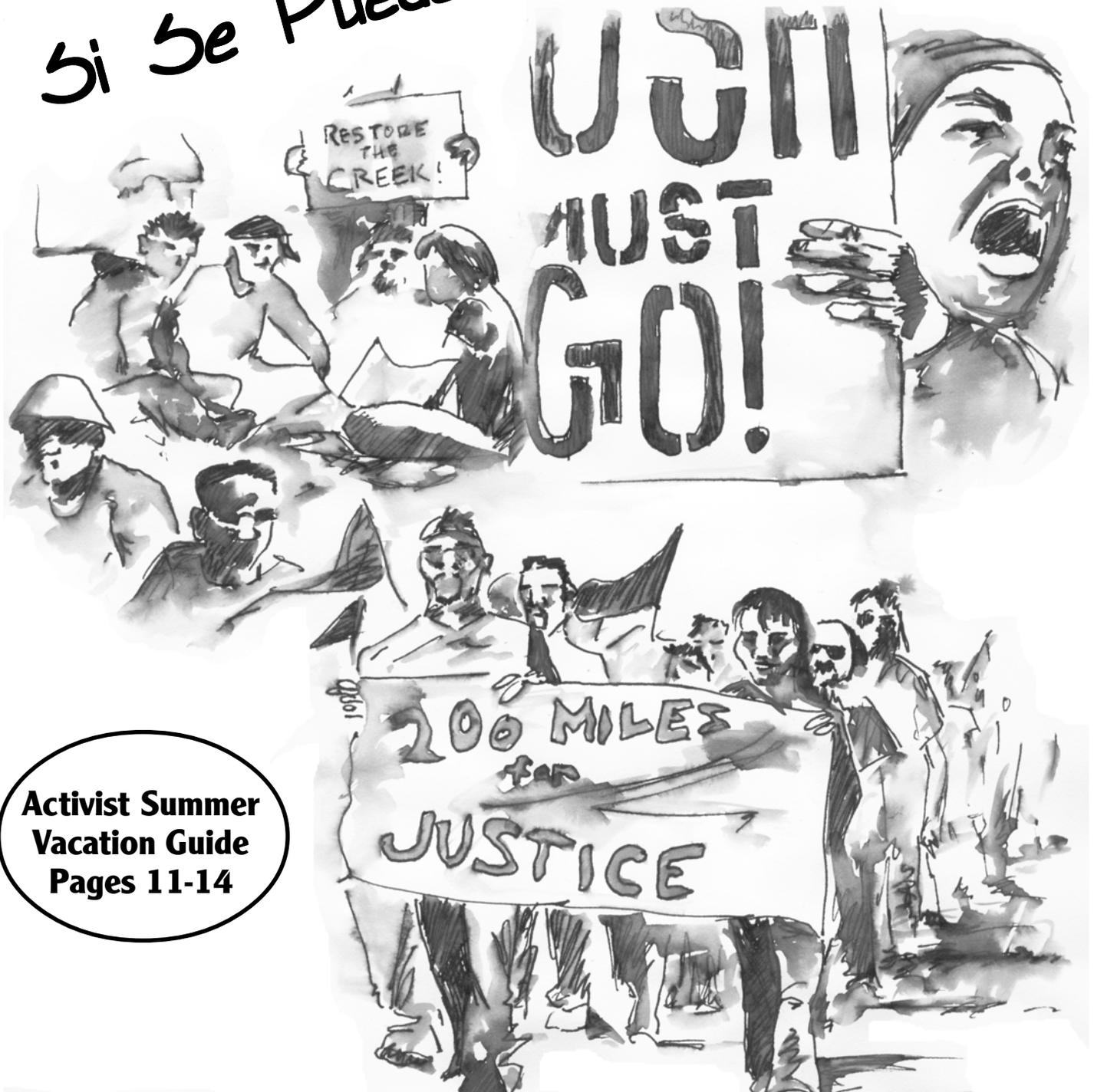


# Peace Newsletter

Central New York Voices for Peace and Social Justice

June 2004 PNL 732

Si Se Puede



**Activist Summer  
Vacation Guide  
Pages 11-14**

# Peace Newsletter

Central New York Voices for Peace and Social Justice

## SPC STAFF

Carol Baum, Andy Mager, Jessica Maxwell, Paul Pearce  
(SPC Press/TV)

## SPC STEERING COMMITTEE

Carol Baum, Gary Bonaparte, Dik Cool, Roxanne Hill,  
Doug Igelsrud, Rae Kramer, Andy Mager, Jessica  
Maxwell, Beth Mosley, Tina Musa, Shirley Novak,  
Nick Poulos, Carole Resnick, Ann Tiffany

## PEACE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Jessica Maxwell (coordinator), John Fitzsimmons,  
Ed Kinane, Rae Kramer. Calendar: Angela Manciocchi.  
Layout: Derek Currie, Andy Mager

## SPC PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Carol Baum, Mary Cunningham, Ed Kinane, Andy Mager,  
Jessica Maxwell, Nick Poulos, Carole Resnick, Ron  
Shuffler, Rose Viviano, Aly Wane

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## About the Cover

This month's cover is by Jenn Elwen, who is also responsible for many of the beautiful signs at our weekly peace outreach. The drawing brings together three strands of current local activism. "Everything is connected."

# Peace Newsletter

A Central New York Voice  
for Peace and Social Justice

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**Syracuse Peace Council**

924 Burnet Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13203

The *Peace Newsletter (PNL)* is published monthly by the Syracuse Peace Council (SPC). The *PNL* is the newsletter of SPC as well as a forum for articles which discuss issues of concern to the peace and justice movement. The opinions expressed in the *PNL* reflect the diversity of opinions within SPC itself.

## Syracuse Peace Council Statement of Purpose

The Syracuse Peace Council (SPC), founded in 1936, is an antiwar/social justice organization. It is community-based, autonomous and funded by the contributions of its supporters.

SPC educates, agitates and organizes for a world where war, violence and exploitation in any form will no longer exist. It challenges the existing unjust power relationships among nations, among people and between ourselves and the environment. As members, we work to replace inequality, hierarchy, domination and powerlessness with mutual respect, personal empowerment, cooperation and a sense of community.

Present social injustices cannot be understood in isolation from each other, nor can they be overcome without recognizing their economic and militaristic roots. SPC seeks to make these connections clear. We initiate and support activities that help build this sense of community and help tear down the walls of oppression. A fundamental basis for peace and justice is an economic system that places human need above monetary profit. We establish relationships among people based on cooperation rather than competition or the threat of destruction.

Our political values and personal lives shape and reflect each other. In both, we are committed to nonviolent means of conflict resolution and to a process of decision-making that responds to the needs of us all.

# Syracuse Peace Council Pages

compiled by Carol Baum

924 Burnet Ave., Syracuse, NY 13203

(315) 472-5478

spc@peacecouncil.net, www.peacecouncil.net

## Bush Must Go! Campaign in Full Swing

SPC's campaign focuses on crucial issues (no matter who wins) while working to evict the current White House resident. We are wrapping up the *Education Not Occupation* phase of our five-phase campaign. The *Human Need Not Corporate Greed* phase starts soon. Please join us for a hot summer of activism!

## Human Need Not Corporate Greed: June/July

The Bush administration's policies on the economy, healthcare, taxes, trade, federal spending, education and the environment fail to address the most basic needs of people living in the US and around the globe. Instead, these policies feed corporate profits and militarization. It's time to put people over profit!

Our second educational brochure will be ready in early June. Contact **Jessica** to help with distribution. SPC's June program will highlight *Human Need Not Corporate Greed*, and we are planning a local action for late June/early July. We will also participate in the Boston Social Forum (**July 23-25**) and Democratic National Convention protests (Boston, **July 26-29**). All events and materials will be posted on SPC's website.



Bush Must Go! lawn signs debuted at the SPC Birthday Celebration. Pick yours up at SPC (donation requested). We'll supply you with Protect the Earth and Bye Bye Big Brother attachments later. Photo: Carol Baum

## Education Not Occupation

With over 14,000 copies of our brochures distributed, the *Education Not Occupation* phase of *Bush Must Go!* was a successful launch of the larger effort. Those involved in door-to-door distribution en-

joyed the opportunity to get out and talk to people about these important issues. *The Post-Standard*, *New Times*, WAER and WFBL radio provided valuable opportunities to share our perspective through the mainstream media. We made solid progress in integrating the theme into ongoing SPC programs, including the weekly peace outreach, SPC-TV and our monthly educational programs.



The Syracuse chapter of Billionaires for Bush welcomes NYS Republicans to Syracuse. Photo: Carol Baum

## Billionaires for Bush Debut

SPC organized a demonstration outside the NYS Republican Convention, which was held May 18-19 in Syracuse. About 90 people attended, holding signs in a long line outside the University Sheraton Hotel. A new contingent was *Billionaires for Bush*, dressed impeccably in evening gowns and suits, drinking "champagne," and tastefully displaying signs such as "Leave No Billionaire Behind," "War is Good for Business," and "Hands Off Halliburton."

The *Billionaires* plan more appearances and welcome additional members. Thanks to Andrea Martin and Susan Galbraith for costuming and props, and to John Digesare for the signs. To help out, contact SPC.

## Weekly Peace Outreach

Our current focus is *Human Need Not Corporate Greed*. Please join us every Tuesday from 4:45 to 5:30 pm.

- **June 1:** Adams St. and Rt. 81 (Downtown)
- **June 8:** Thompson Rd. in front of Carrier Corp. (Northside)
- **June 15:** E. Genesee St. and Erie Blvd. (Dewitt)
- **June 22:** Rt. 57 and Vine St. (Village of Liverpool)
- **June 29:** Valley Dr. and Seneca Tpk. (Valley)

## Staff Email Addresses:

**Andy Mager** <andy@peacecouncil.net>  
**Carol Baum** <carol@peacecouncil.net>  
**Jessica Maxwell** <jessica@peacecouncil.net>

- **July 6:** Geddes St. and W. Genesee St. (Westside)
- **July 13:** S. Salina and E. Colvin (Southside)
- **July 20:** Rt. 695 exit ramp to W. Genesee St. (Fairmount)

## Youth Action Fest

The Youth Action Festival on May 23 was a promising beginning for the burgeoning Youth Empowerment for Peace Group. Although the crowd didn't fill the Thornden Park Amphitheater, an intimate vibe spread throughout the peace rally as many talented acts took the stage.

The School of Hearts energized the crowd with their hip-hop performance, including singing, dancing, and rapping. Additionally, the band Merit and solo artist Joe Driscoll played wonderful sets with impressive presence.

Continued on next page

## The Fourth World War

### SPC's Monthly Program

Thursday, June 24

8 - 9:45 pm

Westcott Community Center  
(corner of Euclid and Westcott, Syr.)  
followed by refreshments & discussion

This video documentary reports from the front-lines of conflicts in Mexico, Argentina, South Africa, Palestine, Korea; "the North" from Seattle to Genoa, and the "War on Terror" in New York, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

*The Fourth World War* brings together the images and voices of the war on the ground – and of those who resist.

Horace Campbell and Khuri spoke about the United States' current situation in Iraq and the current challenges faced by the peace movement. During the festival, members of Youth Empowerment for Peace did a great job of encouraging participation among the festivalgoers. Although the sun did not shine, there was no rain on our parade that day. Special thanks go to the organizing committee—Gabe Barry-Caufield, Risa Stiefel, Tim Stacey, Tina Musa, Johanna Berlin and Emily Aaron, and to Brian Caufield and Brian Stone for running the sound system.

