

JERICHO '98 -- BE THERE!!



Jericho '98 has been organizing for a march on Washington to serve notice that we will no longer tolerate the presence of political prisoners in the United States. Organizers hope that the Jericho '98 march will mark the beginning of a stronger movement for the release of political prisoners. Jericho '98 will present documentation of the cases of political prisoners to Congress and establish a legal office that would handle the cases of destitute political prisoners. The march will take place on Friday March 27, 1998. To get involved in your area call:

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LOVE & RAGE

REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHIST NEWSPAPER



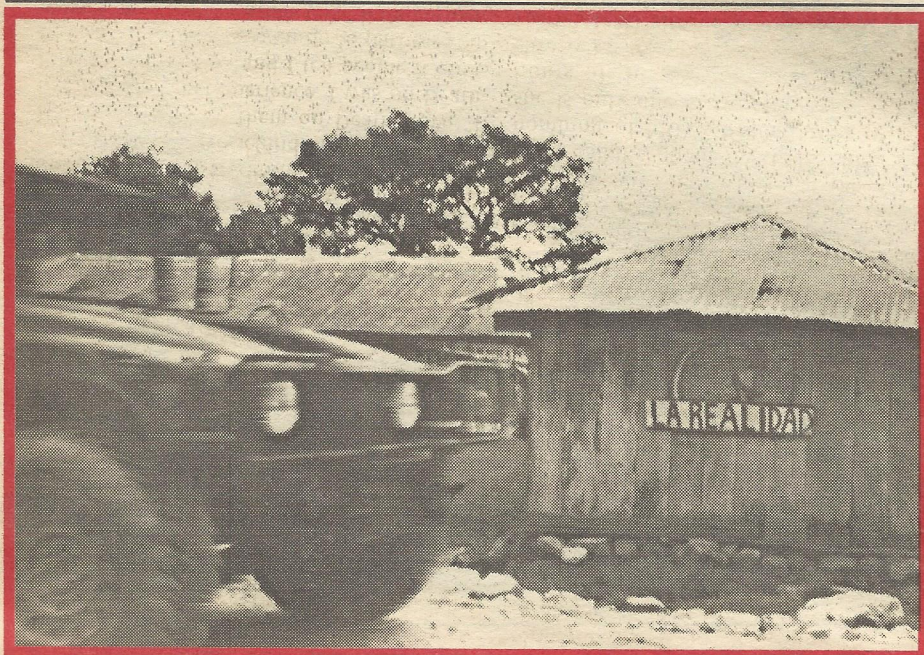
Zapatistas Stand Their Ground

Inside: *US Out of Mexico Centerfold Pull-out Poster ★ Copwatch 206 In-depth Chiapas Coverage ★ Temp Worker Organizing International Anarchist News ★ Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoners*

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 1

JAN / FEB 1998

\$1



American-made Humvees run through the Zapatista stronghold of La Realidad daily.

It Takes A Whole Huey To Raze A Village: US Arms Mexican State for Dirty War Against Its People

BY CHRISTOPHER DAY

Twice a day, every day, about 25 US-made Humvees carry about 175 nervous Mexican soldiers toting US-made M-16 automatic rifles and heavier weapons through the Zapatista village of La Realidad. La Realidad is the headquarters of the military leadership of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN). The troop convoys have become a fact of life for the residents of La Realidad, including the many refugees from the village of Guadalupe Tepayac who were driven from their homes by the Mexican Federal Army in February 1995. In early October the Federal Army soldiers built a new military encampment on the banks of the Rio Euseba on the other side of La Realidad. This new encampment is the latest stage in the military encirclement of the Zapatistas and in the increasing militarization of Mexico. The rapid growth in the Mexican police state has depended on large quantities of US military aid.

Historically the Mexican military differs from those of the rest of Latin America in two respects: It does not wield much politi-

cal power and the Mexican military has maintained a degree of relative independence from US domination. Mexico has been invaded repeatedly by the US and the Mexican military has long considered the US its most likely external enemy. Until recently Mexico has relied less on the US for military training than any other Latin American country. The Mexican people are generally opposed to close military ties with the US.

THE MILITARIZATION OF MEXICO

While the most intense militarization of Mexico followed the Zapatista uprising in 1994, the process of militarization dates to the early '80s. In 1982 when the Mexican Peso collapsed Mexico found itself unable to pay its foreign debt. In exchange for international loans the Mexican ruling party, the Party of the Institutionalized Revolution (PRI), implemented a series of austerity measures; they slashed state programs and sold off public industry. Having faced a number of guerrilla movements in

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Chiapas on the Brink: Forty-Five Murdered on Eve of EZLN's Fourth Birthday

BY JESSICA PARSONS AND CHRISTOPHER DAY

The paramilitaries are still armed in our communities. We left because we are afraid that they will kill us like they did the others," said Manuel Perez, a 28-year-old refugee who fled his village on December 28 with his family. As he spoke, five days after the brutal massacre of 45 indigenous refugees living in the village of Acteal by the paramilitary group "Mascaras Rojas," the violence had not stopped. Over 3,500 campesinos had left their villages seeking refuge in the Zapatista autonomous municipality of Polhó.

In the weeks since the bloody massacre the Mexican state has responded to this crime, not by punishing those responsible, but by attacking the Zapatista communities. The massacre on December 22 is only the most brutal act of violence in an ongoing "dirty war" being waged against the indigenous peoples of Chiapas. Clashes between Zapatista supporters and sympathizers, like

those in Acteal who are members of the civil organization "Las Abejas," and government-sponsored paramilitary organizations have been raging for seven months, leaving at least 30 dead and over 2,000 homeless in the region of Chenalhó alone. The victims of the massacre in Acteal were a part of this refugee population who had already been burned out of their homes in nearby villages by paramilitaries.

From the Presidency on down, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the ruling party in Mexico for over 70 years, has been funding and tacitly supporting paramilitary groups in Chiapas in an attempt to eradicate support for the Zapatistas. All the while the federal government has claimed it seeks to "put an end to the violence," and thrown up flimsy smoke screens to disguise its offensive. In an especially silly foray, Mexico's Federal Public Prosecutor, Jorge Madrazo, claimed the

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Women and children stand up to Mexican military police at Altimirano January 4.

People's Tribunal For Mumia Draws Thousands

BY DAVID ONION

On December 6, 1997 several thousand people packed the Blue Horizon in North Philadelphia for the People's International Tribunal for Justice for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Entering the hall, full of unfamiliar faces, news cameras, communist paper pushers, and freedom fighters of every flavor was bewildering to say the least. Having worked hard on Mumia's behalf with depressingly little results, the turnout was a refreshing shock.

I arrived just in time for Ward Churchill, American Indian Movement veteran and author, who gave a condensed outline of CoIntelPro's specific strategies and tactics in attacking the revolutionary left and other groups of people working for social change. Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt spoke next, casual and down to earth as ever. He talked of his own experience as a CoIntelPro victim, having spent 27 years behind bars after an FBI frame-up, some of them on Death Row. "I like to talk from experience. I was on Death Row for 18 months and I tell people it ain't no joke! You sit here, you go to parties, you have meetings, you drink your little coffees ... Death Row Ain't No Joke! Now, you talk

about freeing a brother on Death Row, you're talking about something that's very serious, that's very immediate. Especially with this situation in Pennsylvania. So I think we should do everything we can to call people to arms if need be to defend our brother." We do need to be reminded sometimes that we have a hell of a lot of moving space compared to those waiting to be executed, or thrown in the hole.

Further testimony came from Mumia himself, read from either letters or books or shown on the screen from video. A representative from Academics for Mumia Abu-Jamal read testimony from Mumia about the night of his arrest, where he details being beaten, tortured and then threatened by cops in the hospital and in jail.

When Pam Africa announced that 5,000 people were marching in the streets of San Francisco for Mumia the crowd went crazy but soon fell silent when she appeared via video talking about the 1985 Philly Police bombing of MOVE headquarters of which she is only one of two survivors. I've seen hours of this coverage but it still sends shivers up my spine. Throughout the additional testimonies people spoke of the severity of the state's repression of activists

and revolutionaries. They emphasized the assaults on MOVE and the brutal and murderous ways of the Philly cops who carry it out.

We reconvened after lunch for more testimonies concerning police brutality and abuse in Philly. Execution-style murders, harassment, and violence against supposed Asian "gangs," Philly's organized and brutal police corruption as recently exposed in the 39th District Police scandal—all were presented.

After briefly outlining Mumia's prison conditions at SCI Green, the Death Penalty itself was presented to the Tribunal. Leonard Weinglass began the presentation of the legal evidence by introducing Mumia's legal team who ran down the case's chronology and its key issues.

Lawyers took the stage individually discussing phony ballistics evidence, bullshit confessions on behalf of the cops and witnesses who had received threats or been otherwise coerced to give false testimony. Veronica Jones, who was coerced into testifying against Mumia and later testified in his appeal despite serious threats to her freedom and life, came on stage to massive applause. Steven Hawkins told of recently-

fired Judge Sabo's hostility, his sabotage of Mumia's defense, and his eagerness to issue the death penalty. Hawkins cited as evidence five District Attorneys' opinions that no one could receive a fair trial in Judge Sabo's courtroom, and these words from the head of the criminal section of the Pennsylvania Bar Association who said that "every time Judge Sabo walks into a courtroom a little bit of the constitution dies." He went on to explain how the prosecution turned what was supposedly a murder trial into a political trial by presenting as evidence Mumia's involvement with the Black Panthers as well as quoting him out of context in an attempt to put his revolutionary politics on trial.

The Tribunal was a huge success. It contrasted strongly with the most recent actions and demonstrations for Mumia not just in size, but also in the broad diversity of participants and organizers. Together with Judge Sabo's firing and the parallel demonstration of 5,000 in San Francisco, we are seeing a surge of strength in this struggle. Let's use this momentum and energy to continue struggling and to launch new assaults on all the machinations of imprisonment and oppression! Onward!★

What is Love & Rage?

Love and Rage is the English-language newspaper of the Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, an organization made up of groups and individuals in Canada, Mexico and the US who share a set of common politics and who work on political projects together. *Love and Rage* is produced by a Production Group in New York City. The Production Group is made up of volunteers and one full-time staff person. *Love and Rage* is one of the many projects of the Federation, which also produces the Spanish-language *Amor y Rabia* in Mexico City, and supports and initiates various actions and campaigns.

Major decisions and overall policies of the Federation are set by federation conferences, or between conferences by the Federation Council.

The Federation is not a closed circle of friends. You can join *Love and Rage* and participate fully in the decision-making process. If you are in general agreement with the stated politics of the Federation and are interested in getting involved, contact the Federation Office or your local contact. Even if you do not wish to be a member of the Federation you can participate in *Love and Rage* projects. Please contact us.

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Boring Disclaimer

The articles we print do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Federation or of any member of the Federation, unless specifically marked. Sometimes we print articles we don't agree with because we believe that they are interesting, provocative, or raise important issues for the revolutionary movement. Some articles represent one view among many views held by *Love & Rage* members on a topic.

Submit to Love & Rage

We encourage you to submit material for publication. Shorter articles are more likely to be printed. 1,750 words, a full newspaper page, is a long article. We will not accept submissions over 3,400 words in length. Submissions will be edited. Please include a phone number and address or email address so we can consult you on editing. Articles not printed may be sent to our internal bulletin unless otherwise noted. All letters will be considered for publication unless you request that they not be published.

