edith@thomasmertoncenter.org or 412-361-3022.

Gandhi on Non-Violence By Thomas Merton

The passage below is from the 20-page introduction, "Gandhi and the One-Eyed Giant" to the book "Gandhi on Nonviolence," edited by Thomas Merton. It includes selections Merton chose from Gandhi's own "Non-Violence in Peace and War." The introduction, as well as a brief commentary by Merton on each of the five sections, manages both to illuminate and deepen our understanding of a complex and fascinating man whose spiritual and political life nourished one another. This little 75 page book is packed with insights from Gandhi and Merton. What a pair they are! - Molly Rush (New Directions paperback 1964)

The white man, says Laurens Van Der Post, came into Africa (and Asia and America for that matter) like a one-eyed giant, bringing with him the characteristic split and blindness which were at once his strength, his torment and his ruin. With his self-isolated and self-scrutinizing individual mind, Western man was master of concepts and abstractions. He was the king of quantity and the driver of those forces over which quantitative knowledge gave him supremacy without understanding. Because he ruled matter without understanding it, he faced his bodily self as an object which could not comprehend though he could analyze and tamper with its every part. He submitted to passions which, though he no longer regarded them as devils, were nevertheless inscrutable and objective forces flying at him from the dark outside the little circle illumined by a pragmatic and self-complacent moral reason. The one-eyed giant had science without wisdom, and he broke in upon ancient civilizations which (like the Medieval West) had wisdom without science: wisdom which transcends and unites, wisdom which dwells in body and soul together and which, more by means of myth, of rite, of contemplation, than by scientific experiment, opens the door to a life in which the individual is not lost in the cosmos and in society but found in them. Wisdom which made all life sacred and meaningful even that which later ages came to call secular and profane.

It is true that neither the ancient wisdom nor the modern sciences are complete in themselves. They do not stand alone. They call for one another. Wisdom without science is unable to penetrate the full sapiential meaning of the created and material cosmos. Science without wisdom leaves man [sic] enslaved to a world of unrelated objects in which there is no way of discovering (or creating) order and deep significance in man's own pointless existence. The vocation of modern man was to bring about their union in preparation for a new age. The marriage was wrecked on the rocks of the white man's dualism and of the inertia, the incomprehension, of ancient and primitive societies. We enter the post-modern [perhaps the post-historic!] era in total disunity and confusion. But while the white man has always, naturally, blamed the traditional ancient cultures and the primitive savages which he never understood, it is certainly clear that if the union of science and wisdom has so far not been successful it is not because the East would not listen to the West: the East has been all too willing to listen. The West has not been able to listen to the East, to Africa and to the now practically extinct voice of primitive America. As a result of this, the ancient wisdoms have themselves fallen into disrepair and Asia no longer dares to listen to herself!

The split of the European mind has become universal. All men, says L.L. Whyte, are caught in the

fundamental division between deliberate activity organized by static concepts and the instinctive and spontaneous life. This dissociation, which was fruitful in the Renaissance, has now reached a point of mad development, of behavior patterns unrelated to organic needs and a relentless passion for quantity... Uncontrolled industrialism and excess of analytical thought... without the catharsis of rhythmic relaxation or satisfying achievement.

This, Whyte continues, is the moment of uninhibited perversions which can now ally themselves with technical power... in a brief period of dominance. This short reign of Antichrist depends on the fusion of two principles which are both vicious because they represent only a part of European or Western human nature: instinctive vitality distorted into quantitative expansion.

Whyte was writing this in the days of Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin, at the beginning of the Second World War. The short reign of Antichrist would soon, he believed, give way to a reign of light, peace, harmony and reconstruction. The end of the war would begin a better era. Or, at least so he hoped, though not without reservations, for he added: *One more dark decade would disprove my judgment, revealing a rot deeper than I have seen.* We are now in the third dark decade since his words were written...

...The question remains the same. It is a crisis of sanity first of all. The problems of the nations are the problems of mentally deranged [sic] people, but magnified a thousand times because they have the full, straight-faced approbation of a schizoid society, schizoid national structures, schizoid military and business complexes, and need one add, schizoid religious sects. *We are at war with ourselves,* said [Ananda] Coomaraswamy, and therefore at war with one another. Western man is unbalanced, and the question, *Can he recover himself?* is a very real one.

The question is all the more urgent now that it concerns not only Western man but everybody...