—Tim Stacey

### Grant for Youth Work

SPC recently received a grant of \$8570 from the Gifford Foundation to support our youth violence work. We believe it is the largest grant ever received by the Peace Council!

The bulk of the grant supports a joint project with the Dunbar Center to conduct workshops with youth on issues of violence and nonviolence. The rest will support the Bikes for Peace project, a series of free clinics to help young people learn how to fix their bikes. Two clinics have already been scheduled at the Northeast Community Center – June 8 and 22, from 5-7:30 pm. Contact Jessica for more information.

### The Wonders of Interns

We have been privileged to have two amazing interns this spring – David Howe and Risa Stiefel. David and Risa were both key organizers in the Tax Day Polls at local colleges, and both have been invaluable helping with general office chores. Risa was also active with the *Bush Must Go!* campaign, coordinating much of the logistical work for the Youth Action Festival. David worked diligently on an informational piece on “free” trade and its impact on CNY and got involved with the Youth Action Festival organizing (even when his internship was technically over). Thanks, Risa and David!

And just when we expected it to get quieter, two unexpected interns appeared. Emily Aaron, an Antioch student, just began



Post-Standard reporter Hart Seely shares some of his “found” poetry from Donald Rumsfeld during SPC’s 68th Birthday Celebration. Photo: Carol Baum

a full-time three month internship. She’s majoring in peace studies, and brings spunk and a willingness to learn. Lisa Maynard, a design student at Syracuse University, will lend her talents to help create printed materials and more. David Salati, an SU communications and political science major, will join us later.

And if you would like to intern at SPC this summer, either formally or informally, contact SPC.

### Fund Appeal ... So Far

Thanks to everyone who responded to our spring fund appeal. So far the appeal has raised about \$2700! The summer is a traditionally “dry” period. If you haven’t contributed yet, please consider it. We especially welcome monthly and quarterly pledges. Help SPC not worry about money over the summer. To learn more, contact Carol.

### SPC’s Birthday Celebration

Over 100 people attended SPC’s 68th birthday celebration on May 15 at St. Andrew’s Church. The program provided non-stop laughter at a time when many of us feel horrified and overwhelmed by the state of the world. *Post-Standard* reporter Hart Seely shared poems from his recent book *Pieces of Intelligence: The Existential Poetry of Donald H. Rumsfeld*. Each poem was written using excerpts from public statements by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld (“the Beltway Bard”). The Wheels of Justice tour spoke about their efforts to educate on the occupations of Palestine and Iraq

through a national bus tour. Their full-sized school bus attracted much attention during their two-day stop in Syracuse. George Shrub/Dave Lippman closed the evening with his satirical songs and biting humor on the “war on terrorism” and US democracy. The program raised about \$2500 to support SPC’s ongoing work.

Many thanks to all those who made the evening a success, especially birthday committee members Janie Garlow, Nancy Hallock, Barb Kobritz, Jessica Maxwell, Linda Perla and Amy Zamkoff; Karen Hall (for her brilliant emceeing); and St. Andrew’s Church (for their warm hospitality).

### Thanks to Marty Kelley

Coordinating the many projects, events and campaigns of the Peace Council is a great challenge for staff. It makes a huge difference when a volunteer has the skills and time to play a major role in a project. Although she’s been here only a short time, Marty Kelley has been one of those people.

Marty was one of the core organizers for last fall’s *Speak Up: The Bush Agenda and You*, and coordinated staffing of SPC’s table at the regional market for much of last summer. She regularly does phone calling for SPC from home and has been our consistent pick-up person for donated goods from Provisions Bakery. Her warmth and generous spirit have made her a pleasure to work with.

Marty heads off to Maine later this month, and we’ll miss her, but also know that another peace community will benefit. Her departure leaves holes here ... please help out.

### Duck Race Tix at SPC

The *Second Annual Duck Race to End Racism* is a benefit for Community Wide Dialogue to End Racism. Purchase duck tickets (\$5 each) at SPC by June 8, and we keep half.

The race is at Syracuse’s Inner Harbor on Saturday, June 12th from noon - 4 pm. There will be also be children’s games, food, music, entertainment, and community groups’ tables (including SPC). Prizes are available for the winning ducks. For more info about the tickets, contact Carol.

# Letter From Ground Zero

Jonathan Schell

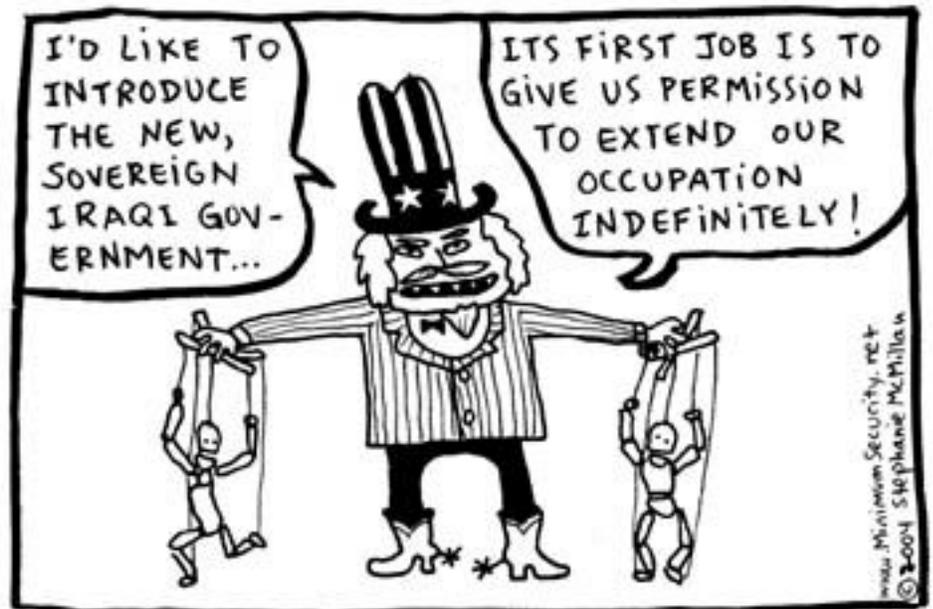
The Iraqi struggle for independence from American rule has begun in earnest. US forces there now face a double insurrection—one part Sunni Muslim, the other Shiite Muslim—that threatens at the same time to turn into a civil war. Only the Kurdish north is quiet. With these events, US policy on Iraq has taken leave of reality as thoroughly as America's claims regarding weapons of mass destruction did before the war. The policy was declared on November 21, when Paul Bremer, head of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), announced that on June 30 of this year the "occupation of Iraq will end," and Iraq will then enjoy "sovereignty." Since then, news commentators and officials have habitually told the public that on that date the United States "will hand over...sovereignty to the Iraqi people" (in the words of Dan Senor, a senior advisor to the CPA), who will then enjoy what is commonly called an "interim Constitution." Every word of these short phrases is based on assumptions radically at odds with the facts.

**1. Sovereignty.** According to Webster's, sovereignty is "supreme power, especially over a body politic." But it is no longer possible, if it ever was, to argue that the United States and its allies wield "supreme power" in Iraq. True, US forces can go where they like, but do they rule? Do the Iraqi people obey them? When the American authorities order something to happen, does it? On the contrary, none of the US plans for running the country announced by the Bush Administration have so far even been enacted, much less succeeded. Even now, GOP Senator Richard Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has said that he has no idea what the plans for the June 30 transition are.

Iraqi political figures, by contrast, have been making a lot happen. According to the always invaluable (and now winner

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*Jonathan Schell is The Nation's peace and disarmament editor and author, most recently, of The Unconquerable World: Power, Nonviolence, and the Will of the People (Metropolitan, 2003).*



of a Pulitzer prize) Anthony Shadid of the *Washington Post*, the most popular of the Shiite leaders, the comparatively moderate Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, launched a petition against the US-sponsored "Constitution." The petition quickly gathered tens of thousands of signatures. This peaceful opposition to American rule, however, was quickly superseded, at least for the time being, by the Shiite insurrection, led by the extreme Islamist Muqtada al-Sadr.

The Iraqi blogger Zayed, until now pro-occupation, offers the following portrait of life in Baghdad the day after the insurrection:

"No one knows what is happening in the capital right now. Power has been cut off in my neighborhood since the afternoon, and I can only hear helicopters, massive explosions, and continuous shooting nearby. The streets are empty, someone told us half an hour ago that Mahdi [Sadr's militia] are trying to take over our neighborhood and are being met by resistance from Sunni hardliners. Doors are locked, and AK-47's are being loaded and put close by in case they are needed. The phone keeps ringing frantically." There is no "sovereign," American or other, in this Iraq; there is anarchy. The less "sovereignty" the United States possesses, it appears, the more quickly it wants to surrender it.

**2. Hand over.** How can the United

States "hand over" power that it has never possessed? In any case, sovereignty is not a physical object, like a desk, that can be moved from one office to another. It is a relationship among people—one of command and obedience. Even if the United States did have sovereignty in Iraq, as it obviously does not, it would not be able to pass it on to someone else. Either the United States would remain the real sovereign behind the scenes or the new group would have to build up sovereign power for itself. Admittedly, the United States does possess something in Iraq—overwhelming military force. But this is one thing, needless to say, that the United States decidedly will not hand over on June 30 or any other day. (Other things it is not planning to hand over are control of the central bank and the news media.) Will the Governing Council, which many Iraqis call "the Governed Council," command American troops or, for that matter, even their own Iraqi troops? Not likely. Meanwhile, the misnamed "administrator" of the misnamed "coalition" will be replaced by a misnamed "ambassador," presiding over what is to be the largest US "embassy" in the world.

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Continued on next page

# Registering Voters in a Swing State

Bo Lipari

On May 8, volunteers from CNY joined citizen groups all over the country in a national effort to register one million new voters. Thirty-eight volunteers registered 106 new voters in Pennsylvania, an important swing state. A swing state is one in which political experts cannot predict which party will win.

The national effort was coordinated by America Votes, <[www.americavotes.org](http://www.americavotes.org)>, a coalition of 29 national organizations working to increase voter registration and participation in electoral politics. The coalition represents a combined membership of more than 20 million people in every state. At the national, state and local levels, grassroots organizations are sharing resources in order to reach out to voters and encourage greater voter participation.

Beside America Votes, the national

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*Bo is the founder of the Finger Lakes Election Committee, an Ithaca group working on increasing citizen participation in the electoral process.*

effort, including America Coming Together (ACT) and MoveOn, started registration drives in all 17 key “battleground” states. MoveOn alone mobilized 7,500 volunteers across the US on May 8 to walk door-to-door and registered thousands of new voters. Plus, they organized more than 1,000 phone banking parties at which over 300,000 phone calls were made in one afternoon. They will work every day until November 2 on this voter mobilization effort.

The effort in our area was organized by the Finger Lakes Election Committee, <[www.fingerlakeselection.org](http://www.fingerlakeselection.org)>. For many of the volunteers, this was the first time they had ever done voter registration. Everyone agreed that the upcoming election is too important to sit out. Citizens need to step up and participate in efforts to get more people exercising their right to vote.

The day started early. Carpools converged in Binghamton, where we met with volunteers from the Southern Tier. We shared a breakfast provided by a local firefighter’s organization. After breakfast, we split up into smaller groups for voter registration skills training. We covered

common voter registration questions, excuses and counter-arguments, and the importance of maintaining a non-partisan approach.