About Our Politics...

The Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation is in the process of developing a statement of our common politics (yeah, it's a long process). The following introduction to our old Political Statement gives an idea of where we are coming from:

Love and Rage is a bi-monthly anarchist newspaper intended to foster revolutionary anti-authoritarian activism in North America and build a more effective and better-organized anarchist movement. We will provide coverage of social struggles, world events, anarchist actions, and cultures of resistance. We will support the struggles of oppressed peoples around the world for control over their own lives. Anarchy offers the broadest possible critique of domination, making possible a framework for unity in all struggles for liberation. We seek to understand the systems we live under for ourselves and reject any pre-packaged ideology. Anarchism is a living body of theory and practice connected directly to the lived experiences of oppressed people fighting for their own liberation. We anticipate the radical and on-going revision of our ideas as a necessary part of any revolutionary process.

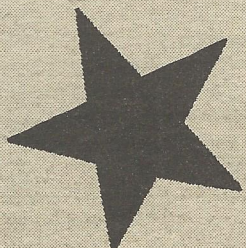


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Veterans of the takeover of San Cristobal in 1994 march in celebration of the fourth anniversary of that action in Oventic, Chiapas, January 1, 1998.

GOVERNMENTS DON'T FALL BY THEMSELVES. THEY NEED YOUR HELP. JOIN THE FEDERATION.

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Letters to Love and Rage

WE STILL CHARGE GENOCIDE, MR. PRICE

Revolutionary greetings and universal luv comrades and cadres in arms. May this article find you in de spirit of resistance,

First of all I would like to apologize to Mr. Price for de name calling in my response to his article. I realize that although we may have different politics, we both seek to dismantle de forces of imperialism. We can agree to disagree without de unnecessary name calling. Nevertheless, its still amazing how some peepoe go to great lengths to prove New Afrikans (Afrikans in Amerikkka) are not victims of genocide. They claim that if your not being treated "Exactly like the so-called 'Jews'" of Nazi Germany then your claim to genocide is invalid, to say de lest. Their failure to take into account time, place, and circumstances is unscientific and kounter-revolutionary. Dialectical materialism teaches us that things are in a constant state of motion (change). if we all understand and agree with this point, then we must study and overstand the dialectical changes in de way genocide is executed towards certain peepoe. This isn't de 1940s, and we aren't in Nazi Germany (per se), and we definitely aren't them so-called Jews. What de Nazis set out to do to de so-called Jews in one day, de Amerikkka empire has set out to do to Afrikans in this Kolony throughout de Diaspora over an extended period of time... but with de same effect!!!

De first problem with Mr. Price's analysis is that he refuses to recognize Afrikans in Amerikkka as a colonized Nation who is engaged in a protracted struggle to free itself from an alien state powah. Kkkolonial violence is genocidal violence, and I think Mr. Price knows this. But to avoid admitting it and addressing de primary contradiction confronting our nation in Amerikkka he uses words such as "minority", "Afrikan-Amerikan", and mere "Lack of

government care", which are words that do not properly define us or our shit-u-ation as a peepoe. These neo-kolonial words divert our attention away from de subjects of genocide, repatriation, self-determination and national independence. Instead our focus becomes racism, discrimination etc. All of which gives de impression that we are Amerikans and also that all we have to do is remove a few bad apples place some blak faces in so-called high places and our conditions will be better.

We must overstand that de system itself is genocidal it was built off de genocide of peepoe of kolour and de only way it can be maintained is off de intentional physical, political, social, cultural, biological, economic and religious and moral oppression of these same peepoe! All of which—according to Rafael Lemkin who first defined it (WCG, pg. 46)—constitutes G.E.N.O.C.I.D.E.

De empire is aware of this. If de system of kolonialism is to be maintained that, whoever is appointed as rulers over it must be a kolonialist! So no Mr. Price there is no difference in Nazi's KKKlansmen, and de "United States" ruling class other than their clothes and de modernized tactics they use to employ kkkolonial violence. These Neo-Nazis, kkklansmen and other right wing extremist orgs. are merely extensions of de empire. Different uniform, same mentality. All of de objectives are de same, which include: Intentionally killing members of our Afrikan nation through kkkounter insurgency campaigns like cointelpro, unleashing kkkolonial occupational personnel (kops) to terrorize our communities and savagely gun down citizens of our nation; or murdering our P.P/P.O.W.'s in fascist death chambers called prisons/x-row.

It also includes forcing our children into schools that are systematically designed to warp our minds and teach us negative images about ourselves, causing us to have low self esteem and self hatred-totally destroying our creativity and will to learn. We new Afrikans Revolutionary Nationalist call this causing

serious bodily or mental harm to members of Our Nation.

There is this thing these beast have about inflicting on de New Afrikan nation, kkkonditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction. They systematically kkkonfine us to disease-ridden ghettos where living conditions far exceed below even de basic standard of living. We suffer everything from lead and asbestos poisoning to illnesses caused by drinking contaminated water, breathing polluted air, and consuming man-made chemicals that have been spread on fruits and vegetables or injected in animals. These foods are being sold on de Blak community at outrageous prices. I recently read an article about an all Afrikan community in Scareborrow Tennessee on South Benedict Ave. where children are having chronic respiratory problems this nuclear plant is causing, but they will do nothing because it serves their interest. I could go on and on but I'd be reiterating my last article in L&R.

Mr. Price admits that where he sees mere "oppression by a social system" I see "A deliberate conspiracy." Well you damn skippy. And I hope that my peepoe wakes up and see this conspiracy as well. Realize that we are at war for our very survival!!! I leave you in de words of our elder, Sundiata Acoli: "...Awareness is essential because it determines your actions. And once you become aware you WILL act. Aware you could no mere refuse to act than to stand in de middle of a railroad track and watch a runaway locomotive bear down on you. You will act and act in de correct manner, because it is a matter of life and death that you do so..."

Uhuru (freedom) Sasa (now)!

~Re-Build~

Mangwiro A. Sadiki
New Afrikan Revolutionary Nationalist
held captive at de Indiana State Prison

(Continued to page 19)

Temp Worker Organizing: High Hopes, Legal Traps

By JASON WINSTON

Jason Pramas, an organizer for the Massachusetts Campaign on Contingent Work, thinks he's sitting on a time bomb. "If we succeed in what we're doing, we will have a labor movement that dwarfs that of 1930s. The numbers involved are just so much larger."

Statistics on the contingent work force back Pramas's claim. Contingent workers (part-time, temporary, contract and day-labor employees) make up 30% of the Massachusetts work force and about the same nationally. Temp workers, the most visible section of this group, make up about 16% of the US work force. Unions currently represent only 11% of American workers.

As became clear in the recent UPS strike, contingent work is one of the most serious current threats to struggles for workplace justice and dignity. Increasing use of contingent workers is also a huge obstacle to unionization. But some groups, often sponsored by or in coalition with unions, have met this challenge with a variety of creative strategies.

In addition to the Campaign on Contingent Work, organizers of this fast-growing section of the work force include the Temp Workers Union in San Francisco, the Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment (CAFE), Communication Workers of America, Justice for Janitors, Atlanta Union for the Homeless, Louisiana Injured Workers Association, and 9 to 5, the national association of working women.

The need for organizing is clear. Temporary workers earn 30% less than full-timers, and that figure includes temporary technical writers who are paid \$150 an hour. Even with such high-paid temps included, temp workers average only \$7.50 an hour. Half of temps are clerical workers. One quarter are considered professional and the rest are industrial workers. Most statistics on temporary work only represent temps in "temp agencies" and don't even account for the many industries like janitorial services and the needle trades that work almost exclusively through subcontracting firms.

ANTI-LABOR LAWS

Worse than just low pay is temps' almost complete lack of benefits, protections or job security. Existing labor law rewards companies who subcontract out for work. If a company uses a temp firm, it is no longer legally required to provide benefits, or even to monitor basic working conditions. When a company keeps its number of employees below fifty, it need not comply with the Family and Medical Leave Act, which guarantees family members time off from work to care for one

another. And, all federal anti-discrimination law applies only to workplaces with more than 25 employees. Because temps, part timers and contingent workers move in and out of the job market, they are also ineligible for social security benefits and disability insurance, despite having paid into the system their whole lives.

A TIER SYSTEM

Routine racial and sexual discrimination is a fact of life for temps, 80% of whom are women. Pramas describes how this system of discrimination works at one Boston financial services company: At the bottom are workfare workers, who are primarily women of color. Above them are the temporary service staff, who are mostly Latino. Office temps are mostly white, as are consultants, most of whom are college graduates. With legions of temps ready to take over their tasks, the few full-time workers left are increasingly vulnerable to being fired or having wages and benefits cut. The racial tier system in this one firm also operates in the temp industry as a whole where people of color get assigned manual labor jobs and office work is reserved predominantly for whites.

Temp firms are always out to keep wages down, and they are relying more and more on workfare workers to do so, especially as unemployment decreases from its high of 17% in the early 1995 to 12% today. SOS Staffing Services Chairman Richard Reinhold admits, "Without the welfare people we cannot fill all our orders for temps. To get enough people without them, we would have had to raise the wage—not by a lot, maybe five percent—but we would have had to pay more." State governments and temp agencies are often eager to cooperate in placing workfare workers with temp agencies. This corporate-government collusion is exemplified by Juanita Pierman, who does double duty as vice-president of government affairs for Kelly Temporary Services and chairwoman of Michigan Governor John Engler's Workforce Commission, which oversees one of the nation's harshest welfare-to-work programs.

The use of workfare workers is helping to drive the continuing expansion of temp work in the economy. Temp giant Manpower surpassed General Motors as the largest private employer in the US in the early 1990s. While total US employment increased only 1% between 1990 and 1993, personnel services employment, which includes most

temp agencies, increased by 25%.

So how do temps and other contingent workers fight back? In Louisiana, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) has spearheaded the Louisiana Injured Workers Association. They have successfully organized "hoppers," people who load garbage onto sanitation trucks, who are contracted through agencies and work alongside unionized Teamster truck drivers. SEIU's strategy is to negotiate separate contracts

sent "testers" into temp agencies to prepare to file legal charges against violating agencies. CAFE has launched a state-wide campaign to target violating agencies with legal action and grassroots pressure. New local organizing projects are brewing with contract food service workers at the Citadel, temp workers at hospitals in Charleston, and contract janitors in state buildings in Columbia.

In 1992, members of the IWW, the Peace



SEIU's Justice for Janitors takes to the streets of Washington, DC.

simultaneously with all the temp agencies that hire hoppers in Southern Louisiana. They have already won two master agreements that cover 750 hoppers, raising wages and setting a minimum day rate. Organizing all the hoppers prevents any one agency from getting a competitive edge.

Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment (CAFE) in Greenville, South Carolina is a state-wide community based workers' rights group that began work on contingent employment in the late 1980s with efforts to stop a school district from contracting out its majority black hourly workers and to pass a county ordinance to limit the time that county employees can remain temporary. Since then, CAFE has built a base of temp workers and gathered information on the most abusive temp agencies. They held a week-long "Temp School", distributed a newsletter for temp workers, asked agencies to sign on to Principle of Fair Conduct and

and Freedom Party, and the anarcho-syndicalist Workers Solidarity Association came together to start the San Francisco Temp Worker's Union (TWU). The TWU operated a drop-in center and served as a temp hiring hall which sent temps mostly to unions and non-profit organizations. The TWU hoped to allow temps to earn high wages by keeping administrative costs low and requiring union members to work office hours. "Interest was no problem," says TWU organizer Ray, "We had over 400 people apply and about 800 drop in."