...One of the most significant facts about the life and vocation of Gandhi was his discovery of the East through the West. Like so many of India, Gandhi received a completely Western education as a young man. He had to a great extent renounced the beliefs, the traditions, the habits of thought, of India. He spoke, thought and acted like an Englishman, except, of course that an Englishman was precisely what he could never, by any miracle, become. He was an alienated Englishman whose sole function in life was to be perfectly English without being English at all; to prove himself the superiority of the West by betraying his own heritage and his own

self, thinking as a white man without ceasing to be a Nigger. The beauty of this (at least to Western minds) was that it showed Western culture to be a pearl of such great price that one could reasonably sell the whole of Asia in order to acquire it, even though the acquisition was not that of a new being, or even of a new identity, but only a new suit.

Gandhi was unusual in this. Instead of being fooled by the Western costume, and instead of being persuaded that he no longer really existed as an Asian, he recognized that the West had something good about it that was good not because it was Western but because it was also Eastern: that is to say, it was universal. So he turned his face and his heart once again to India and saw what was really there. It was through his acquaintance with writers like Tolstoy and Thoreau and his reading of the New Testament, that Gandhi discovered his own tradition and his Hindu dharma (religion, duty). More than a tradition, more than a wisdom handed down in books or celebrated in temples, Gandhi discovered India in discovering himself. Hence, it is very important indeed to understand Gandhi's political life, and particularly his non-violence, in the light of this radical discovery from which everything else received its meaning. Gandhi's dedicated struggle for Indian freedom and his insistence on non-violent means in the struggle both resulted from his new understanding of India and of himself after his contact with a universally valid tradition which he saw to be common to both East and West...

...[his] spirit of nonviolence sprang from an inner realization of spiritual unity in himself. The whole Gandhian concept of non-violent action and satyagraha is incomprehensible if it is thought to be a means of achieving unity rather than the fruit of inner unity already achieved.

Indeed, this is the explanation for Gandhi's apparent failure (which became evident to him at the end of his own life). He saw that his followers had not reached the inner unity that he had realized in himself, and that their satyagraha was to a great extent a pretense, since they believed it to be a means to achieve unity and freedom while he saw that it must necessarily be the fruit of inner freedom.

The most important thing of all was the inner unity, the overcoming and healing of inner division, the consequent spiritual and personal freedom, of which national autonomy and liberty would only be consequences. However, when satyagraha was seen only as a useful technique for attaining a pragmatic end, political independence, it remained almost meaningless. As soon as the short-term end was achieved, satyagraha was discarded. No inner peace was achieved, no inner unity, only the same divisions, the conflicts and the scandals that were ripping the rest of the world to pieces.

A Meditation on Peace: Thomas Merton and the Black Experience

*I have no illusions about the future.
Many chickens are coming home to
roost in the white man's parlor.*

- Thomas Merton, 1 May 1967, Letter to Robert Williams

In February 1965, Malcolm X, a devout Muslim, died in a blaze of smoke in Harlem in the public eye, as perhaps only he could. In December 1968, Thomas Merton, a devout Catholic, died in a room by himself, composed in a solitude which did not fashion death, but life and love and mystery being what they are, he died as perhaps only he could.

The nature of Malcolm X's intentional assassination and Thomas Merton's accidental death forge symbolic links, but their lives and ministries form a nexus of ideas, ideologies, religious communities, and visions called for them to travel different spiritual roads. Yet their journeys are of the same cloth, and neither of their deaths, social visions, and enormous contributions to the African American liberation struggle can be fully understood if we neglect to remember the historic and symbolic importance of their contribution.

For time immemorial Blackpeople the world over have told the truth, but since Europeans and European-Americans came to international power six centuries ago, Africans have not named the truths we know to be reality. If I miss facts here, I do not miss the truth. And of all persons I know called white ñ be they labeled writers, musicians, political activist, historians, feminists, leaders, revolutionaries - none has so beautifully, cunningly, fully, gracefully, humbly, poetically, and straightforwardly named the truth of the madness of the spiritual roots of racism, warfare, and the blazon false heroics of whiteness as the great catholic monk Thomas Merton.

My own reading of history leads me to the conclusion that Thomas Merton's source of light on the white problem of race - usually mislabeled as "The Race Problem," or "The Black Crisis," ñ grew from his understanding of his vocation as a Christian monk. Merton's multifarious gifts of work ñ photography, poetry, prose, prayers, friendships, silence ñ unveiled the core of what allowed him to transform the roots of historic white violence against any and all forces which did not accede its wayward dream.