From Binghamton we drove to Scranton, PA, where we met at the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union hall to receive voter registration materials and maps to targeted neighborhoods. A Scranton citizens group selected the neighborhoods based on demographic data, voter rolls and its knowledge of the community.

We went door to door individually or in teams of two and three in the neighborhoods, knocking on doors asking people to register to vote. The results were good, and when we were done we had registered 106 new voters.

*This kickoff was the first of many voter registration events that will take place between now and Election Day. If you want to participate in this important effort to get our citizens voting, contact me, <[bolipari@fingerlakeselection.org](mailto:bolipari@fingerlakeselection.org)> or John Fitzsimmons, <[fitz56@a-znet.com](mailto:fitz56@a-znet.com)>, (315) 255-4362.*



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## Phantom Sovereignty / from page 5

**3. The Iraqi people.** The Iraqi people will have no involvement, whether as givers or takers of power, on June 30. Those to whom the United States plans to hand over something or other (it will certainly not be power) are a small group of Iraqi officials, most of whom are to be US appointees. No one knows yet exactly who they will be or how they are to be chosen, Bremer’s previous plan of selecting them by means of managed “caucuses” having been scuttled in the face of opposition from Ayatollah Sistani.

**4. Interim Constitution.** A series of temporary regulations promulgated, before any election has been held, in the name of a conquering power and its local appointees is wholly misdescribed as a Constitution. A Constitution is the fundamental, enduring law of a country. In a democracy, it proceeds from the will of the people. Nothing of this kind will be instituted in Iraq on June 30.

**5. June 30, 2004.** Among political observers, it is widely and believably said that this date is geared not to any events in Iraq but to the 2004 US presidential election. The Bush Administration wants to bolster the President’s campaign by creating an impression of progress in Iraq, and is staffing the CPA’s office of strategic communications with GOP operatives including Rich Galen, former press spokesman for Newt Gingrich and Dan Quayle.

Keeping all these things in mind, we should revise the commonly used phrases. Instead of saying, “On June 30, the Coalition will hand over sovereignty to the Iraqi people,” we should say, “On June 30, the re-election campaign of George W. Bush will hand over the appearance of responsibility for the rapidly deteriorating situation in Iraq to certain of its local appointees.”

And the Iraqi people? They are busy, violently and otherwise, struggling for their own future. One of the organizers of the



Sistani petition, Saad Taher, commented to Shadid, “America has a term: the rebuilding of Iraq. We are rebuilding ourselves. We want to create a new Iraqi personality. That’s our task. That’s not the Americans’ task.” For better or worse, these words are already on their way to becoming true.



*This article first appeared in the April 26 issue of The Nation magazine. Many of its ideas were explored by Schell in his talk at May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society in Syracuse in early April.*

# Abu Ghraib: It Goes With the Territory

Ed Kinane

Some months ago at a national anti-war rally, I saw this sign addressed to Iraq: "WHY IS OUR OIL UNDER YOUR SAND?!" The words drip with irony. They sum up the arrogance of our leaders in Washington.

The cover art of the May 10 *New Yorker* magazine features an oil derrick. Blood gushes out of its top. This stark graphic depicts a swap – the swap our gas guzzling, SUV-loving nation, and its corporation-cozy government make with the devil: *blood for oil*.

Bush, Inc. has done a splendid job of enriching its corporate buddies. But, thanks to Abu Ghraib, it's now less cocksure. It faces Congressional interrogation and a less docile media. Mutiny is in the air. High level resignations should be next...and then regime change in November.

Abu Ghraib is appalling. For many here, those photos may become *the* image of the invasion. But we must pull our heads out of the sand. Abu Ghraib isn't isolated; it's not a rare aberration. The photos depict a only small part of the horror inflicted on the people of Iraq.

Something in human nature leads human beings to resist occupation. Wouldn't many here resist vigorously, even violently, if the US were occupied by some alien force – a force that detained our men, abused our women, killed our children, violated our homes, shelled our holy places, destroyed our infrastructure, poisoned our soil, air and water with depleted uranium; a force bent on controlling our economy and extracting our resources?

And that force would seek to crush any such resistance by any means necessary. For the invader torture goes with the job. He needs intelligence to pacify the population. And it's not an easy job when he can't speak the language and he's clueless about the culture...or the structure of the resistance

These days abuse and torture, tools of occupation from time immemorial, are honed skills. Private companies of mercenaries - delicately called "civilian con-

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*In 2003, Ed worked in Iraq with the human rights organization Voices in the Wilderness. Locally he's on the Peace Newsletter editorial committee.*



Graphic: Kirk Anderson

tractors" - recruit former soldiers on the Internet and market their expertise to the US military.

This work, however, isn't entirely outsourced. It's part of US Army training curricula. The Army's School of the Americas [as it was formerly called] at Ft. Benning, GA, for example, runs interrogation courses. During the eighties and nineties its students studied "torture manuals" written by senior Army officers. Drawn from techniques used in Viet Nam two decades earlier, the manuals flouted US and international law. Kept classified, they were used for years without a murmur from the Army or the Pentagon.

Like invasion and occupation, the torture is illegal, immoral, lethal and cowardly. It reflects the invader's disregard for the Geneva Conventions. It reflects Bush, Inc.'s contempt for international treaties and international law.

The de-humanizing of prisoners inside Abu Ghraib is at one with the invasion and occupation. It fits with the occupation's failure to restore Iraq's security and basic services – a deadly betrayal of the Iraqi people. It's part and parcel of the killing of thousands of Iraqi civilians this past year.

And it's heedless of longterm consequences. In 2001 the World Trade Center – a pre-eminent symbol of US financial interests – crumbled. Almost as tangibly, thanks to Abu Ghraib, in 2004 much of whatever goodwill the world has had toward the US likewise crumbled.

Abu Ghraib's silver lining is that it

helps explain that pseudo-mystery of why many hate the US and its empire. It's a painful lesson. Maybe now we won't be so easily duped into handing over more of our civil liberties to Washington. Maybe now we'll work to have our tax dollars go to human need, not corporate greed.

What Iraq's liberators have been doing to Iraqi detainees is vile. Also vile is what military service has done to our soldiers. Surely, prior to enlisting, many had honor and idealism. How many will return home proud of what they've done to Iraq? Our troops there have overstayed whatever welcome they may have had. They must withdraw.

Every Tuesday afternoon a few Central New Yorkers stand for 45 minutes at certain busy intersections. We hold signs facing rush hour traffic. These say things like, "SUPPORT OUR TROOPS – BRING THEM HOME." They just as well might say, "SAVE OUR SOULS – BRING THE TROOPS HOME."

But ending the war doesn't end our responsibility. The US must provide the funds so Iraq's own capable people can rebuild their country. The bill for years of crippling sanctions, for "shock and awe," for attacking Iraq with toxic and radioactive weaponry and contaminating its environment, is past due. These reparations should not be taken from Iraq's oil revenue. They should be taken from the Pentagon budget.

*For the Weekly Outreach schedule call SPC, 472-5478, see page 3 or check out <[www.peacecouncil.net](http://www.peacecouncil.net)>..*

# Congressman Condemns Bush's Iraq Policy

Aly Wane

Elected to Congress in 1986, John Lewis represents Georgia's Fifth Congressional District. He is widely recognized as one of the most influential Civil Rights leaders. His commitment to nonviolent, grassroots tactics is legendary, having endured more than 40 arrests, physical attacks and injuries over his career. He was recently the keynote speaker at a Syracuse conference on the role of the media during the Civil Rights movement. The following is excerpted from a longer interview available on the SPC website.



John Lewis, then President of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, represented the radical wing of the civil rights movement at the March on Washington in 1963.

**Aly Wane:** *Let's get started on the War in Iraq. This is a two-part question. The first part is, did you, as a US Congressman feel that the war was just or unjust? The second part is, now that we are in Iraq, what do you feel is the most equitable way of dealing with this situation that would both honor the sacrifices of US soldiers, while making sure that we promote a peaceful, democratic Iraq in the future?*

**John Lewis:** I felt all along, and I still believe today, that this war was not justified. I said on the floor of the House in the debate about making available the resources, and the dollars to support this military effort, that the war is bloody, it is messy, it destroys the dreams and aspirations of a people. We should wait and continue to discuss, continue to debate, and that we should give peace a chance. I happen to believe that war is obsolete as a tool of our foreign policy. On the other hand, it is my belief that this president and people around him have made a decision; they had made up their mind to go to war even before he took the oath of office. He was hell-bent to have a war with Iraq; he was hell-bent to have, what they call "regime change," to get rid of Saddam Hussein. But in my estimation, nothing justifies this military intrusion into Iraq.

There is no way to prove that Iraq had anything to do with 9/11. I think that the president, the people around him, and

other people in this administration deliberately misled the country, misled the community of nations, and they deceived and lied to members of Congress. We have to find a way to get out. On the one hand, I think we can be supportive of our young men and women in harm's way, but I want to see them come home. I want to find a way to get out of Iraq. We must get our allies in the UN and other members of the community of Nations involved. It's not just the loss of US lives, but it's the loss of the lives of hundreds and thousands of Iraqi military people, and also civilians, women and children. I don't think that the spirit of history is going to be very kind to us as a nation and as a people for what we've done.

**AW:** *I'm so glad to hear you speak about the lives of Iraqi civilians as well. It seems like the pink elephant in the room that no one really wants to talk about, but a lot of people in the US were concerned about during the run-up to the war in Iraq. A related point is that a lot of progressive people and people at the grassroots were really disappointed by the fact that so many Democrats seemed to endorse Bush's current war powers. You and a handful of people in Congress really tried to stem that tide, but it seemed that most of the Democratic Party gave Bush the powers he now has. Can you give us a sense of what your understanding was in terms of the rift between what at least half of the American people felt at the time and this seeming majority opinion in Congress that we should give Bush as many powers as he needs to prosecute the war in Iraq?*

**JL:** I think there was a feeling on the part of many of my colleagues on the Democratic side that, in some ways Saddam Hussein and the country of Iraq were real threats to our own national security. We had been told this by the Secretary of State, by the Secretary of Defense, by Condoleezza Rice, National Security Director, by the Vice-President and others. They showed us maps that showed here and there the stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction. They said that these weapons were very dangerous, and they said that it was just a matter of time until Saddam had the ability to deliver, maybe, some type of nuclear warhead, or biological, chemical weaponry. And some people bought into that, and didn't want to go back home, especially with an election coming up, and appear to be on the wrong side. Now, the great majority of Democrats and a growing number of Republicans feel like they were lied to. People don't want to appear not to be supporting the troops because they are currently embattled. You can condemn the war and still say we are going to support our young men and women. The best way of supporting them is to find a way to get them out of harm's way and bring them home.

**AW:** *You are here this weekend to attend a conference about the role of the media in the Civil Rights movement. A lot of people felt that, at least the major corporate-owned media led the drumbeat to the War in Iraq, and that for individuals to get more objective information they had to go the Internet, progressive media outlets like The Nation, and foreign news outlets. Do you feel that the major news*

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*Aly is a resident staff member at Unity Acres in Orwell, NY and member of the Peace Council's Program Committee.*

agencies are only now asking some of the questions that they should have been asking before the US even went to Iraq?

**JL:** I think, in dealing with the war, and the whole question of national defense, national security, homeland security, I think that the media is somewhat lacking. This is not an indictment of the media, but I think that the media to some degree is a taillight rather than a headlight. Certain quarters of the media were almost a bulletin board of the Administration. People were not questioning enough; they took everything. Now, more and more journalists are beginning to raise questions about where, when, and how. The Bush administration got us into a mess, and they need to find the most creative way to get us out.