But the TWU had some legal problems and difficulties with member turn over that forced it to close its drop-in center. Members are currently fundraising and exploring ways of using the internet so that they can reopen. The union hopes to eventually organize enough of the work force to have an influence on workplace disputes

(Continued to page 19)

The Canadian State's Got No Class

By BIG B AND CLYDE—HAMILTON, ONTARIO

Tory Education Minister John Snobelan came to power in 1995 on promises to cut taxes for the middle and upper-classes, clamp down on welfare fraud and preserve frontline health care and classroom spending in Ontario. Snobelan expressed his wish to "Create a crisis in education." Two-and-a-half years and one teacher's strike later, he seems to have gotten his wish.

Early in the Fall of this year with the introduction of a sweeping piece of Legislation, Bill 160 (the Education Quality Improvement Act), the stage was set for a fight over public education.

In the meantime public outcry over Snobelan's style forced his replacement by then "House Leader" Dave Johnson who was promoted by the government as a Mr. Fix-it.

Teachers' groups threatening to strike under the banner of the Ontario Teacher's Federation (OTF) demanded that the government directly address their concerns over the proposed Bill, as they had the Province's Doctors' the previous year.

The Teachers' main concerns over Bill 160 were negotiated class sizes, preparation

time, lay-offs and to continue collective bargaining between local school boards and teachers. To the teachers' unions all of these amounted to a massive concentration of power over education in the Province's hands. Province-wide the teachers maintain that mandated shorter preparation time for teachers would mean a reduction of up to 10,000 jobs. The Government does not dispute the likelihood of lay-offs, only the number, which it estimates at around 7,000. This estimate set bells ringing not only among teachers, but increasingly with the public, who could not figure how fewer teachers would mean "better, quality education". The Bill also proposed that the Government would, along with an appointed "Education Improvement Commission," make the massive changes to education alone and without appeal.

Reaction to the perceived threats of the Bill grew among students, parents, schools and local boards, many of which were under threat of elimination anyway, from previous legislation which had now become law.

In Hamilton, as in the rest of the Province, student walk-outs and parent-teacher meetings and speak-outs became more frequent. Local boards passed resolu-

tions leading to the point of strike.

The Province-wide and illegal strike by teachers (illegal because nearly all of the collective agreements in Ontario were still current) was announced for October 28 after two delays. The teachers referred to it as a giant "political protest".

This turn of phrase—the use, by the unions, of the term "political protest" as opposed to strike, was meant to avoid vio-

lating 'Back to Work' legislation or breaking their collective agreements—legally speaking. Teachers could not be forced back from a suspension of services under Labour law, if they were exerting their right to protest an injustice done them. A "Political Protest" grew, however, as an idea to include all those feeling some stake in public

(Continued to page 19)



Canadians show support for the largest teachers' strike in North American history.

Watch 206

Watch 206, founded by members of Black Autonomy The Nation of Gods and Earths (The Five Percenters) and other concerned people in Seattle, is one of the most consistent, interesting, and radical copwatch programs in the country. Members of Love and

know, because that's just how our people are. Merciful: Straight up. Because it's life or death. It's not like a hobby thing where we're like, "Oh, this is fun." No, cos if we're not out watching, somebody is gonna get killed. My best friend was killed by the

DOING COPWATCH

L&R: Why don't you break it down step-by-step what happens on a typical copwatch?

Merciful: There is no typical day. [Laughter]

Shukuza: The first thing is an equipment check. Make sure you have all the proper tools you need. Make sure you have all the laws on board, your automobile licensed, etc. Don't give the cops anything because as soon as you do you'll be a target. Find out

be anywhere.

Merciful: You don't want to let the cops see your car. They'll see you and they'll go in a different direction. Don't let them get to know your car. If you see something happening, drive a couple blocks up the street, park around the corner and walk back. Cos they'll start fucking with your car or they'll know you're there. We had two instances where we had stopped and jumped out the car up the street. But they saw us go by, and by they time we got back, what happened?

Shukuza: They were gone.

Why and How We Watch the Cops

Rage talked with them to get a sense of the strategy, tactics, and political purposes behind watching the cops. Speaking for Watch 206 were Greg Jackson, Nuru Shukuza, and Merciful. The interview was conducted by Joel, with the help of Doug and Stephanie, at the Evergreen College in Olympia, Washington.

L&R: Why don't you start out by explaining what Watch 206 is and who it's made up of.

Jackson: It's a program where we basically do surveillance of law enforcement, government, business, etc., and provide information to the community. The community needs, everything from statistical information to something they can build a case on if they're suing a police department. What we do is roll around with the cameras and the law books, and if we see a cop making a stop we come up on him from a safe distance—in uniform so they can't say we're from the TV show Cops or Candid Camera. We come out disciplined, sober, and we handle business. We record the stop on camera. If the person is let go we give them a flier and tell them what we're about and ask them if they need any help in any kind of way, be it getting an attorney, or giving the person a ride. Simple stuff like that. You know, just serving the people. It's pretty straightforward.

L&R: How did Watch 206 get started?

Jackson: Basically, it was the killing of Edward Anderson on Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, 1996. The cops blew him away in his own backyard. We saw how various reactionaries in [the Black] community handled it, as far as getting everyone into the church to whine and cry and vent their frustrations and yet nothing happened. They just deferred to the police department and of course the officer was acquitted.

Merciful: In a private inquest. When they picked the jury [for the inquest], Anderson's family wasn't invited. The police chief was there, the officer involved was there, but nobody from the community was allowed to sit in. We don't know what was said. The inquest concluded that the [officer's] glock went off accidentally.

L&R: And you all suggested that if this is true, why didn't the city sue the glock company.

OBJECTIVES OF COPWATCHING

L&R: What are the objectives of Watch 206?

Jackson: Essentially, to police the police, to educate the public on what their rights are, and to further develop community unity. Our slogan is "We're the REAL civilian review board." That's what we are. We're appointed by the community, because this \$900 camera here, that was given to us by a member of the community. The other \$800 camera we have was given to us by a member of the community, no strings attached. That's who we answer to, the community, and if you're doing a good job they let you know and if you're not they will really let you

police in 1995, and that ended a big part of my life. The same thing's gonna happen to somebody else's friend if we're not out there watching the police.

Jackson: Especially when they're protecting the interests of the rich, and that's their historic role. Where did the police come from? They came out of the slave patrols, they came out of the European immigrant population, using one section to go after the other section, and then both sections went out after our people.

L&R: Is the goal of Copwatch to get the suspect out of custody or

is it education? For Minneapolis Copwatch (organized by Minneapolis Anti-Racist Action), the goal has always been to get that person let go, and at first we were pretty successful. The cops would shove the person along and focus on us, while meanwhile we're talking to folks and passing out propaganda. For the first few months the cops were totally flustered. But then they figured out who we were and as soon as they saw us they called on their radios "We've got Copwatch, send backup." They learned how to deal with us so that they could still take care of their business busting people even with our presence. So is your goal to unarrest or to observe?

Jackson: Either one is fine as far as we're concerned, but the science is as far as what you're talking about: always have that hidden camera. Always have an ace up your sleeve, always.

Shukuza: It's actually a win-win situation whichever way you go. You're either going to catch them doing something illegal to the suspect that you can use in court, or they're going to leave [the suspect] alone. If they straighten up in front of the camera because they don't want to get sued or whatever, well, you just saved somebody from possibly getting killed.

Jackson: They also know that if something happens to [a suspect] in jail, Copwatch may swoop down on them at another time, maybe in court, at the jail, or on their beat again.

where the hottest areas are to do a copwatch. Build a rapport with the community, so they'll let you know what's going on. Get a register of the officers that you deal with.

L&R: How do you do that?

Shukuza: Well, a lot of times it's dangerous to ask an officer for his badge number, especially if it's an abusive officer, so use the camcorder. Zoom in on their badge, their license plate, their car number. Get a description of the officer.

Merciful: That's right, cos they knew. Park a distance away and get some good binoculars, so you can creep up. Also, [while you're taping the cops] somebody stands kinda close and somebody stands like 20 or 30 feet back. Cos the person in the back is watching what the pigs is going to do to the person up close and to the person they're arresting.

Shukuza: A lot of times you [Copwatch] will become the event. A lot of times they cops will come after you, so you need to be able to catch that, too. We have had

someone try to take a swing at the camera.

L&R: So you get the call and you head on out there. You park the car discreetly and you go to wherever someone's up against the wall or whatever. Then, what's the standard operating procedure?

Merciful: Announce yourself to everyone so they don't think your cops. "We are Copwatch 206. We are here to make sure no misconduct takes place."

Shukuza: We pass out fliers so people in the general area know what we're about. We have a couple cameras filming, we got a couple people doing some writing.

Merciful: Don't walk up on the actual person [being

detained]. If you walk up to them the police can arrest you for obstruction of justice. If we see something that's going in the direction of assault we're like, "What are you doing, officer? Why you doing that? He's not resisting arrest."

Jackson: You can speak firmly to them. Straight up, I talk down to them. Now that may sound authoritarian, but what did Malcolm X say about racists? You speak to them in a language they can understand. Now if a cop comes up to us like "How you guys doing?" we talk to them like normal people. But when a cop's up there representing or mean-mugging or yelling at us, we tell them, "We're taxpayers. Our money pays your salary. Therefore, we're your boss, so you will surrender your badge number now."

Merciful: And they can sense fear, too, so you gotta talk to them like you know what you're doing, like you have a right to be there, or they'll punk you.

L&R: How many people go out on a copwatch?

Jackson: We never give out those numbers.

(Continued to page 14)

Abortion Doctor Under Attack

Dear Pro-Choice and Social Justice activist,

We are writing this open letter to the pro-choice and social justice community to ask for your involvement in supporting a Bay Area abortion provider who has been charged by the California State Medical Board with murder for the death of a woman from an abortion-related complication. Your help is needed, not only to vindicate Dr. Steir of these trumped up charges, but to contend with the efforts of the anti-abortion movement to criminalize abortion and the doctors who provide this essential service. The anti-abortion movement is already manipulating this case to spread more fear and misinformation about abortion.

On December 13, 1996, Sharon Hamplton, a 27-year-old woman, traveled two hours from her home in Barstow to the closest abortion clinic for a second trimester abortion. She was 20 weeks pregnant. She received standard care, and at the end of the abortion her vital signs were within the normal range. She was released from the clinic and driven home by her mother. She and her mother stopped for a meal along the way. Tragically, when they arrived home her mother discovered that Sharon had died in the back seat from undetected internal bleeding due to a perforation in her uterus.

While this is a terrible event, it is clear to us that this is neither a case of murder nor criminal medical negligence. There has been misleading press coverage about this case in the San Francisco Chronicle. On October 24, 1997 the Chronicle told the prosecutors' story that "Sharon Hamplton was vomiting blood and in an unstable condition" when Dr. Steir left the clinic to catch a plane back to San Francisco. However, at the time of the tragedy, we were told by personnel from a sister clinic that Sharon Hamplton was functional when she left the clinic and that her physical condition did not indicate that there was a serious medical complication occurring (like vomiting blood!). Most people have physical changes in their vital signs after surgery, and the changes that she had are considered normal within the standard of abortion care. Had Sharon Hamplton shown signs of internal bleeding proper steps would have been taken and she would be alive today.