The overhauling of a false master narrative and its genealogical derivatives means we need "white" writers and spiritual leaders such as Thomas Merton. To reinvent the wheel of racism into a genuine conversion of equal brotherhood calls for a spiritual power beyond human ken, scientific analysis, liberation warfare, university research, political marches, and staged prayers. It calls for a sacred silence Thomas Merton knew better than any writer I have ever encountered.

His vision of racial wholeness well preceded the Civil Rights Movement, which effectively saved the nation by transforming the national landscape, and helped the white religious communities to forge a road and blueprint to do what hitherto had been the most difficult thing in the world: acknowledge the most soft, simple, and sacred landmark of all: we are all one people, made in the Image of God, treasured beyond measure, alive to abide in the inner glory of Creation beyond the external differences of color and divisions of language, geography, and culture.

Thomas Merton's life work of spiritual witness and unity between all people fits the paradigmatic model of Malcolm X's clarion call for all whites who say they are for Blackpeople's full freedom and empowerment (for with no power, you are not free!): preach and teach the truth to White America, for here is the true heart of a darkness which too often has been life denying, unfree, unjust, dangerous, and in need of a spiritual healing beyond traditional white Christian and Jewish spiritual divinations and economic beneficence.

I write this meditation on September 15, 2006, exactly 43 years to the day that four little Black girls went to church to praise God and never made it to the Sunday morning service. The easy response to this tragedy is to say the white men who killed these precious girls were evil racist whose raging violence violated the highest principles of humanity. But we still have history: the men's target was the entire church, thus the entire Black Freedom Movement, thus all Black People. While I was in gestation, and less than a month after the March on Washington in which Rev. Martin Luther King gave his soul-stirring sermon to the nation about a dream of all people living in equality, a bomb ripped through a Black church, killing four innocent children.

And 43 years later, do we not see the sadness, death, fear, and Risen love of God in the dark eyes of

Iraqi children suffering under American bombs? Do we not now, in 2006, understand what ails this country and western civilization? Has the spiritual and literary and prayerful witness of this beautiful catholic Monk not helped us to engage the most fruitful challenge ñ truth - of all: the systemic, historic, economic, political, and personal crimes of America toward Blackpeople?

One powerful example of this is America's celebration of the Confederate General Robert E. Lee. The lionization of Lee speaks volumes about what kind of white men this nation will honor vis-à-vis the Black experience. Can you imagine under the guise of their qualified greatness in their fields of endeavors, any American official establishment admiring, touting, and naming any building, sign, road post, or schools after the Nazis Albert Speer or Adolph Eichmann? To this hour, if anyone merely suggests any human virtues in those who fought a war to erase Jews from the earth, they are publicly charged with anti-Semitism. But every day, in every way, America honors and celebrates white men and women who fought to enslave and oppress (and who often outright murdered) African-Americans, while ignoring nobles spirits such as Merton, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Rev. John Rankin.

While the white history books make Merton's ecumenical witness invisible, they say Mr. Lee was a great general and a lover of Virginia; their books and visual documentaries - north and south- portray Lee as a man of judicious pride, magnanimous integrity, and impeccable spiritual virtues toward those who happen to be temporarily called the enemy (and this is true: the battles of 1861-1865 was a Civil War between brothers of the same vision).

Well, if Mr. Lee was great ñ however we define the term ñ and his goal and objective was for an independent white country ifounded on the premise of Negro Slavery (see Alexander Stephens for the true reason for white southern cession); and if he is an American hero; and the reality is that his name graces a university shared with the general who freed white soon-to-be Americans from England, then where do I, as a Black man, and where do we, as Blackpeople, stand in relation to the Republic called the United States of America in 2006?

If Robert E. Lee ñ or Stonewall Jackson, or any Confederate ñ can be a national hero, then what has been hidden under layers of doublespeak and ambient music is made manifestly clearer: Africans in Americans were never invisible, or a burden, or a hindrance, or a problem. The problem facing African-Americans then, and now - and from what I can see, tomorrow - is not



Thomas Merton

that we are despised, or lost to the conscience of the nation, or greatly outnumbered, but that we lack what freedom is ultimately built on: the power to reinvent the wheel, which is to say, the power to name the truth.

To have a true and genuine peace, our goal must be to see that the Confederate terrorist and legal traitor General Robert E. Lee, and Governor George W. Bush's political (old) world order does not prevail. We must create a peace based on justice, educational access, economic equity, and physical security for all of God's children.