**AW:** You are a leading figure in the Civil Rights movement. Many of us grassroots activists take inspiration from the work that you and many others have done over the years. What do you think the role of nonviolent tactics and grassroots education is in this very politically fragmented country? Do you think that nonviolence techniques are still effective today?

**JL:** I think that the philosophy and tactics of nonviolence are still relevant as a way of meeting the needs of people so that they can vent their sense of discontent, to display a sense of righteous indignation. This is still relevant, despite all of the changes, despite the different techniques and tactics of nonviolence that were used during the '50s and '60s. I don't think we really explored all of the possibilities that we could have in the use of nonviolence. You know, some people think that when you practice nonviolence you are soft or meek. They don't understand it. Nonviolence can be a very powerful tool, a powerful means of bringing about change.

**AW:** In relation to this, you have people like Kathy Kelly who have gone to Iraq in order to bring needed food and medicine to the people there. She has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize at least twice, and yet when it comes to the mainstream media coverage, you are not likely to hear about her. What made your tactics so effective in the '50s, '60s, and '70s, in terms of getting the media attention that you needed to dramatize the situ-

ation? Today, you still have people who use some of these tactics, but they tend to be marginalized; you don't really hear about them, even when they have accomplished many things. Do you think that there are things that Kathy, and others like her, should be doing that they haven't been exploring? Or are the very structures of the media such that this type of activity might be seen as less effective?

**JL:** I think, some of both. The members of the media today have no idea, no concept of what the civil rights struggle was about, because they didn't get first-hand experience. They may read about it in a book, or see it in a video, or maybe a movie, but these people in the media, and some not in the media have to go through certain steps in order to really feel what the movement was about. It is very hard. You can talk about it, you can sing about it, you can pray about it, but not until people feel it, and see it can they believe that they are themselves a part.

**AW:** You seem to be a politician who tries to follow his conscience the best he can. What room do you see for such a politics of conscience when you see people like Kucinich, Sharpton, and Nader who try to follow what they believe, pushed aside from the "mainstream?" How do you try to live out that sense of being a politician who tries to act according to his conscience while having to deal with the machinery of Washington?

**JL:** It is not easy at all, but you have to make up your mind,



and say, "I have to live with myself." I don't want to become bitter or hostile and get lost in a sea of despair. I am here to be faithful. As we would say, I want to "keep my eyes on the Prize," stay focused, so that when someone beats you, or pulls you to the side, or tries to crush in your skull, you just keep on hanging on, keep on looking ahead. I have this feeling that everything is going to work out.

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# Syracuse's War on Black Youth

Steven Muhammad

According to the US Attorney's Office, the issue of youth, guns and gang violence is second, in terms of its priorities, only to the fight against terrorism. Although both are important, the methods by which each are being pursued are both terrifying and criminal. The labeling of certain youth as thugs and gang members (in some research papers they are called "super predators") is like labeling Muslims or so-called 'militant' Muslims as terrorists. In the case of youth violence, the government continues to ignore the totality of individual circumstances. It also ignores alternatives to incarceration that are more effective and low cost.

## Rico: The New Weapon against Black Youth

Under the guise of reducing guns and gang violence, the City of Syracuse has planned a war against Black youth. The Northern District of New York Office of the US Attorney, based in Syracuse, has indicted 24 young Black men under the Racketeering Influenced Corrupt Organization (RICO) Act since last summer. The defendants are accused of using violence to protect their territory and the drug trade revenues they had supposedly acquired since 1995.

There are a total of 42 indictments, or what are referred to as "overt acts," allegedly committed by the defendants on behalf of the "Boot Camp" gang since 1995. Some defendants have not engaged in criminal activities for over two and half years and were gainfully employed. Some had already been convicted on the indictment and completed their sentences when they were charged under RICO for the same act. Despite that, youth who resided around the corner of Midland Ave and W. Colvin St (on Syracuse's Southside) were targeted by the US Attorney's application of RICO.

Youth who have not been recently involved in criminal activity but were still charged under the RICO Act are consid-

ered collateral damage. They are being used to send a harsh message to other youth in the area. The problem is that law enforcement is sending the wrong message. When it comes to Black youth or youth living in economically depressed neighborhoods, billboards of youth being arrested and strict law enforcement methods are used. But in other communities, more positive incentives are used, for example, building a skateboard rink for recreational activities.

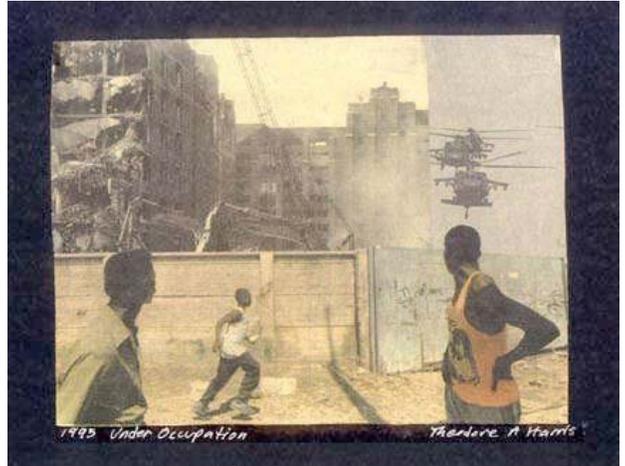
## Syracuse as a Test Market?

This is the first time the RICO Act has been applied based on geography. The City of Syracuse is a test market for goods and services. A widely read list of test markets compiled by Dancer, Fitzgerald and Sample lists the top eight markets most similar to the average US national demographics. Syracuse is among them.

Rita J. Runyon, President of TRC Consultants, Inc., states, "the beauty of the 'Test Market' is that it allows marketers the opportunity to test all the variables in a real marketing environment where real people are buying real products, in a smaller, less expensive *experiment*" (emphasis added). These products are not limited to store products sold at Wal-Mart but include governmental policies and programs, particularly those involving youth violence.

For example, the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention funded four US cities to develop a local "Partnership to Reduce Juvenile Gun Violence." Programs were given millions of dollars in seed money to develop comprehensive strategies that encompassed prevention, intervention and suppression methods to reduce youth access to and use of illegal guns. The four selected cities were to create partnerships between local law enforcement agencies, school districts, community and faith-based organizations and other community stakeholders. Syracuse was one of the cities to receive such funding although there were areas in the US with a greater need.

Although the US Attorney is justified in making youth violence a priority, the long-term ramifications of this case and



the precedent it sets threaten the constitutional rights of everyone in neighborhoods that the government targets. The government could target any neighborhood based on a theoretical pattern of criminal activity or past indictments. Any name could be assigned to the area. Any resident with a criminal background could then be prosecuted under this interpretation of RICO.

## Ridwan's Story

Ridwan Othman was born in Syracuse and has lived here all his life. Teachers describe him as a good student and an outstanding football player. Mr. Othman received letters from colleges for possible scholarships but was disqualified when he was expelled from school. Like many young men, he embraced the streets and peer pressure that undermined his focus. Although never convicted of a crime, he engaged in anti-social activities until he was arrested on a sealed indictment (selling drugs to an undercover police officer) in 2000. Mr. Othman pled guilty to a felony and was sentenced to probation.

At that point Mr. Othman attempted to separate himself from his past. He stopped hanging out; he focused on successfully completing probation and actively searched for employment. Mr. Othman applied to CNY Works in hopes of securing his GED and participated in Career Path to Success at Onondaga Community College. Mr. Othman then participated in the American Friends Service Committee's Help

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*Steven is the former Outreach Coordinator for the Syracuse Partnership to Reduce Juvenile Gun Violence and is now the Program Director for the Southside Neighborhood Action Group.*

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Continued on page 16

# SUMMER VACATION GUIDE 2004

compiled by Andy Molloy

artwork by Karen Kerney



## POLITICS

### Radical Walking Tours of NY City

**DATE:** June 6, 13; July 11, 25

**PLACE:** New York, NY

**CONTACT:** 718-492-0069; [www.he.net/~radtours](http://www.he.net/~radtours)

~radtours

**COMMENT:** learn about the social history of the city

### Protest the G8 Summit

**DATE:** June 8-10

**PLACE:** Sea Island, GA

**CONTACT:** [www.infoshop.org/octo/g8\\_2004.php](http://www.infoshop.org/octo/g8_2004.php)

**COMMENT:** the G8 is coming back to the United States. Tens of thousands will converge once again on Georgia for mass protests against the G8, neoliberalism at home and abroad, and capitalism.

### Continental Bioregional Congress

**DATE:** June 12-20

**PLACE:** Earthaven Ecovillage, NC

**CONTACT:** Culture's Edge, c/o Mary Armstrong, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd, Black Mountain, NC 28711; [biocongress2004@earthaven.org](mailto:biocongress2004@earthaven.org)

**COMMENT:** brings together hundreds of activists, artists, permaculturists, farmers, policy-makers, scientists, children and adults

### 13th Annual Protecting Mother Earth Gathering

**DATE:** June 17-20

**PLACE:** Rapid City, SD

**CONTACT:** Indigenous Environmental Network; 877-436-2121; [www.ienearth.org](http://www.ienearth.org)

**COMMENT:** focus on water, globalization, free trade, energy and more.

### Women in the Middle: Borders, Barriers, Intersections

**DATE:** June 17-20

**PLACE:** Milwaukee, WI

**CONTACT:** NWSA, University of Maryland, 7100 Baltimore Blvd., Ste. 500, College Park, MD 20740; 301-403-0525; [www.nwsa.org](http://www.nwsa.org)

**COMMENT:** 25th Annual National Women's Studies Conference

### National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America 15th Annual Conference

**DATE:** June 17-20

**PLACE:** Howard Univ., Washington, DC

**CONTACT:** N'COBRA; PO Box 716; Washington, DC 20044; 202-736-1719; [www.ncobranews.org](http://www.ncobranews.org)

**COMMENT:** theme "Coalition Building and Operational Unity"

### Allied Media Conference

**DATE:** June 18-20

**PLACE:** Bowling Green, OH

**CONTACT:** Clamor, POB 20128, Toledo, OH 43610; [www.clamormagazine.org/amc/](http://www.clamormagazine.org/amc/)

**COMMENT:** focus on sharing skills, building alternatives to corporate media and using the media for social change. Besides hands-on workshops, the conference features film screenings, artist presentations and space to share your work.

### Anarchist Gathering 2004

**DATE:** June 18-20

**PLACE:** near Fresno, CA

**CONTACT:** [www.occupiedterritory.net](http://www.occupiedterritory.net)

**COMMENT:** cooking, teaching, loving, working, enjoying, existing and providing for others in an autonomous community without coercion

### 5th Annual Oglala Commemoration

**DATE:** June 26

**PLACE:** Oglala, SD

**CONTACT:** [www.geocities.com/oglala\\_commemoration](http://www.geocities.com/oglala_commemoration)

**COMMENT:** ceremony honoring our warriors and promoting national healing. Invited are family, friends and supporters of Anna Mae Pictou Aquash, Joe Stuntz, the American Indian Movement, and the entire Indian Nations.