UNPRECEDENTED ACTION AGAINST ABORTION PROVIDER

When there are medical complications in any other procedure, doctors are investigated for medical malpractice, not murder. Physicians are often charged with medical malpractice because their patients die from surgical complications. They are not, however, criminalized and charged with murder. This is in fact the first time that an investigation by the State Medical Board has led to murder charges against a doctor. With this charge the Board of Medical Examiners is telling providers that if they practice abortion they will be evaluated by different standards than their peers in other specialties. In fact, public documents show that while the Board is spending resources in their "full speed ahead" investigation of abortion providers, they have been tossing out hundreds of complaints against other providers without investigation due to their backlog of cases.

The Board's action is the culmination of years of a politically-motivated investigation into the practice of all California doctors who provide second trimester abortion. Documents legally obtained through discovery in a separate but related case exposed an eight-year campaign, spearheaded by "Physicians For Life," of lobbying the Board of Medical examiners to persecute doctors who do second trimester procedures. The lawyer representing the Hamplton family is the attorney for Physicians for Life, and there is evidence of anti-abortion sentiment on the Board of Medical Examiners.

THE THREAT TO SECOND TRIMESTER ABORTION

We are dealing with a significant threat to second trimester abortion. Abortion is inaccessible to women in an overwhelming 85% of U.S. counties. Second trimester abortion is even less accessible and the anti-abortion movement has specifically targeted those few doctors willing to perform this important service with intensified harassment. As we are sure you are aware, the anti-abortion movement tries to discourage doctors from providing abortion by making life so miserable that they give up the practice and that young doctors do not take up abortion service.

Dr. Steir is one of a hand full of doctors in California who has not backed down from providing second trimester abortions and had been willing to travel where his services were required. There are innumerable women in the rural areas of northern California who would have not gotten the services they needed or would have had to travel to Reno or Sacramento if it were not for Dr. Steir. Dr. Steir has survived death threats and a murder attempt and his name appeared on a "target list" circulated by anti-abortionists who call killing doctors "justifiable homicide."

Locally, anti-abortion clinic harassers are already adding the Chronicle article to their arsenal of fear-inspiring misinformation. Anti-abortion pickets at the Pregnancy Consultation Clinic in SF have been chasing women down as they enter the clinic, handing them copies of the article and trying to intimidate them.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Don't let this tragedy become a banner for the anti-abortion movement. Join our efforts to stop this anti-abortion campaign. Medical complications are not murder. You can help by circulating this letter or your own statements regarding this case to your members and contacts, writing letters to the editor, and to the Medical Board of California. And you can help mobilize a strong presence at Dr. Steir's trial the first week in February in Riverside County. Get involved in the Dr. Steir Defense Committee.

Sincerely,

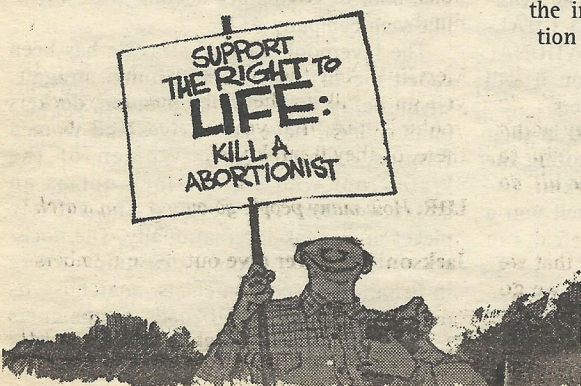
Brenda Cummings, ACCESS
Laura Weide, BACORR
Tom Burghardt, BACORR
Simone Durante, Refuse & Resist

We are members of the Strong Links coalition, a coalition dedicated to quality care and full accessible reproductive health services for all women. We convened in 1995 to create a link between pro-choice activists, clinic workers and abortion providers to better counter the insidious efforts of the anti-abortion movement.

Medical Board of California
1430 Howe Ave
Sacramento, CA 95825

Dan Lundgren, CA Attorney General
PO Box 944255
Sacramento, CA 94244-2550

Dr. Steir Defense Committee
510-704-5293



Bad Attitude Goes Belly Up

For the last six years Bad Attitude (BA) magazine, published out of London, has brought a class struggle, anti-state approach to feminism. Unfortunately BA has ceased publication. Despite a series of personal and financial setbacks, BA had intended to continue. Some BA members have left London, while the rest have suffered the financial hardships of wage cuts, the pressures on low-rent housing and squatting and all the other hassles of surviving in capitalism. This has also made it hard to find new collective members who have the time necessary to make the kind of commitment needed in putting out a publication such as Bad Attitude. BA intends to donate their remaining funds to two new radical women's magazines and to other women's groups making trouble in the spirit of BA. One of the new publications BA will be supporting is Women's Direct Action News. They are looking for reports, photos, cartoons and graphics. Send a large self-addressed envelope, donation and/or stamps for the first issue to: PO Box 9384, Brixton, London SW9 7ZB.★

Activists Hassle Mead Paper Mill for Decades of Dioxin Dumping

BY ANNE PETERMAN

Early on the morning of September 15, twenty activists from the Native Forest Network and Earth First! descended upon the town of Rumford, Maine. Upon arrival, the activists hung a large banner which read "Mead/Boise: Different Name—Same Game" off the main bridge through town which crosses right by the Mead mill. Other activists blocked the bridge with cones and a "Road Closed" sign.

Simultaneously, another group took over the roof of a Mead office and hung two banners. One read "Dioxin Kills" and the other, "Corporate Greed Stinks. Can You Smell it?". Three activists left the roof without incident when the police arrived but one was arrested after he came off the roof and the two activists who remained on the roof were arrested and charged with criminal trespass.

Known as Cancer Valley, Rumford is notorious throughout the region for its one-in-four cancer rate. A local doctor is working to prove that the cause is the Mead paper plant (formerly Boise Cascade) in the heart of the town on the Androscoggin River.

Mead recently declared that they will comply with new federal guidelines and convert the mill to less polluting technology. However, NFN and EF! protested to demand Mead convert all its mills to 100% chlorine-free technology.★



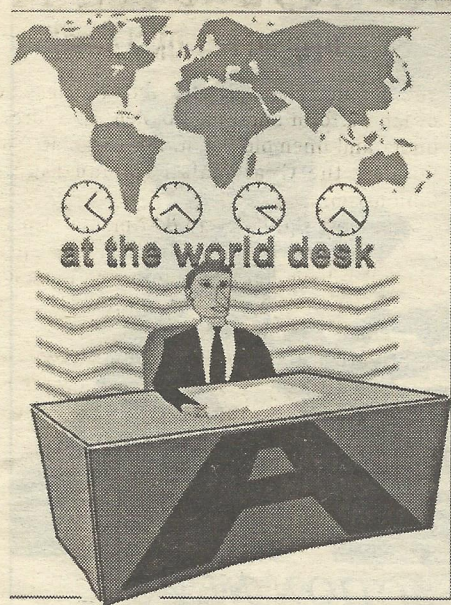
Custodians 1, Privatization 0

Custodians and groundskeepers in Barre, Vermont public schools were forced to accept a cut in pay last spring or be privatized. Their jobs would have been contracted out to a private firm which pays minimum wage and offers no benefits. The school custodians, members of AFSCME Local 1369, weren't going to sit back and take it. Working together with AFSCME, the National Educational Association, Central Vermonters for a Livable Wage and #10 Collective/Central Vermont Love and Rage, they developed a plan for fighting back.

This summer activists canvassed most of Barre with a petition supporting the custodians and working to build support for their case. Activists found a very pissed-off community that was aware of the problems of privatization, the distribution of wealth and union busting. Many were aware that school administrators received raises on their \$80,000-a-year salaries and the school actually had a budget surplus.

Large crowds attended a series of five Barre School Board meetings this fall to demand the School Board adopt a no-privatization policy. The janitors received good support from the teachers, students and community members who generally put forth a radical, class-conscious message. Spaulding High School janitor Norm Frattini spoke for many when he said "this is all wrong. Capitalism, all of that. We need different priorities. I've got five kids and am working wherever I can just to scrape by."

In the end the Barre School Board caved in to community pressure and agreed not to privatize for three years, when privatization will be subject to collective bargaining between the union and the School Board. Activists, including some of the Barre school custodians, are now planning to work with other low-wage school employees in the central Vermont area to demand a living wage.★



Victor Serge Library Opens

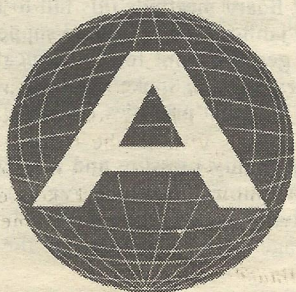
MOSCOW—The Victor Serge Public Library opened on May Day-May 1, 1997. It is the first and only library of its kind, since the end of Russian Revolution (1921), that holds scholarly and political literature of a left-wing political nature (anti-capitalist and anti-bureaucratic). The library also hosts discussions. "We are working in cooperation with the Self-Government Committee of a public library in a Moscow neighborhood. Books are lent out, there are classes and discussions, most recently on the 1936 Spanish Revolution. The Library Committee appeals to all organizations and individuals that would like to support the spread of left-wing ideas and the development of the workers' movement in Russia to help our work," reported Julia & Alexei Gusev. The library came out of a project, Books for Struggle, which in 1995 collected forty six boxes of radical books sent from U.S. activists. Renfrey Clarke, an Australian journalist, arranged for the books to get through customs, actually getting an actor to impersonate an irate official! The Victor Serge Foundation in Paris (a nonprofit group since 1996, translating and publishing Serge's works) also helped support the project. Richard Greeman of the Foundation said the library was set up "on the initiative of representatives of various left-wing currents (from democratic socialists to anarcho-syndicalists)." Victor Serge (1890-1947) was a French-German writer and revolutionary active in anarchist and Marxist circles. The library welcomes donations of books and journals and financial contributions.★

Books and journals can be mailed directly to:

The Victor Serge Public Library
Balaklavsky Prospect 4-6-365
113639 Moscow, Russia

Tax deductible donations can be sent to:

The Victor Serge Foundation, Inc.
16 rue de la Teinturerie
34000 Montpellier, France
tel/fax: (334) 67 63 14 36
Email: richard.greeman @ hol.fr



Anarchist Communist Federation of UK Goes Global

LONDON, ENGLAND—The Anarchist Communist Federation, organized in Great Britain, has made contact with North American anarchists in hopes of going international. Its new North American Bulletin boasts, "The ACF takes its international contacts seriously—we want world revolution after all! We now have 60+ individual contacts in the USA and almost 10 in Canada."

Mike of Nottingham ACF, gave a talk at the London Anarchist Bookfair in October, '97, "Whilst there are anarchist communists in many countries, the individualist and syndicalist traditions still dominate. We argue that these traditions neither fully represent revolutionary, working-class self-activity nor offer the best way towards international revolution. In addition, many countries have no anarchist tradition, where our ideas have not reached or the state has suppressed them. Our aim is to encourage revolutionaries to work towards an Anarchist Communist International. This is vital because we believe that the revolution, wherever it starts, must spread quickly internationally if it is to survive."