But this kind of peacemaking is only possible with a vital awakening akin to what Merton called for in 1963. Writing to a friend about the necessity of the Black Revolution, it is well for us to remember Merton's words for our own era: "There is going to be revolution" "There is going to be an awakening. But a lot of people do not want that kind of awakening, I am afraid. Still, it has to come."

Yes, we are awakening, and this, my sisters and brothers, is a good thing.

- Malcolm Cash. This essay is the first of a two-part reflection by Malcolm Cash on Thomas Merton and the Black Experience. Cash is a writer and a professor of English at Lorain Community College in Elyria, Ohio. He is currently editing a book of Thomas Merton's writings entitled, "I Have Called You by Your Name: Writings on the Black Experience." Cash hopes to publish his book in 2008 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Merton's death.

Intern Profile on Mike Butler: Community Labor Solidarity Profile

1. What are your hobbies/interests?

My hobbies pretty much revolve around movies. Watching them, reviewing them, making them and talking about them. My interests revolve around fundamental change in the society in which we live. The latter takes up much of my time, but I still make time for the former.

2. What are you doing at the TMC this semester?

I'm the Labor Solidarity Project's intern. I will mostly be facilitating labor-community relations. I will attempt to create new ties and strengthen existing ones so as to unite the labor movement and the social justice movement in their common struggles for justice.

3. How did you hear about the TMC originally?

In college, it was this far-off thing that was run by Tim Vining. Recently, it has become somewhere that many of my friends work or have worked.

4. What do you plan on doing after you leave (anything social-justice related)?

Continuing the struggle in whatever form it takes.

5. When did you first start thinking about social-justice related issues? Was there a defining moment or some experience that made you think of things differently?

In a lot of ways, I was raised thinking about them, but I first started thinking in depth about them in the run up to the Iraq war. Since then, my beliefs and ideology



Mike Butler, hard at work at the TMC.

have slowly evolved (and will likely continue to do so) into what they are today.

6. And what made you act on that? Why do you feel it is important to you to do something?

The opportunity to do so. In college, for the first time, there were people actually trying to do something other than voting to make change in the world. I think it's important to work to do something because if you don't, you are complicit in the violent system in which we live.

7. Anything you'd like to add?

"*Prefero morir de pie que vivir siempre arrodillado!*" (I prefer to die standing up than to always live on my knees.)

The Movement Is Always Bigger Than We Imagine

The gifts and advantages of diversity certainly outweigh the challenges. The Thomas Merton Center is a big tent. There is an incredibly diverse mix of people who are members of the TMC and who use the TMC on a weekly or daily basis. There is also a diversity of opinions both on how the world could look and on what we can do to move the world in a more positive direction. Often, I think when we are busy, many of us tend to forget that this diversity is a strength. Too often it can seem we are just disagreeing with each other and driving each other crazy. But many organizations envy the diverse membership of the TMC, especially the extent to which we are an intergenerational group. We have high school students and retirees doing work here every week, and we should value and be proud of that.

We must also remember to respect each other for our own different experiences. There is room in the peace and justice movement for everyone. The tension that is sometimes created when folks from different ideological/cultural/economic or ethnic backgrounds work in such close proximity to each other is a reality and we can use it to challenge ourselves. I know that I can get challenged all the time by folks in their 60s using their experience as activists to school me, and then young transgendered folks talking about the intersections of class and race in the choice of group tactics in the same day. I love that about the Thomas Merton Center! The fact that we are intergenerational is wonderful and it speaks a lot to the willingness of members of the TMC to share resources with all types of people in Pittsburgh. That makes us stronger as an institution and as a movement.

I often get complimented when I talk to people in other cities about the structure of the TMC and about who is involved here. This summer at a conference, I was talking to these amazing youth organizers from another city who use the different elements of hip hop to work with kids and eventually organize around youth rights. One of them made comments basically saying that it was great that we incorporate young and old at the TMC because the peace and justice organizations in their city could care less about what each other is doing. They don't see each other as allies.

We are all allies in the struggle for a better world. Some of us may fight in the labor movement for economic justice and workers' rights. Some of us may work towards total nuclear disarmament. Some of us may work for environmental justice. Some of us may be motivated by our faith in a higher power to want to create more just social and political relationships. And some of us may work towards dismantling capitalism and hierarchy and use direct action in our campaigns. Some of us might vote Democrat and some might vote Green (heck, there might even be a Republican here or there) and some of us might be against voting all together. But we can all work together sometimes. Or at least support each other. Or at least see each other as integral parts of the same broad social justice movement.