### San Francisco LGBT Parade and Annual Dyke March

**DATE:** June 26-27

**PLACE:** San Francisco, CA

**CONTACT:** 415-864-3733; [www.sf-pride.org](http://www.sf-pride.org)

**COMMENT:** join 500,000 supporters, onlookers and participants for one of the largest Pride events

### Earth First! Round River Rendezvous

**DATE:** June 28-July 5

**PLACE:** Maine

**CONTACT:** Maine EF!, 224 West Side Dr, Verona Island, ME 04416; [www.earthfirstjournal.org](http://www.earthfirstjournal.org)

**COMMENT:** workshops, direct action

### We Are Resisting Conference

**DATE:** June 30-July 4

**PLACE:** Leavenworth, KS

**CONTACT:** [www.kansasanarchist.net](http://www.kansasanarchist.net)

**COMMENT:** focus on critical analysis, skill sharing and discourse on how to build a movement for social justice and collective liberation

### Animal Rights 2004 Conference

**DATE:** July 8-12

**PLACE:** Washington, DC

**CONTACT:** FARM/AR2004, 10101

Ashburton Lane, Bethesda, MD 20817; [www.ar2004.org](http://www.ar2004.org)

**COMMENT:** sponsored by 50 organizations

### North American Anarchist Convergence

**DATE:** July 12-15

**PLACE:** Athens, OH

**CONTACT:** [www.naac2004.org](http://www.naac2004.org)

**COMMENT:** weekend of community-focused discussion on freedom, prosperity, and responsible society. American Anarchists will cross borders to converge in the foothills of Appalachia to network, brainstorm, and discuss social change through building a positive movement toward a free and responsible society. Focus on practical alternatives to problems associated with power-based governments, institutions, and internalized systems of oppression.

## National Organization for Women National Conference

**DATE:** July 16-18

**PLACE:** Las Vegas, NV

**CONTACT:** NOW Conference, 733 Fifteenth Street NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, D.C. 20005; [www.now.org](http://www.now.org)

**COMMENT:** join NOW members across the country for three days of fun and friends, fast-paced workshops, great speakers and entertainers, skill-building sessions, special interest caucuses, and, of course, sharing stories about the March

## Boston Social Forum

**DATE:** July 23-25

**PLACE:** UMass, Boston, MA

**CONTACT:** BSF office 617-338-9966; [www.bostonsocialforum.org](http://www.bostonsocialforum.org)

**COMMENT:** we invite all progressive activists, interested community members, and delegates to the Democratic National Convention, to come and become part of the global process to build a better, more human-centered society. *SPC will coordinate transportation to this event; please check with us!*

## Mass Protest at the Democratic National Convention

**DATE:** July 26-29

**PLACE:** Boston, MA

**CONTACT:** [www.blackteasociety.org](http://www.blackteasociety.org)

**COMMENT:** *SPC is hoping to participate in this event and coordinate transportation; please check with us!*

## Democracy Uprising: March from the DNC to the RNC

**DATE:** July 26-August 29

**PLACE:** Boston, MA to New York, NY

**CONTACT:** [www.dnc2rnc.org](http://www.dnc2rnc.org)

**COMMENT:** 276-mile march from the Democratic to Republican National Conventions

## Pax Christi USA National Assembly

**DATE:** July 30-August 1

**PLACE:** Miami, FL

**CONTACT:** Pax Christi, 532 West 8th St, Erie, PA 16502; 814-453-4955;

[www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org)

**COMMENT:** theme is Politics and Prophecy: Challenging the Idolatry of Empire

## Organizing the Real Superpower: FOR National Conference

**DATE:** August 5-9

**PLACE:** Los Angeles, CA

**CONTACT:** Fellowship of Reconciliation, Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960; 845-358-4601; [www.forusa.org](http://www.forusa.org)

**COMMENT:** 60 workshops, plenary sessions, nonviolence training, mediation and reconciliation training, youth programs, Muslim-Jewish peace walk, and more

## Annual Hiroshima Day Procession

**DATE:** August 6

**PLACE:** Syracuse, NY

**CONTACT:** Syracuse Peace Council, 315-472-5478, [www.peacecouncil.net](http://www.peacecouncil.net)

**COMMENT:** Gather at 11:30 am at Plymouth Church, 232 E. Onondaga St., downtown Syracuse. A dramatic procession through downtown Syracuse to remember the horror of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and call for an end to the development and use of nuclear weapons

## 6th Annual Southern Girls Convention

**DATE:** August 12-14

**PLACE:** Memphis, TN

**CONTACT:** SGC, P.O. Box 980511, Ypsilanti, MI 48198; [www.southerngirlsconvention.org](http://www.southerngirlsconvention.org)

**COMMENT:** annual grassroots meeting of pro-woman activists devoted to networking, organizing, educating, agitating, to empower women and girls in the South. We discuss Southern culture, the radical history of organizing in the South, views and stereotypes of the South, and the struggle for social justice.

## Northeast Organic Farming Association Summer Conference

**DATE:** August 12-15

**PLACE:** Hampshire College, Amherst, MA

**CONTACT:** NOFA, c/o Bill Duesing, Box 135, Stevenson, CT 06491; [www.nofa.org](http://www.nofa.org)

**COMMENT:** theme "Breaking Ground for the Future With the Wisdom of the Past." Presenters include Eliot Coleman, Vandana Shiva, and Ralph Nader.

## United Poultry Concerns Annual Forum

**DATE:** August 21-22

**PLACE:** Norfolk, VA

**CONTACT:** UPC, PO Box 150, Machipongo, VA 23405; [www.upc-online.org](http://www.upc-online.org)

**COMMENT:** topic is "Mad Cows to Mad Chickens: What Insiders Can Tell You About Agribusiness, Animal Liberation, and Your Diet"

## Mass Protest at the Republican National Convention

**DATE:** August 29

**PLACE:** New York City, NY

**CONTACT:** United for Peace & Justice, PO Box 607, Times Square Station, NY, NY 10108; [www.unitedforpeace.org](http://www.unitedforpeace.org)

**COMMENT:** theme is The World Says No to the Bush Agenda. *SPC is hoping to participate in this event and coordinate transportation; please check with us!*

## Counter Convention to Republican National Convention

**DATE:** August 30-September 2

**PLACE:** New York City, NY

**CONTACT:** [www.counterconvention.org](http://www.counterconvention.org)

**COMMENT:** because of the huge diversity of populations targeted by the Bush administration's regressive agenda, the protests are likely to be the largest in history. *SPC will coordinate transportation to this event; please check with us!*



## 27th Annual Bluegrass Festival

**DATE:** June 3-6

**PLACE:** Strawberry Park, Norwich, CT

**CONTACT:** 42 Pierce Road, Preston, CT 06365; 860-886-1944;

[www.strawberrypark.net/bluegrass.html](http://www.strawberrypark.net/bluegrass.html)

**COMMENT:** camping, instrumental and vocal workshops, children's activities

## 16th Annual New York LGBT Film Festival

**DATE:** June 3-13

**PLACE:** New York, NY

**CONTACT:** The New Festival, 47 Great Jones St, 6th Fl, New York, NY 10010; 212-254-

7228; [www.newfestival.org](http://www.newfestival.org)

**COMMENT:** over 100 films hosted in several venues

## 25th Annual Otsiningo Pow Wow

**DATE:** June 5-6

**PLACE:** Otsiningo Park, near Broome

Community College, Binghamton, NY

**CONTACT:** Otsiningo American Indian Program, 28 Zevan Rd, Johnson City, NY 13790; 607-729-0016; [www.tier.net/isa](http://www.tier.net/isa)

**COMMENT:** features Niagara River Dancers, Nukarilk throat singers; Indian Craft Fair, lectures, exhibitions, food, campfire storytelling, art

**28th San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival**

**DATE:** June 17-27  
**PLACE:** San Francisco, CA  
**CONTACT:** 415-703-8650;  
[www.frame-line.org/festival](http://www.frame-line.org/festival)  
**COMMENT:** join over 80,000 attendees, 80 features and 150 shorts

**Clearwater's 38th Annual Great Hudson River Revival**

**DATE:** June 19-20  
**PLACE:** Croton Point Park, Croton-on Hudson, NY  
**CONTACT:** Clearwater Revival, 112 Little Market St, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601; 800-67SLOOP; [www.clearwaterfestival.org](http://www.clearwaterfestival.org)  
**COMMENT:** seven music stages of folk, blues, gospel, Irish, Cajun, World, Swing; Children's theater, crafts, storytelling, ethnic foods; Ani DiFranco, Toshi Reagon and others

**30th Annual National Women's Music Festival**

**DATE:** June 22-25  
**PLACE:** Ohio State University, Columbus, OH  
**CONTACT:** NWMF, PO Box 1427, Indianapolis, IN 46206; 317-713-1144;  
[www.wiaonline.org/nwmf](http://www.wiaonline.org/nwmf)  
**COMMENT:** oldest women's festival in the U.S.; ten concerts, guest speakers, comedy concert, theater presentation, 150 workshops

**24th Annual Old Songs Festival**

**DATE:** June 25-27  
**PLACE:** Altamont Fairgrounds, Altamont, NY  
**CONTACT:** Old Songs, Inc., PO Box 399, Guilderland, NY 12084; 518-765-2815;  
[www.oldsongs.org/festival](http://www.oldsongs.org/festival)  
**COMMENT:** traditional music & dance, children's activities, crafts; feature Cajun, banjo, fiddling, Contra dances, Celtic, French Canadian and more

**Solarfest**

**DATE:** July 10  
**PLACE:** Green Mountain College, Putney, VT  
**CONTACT:** 802-287-9135; [www.solarfest.com](http://www.solarfest.com)  
**COMMENT:** the New England Renewable Energy Festival; workshops on sustainable energy basics; advanced renewable energy,

system design and installation; green buildings and sustainable communities.

**Grey Fox Bluegrass Festival**

**DATE:** July 15-18  
**PLACE:** Rothvoss Farm, Ancramdale, NY  
**CONTACT:** Grey Fox Office, PO Box 535, Utica, NY 13503; 888-946-8495;  
[www.greyfoxbluegrass.com](http://www.greyfoxbluegrass.com)  
**COMMENT:** five stages including main, workshop, grass roots, dance and children's

**Vegetarian Summerfest 2004**

**DATE:** July 21-25  
**PLACE:** Johnstown, PA  
**CONTACT:** NAVS, Box 72, Dolgeville, NY 13329; 518-568-7970;  
[vegetariansummerfest.org](http://vegetariansummerfest.org)  
**COMMENT:** 30th annual conference of the North American Vegetarian Society

**Finger Lakes GrassRoots Festival of Music and Dance**

**DATE:** July 22-25  
**PLACE:** Trumansburg, NY  
**CONTACT:** Finger Lakes GrassRoots Festival, PO Box 941, Trumansburg, NY 14886; 607-387-5098; [www.grassrootsfest.org](http://www.grassrootsfest.org)  
**COMMENT:** over 60 bands including Cajun, Zydeco, stringband, African, world beat, roots rock and alternative; food and crafts areas, art exhibits, children's area with performances and activities for younger folks; event supports arts, education and the fight against AIDS

**9th Annual Solar Living Festival**

**DATE:** August 21-22  
**PLACE:** Hopland, CA  
**CONTACT:** Solar Living Institute, PO Box 836, 13771 S. Highway 101, Hopland, CA 95449; 707-744-2017; [www.solarliving.org](http://www.solarliving.org)  
**COMMENT:** workshops, tours, music, speakers including Vanadana Shiva, Amy Goodman, Bruce Cockburn