Revolution cannot succeed whilst Capitalism remains in any part of the world. Neither can it succeed whilst established anarchist organizations draw too heavily on the experience of militants in the Western traditionally industrialized countries, without addressing the changing experience of the working class under new global capitalist practices. For this reason we take communication with our members, sympathizers and contacts throughout the world very seriously, giving what advice and support we can to them and learning from the lessons they learn in struggle in their respective countries.★

The ACF North American contact is
Raze the Walls - Section Georgia, 2351 College
Station Road, Box 253, Athens, GA 30605
Email: raze@bellsouth.net

The ACF publishes a quarterly, Organise! and has a new, shorter bimonthly broadsheet, Resistance.
Contact them at:
ACF c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London
E17QX, England
Web: http://burn.ucsd.edu/~acfi

Liverpool Dockers End Dispute

In a stunning, short statement issued Monday January 26, 1998, Jim Nolan, chairman of the Merseyside Port Shop Stewards notified longshore workers and supporters around the world that "the Liverpool Dockworkers decided to call an end to their long running dispute." The stewards recommended a collective settlement providing a \$42,000 buy-out and continuity of pensions for those employed by Mersey Docks and Harbour Company. About 80 young dockers employed at Torside and Nelson Freight are not covered by the terms of the agreement. There is no guarantee for job re-instatement for the 500 dockers.

After the privatization of the docks in Britain in 1989, Dockworkers' unions have been busted in port after port. There is now not one union port in Britain with a collective bargaining agreement solidly in place. Liverpool was the last! Such is the legacy of 20 years of Tory and now "New Labour" Government's service to Capital!

After nearly 2½ years of waging a militant fight against the company, interna-



Freedom for George Balafas

ATHENS—Greek radical, George Balafas, went to trial in a court of appeal on October 22, 1997. Balafas' trouble goes back to 1985 when he went into hiding for seven years. He was accused of the deaths of police in an armed confrontation. He was later also wanted in the death of a public prosecutor and sought as Greece's number one terrorist. Balafas was arrested in 1992 and presented, unsuccessfully, as a member of the 17 November organization. Then he was charged with hashish possession. Many sectors came to his defense during his February 1994 trial. After five months he was found innocent on twenty counts. The authorities prolonged his jailing and he went on a two month hunger strike. He was released in September 1994. The authorities were shamed by his release. Apparently under pressure from the US State Department and the right-wing New Democracy party he was again arrested in November 1995 in a case that should have been dismissed in the first place and for which in 1988 two other persons were found innocent. Balafas was convicted and sentenced to ten years imprisonment.

The Committee of Solidarity to G. Balafas, formed in 1995, is composed of anti-authoritarian and far-left activists. It sees the case in a context of changed conditions in Greek society. There has been a militant, fighting movement in solidarity with political prisoners and armed groups.

There have been demonstrations, occupations, hunger strikes and support from a wider social movement still hostile to authority since the dictatorship that ended in 1974. Many victories resulted from the activism. But since the 1980s and into the '90s Greek repressive mechanisms became more integrated with European and American ones. This so-called modernization is seen by the Committee as:

- Imposition of neoliberalism/imperialism; redistribution of wealth away from weaker classes to elites.
- Domination by the US State Department and CIA in antiterrorism, in Greece and internationally.
- An increase in judges' power, creating a "prison state" against civil rights and the freedom of the individual. Harassment mainly focuses on political militants.★

Send protests to the Ministry of Justice:
fax: (01) 7758742

and the daily newspaper "Eleftherotipia":
fax: (01) 9028311

"Against the CIA - Greek State's plans - Release George Balafas".

Committee of Solidarity to G. Balafas
Valtetsiou 35 - 10681 - Athens, Greece
tel: (01) 3813928 fax: (01) 6745 302.

Nigerian Anarchists Need Funds!

NEW YORK—the Workers Solidarity Alliance (WSA) section of the anarcho-syndicalist International Workers Association (IWA/AIT) has started a solidarity effort to assist the Nigerian section of the IWA, the Awareness League. The AL is a recently formed group. Anarchism is a fairly recent movement in Africa. The AL suffers under the twin problems of imperialism and military dictatorship. Lack of finances hinder their ability to organize. They have asked

international comrades for financial help in securing office equipment like a computer, printer, typewriter, etc. They seek relatively modest sum of \$2000 to buy a computer.★

To donate or for more information contact:

WSA
339 Lafayette St., Rm 202
New York, NY 10012
tel: 212-979-8353, fax: 201-667-9197
E-mail: agony@dorsal.org

tional shipping conglomerates, the government, and even their own Transport & General Workers Union leadership, the Liverpool dockers, perceiving dwindling national and international support, decided to end the strike.

Although our brothers in Liverpool have been defeated in a valiant effort, through no fault of their own, they have awakened workers around the world and taught us all a critical lesson: "UNITED ACTION THROUGH INTERNATIONAL LABOR SOLIDARITY IS THE ONLY WAY TO CHALLENGE THE POWER OF INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL". If we absorb this lesson it will be a victory for the Liverpool dockers.

The Liverpool dockers concluded in their January 28 letter to supporters quoting the great Irish trade unionist James Larkin:

"Who is it speaks of defeat? I tell you a cause like ours is greater than defeat can know it. It is the power of powers."

--The above was taken from a statement by the Liverpool Dockers Victory Defense Committee of Oakland/San Francisco.

In California, solidarity activists are being sued for damages incurred by the shipping company whose goods languished when protesters successfully prevented a ship, the Neptune Jade, from unloading.

In a one day worldwide strike action September 8, 1997, dockers in South Africa, Japan, Canada, West Coast US, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, etc. halted work. Some vowed to continue to boycott the Mersey Dock and Harbour Company (MDHC) in Liverpool or companies dealing with MDHC like scab company ACL.

The Liverpool dockers' struggle has been called the first postmodern union struggle. Given paltry help from their union, dockers (mainly men) have seen wives and women friends organize into Women of the Waterfront who see the lock out as an attack on their very survival and actively picket and speak internationally. The dockers accepted help from extra-union forces in Britain like eco-anarchists, anarcho-syndicalists, socialists, anti-roads campaigners in Reclaim The Streets and unemployed activists in Groundswell. ★

Repression's new face in Guatemala

By MARK LUCEY

Guatemalan government in its war of counter-insurgency?

THE PEACE ACCORDS

Guatemala was infamous in the 1980s as "the number one human rights abuser in the Western Hemisphere", as identified by Amnesty International. Today Guatemala now fancies itself a major defender of human rights. The signing of Peace Accords in December of 1996 marks the first formal truce between the guerrillas of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) and the government. To any visitor to Guatemala, the social and political situation certainly appears to have improved significantly. But the question remains: Do the Peace Accords actually mark the end of over 40 years of brutal repression or simply a strategy shift by the

The Peace Accords met with enormous celebration on the part of the government, the URNG and the indigenous population. The URNG initiated negotiations in 1986 when heavy casualties convinced them that seeking state power through armed struggle was too costly. The government was obstinate at first and claimed they had "defeated" the guerrillas and thus had no reason to negotiate, especially if the URNG remained armed. But on May 8th of this year as the Military Observers Mission of the UN attested, the URNG turned in all their weapons demon-

strating "its wholehearted will to comply with the Peace Accords."

In September 1996, the Demilitarization Accord was signed, which supposedly leaves the military with a single function: defense of Guatemala's territorial integrity. It also made the important step of disbanding the Civilian self-defense Patrols, village men organized in paramilitary fashion by the military, and it reduced the military budget by a third.

The 1995 Accord on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples mandates an amendment to the constitution that Guatemala is a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic nation. The accord has not addressed problems at the grassroots level and racism abounds within the Ladino community.

The Peace Accords will most likely have little material benefit to the lives of most Guatemalans.

A key element of the development of the Peace Accords was the formation of the Assembly of Civil Society (ASC), a forum made up of almost all sectors of society except, by their own choice, the CACIF (Camara de Comercio y Industria Financiera - Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Finance). The CACIF is an organized body made up of the 2%-3% of the population that owns 75%-90% of the country's resources.

The Peace Accords have little chance of being passed intact by the Guatemalan Congress. The second largest party in the congress is the extreme right party of former dictator Rios Montt, which has stated quite bluntly that it has no intention of cooperating. The Accords are full of weak or reactionary provisions that can be sabotaged or compromised to the point of complete ineffectiveness.

The Truth Commission for example was created as part of the Peace Accords to expose past governmental and military crimes, but has been given no power to name criminals, nor to take any sort of judicial action. This carefully planned amnesty law lets war criminals off the hook to continue repression.

THE NEOLIBERAL ONSLAUGHT

The Accords also side-step the crucial issue of land reform and take no steps to address under and unemployment, now estimated at 66% by the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission.

The most significantly detrimental aspect of the Accords, however, is the wide open door they have left to the gung-ho embracing of neoliberalist strategies by Guatemala's economic elite.

Privatization dug the ground of social security out from beneath Guatemala's poor just as repression appeared to be fading. Every day the newspapers spout headlines about privatization of yet another public industry. President Alvaro Arzu is one of the country's biggest proponents of this economic approach. He promises in speeches and official releases that privatization will benefit the entire country by increasing the quality of services and by raising money for the government which can then be fed into the communities. But, according to Julio Diaz, General Coordinator of the Worker's Union of Quetzaltenango (UTQ), "We [the people] haven't seen one penny yet."

Diaz talked about how the Ministry of Public Works, his former employer, was shut down. Contracts for road building and other infrastructure are being sold to large private companies. Five thousand workers were left unemployed. Since the Ministry of Public Health was privatized, medical check-ups that used to cost one quetzal (16 cents) per visit are now five to ten quetzals.

As the cost of living in Guatemala is surging, overt violence has been replaced by a neoliberal economy that threatens workers with unemployment. Maria Toj, a spokesperson for the Commission of Campesino Unity (CUC) stated, "Organizing to demand human rights is prohibited. Anyone organizing for any reason will be threatened as a consequence. And the threats come in the form of lay-offs, unem-

(Continued to page 18)



Residents of Panzós, Alta Verapaz, prepare to excavate the graves of the remains of 50 villagers assassinated by the Guatemalan army in 1978.

Elections a FARC in Colombia

By JESSICA PARSONS

National elections in Colombia on October 26, 1997 saw record low turnouts at the polls. The New York Times reported that in most rural areas, turnout was negligible.

In the Eastern and Southern parts of the country, turnout was measured in the single digits in many towns; mayors in at least nine towns were elected with fewer than 20 votes, in some cases with just one ballot in their favor. Polling places were heavily guarded by soldiers and men and women

who did come out to vote were separated and search by armed soldiers and police. The small turnout was a product of the boycott of the elections declared by two guerrilla groups the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

The two groups declared a boycott in April on the grounds that it is not possible to have free and democratic elections in Colombia. They cited the lack of guarantees of safety for progressive candidates who face death at the hands of paramilitary groups, and the "dirty war" being waged by

the Colombian government against insurgents that has displaced and killed thousands every year for the past twelve years. Both groups considered anyone running for election as a potential military target. Keeping to their word, the guerrillas killed at least 28 candidates and kidnapped over 200. More than 10,300 candidates for various offices feared the guerrillas and withdrew their candidacy.

Events the week preceding the election give credence to the rebels claims that free and democratic elections are impossible in Colombia's present political climate: On the 19th and 20th of October, 24 soldiers and rebels were killed in clashes.