We must remember that we are in this together. And together we can win and create a better world.

All Power To the People.

- Jeremy Shenk, Communications Director of the TMC

Do you want to change the world?

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- ◆ One-year subscription to *The NewPeople*, published 11 times a year, keeps you up to date on how you can be active;
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Pay by check (payable to Thomas Merton Center) or credit card.

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I am interested in volunteering! ___ The best time to reach me:

Where did you hear about TMC? (please be specific)

Mail to:

The Thomas Merton Center, 5125 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Copies of the TMC's official registration and financial information may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999.

Intern Profile: Rachel Kohan, Development Intern

My name is Rachel Kohan. I am twenty years old. I am a native Pennsylvanian, born and raised in Philadelphia. Currently I am a senior at the University of Pittsburgh finishing up a Bachelors degree from the College of Arts and Science in both sociology and urban studies with concentrations in community development, social movements, inequality and the combined topics of race, gender and sexuality.

1. What are your hobbies/interests?

Being introduced around the office as the School of Rock Intern it can be safely assumed that I enjoy music: playing it, listening to it and creating it. I however also enjoy the visual arts. There is something to be said about making something striking with one's hands from objects that have very few attractive qualities. However, more than anything I am interested in the work of visionaries. No matter the medium: physical materials as it tends to be in visual art, auditory compilations frequently found in music or the individual and world as manifestations of social change I feel the work of visionaries is the most fascinating thing on earth.



Rachel Kohan

2. What are you doing at the TMC this semester?

This semester I am working with Michelle Burton Brown as a Development Intern. I am helping plan various fundraisers like the upcoming Merton Award Dinner. I will also be writing a few grants for the center to help alleviate some of the financial burden often associated with being a non-profit. I hope to help support the grassroots organizing at the center by giving the staff and volunteers the ability to focus on affecting change in our world as opposed to finding ways to fund it.

3. How did you hear about the TMC originally?

During my sophomore year I took a peace movements and peace education class that [former TMC director] Tim Vining was asked to sit in on by my professor Dr. Epitropoulos. Tim, an active member of the class, told stories about his dedication to peace and justice, often mentioning the Thomas Merton Center's projects. My interest was then sparked and I have yet been able to escape its pull.

4. What do you plan on doing after you leave (anything social-justice related)?

Leaving the Merton Center means it is time for me to graduate from University of Pittsburgh. Right now I am toying with the idea of becoming a New York Teaching Fellow. I have a deep interest in educational justice issues. Public schools are a microcosm of our world where one can easily identify examples of racial, class and gender inequality. These institutions are a reflection of our society. I hope to be able to affect some change in society by being a teacher who is dedicated to helping students learn for life as opposed to merely going through the motions and moving through a system that is not concerned with their future.

5. When did you first start thinking about social-justice related issues? Was there a defining moment or some experience that made you think of things differently?

I think I have always been very conscious about social justice issues. My family argued politics and societal problems over dinner every evening for as long as I can remember. However, when I was in high school I became more aware of the world that turned a deaf ear to injustice. Frustrated with the feeling that my voice did not matter I stumbled upon an ACLU-sponsored event. Here I found other concerned youth that were trying to affect change. It turned out to be just the kind of security blanket an unsure teenager needed to get comfortably wrapped up in organizing.

6. And what made you act on that? Why do you feel it is important to you to do something?

I knew that I could not simply persuade someone to change one's self or one's worldview. I also knew that I could not even convince someone that he or she needed to think about changing. I realized that one can only change the world by showing people they have the strength and capacity to create change in themselves. Someone supported me while I tested my own strength. Since then I have been unable to ignore the fire in my belly that compels me to be an agent of change.

7. Anything you'd like to add?

I am really enjoying working at the Thomas Merton Center. The people are fantastic and the work is near and dear to my heart. I am sure my time at the Center will be a memorable experience, making it that much more difficult to leave Pittsburgh in a year.

TMC Membership Gatherings

Come join some really fun and interesting people every fourth Monday of the month and learn about one of the many wonderful projects at the TMC. We have some changes to announce: now, we will begin at 5:30 pm with snacks, socializing and networking and a project will present at 6 pm. Oct. 23 will be the Save Our Transit project and Nov. 27 the Anti-War Committee will present. Feel free to stay for the Board of Directors meeting at 7 pm. See you here at the Thomas Merton Center!

- Ru the recruiter