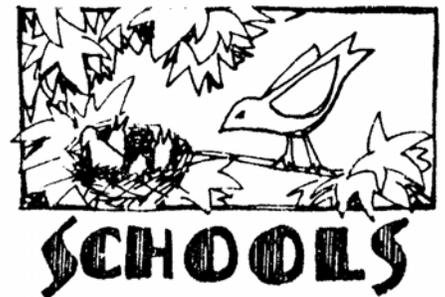
**Falcon Ridge Folk Festival**

**DATE:** July 22-25  
**PLACE:** Long Hill Farm, Hillsdale, NY  
**CONTACT:** FRFF, 74 Modley Rd, Sharon, CT 06069; 866-325-2744;  
[www.falconridgefolk.com](http://www.falconridgefolk.com)

**COMMENT:** many stages, dancing, camping, crafts, workshops, song swaps, comedy, family, spoken word

**29th Michigan Womyn's Music Festival**

**DATE:** August 10-15  
**PLACE:** Walhalla, MI  
**CONTACT:** WWTMC, PO Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458; 231-757-4766; [www.michfest.com](http://www.michfest.com)  
**COMMENT:** 40 performances, hundreds of workshops, film festival, crafts fair; an experiment in alternative community where we all contribute to a collectively run village



**Eastern Forest Action Camp**

**DATE:** June 13-21  
**PLACE:** western VA  
**CONTACT:** EFJL, PO Box 571 Athens, OH 45701; [www.easternforestdefense.org](http://www.easternforestdefense.org)  
**COMMENT:** workshops on tree-sits/tree climbing, basic and advanced blockades (including tripods/bipods), field kitchens, field survival, radio communications, banner making, campaign strategy, forest monitoring, media messaging, police negotiations, security culture, woodland movement

**Minority Activist Apprenticeship Program**

**DATE:** June 15-August 8  
**PLACE:** work across the nation in local campaigns  
**CONTACT:** Center for Third World Organizing, 1218 E 21st St, Oakland, CA 94606; 510-533-7583; [www.ctwo.org](http://www.ctwo.org)  
**COMMENT:** develop skills in labor and community organizing; stipend and housing provided

**Open Hand Theater's Circus Camp**

**DATE:** July  
**PLACE:** Lafayette and Syracuse, NY  
**CONTACT:** Open Hand Theater, 518 Prospect Ave, Syracuse, NY 13208; 315-476-0466;  
[www.openhandtheater.org](http://www.openhandtheater.org)  
**COMMENT:** classes include comedy and mime, movement and dance, magic and juggling, mask making and art; ages 8 and up



**Peace Action Freeman Fellowship**

**DATE:** starts in July  
**PLACE:** Silver Spring, MD  
**CONTACT:** Peace Action Education Fund  
 Attn: Freeman Fellowship Search,  
 1100 Wayne Ave., Suite 1020, Silver Spring,  
 MD 20910; [www.studentpeaceaction.org/fellowship.html](http://www.studentpeaceaction.org/fellowship.html)  
**COMMENT:** enables a young activist to develop the hands-on organizing skills, experience in creating resources and campaigns, decision-making ability, and contacts useful to pursuing a career in the peace and social change movement

**Spanish For Activists Camp**

**DATE:** July 3-5  
**PLACE:** Truxton, NY  
**CONTACT:** NY CISPES, 130 W. 29th Street  
 9th floor, New York, NY 10001; 212-760-0333; [www.rso.cornell.edu/cuslar/SpanishCamp.htm](http://www.rso.cornell.edu/cuslar/SpanishCamp.htm)  
**COMMENT:** for the last two years, solidarity activists and friends gathered from across NY State on a beautiful cooperative land trust outside Ithaca NY to learn more about cultural solidarity, nueva canción, radical Latin American poetry, Spanish language, tango and salsa and also to discuss state-wide coalitions to ward off upcoming free trade agreements and support those who struggle against neo-liberal US intervention throughout the Americas

**Peacemaker Training Institute**

**DATE:** July 3-10  
**PLACE:** San Marcos, TX  
**CONTACT:** Fellowship of Reconciliation, Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960; 914-358-4601; [www.forusa.org/programs/pti](http://www.forusa.org/programs/pti)  
**COMMENT:** for ages 17-25; focus on multiculturalism, racial and social justice, and strategies for creating positive social change

**NYC Summer**

**DATE:** July 15-August 19  
**PLACE:** New York City, NY  
**CONTACT:** New School, 65 West 11th Street  
 New York, NY 10011; [www.nycsummer.org](http://www.nycsummer.org)  
**COMMENT:** six weeks of liberation schools for youth activists from NYC and around the country affiliated with community organizations working for social and economic justice

**Class Matters**

**DATE:** August 27-28  
**PLACE:** San Francisco, CA

**CONTACT:** Training for Change, George Lakey, 4719 Springfield Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19143; 215-729-7458; [www.trainingforchange.org](http://www.trainingforchange.org)  
**COMMENT:** see the hidden dynamics of class. Class is everywhere. It influences how we feel about ourselves and how we treat each other. It influences who we make friends with, who we partner with and who we do our activism with. That's why we've created a workshop to give activists a hand with the mystery of class dynamics. The goal is stronger activism for deeper social change.

**Whites Confronting Racism**

**DATE:** September 10-11  
**PLACE:** Philadelphia, PA  
**CONTACT:** Training For Change, George Lakey, 4719 Springfield Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19143; 215-729-7458; [www.trainingforchange.org](http://www.trainingforchange.org)  
**COMMENT:** workshop for white people who are upset by the racism around them - and in their own heads and hearts - and who are searching for a way to begin their work for racial justice. It's for people who already do anti-racism work but want to enhance their skills and deepen their approach. And it's for anybody who wants a better understanding of how racism operates in society and in us.

**Omega Institute Workshops**

**DATE:** all summer  
**PLACE:** Rhinebeck, NY; Austin, TX  
**CONTACT:** Omega Institute, 260 Lake Dr, Rhinebeck, NY 12572; 800-944-1001; [www.eomega.org](http://www.eomega.org)  
**COMMENT:** over 250 workshops, trainings, retreats in personal health and development, gender, relationships and family, the arts, nature and society, spiritualism

**Institute for Solar Living Workshops**

**DATE:** all summer  
**PLACE:** Hopland and Ukiah, CA  
**CONTACT:** Institute for Solar Living c/o Real Goods, 555 Leslie St, Ukiah, CA 95482; 800-762-7325; [www.solarliving.com](http://www.solarliving.com)  
**COMMENT:** workshops on renewable energy, alternative construction techniques and sustainable living practices

**Herbal Medicine and Wise Woman Workshops**

**DATE:** all summer  
**PLACE:** Woodstock, NY  
**CONTACT:** Susun Weed, POB 64, Woodstock, NY 12498; 914-246-8081; [www.susunweed.com](http://www.susunweed.com)

**COMMENT:** for women and men; write for listing; examples: Hands-on Herbal Medicine, Menopausal Years: The Wise Woman Way, Green Witch Intensive



**TOURS**

**Global Exchange Reality Tours**

**DATE:** June-August  
**PLACE:** Cuba, Afghanistan, Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, Ireland, South African, Israel/Palestine, Venezuela  
**CONTACT:** Global Exchange Reality Tours, 2017 Mission Street, #303, San Francisco, CA 94110; 800-497-1994; [www.globalexchange.org/tours](http://www.globalexchange.org/tours)  
**COMMENT:** Reality Tours give travelers hands-on opportunities to explore the crucial issues facing the world and examine how the US's economic and foreign policies impact other countries. These educational delegations offer participants the chance to meet people from all walks of life, gain an understanding of those people's hopes and fears, and discover opportunities for international cooperation. Delegation participants meet with community leaders, visit environmentally sustainable agriculture projects, and learn about the international stories that never make it into the headlines.

**International Workcamps**

**DATE:** all summer  
**PLACE:** Latin America, Asia, Africa, Russia, Europe  
**CONTACT:** International Workcamps, 43 Tiffany Rd, Belmont, VT 05730; 802-259-2759; [www.vfp.org](http://www.vfp.org)  
**COMMENT:** promote international goodwill through short-term community service projects; over 2000 programs in 90 countries!



# Reclaim Our Creek, Save Our City!

Zac Moore and  
Louise Poindexter

*"This is my home and I don't want to leave – neither do my kids or grandkids. Let's get this one right with clean fish in the creek."*

- Henry Clemons, 40-year resident of the Midland neighborhood

*"We may not have money or prestige, but we've got our bodies, our voices, and you know that I'm going to use those. We've got people power and that's one of the best kinds of power there is."*

- Joanne Stevens, Southside resident

For five years now, neighborhood residents, environmental activists and civil rights activists have joined forces to fight Onondaga County's racist proposals to build sewage plants in the urban core of the City of Syracuse. From Midland Ave, a primarily African-American neighborhood, to downtown Armory Square, the only successful economic redevelopment project in the City, resistance to building outdated and ineffective sewage plants in our neighborhoods and business district continues to grow. County Executive Nick Pirro plans to destroy homes over five blocks in the Midland Avenue neighborhood and build a large, stigmatizing sewage plant.

In Armory Square, a similar plant will be built behind the MOST museum, within shouting distance of downtown restaurants, bars and businesses. In both cases, the proposed sewage plants will dump millions of gallons of partially treated sewage into one of the most important waterways in our community, Onondaga Creek. And, as you may know, many of us intend for our Creek to have a bright future...with canoeing, a creek walk and bike paths, not as a sewage ditch.

## 300 Rally Downtown

Convinced that rising up for this vision extends beyond our generation and rever-

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*Zac lives on the Eastside of Syracuse and Louise on the Southside. Both have been active in the sewage struggle for several years with the Partnership for Onondaga Creek and Syracuse United Neighbors (SUN).*



Armory Square merchants express their outrage on a billboard. Photo: Mike Greenlar

berates deep into the future of equity in our community, we joined with like-minded friends and took our case to the streets. On May 2, the Partnership for Onondaga Creek co-sponsored a rally and march called "Reclaim Our Creek-Save Our City!" with concerned Armory Square merchants, Jubilee Homes, Syracuse United Neighbors (SUN), and the SUNY-ESF/SU Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC). A march of about 50 people gathered at Blaine Street and Midland Ave, the proposed site of the County's sewage plant, and vibrantly marched to the downtown Armory Square lawn. We were met by rousing cheers, open arms from a giant Earth mother puppet, "Emma," and the melodic sound of local musicians Joe Driscoll, Zach Kline and Anthony Kirkman.

We were over 300-strong, calling for a new vision for our city and for our creek. With a canoe on the stage, we called for

elected officials (see below) to build underground storage instead of aboveground sewage plants so we could enjoy the gift that Onondaga Creek is to our community. To a wave of cheers, Father John Schopfer of the Brady Faith Center said that Onondaga Creek was a "precious jewel" that should be honored as a creation of a higher power, not used as a sewer.

## A City United and a Creek

Armory Square merchants James Horan, Bruce Block and Karen Vladimer spoke of the need for a creek walk. They also spoke of the damage that an aboveground sewage plant that dumps sewage into the creek would do to the business community. Karen described how some of the merchants were selling decorative plungers as a symbolic protest of the lost opportunities that a downtown sewage plant represented. We heard from Lula Donald and John Thomas of the Midland neighborhood who described the history of relocation that many African-Americans have experienced in Syracuse. They emphasized that it was time to change course to a positive future for our grandchildren. This was not the first time that John Thomas has been faced with the prospect of uprooting his family, his home, because of the County's plans.

### Who to call:

County Executive Nick Pirro  
315-422-5311 or 315-435-3516  
excmorg@nynet.net

Gov. George Pataki  
315-428-4337 or 518-474-1041 or 8390  
gov.pataki@chamber.state.ny.us

NY Senator Nancy Lorraine Hoffman  
315-478-0072 or 518-455-2665  
Hoffmann@senate.state.ny.us

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Continued on next page

## Rico / from page 10

Increase the Peace Program (HIPP) where he was trained in conflict resolution.