On October 21, the Supreme Court voted to oust Attorney General Orlando Vasquez, five months after he was arrested for accepting thousands of dollars in drug money. On the same day, four people were injured in Cali when a grenade exploded outside of a bread shop. On October 22, a bomb exploded outside of police headquarters in Monteria, in the northwest section of the country. The blast damaged 17 buildings. On October 23, two machine-gun attacks killed six workers in the banana-growing region of Uraba. The victims were believed to be a part of a leftist group called Hope, Peace and Freedom. On the same day, in the Northeast area of Covarachia nine rebels and a policeman were killed during heavy fighting. A total of 34 rebels and security force members had been killed in the past three days. On the same day, the United Self Defense Groups of Colombia, a right-wing paramilitary organization released a communiqué threatening retaliation against all those who abstained from the elections. Similar threats were made by the left-wing guerrilla group, the Popular Liberation Army against all those who participated in the elections.

THE REBELS ARE WINNING

In an October 7 interview in the Mexican daily paper, La Jornada, a former leader of the now-defunct Colombian rev-

olutionary organization M-19, stated that FARC and ELN "In military terms... have more territory under their control than ten years ago, more people in arms... and they have a consolidated a very strong social base, almost all of them in the illegal [drug] cultivation zones that are very extensive. The national agrarian crisis provoked by the neo-liberal model has very much helped with the guerrillas' expansion."

On September 11, two of Colombian President Ernesto Samper's special advisors admitted publicly that the Colombian state cannot militarily defeat the rebels. The advisors said that the government had no other option than to recognize rebel spokespersons. While Samper agreed with his advisors and attempted to initiate talks with the rebels, the rebels rejected Samper's conditions that they end their boycott of the elections and recognize paramilitary groups as legitimate actors in Colombia's political arena.

On September 4 Samper began an attack on the FARC. The operation, code-named "Destructor II", included 4,000 government troops, backed by US-supplied Bell attack helicopters and 25 A-37 fighter-bombers. The main goal of the mission was to capture FARC leaders believed to be in the area. In addition to the military offensive, Samper authorized the legalization of paramilitary death squads, known as "Convivir," to terrorize supporters of the revolutionary movement. Hundreds of peasant and union leaders have been tortured, assassinated or kidnapped by death squads this year.

THE GOVERNMENT IS CORRUPT AND INCOMPETENT

Samper and his administration have been wracked with a series of scandals connecting them to Colombian drug cartels. In July of 1996, the United States accused Samper of collusion with drug traffickers and revoked his visa to the United States. A series of investigations into the government's connection with drug traffickers resulted in the resignation and imprisonment of the

(Continued to page 18)



Venezuelan soldiers near the border with Colombia, awaiting possible guerrilla activity from their neighboring country.

ANTI-RACIST ACTION REPORTS

Los Angeles ARA Calls Out Sierra Club On Racism



Men peak through new, "friendly-looking," 14-ft border fence from Nogales, Mexico into Nogales, Arizona.

By Scott, ARA-LA

Friday, November 28, members of Anti-Racist Action/Los Angeles, People Against Racist Terror, the Industrial Workers of the World, La Resistencia (an immigrants' rights group) and L.A. Workers' Voice staged a two-hour protest in support of immigrants' rights outside the Los Angeles office of the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club will soon vote on a proposal that opposes immigration on the grounds that it hurts the environment. The protest was planned to coincide with "Thanksgiving," a holiday itself based on a white-washed tale of European immigrants in Massachusetts who enslaved and murdered the natives who taught them to grow food and survive.

The action aimed at persuading the more moderate members of the Sierra Club to vote against this anti-immigrant proposal when it is placed on a club ballot in early 1998. We carried signs saying "The Environment Knows No Borders," "Fight the Real Enemy: CORPORATE Pollution" and "Sierra Club: Don't Legitimize Racism."

The action received news coverage from both local radio news stations. All the Spanish language television stations broadcast the picket on the evening news. Several of the participants gave interviews in Spanish to the news people. They advised The Sierra Club that if they do not reject this anti-immigrant proposal we will step up our campaign and expose them as a racist organization.

It is hardly surprising to find the Sierra Club caught up in this mess. They have long been one of the most conservative

environmental groups and have frequently compromised with corporations seeking to develop wild lands. They are not part of the right-wing "wise use" movement whose ranchers and hunters want to use wild areas for sport or profit but they have always favored the recreational use of wild areas over other ecological concerns. Nevertheless the Sierra Club has a reputation as a "pillar of the community." The Sierra Club legitimizes the faction that is sponsoring the proposal, and cloaks themselves in this reputation to mainstream their agenda.

THE NEW WAVE OF ECO-FASCISM

In the 1980s, right-wing Washington, DC think tanks began soliciting support from the growing environmental movement. They used names like "Population-Environment Balance" and claimed that the US had reached its ecological "carrying capacity" (the maximum number of life forms it could support) and that the only way to preserve the environmental balance in the US was to put a stop to further immigration. But a lot of the fuel for the 1980s "green movement" came from middle class suburbanites who were angry about being inconvenienced by the impact of unbridled growth. This was personified by the so-called "Not In My Backyard" (NIMBY) movement against development.

Unlike movements like Earth First! which focus on ecological issues, the so-called "environmentalism" of the NIMBY people is about preserving middle-class privileges and lifestyles and trying to segregate and isolate

their communities to preserve the English Country lifestyle idealized in the suburban community developments and gated communities the wealthy have built in many cities.

Those who equate immigration with environmental decline overlook key environmental and economic facts in their search for scapegoats:

1. The environment has no borders; national borders do not confine pollution, economies or people. Degradation and neglect on one side of the border affects the other side. Economic exploitation on one side makes people want to go to the other side.

2. The chief cause of environmental decimation is the consumption behavior typical in capitalist economy. Capitalists use up the environment. They make products people want and buy but don't need. They make products that fall apart and go to landfills so people will go out and buy a new one every few years. Corporations have grown so big and powerful that they can buy off politicians and use their lawyers to evade and manipulate the laws of national governments. They are building a global economy where they can move their wealth on a whim and consume whatever they can lay their hands on. Corporations rather than people are the chief destroyer of the global environment and they are not limited by national borders.

3. Since immigration laws enacted in 1924 with the support of the Sierra Club and the Ku Klux Klan discriminate in favor of rich people and Northern Europeans, most undocumented persons work at the bottom of the economic ladder when they first arrive. In the US, rich people consume a heck of a lot more per person than the poor.

4. Immigrants pay taxes. They pay sales tax when they buy things and they pay property and utility taxes as part of their rent and utility bills. Most undocumented immigrants in Los Angeles work on forged papers and social security cards and pay income taxes. Most taxes are paid by people who work rather than by capitalists who get money by renting money or property. Workers therefore pay most of the cost of running the government including subsidies for services to the rich and corporate welfare.

5. Developers are not building suburbs, subdivisions and office buildings to serve a growing immigrant population. Moreover, most new development is intended to profit from corporations or middle-class buyers. The more the middle class runs away (to their suburbs and gated communities) from the problems they created in the cities, the worse their impact on the environment.

We must discredit the notion that immigration is a factor in environmental degradation and keep attention turned toward the capitalist corporations who are the primary cause of environmental destruction. Preventing groups like the Sierra Club from lending credibility to these ideas is one step in this direction.

As Anarchists, we are for a world without borders where people can live and work where they like, where capitalism and government have been abolished, and where we can live freely as social equals. In order to work toward those goals we need to break down the myths used by the status quo to control us, keep us divided and preserve the privileged classes. Part of the class war must be the fight against racism and xenophobia and continued educational campaigns and direct action to show working people who their real enemies are when it comes to issues of economic exploitation and environmental destruction.★

Anti-Racist Framed-Up In Texas Prisons

Chris Plummer is an anti-racist Anarchist activist imprisoned in Texas. He was convicted in 1993 for his part in an action carried out on a Nazi-skinhead house in Houston, Texas. No one was hurt during the action; only the Nazi's hate literature was destroyed. Chris was convicted for breaking and entering with intent to burglarize.

Prison did not stop Chris's organizing efforts. Despite rampant racial hatred fostered by the prison administration, Chris was able to set up a prisoner organization called Cell One at Huntsville, also home of Texas's notorious Death Row. Cell One's main project was the Texas Prisoners' Anarchist Lending Library. Organizations such as Books Through Bars in Philadelphia, Books To Prisoners in Seattle plus many individuals donated books of all kinds to the library. Prison authorities and white-supremacist prison gangs alike were threatened by a library providing radical and progressive literature by and about African Americans, Chicanos, Native Americans and poor/working-class whites to anyone who was interested. In March of 1997 guards confiscated and then "lost" all of the books as well as many of Chris's personal possessions under the pretext of a "gang activity" investigation. Around this time, Chris had his jaw and cheekbone broken by a Nazi prison gang and barely escaped death.

In May, 1997 Chris was transferred to a Nazi-infested unit in Gatesville, Texas by prison authorities who knew that Nazi gangs had a paid 'hit' out on Chris. Shortly after the transfer he was locked down for arbitrary and unclear reasons. On August 26, 1997, Chris was again attacked by prison staff for his speaking out in support of another prisoner. Along with various threats to his well-being, he was told he was now being charged with conspiracy to smuggle guns into the prison by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms—a blatant lie and frame-up. A conviction on these charges would result in 30 to 40 more years of prison.

We must defend Chris and halt this drawn-out, torturous injustice. Not just because Chris's life is on the line but because he is one of those who has struggled against injustice. ★

Please write and call these law enforcement and prison authorities:

Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms
attn: Charles Meyer
9009 Mountain Ridge Drive
Austin, TX 78759 (512) 349-4545

Wayne Scott, Director TDC
P.O. Box 99/Huntsville, TX 77342 (409) 295-6371
Demand that the charges against Chris Plummer #677345 be dropped, stop threats and harassment and insist that stolen property be returned.
Chris is desperately searching for a lawyer to take his case. If you can provide any help with this search please contact:
Chris Plummer Support Group
P.O. Box 416591/Key West, FL 33041
305-293-1186
Christopher Lee Plummer #677345
Hughes Unit/Rt. 2 Box 4400
Gatesville TX 76597

Detroit ARA Mobilizes Against Racist Band

On November 29, Anti-Racist Action mobilized against a concert planned by Resistance Records that was being held in Madison Heights, MI, a Detroit suburb. The featured band was Steel Cap and the concert was held in a Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) hall. The racist rockers had the actual hall while their jingoist VFW hosts occupied the bar. ARA tried to convince the VFW to cancel the show, but their lawyers balked out of fear of a petty lawsuit. Madison Heights is a working and middle-class, overwhelmingly white suburb in Macomb County. Apparently the neighborhood surrounding the hall has historically been all white, but recently some Black families have moved in. Neo-nazis typically invade such areas and hope to gain support by playing on whites' fears. But in leafletting the adjacent neighborhoods prior to the event we discovered strong if passive support for what we were doing.

Police came out in force and arrested two anti-racists. Ralph, a Black ARA'er from Detroit was picked off for no apparent

reason other than pure racism.

The action mobilized about 80-100 ARA'ers from eleven chapters. While we failed to shut down the show, we succeeded in turning away a few cars of racists. Their attendance was small and the racists knew they could only have their show safely under police guard.