In attempts to give back to the community and to share his story with others, Mr. Othman participated in an interview with local Channel 5 along side his case manager. Mr. Othman played a large role in organizing and facilitating a successful meeting at the Forum West to address issues of gun violence and positive alternatives for youth from different sides of the city. He was an example of what hard work, commitment, and determination together with community resources and support could do to change the lives of at risk youth in the Syracuse community. In March of 2001 he became a peer counselor

with the Boys and Girls Club in the same neighborhood where he grew up.

Mr. Othman worked for two and half years before he was indicted under RICO for the same charges for which he had already served probation. In his two and a half years of employment at the Boys and Girls Club, he had not been arrested, had no police contacts and was even released early from probation. He had no new charges or pending charges. Mr. Othman was indicted for racketeering for no reason other than that he had pled guilty to a charge three years ago and the US Attorney needed his indictment to strengthen the Government's case. A police officer acknowledged, "Ridwan is just a pawn in this."

How far is this government willing to go to get its way?

Why do local law enforcement officials assume programs geared towards intervening in and preventing youth violence among Black youth are less effective than just "locking them up?"

Although Black youth make up less than 15% of the county population, thus far they are 100% of those who have been indicted under RICO.

When will it stop? What will *you* do to make it stop?

There is a list circulating throughout the community of over 500 Black males who are being targeted next for RICO. Are your family members on the list? There will be rallies and meetings on this issue in the next few weeks. Please contact **Steven Muhammad** for specific times and days at **472-9744**. ☎

## Creek / from previous page

### Farmers and Fish Together !

As the rally progressed, we realized just what our movement – over 50 organizations and thousands of people who have participated through petitions, postcards and phone calls – could become if we worked together as an activist community. The Syracuse System Shakers, a colorful, radical cheerleading group waving plungers in synchronized chants, welcomed over 30 marchers from the NY Farmworkers Coalition (see p17) into our rally, waving red and black flags and chanting “*¡Si, Se Puede!*” (“Yes, we can do it!”). There was a powerful feeling of solidarity. At that moment we understood that if we refuse to struggle alone, we will always have strength together and we can win!

SUNY-ESF Professor Richard Smarden reminded us that Onondaga Creek and Onondaga Lake are sacred, particularly to the Onondagas, who are the historic stewards of the watershed. We should be mindful that these waters are our future as a community. They must be treated with respect so that life can return to them free from sewage or carcinogenic chemicals. We must embrace them as living parts of the lives that we would like to lead together. We must face this struggle in unison, not as segmented neighborhoods. Our collective history of justice, what is happening here and what is said and done for this vision will reach into our future. May we have a healthy community, a clean creek, and a prosperous future for those

to come.

Partnership for Onondaga Creek meetings are Tuesdays, 7pm at the Brady

Faith Center, 404 South Ave (across from the Southwest Community Center). To learn more, call **478-4571**. ☎

### The Civil Rights Complaint

What you should know about the Partnership's Title VI Civil Rights Complaint to the EPA (filed by Syracuse University Public Interest Law Clinic, April 9, 2004)

- **Sewage plants were planned in 1991, while public participation in the process began after the plans had been submitted in 1998.** In addition, the County intentionally compressed deadlines for the cleanup by four years, undermining a national search for alternatives and limiting public input for a community-friendly, environmentally sound solution. To date, South side homeowners *still* do not know the location of over a mile of proposed pipe relating to the Midland project.
- **The proposed Midland sewage plant will dump 77 million gallons of partially treated sewage into the creek per year,** undermining EPA-funded creek restoration efforts.
- **Asthma rates for the Midland neighborhood are 13 times higher than the rest of the County,** yet the proposed above ground plant will produce carcinogenic chemicals and destroy property values in a residential neighborhood where over 130 homes recently have been built.
- **The County plans to build underground storage for combined sewage near Schiller Park, where about 75% of the residents are "white."** The County plans to build an above ground sewage plant in the Midland neighborhood, where about 83% of the residents are African-American.

**Call the EPA (202-272-0167) and our Federal Representatives.**

Tell them to take the Title VI Civil Rights claim seriously...because you do!

Congressman James Walsh, rep.james.walsh@mail.house.gov  
315-423-5657 or 202-225-3701

US Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, senator@clinton.senate.gov  
315-448-0470 or 202-224-4451

US Senator Charles Schumer, senator@schumer.senate.gov  
315-423-5471 or 202-224-6542

# Long Road to Freedom: NYS Farmworkers March on Albany

Laurie Todd

In May, farmworkers and allies marched through upstate NY for passage of a Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act. Marchers joined the "Reclaim Our Creek, Save Our City" rally in Armory Square on May 2 (see p15).

Farmworker Celia Escamilla from Brockport, NY told a crowd in Syracuse, "I work eight to ten hours per day. I work with a desire to give a better future to my children. I'm here to ask the Senators to take us into account when making their laws."

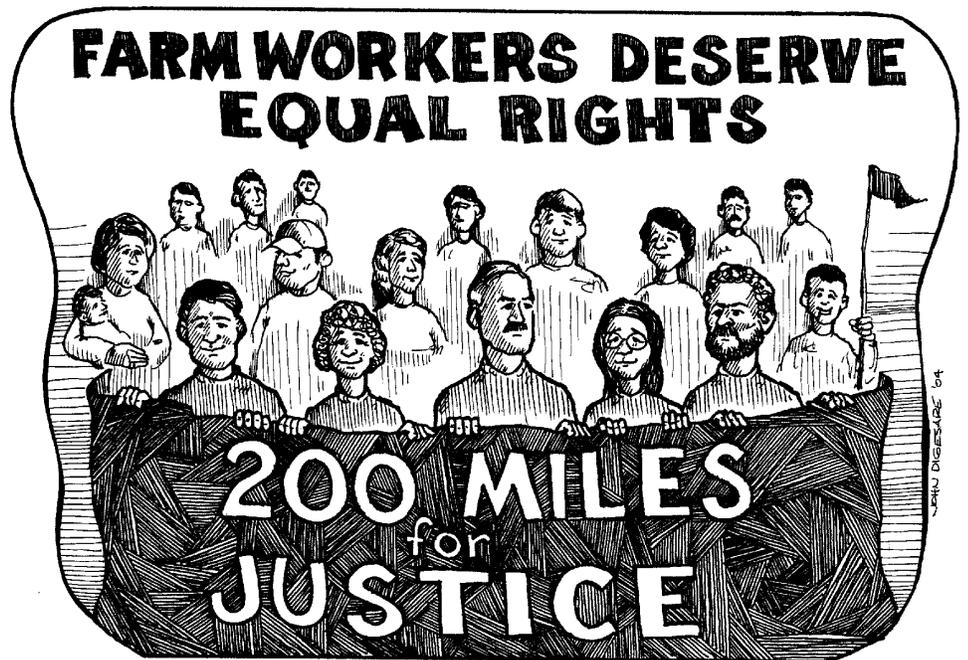
As he walked along, Francisco Rosario of Albion, NY, a farmworker for 20 years, remarked, "I believe in this country, I love this beautiful country. But I ask, what is going on? Why can't we have equal rights?" That is a question for which farmworkers are demanding an answer from the NY State Senate.

NYS farmworkers brought their struggle for equal rights to thousands of people in their ten-day, 200-mile journey from Auburn to Albany.

This March for Justice was organized to foster a groundswell of grassroots support for the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act (A2859/S3351), a bill that would grant farmworkers the same rights enjoyed by other workers in NY. Under current NY labor laws, farmworkers are excluded from basic workplace rights such as overtime pay, disability insurance, collective bargaining and a guaranteed day of rest. The State Assembly has already passed the legislation that would end these exclusions. The State Senate is the sticking point.

For the first time, there is significant support for the bill from the Republican majority in the Senate. But the bill languishes in committee, and without grassroots pressure may never be called to the floor for a vote.

The March for Justice, organized by a coalition of 200 farmworker organizations, labor unions, faith communities and advocacy and community groups, began



Graphic: John Digesare

on Saturday, May 1 in Auburn. For ten days the marchers traveled by foot through upstate NY, through Syracuse, Oneida, Utica, Little Falls, Canajoharie, Amsterdam, Schenectady and Colonie. They arrived in Albany on May 10 to bring their message to the state legislature.

At evening programs and rallies along the way, the marchers explained their cause and their motivation for undertaking this long journey. They asked people to contact their State Senator to ask him or her, not just to support, but to co-sponsor the legislation. The Senators need to hear from constituents that there is real support for this equal rights legislation in order to convince them to take action.

Upon reaching Albany the group was met by a large contingent from the Civil Services Employees Association (CSEA). The March for Justice proceeded to the state capitol where the marchers started a 24-hour vigil that lasted until the noon rally of hundreds the following day.

Farmworkers rights advocates, clad in bright red T-shirts and ponchos, declaring, "Farmworkers Deserve Equal Rights," heard from Arthur Rodriguez, President of the United Farm Workers union.

Rodriguez, successor to Caesar Chavez, called upon the Senate and the Governor to ensure that farmworkers are granted equal rights. "It's a moral obligation on their part," he declared.

Lucas Benitez, co-director of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (Florida), pledged to continue to pressure the legislators: "As long as workers working seven days a week can't maintain a dignified standard of living and...as long as farmworkers are seen as second class people."

Dennis Hughes, President of the New York State AFL-CIO, expressed his dismay that farmworkers have not yet won the right to collective bargaining in NY, a state with 2.5 million union members. He vowed, "With all my heart I promise you that we will fight with you until you win your equal rights."

A co-sponsor of the legislation, State Senator Olga Mendez (R-Bronx) reported that the bill has been voted out of the Labor Committee and is now awaiting action by the Rules Committee. Do your part to gain justice for farmworkers by contacting your State Senator to support bill S3351.

Laurie was the media consultant for the farmworkers' March for Justice.

# The Rwanda Genocide & Never Again in Africa

*Horace Campbell*

During April 1994, the peoples of South Africa celebrated the end of apartheid and centuries of institutionalized racism and white supremacy. The promise of a new era – the end of apartheid and crimes against humanity – was, however, shattered by the news, that same month, of the start of genocide in Rwanda, in central Africa. For 100 days the news from Rwanda overwhelmed all other news in Africa as the fastest genocide in history unfolded with the murder of over one million citizens.

Ten years later, the lessons of the Rwanda genocide have not been fully absorbed as the formation of the African Union seeks to move the African continent and its peoples beyond the traditions of genocide. Within South Africa the political leadership embarked on the establishment of a new institution, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in order to make the concept of Truth central to the politics of Africa. The idea of the Truth Commission came from the African principle of *Ubuntu*, meaning forgiveness, willingness to share, and reconciliation.

## History of Genocide in Africa

The history of mass murder in Central Africa has been traced to the colonial era when the Belgian colonialists massacred more than ten million people during the colonial occupation and pacification of the Congo. Adam Hochschild's 1998 book, *King Leopold's Ghost* documented what is known in Africa: that the colonial period was one of genocide. Genocide was a central aspect of the civilizing mission of colonial rulers.