Anti-Racist Action members made up practically the entirety of the demonstration. The different chapters were tighter and better organized tactically at this action than at other previous ARA mobilizations. The cops were doing their best to provoke, but ARA'ers resisted foolish confrontations with cops and with the fools from the VFW (one told me "I understand both sides") who were working with the cops and were more concerned about us not touching their cars than about the fact they were hosting racist terrorists in their club. Chapters represented included Detroit, Macomb, Ann Arbor, Lansing, Traverse City, Columbus, Yellow Springs, Akron, as well as Toronto, Montreal, and Kitchener/Waterloo.★

Anti-Racists Confront Ku Klux Klan in Beloit, WI

On December 6, the KKK held a "recruitment" rally in Beloit, Wisconsin. ARA members from Milwaukee, Chicago, St. Louis, Madison, Yellow Springs, Columbus and Minneapolis attended a counter rally outside of the Beloit Courthouse. There were about 500 counter-demonstrators, 300 cops in full riot gear and 18 KKK supporters. The cops arrested eight people, only one a KKK supporter. One ARA person from St. Louis was arrested after an alleged altercation with a KKK supporter.

Interestingly enough, counter-demonstrators in police custody were dragged through the area where the KKK was rallying. Many would-be KKK supporters confronted on the street by ARA never made it into the rally. The cops were fairly aggressive, at times they ran into the crowd of demonstrators for no good reason and made random arrests.★

You can contact Milwaukee ARA at
544 E. Ogden #700-134
Milwaukee, WI 53202



The Zapatista Dream

THE GUERRILLA FOCO

The Zapatismo of 1994 consists of three main components: a political-military group, a group of politicized and very experimental indigenous people, and the indigenous movement of the Selva (jungle). A starting point would be the Marxist-Leninist political-military organization with a style very similar in its military profile—not politically, just militarily—to the national liberation guerrilla organizations of Central and South America. An organization based on the idea that the possibilities for peaceful struggle were exhausted, that it was necessary to confront the authorities, to defeat them and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and of communism. At its start this clandestine organization was very close to the urban one. It was an organization with a composition that is majority middle class—almost no workers, a few campesinos and no indigenous people.

Its political analysis foresaw a radicalization and polarization of the different elements of Mexican society—the state on one side, the people on the other—and that this polarization was going to result in a civil war. On the military plane this posed a new possibility—that didn't consist of preparing for war, for initiating a war, but rather to prepare for when the war breaks out. It's an organization that doesn't intend to initiate combat but rather to appear when it becomes necessary. The idea is that, in this case, the people were going to need an armed group to defend themselves, to fight, to resist the actions of the Federal Army.

This group had these characteristics: it was politically healthy, it was militarily healthy, and it was very modest. Being submerged allowed it to survive the repression that groups that were openly engaged in military actions were suffering.

THE INDIGENOUS ELITE

On the other hand we have an indigenous movement with two main elements: a very isolated group, that is the indigenous people of the Selva, and another movement that we could call the politicized indigenous elite, with a great organizational capacity and a very rich experience of political struggle. They were in practically all the political organizations of the left and they were familiar with all the prisons in the country. And these groups entered into contact with each other.

The EZLN's plan for the future was to build a regular army, thinking already in terms of its command structure, its articulation, its territory, its organic character. This was proposed and the politicized indigenous elite offered to find a place where this could be done without the danger of being detected. This is when this group decided to establish itself in the Selva Lacandona. It went in and founded the EZLN, in November 1983, in an encampment that was called "The Nightmare."

We went to learn to live in the mountains, to learn to fight, and to wait for some day when the revolution would explode in Mexico. Already back then we had established that the revolution was not our per-

sonal possession, but that others were going to make it and we were going to help. In military terms, during these months in the mountains, as we had no foreign support nor advisors, nor anything, we had to resort to training ourselves militarily based on the experiences of the Latin American guerrillas that we had read about, but above all based on the guerrilla and counter-guerrilla manuals of the US military. We learned how to be guerrillas in the manuals of the Rangers, the SIESPOS, the SEALS, and all the commando-type structures in the US Army and NATO. Here we learned what the guerrilla was, what a regular army was, we learned this from the military history manuals. From the epoch of the War of Independence we learned about the army of Morelos and above all from the Revolution about Villa's Northern Division and Zapata's Liberating Army of the South. Accordingly we organized into units, sections, companies, battalions, divisions, army corps, army, the great army, the same as their command structures. Our organizational plan is very close to that of the armies of Villa and Zapata.

CONDITIONS RIPEN

This guerrilla group was isolated. For that reason it failed to detect other things that were beginning to develop in the zone—the sharpening conditions of repression, of life, of misery—that would allow this indigenous movement, this indigenous mass that we now see, to become ready to enter into con-

indigenous communities that were conscious of the armed struggle. This was to coincide with the growth of the Guardias Blancas and acts of repression, above all in the Selva and in the North of Chiapas, where the indigenous people naturally had to defend themselves. At the time that the armed struggle was proposed to them they said "Well, if they are going to teach me to fight and they are going to get weapons, that's what I need." It's a very practical interest, very immediate, of survival, that allowed this first contact between the indigenous communities and the political military group—and from this impact would emerge what we now know as

socialism in its broadest features, but digested and enriched with humanitarian, ethical and moral elements that come more from the indigenous people themselves. Quickly the revolution was transformed into something essentially moral, ethical. More than the redistribution of wealth or the expropriation of the means of production, the revolution became the possibility that to be human was to have the space for dignity. Dignity started to be a very strong word. This wasn't a contribution of the urban element, the communities contributed this.

THE EZLN DEFEATED

In our perspective they were exploited people that had to be organized and shown the road.

Part 1: from 1983 to 1993

Zapatismo, not that of right now, because that already has other ingredients, but the Zapatismo that emerged in January 1994.

This intermediary group had talked with their families, also indigenous people—Tzeltales, Tzotziles, Choles, and Tojolabales, and these families decided to send their youngest children to the mountains to become guerrillas. Here we had this political-military group with the indigenous ingredient within it. After a little while—I'm speaking of 1984—we ceased having a majority of Ladinos and Mestizos, and the indigenous people became the majority. At the time that contact was made with the communities the indigenous element was already the majority in the political-military organization, even if this wasn't reflected in the command structure. It was reflected in its internal life, because already there had been an initial

Put yourself in our place: we were the light of the world. They were blind people who had to open their eyes. This didn't change until the translator Old Antonio, appeared. At the time that the communities entered into contact with us someone emerged who seemed like a literary character, but who was real. That old man became the link with the communities, with their world, and with the part that was most indigenous. By way of him, by way of those political leaders and leaders of the communities, the EZLN began to understand the history of [the communities'] political roots, of their consciousness, of their historical consciousness. What became clear was that we were not talking with an indigenous movement that was waiting for a savior, but rather with an indigenous movement with a long tradition of struggle, with a lot of experience, very resistant, very intelligent as well, to which we would simply serve as something like an armed wing. In this—we're speaking of the period 85-87—we were learning. We quickly realized that there is a reality for which we were not prepared. We discovered the indigenous world, we saw that they weren't just people interchangeable with any other, that they weren't waiting for us, that we hadn't come to teach them what we had developed for whatever other sector. We thought that it was the same to talk with a proletarian, with a campesino, with an office worker, or with a student. Everybody was going to understand the word of the revolution. And then we were confronted by a new world for which we had no response.

The virtue of this military organization was in recognizing that it didn't have an answer and that it had to learn. That was the first defeat of the EZLN, the most important and it marked what was to follow. The EZLN faced something new and recognizes that it had no solution for that problem, that it had to wait and learn, that it no longer was the teacher. All we had to offer before this reality was a ton of questions, but no answers.

And here began the process of transformation of the EZLN from an army of the revolutionary vanguard to an army of the



Zapatista women converse with city folk at the "picnic with the Zapatistas" Mexico City, September, 1997.

tact with the guerrilla group. But this contact between the communities and the armed group—this group of urban origin, the guerrilla of the university—didn't happen with people coming from the city. These people had lived in the mountains three, four or five years. For the indigenous people this signified a lot.

This politicized indigenous group began to talk with some of the leaders of the

cultural shock that had been necessary to assimilate and resolve—to learn the language, but to learn something more than the language, the use of the language, of the symbols of what different things represented, what the sense of the symbols and their meaning for the communities.

This is a kind of translation enriched by the perspective of political transition: the idea of a more just world, everything that is

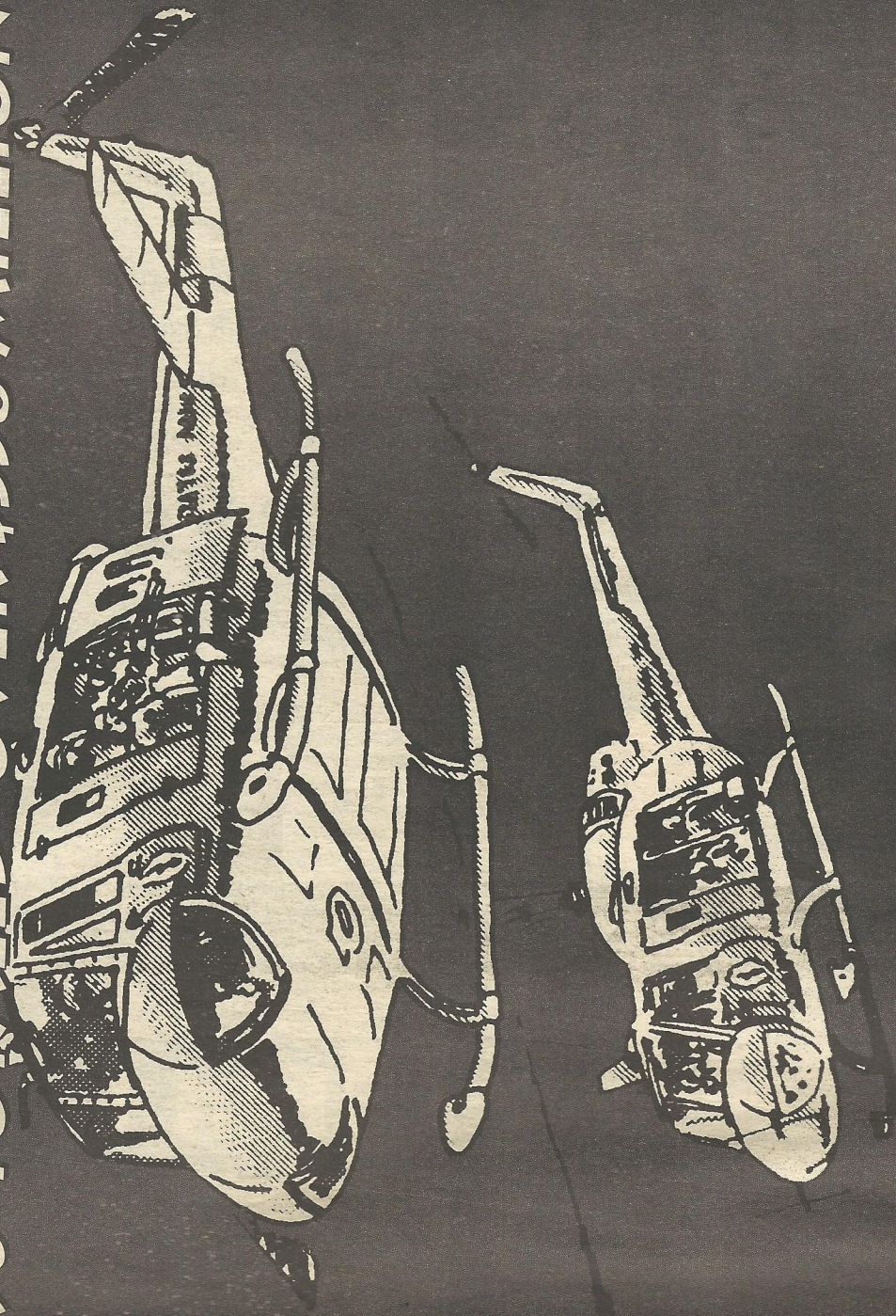
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PUBLICLY REPORTED US ARMS SALES TO MEXICO
FROM 1987 TO 1996 TOTALED OVER \$358 MILLION.