The same colonialists that carried out mass murder implanted the idea that the issues in the region were ones of tribal hostility. This is the element of racism in

---

*Horace G. Campbell is a peace activist and Professor of African American Studies and Political Science at Syracuse University. His latest book is Reclaiming Zimbabwe: the Exhaustion of the Patriarchal Model of Liberation, Africa World Press, New Jersey, 2003.*

colonial history. Colonial powers carried out genocide in Africa. The genocide and mass murder in the Congo was followed by a century of mass slaughter throughout Africa, with the slaughter in the German protectorate of Namibia providing the rehearsal for the Nazi Holocaust. The Nazi Holocaust brought the issue of genocide to the center of international concern.

## Hutus and Tutsis

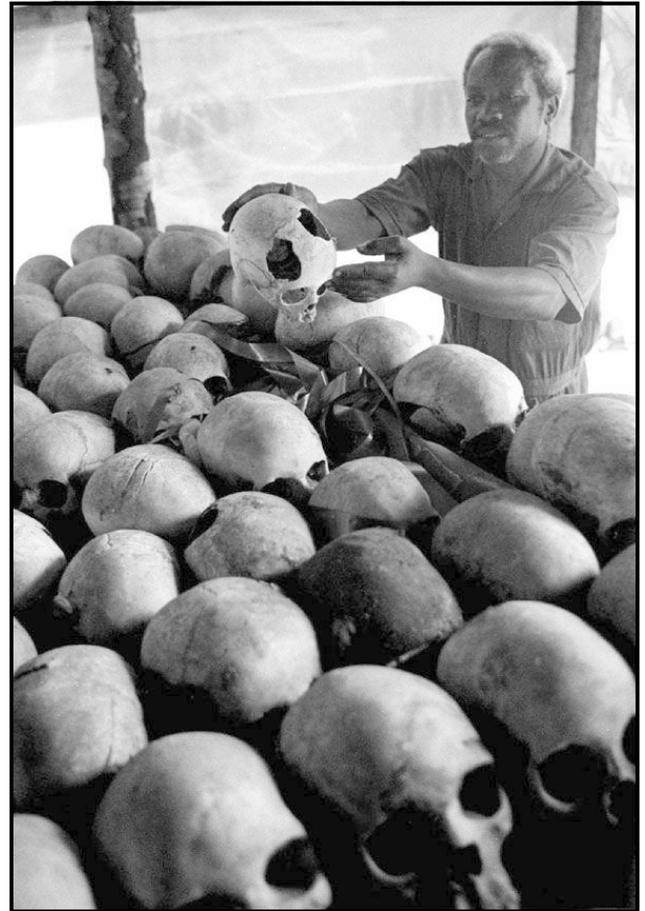
By framing the issues of the war and genocide in Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in ethnic terms, the international media successfully reinforced the racist notion that Africans come from savage tribes prone to war. The historical record will show that the Tutsi/Hutu identities were political identities that developed over hundreds of years as a result of colonial policies of divide and rule.

In both Rwanda and Burundi the forms of Belgian colonialism nurtured Tutsi and Hutu identities to shore up the colonial power. This deformity at the political level exploded on the eve of independence.

## Genocide in Rwanda and Burundi

In the era of decolonization when the US and Belgium were conspiring to derail the decolonization process, the Belgians shifted their support away from the so-called Tutsis when the Tutsis joined in the call for decolonization. Belgium supported a group called the Paramehutu to try to hijack the decolonization process and the first massacres took place in 1959. Between 1959 and 1994 there were systematic pogroms against the so-called Tutsi in Rwanda.

The politics of the region was seriously split in the Cold War. The military forces that ruled in Rwanda said they were defending the Hutu and carried out geno-



*The official memorial site dedicated to the victims of genocide in the village of Ntarama, Rwanda, where 5,000 people were killed in April 1994. Photo: Reuters*

cide against the Tutsi, while in Burundi the militarists carried out pogroms against the so-called Hutus. Tutsi refugees in Uganda and Hutu refugees in Tanzania ensured that the questions of Rwanda and Burundi were militarized issues for central Africa.

During the Cold War, the militarists who ruled Rwanda and Burundi were supported by Mobutu in the Congo and by France and Belgium. Mobutu had been elevated to power after the Belgians and the US assassinated Patrice Lumumba in the Congo in January 1961. In 1990 some of the refugees from Rwanda started to wage armed struggle for their return home and for an end to the pogroms. The organization which launched this armed struggle was called the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF).

The Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi were killed in a plane crash in April 1994 while returning from a meeting in Arusha, Tanzania. There is still controversy over who shot down the plane. Notwithstand-

## Rwanda / from page 19

ing this controversy, the reality was that the plans for genocide had already been made. Weapons had been distributed for the mass slaughter.

In his 2003 book, *Shake Hands With the Devil*, General Romeo Dallaire detailed his warnings to the UN Security Council of the elaborate plans for genocide. Opposition politicians were the first to be targeted. Most of those killed were Tutsis, but all those who opposed genocide were marked. The United Nations pulled out troops just when they were needed. There are now a number of books that detail the complicity of France and the US in betraying the peoples of Rwanda and Africa. It is important to highlight the role of France in supporting the authors of the genocide.

### France Protects the Authors of Genocide

At the time of the genocide in 1994 (when scenes of the bodies in the lake made good footage for CNN), there was no force on the horizon to stop the killings. The RPF resumed the war to stop the killing. At the point when the RPF was close to defeating the killers who were called the Interahamwe, France intervened on a so-called "Humanitarian Mission" called "Operation Turquoise." The French "humanitarian" mission provided military assistance so that those who were carrying out the genocide could escape into neighbouring Zaire (formerly Congo, renamed Zaire in 1971, changed to Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1997) – ruled by Mobutu. Before they escaped, the perpetrators of the genocide incited millions of ordinary Rwandese to flee, saying that they would be killed.

The US government lobbied other governments to withdraw from Rwanda amid the genocide and then flew into Goma in Zaire to provide camps for the nearly two million Rwandans refugees. Such was the level of disinformation in the West that ordinary citizens were called upon to provide donations for the refugees in the camps in Zaire (now renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo). In 1996 more than a million refugees returned to Rwanda. This left over 40,000 Interahamwe fighters in the DRC. These fighters were supplied with weapons by France. It is their presence in the Congo that has precipi-

tated the wars in that country since 1996.

Ten years later the whole of central Africa suffers the legacy of this genocide as the unfinished questions engulfed Rwanda and the Congo in two wars. There are reports of more than three million persons dying in the war between 1998-2002. The impunity with which the Interahamwe roam capitals around the world forces us to ask: what are the future implications of this silence for would-be perpetrators and victims of genocide?

### Democratization and Demilitarization in Rwanda and Central Africa

There will be destabilization in the region until the peoples of central Africa embrace the politics of healing and reconstruction beyond militarized identities. The reality is that even after the overthrow of Mobutu, the end of war and the formation of the African Union, there are vested interests in the capitalist world that want to see the region destabilized and the peoples exploited. The economics of warfare in this region perpetuate violence and crude extraction of resources. This is the region of *blood diamonds* and coltan – a mineral used in cell phones. All cell phone users should reflect on the link between this region's mineral resources and the realities of warfare.

Those committed to demilitarization and justice in their own societies will support the call for the authors of the genocide to be brought to justice. It would be unthinkable that ten years after World War II the Nazi killers could be roaming around Europe mobilizing support for their crimes. This travesty is possible because for many in Europe and the US, Africans are not human beings but savage tribalists.

One of the many



A young survivor of the genocide.  
Photo: Jenny Matthews

challenges for the peace movement is to be able to oppose genocide in *all* parts of the world. There are many who continue to embrace the view that genocide does not happen in Africa. That the genocide nevertheless happened and other mass murders and crimes against humanity continue in Africa (now in Darfur, Sudan) reflects the reality of militarism, warfare, torture and war crimes in international politics. ♻️

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# The Ice is Melting in the North:

## Statement to the UN Peace Summit

Oren R. Lyons

*Oren Lyons, faithkeeper of the Onondaga Nation, and Audrey Shenandoah, Onondaga Nation clanmother, represented Indigenous Peoples of North America at the UN Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, August 28-31, 2000. The following is taken from Oren Lyons' statement made to that gathering. Prepared for the PNL by NOON (Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation).\**

### Leaders of the World:

*Neyuwenha-skanoh* [Thank you for being healthy]. I bring you greetings from the Indigenous peoples of the north and the great Turtle Island, now called North America. I bring you the most urgent message brought to our annual gathering of traditional elders and youth by a runner from the north, from Greenland: *The ice is melting in the north.* He informed us that some 15 years ago they noticed trickles of water coming down the sheer face of Glacier Mountain. That trickle has grown to a roaring river of ice water pouring out of this mountain into the Atlantic Ocean. He informed us that Glacier Mountain has lost 4,000 feet of ice in these past few years. And the melt continues to accelerate. *This is an alarming message that requires your absolute attention.*

### Leaders of the World:

We are a collective voice of indigenous peoples. We have joined this great mission for peace. We add our presence in support of this great effort for reconciliation between peoples and nations. We agree that there must be parity and equity between rich nations and poor nations; between white people and people of color and rich people and poor people with special attention to women, children and indigenous peoples. We, in our collective voices, add to this that *there must be a reconciliation between people and the natural world, between nation states and the forests that sustain us; between corporations and the resources that they mine, the fish that they catch and the water that they use.*

### Leaders of the World:

Indigenous nations and peoples believe in the spiritual powers of the universe. We

believe in the ultimate power and authority of a limitless energy beyond our comprehension. We believe in the order of the universe. We believe in the laws of creation and that all life is bound by these same natural laws. We call this essence the spirit of life. This is what gives the world the energy to create, procreate and becomes the ponderous and powerful law of regeneration, the law of the seed. We in our collective voices speak

of this to remind you that spirit and spiritual laws transcend generations. We know because this has sustained us. Religions and spirituality are vital to survival and moral law. It is faith that has sustained our human spirit through our darkest hours. It has sustained our human spirit in crisis, during the times we suffered through the grinding measures of inexorable persecution that have spanned generations and continue today. Yet here we are today, adding our voices to this plea for sanity in leadership and responsibility to the future generations whose faces are looking up from the Earth, each awaiting their time of life here.

### Leaders of the World:

Peace is dynamic and requires great effort of spirit and mind to attain unity. Leaders of peace must step forward and take responsibility for a paradigm change away from current lifestyles and materialistic societies. *The human species has become the most voracious and abusive consumer of Earth's resources. We have tipped the balance of life against our children and we imperil our future as a species.*

### Leaders of the World:

Despite all of our declarations and all of our proclamations, no matter how profound they may be, *the ice is melting in the north. We see the acceleration of the winds. We see the fires that are raging in North America. And, we see that the sun's rays that provide us with light, energy and*



*the very essence of life now are causing cancer in people, blinding animals and killing the plankton and krill of the sea. This is only the beginning and already we are helpless. We will now see the real spiritual powers that govern the earth.*

### Leaders of the World:

There can be no peace as we wage war upon OUR MOTHER, THE EARTH. Responsible and courageous actions must be taken to realign ourselves with the great laws of nature. *We must meet this crisis now, while we still have time.* We offer these words as common peoples in support of peace, equity, justice and reconciliation. *As we speak, the ice continues to melt in the north.*

*Dahnato* [now I am finished].  
*Neyawenha* [thank you].

\*This material, as well as Audrey Shenandoah's statement were originally included in *Neighbor to Neighbor, Nation to Nation*, published by NOON in November, 2001 (available from SPC).

*Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation (NOON) is a program of the Syracuse Peace Council focusing on recognition and support for the sovereignty of the traditional government of the Onondaga Nation. Among our goals is promoting understanding of and respect for the Onondaga people and culture within the broader Central New York community.*

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