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VIVA

An Open Discussion with Political Prisoners Marilyn Buck, David Gilbert and Laura Whitehorn

BY MEG STARR AND MATT MEYER

The government and mainstream media have used their formidable powers to prevent the circulation of any real information about political prisoners such as Marilyn Buck, David Gilbert, Laura Whitehorn. Small wonder. Like John Brown, these white activists took up arms against the US government in solidarity with oppressed peoples. Invisible in the social democratic or liberal histories of the 1960s is the logic of their progression from public to clandestine activism. In the following interview these three help us to understand an important part of radical history so often distorted. They are all now serving prison terms for such "unthinkable crimes" as infiltrating the Klan, robbing

money from banks and giving it to Black self-defense patrols, helping to liberate Black Liberation Army (BLA) leader Assata Shakur, and bombing the Capitol in response to the US invasion of Grenada.

Marilyn Buck was among the first women to address the national Students for a Democratic Society (SDS, a radical mass anti-war organization) around issues of sex-

ism. Her experiences working with the Black community and protesting the Vietnam War led to her consistent resistance. She is serving an 80-year sentence for conspiracies to free political prisoners, to protest and alter government policies through the use of violence, and to rob banks to fund Black liberation organizations.

David Gilbert was a founding member of Columbia University SDS and returned to Columbia three years later to help organize the 1968 student strike. He was a charter member of Men Against Sexism in Denver. He is serving a 75-years-to-life sentence on charges of

Many readers of Love and Rage have participated in some form of work around prisons: protesting the growth of the prison industry, exposing control unit torture, supporting social prisoners and political prisoners. All of this is important. Agitating around prisons can expose the true nature of US democracy, and it can alleviate prisoners' daily suffering. The use of prison to control communities of color and all poor and work-

held over our heads as a deterrent. It is one aspect of the repression and control of our movements. In this light we should carefully examine how our organizations relate to political prisoners. An organization's choice to distance itself from political prisoners may be one way of denying the realities of state repression. Connecting with

political prisoners not only keeps us in contact with some of the harsh realities of state repression, it also lends continuity to

our own revolutionary goals. By continuing to

affirm their politics, and by remaining activists on the inside, the prisoners themselves subvert the government's power.

Whether or not our specific daily work is around political prisoners or prison conditions, we should give them organizational priority and carry both issues in our hearts. In our imaginations, we can smash the barriers of fear and prison, as we organize to tear down the very real walls.

The following is an excerpt from one of the first public dialogues released by anti-imperialist white political prisoners in which they review their past actions and current political stands. We hope this discussion will initiate a broader dialogue on strategies and tactics, past and present.

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

participating, as an anti-racist ally of the BLA, in the 1981 Brinks robbery and shoot-out.

During the Vietnam War, Laura Whitehorn organized 400 women in a takeover of the Harvard University administration buildings. She worked with anti-racist whites to defend Black communities from attack, and helped found the Madame Binh Graphics Collective, a radical art group. She is now serving a 23-year sentence for conspiracy to protest and alter government policies through the use of violence against government property.

ing-class people is a vital means by which the state maintains power. All the more reason why the State systematically removed over one hundred political prisoners and prisoners of war from the movements to liberate those communities.

As fellow radical activists, the political prisoners and prisoners of war are part of our closest roots, our nearest heritage. This is true whether or not we agree with every aspect of their analysis. As BLA anarchist political prisoner Kuwasi Balagoon once said, "I worked with the Nationalists and the Marxist-Leninists because they were the ones getting down and fighting."

The suffering of the political prisoners is

1) When you made your decisions to take militant action, a sense of world-wide revolution was on the rise. Now, although there are many trends of protest and fight-back, reaction appears to have consolidated. In this context, do you regret the sacrifices you made to fight against US imperialism?

Laura: A resounding NO! First of all, I believe that change can never take place without resistance. No matter how overwhelming the odds, struggle is the only path to justice. Without resistance, there is no hope of a better future, and resistance often demands sacrifice. To me, the decision not to fight-not to resist-would mean sacrificing my own humanity. That would be much worse than the sacrifices that I've had to make.

I believe that all kinds of resistance are necessary to oppose the consolidation of reactionary forces. I don't feel that any of the forms of resistance I've been involved in over the past twenty-five years-from mass struggle to armed actions-are irrelevant to the future of progressive movements.

2) Today's radicals more commonly talk about various systems of oppression. You tend to use the term imperialism. How do you define it?

David: Imperialism is built on and incorporates the structures of patriarchy and capitalism. And it is important-whatever name we use-to recognize the fullness of all modes of oppression: class exploitation, male supremacy and the related homophobia, white supremacy, and the host of other ways human beings are demeaned and limited.

But I think it all comes together in a more or less coherent social structure, with a range of sophisticated and brutal methods a ruling class uses to maintain power. The term "imperialism" is valuable because it emphasizes the importance of a global system: the polarization of wealth and power between a few rich and controlling "centers" (Western Europe, the US and Japan) and the improv-

erished "periphery" of the third world. The wealth of one pole is totally connected with the abject poverty of the other; the human and natural resources of the third world have been ruthlessly exploited to build up the developed economies. Thus, "imperialism" speaks most directly to the oppression of three-quarters of humankind.

That vantage point helps us see why third world struggles have been so central in the modern world. And there is the added resonance with the foundation of the US on the internal colonization of Native Americans, New Afrikans (Blacks), Mexicano/as and Puerto Ricano/as. This helps explain the depths of racism within this country, and why that has so often corroded potentially radical movements amongst white people.

3) Some movement activists believe that violence cannot be justified for any reason, and even a few political prisoners have said that they were wrong to engage in violent

ence comes exclusively from the opponents of the system. It's obscene to accept those parameters; they demand a heartless silence about the untold and incalculable violence of the system-massive and brutal, yet unnoticed because it is structured into the foundation of the status quo.

So let's start with just a glimpse of the what the daily functioning of imperialism means in people's lives. Each year, twelve million children under the age of five die from malnutrition and easily preventable diseases- that's 32,000 per day. 1.2 billion people live with virtually no access to health care; 1.6 billion people don't even have direct access to drinkable water. One hundred million children lack the most basic schooling.

This colossal suffering is not an act of nature. We easily produce enough to meet all basic human needs. Abject poverty continues so that, for example, the 358 richest individuals in the world can amass a combined net worth of 760 billion dollars, more than the combined net worth of the poorest two and half billion people put together.

Enforcing such a vicious social order requires the repressive regimes around the world that have jailed, tortured, "disappeared," or murdered hundreds of thousands-actually millions-of persons. I was initially a pacifist, but never one who condemned the resistance of the oppressed. The only principled form of nonviolence-as beautifully exemplified by people like Dave Dellinger or Fay Honey Knopp-is to constantly and creatively struggle against the infinitely greater violence of the social system.

After seven years of activism and analysis, I reluctantly concluded that there wasn't a chance against the forces of repression without developing a capacity for armed struggle. But there certainly have to be clear moral standards regarding how that struggle is implemented. With armed struggle-as with any aspiration to play a "leading" role-it is very easy to fall into the corruption of ego. So it is essential to have

firm guidelines to keep such actions completely directed towards dismantling the power structure and to take the utmost precautions to avoid hurting civilians.

We have to be sure that our action always furthers the interests of the oppressed, and to build their participation rather than aggrandizes the armed group's own power and status. There have to be forums for criticism from and accountability to the oppressed. Of course, there remain critical issues about what constitutes an effective strategy, questions that I'm not

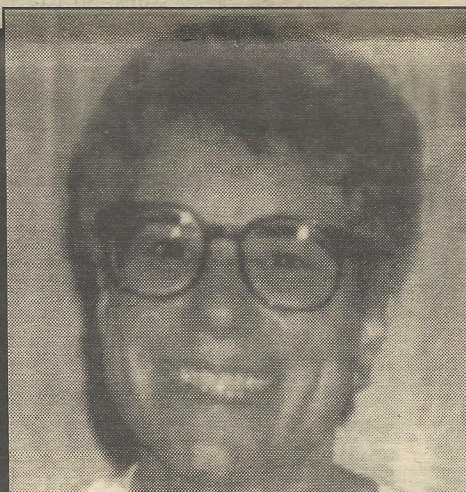
addressing here but which are far from settled.

During our trial, we were besieged by attacks on a armed struggle-of course from the mainstream but also, in various forms, from within the left. We felt embattled, and we in turn were very dog-

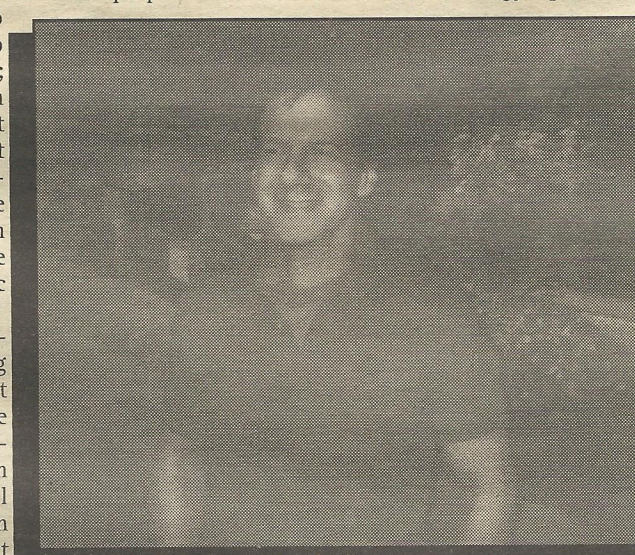
matic in treating armed struggle as the principle rather than as one of the necessary means to fight to stop oppression. On a personal level, I regret that we weren't capable of expressing publicly a feeling of loss and pain for the families of the two officers and the guard who were killed during the Brinks expropriation. Even in a battle for a just cause, we can't lose our feeling for the human element. It's not like these three men were picked as targets for being especially heinous or conscious enforcers of the system. Rather, they just happened to be the representatives of the states' and banks' armed forces who responded on that day. So it must have felt like a completely senseless and bitter loss to their families.

The pain of the human losses, on both sides, is even more regrettable because of the serious political errors we made in how this action came down. I feel sorry for the losses and pain of the families of those who were killed. I feel also the pain to my own family, who never got to make choices about the risks I would take. And I feel self-critical for

(Continued to next page)



Laura Whitehorn



David Gilbert



Marilyn Buck

acts. What are your feelings on revolutionary violence? How have they changed over the years?

David: Those who hold power have successfully sold the idea that political vio-

Enemies of the State

(Continued from previous page)

political mistakes and setbacks in the struggle against this criminal social system.

The cost of errors that are made in the course of armed struggle are very visible. At the same time, it is a shame that the very grave errors of inaction, of not fighting hard enough, are rarely even noticed. What were the costs, in terms of violence, of the terrible passivity of most of the white left during the FBI and police campaigns of the 1960s and '70s?

4) What do you find to be some of the achievements or the errors of the anti-imperialist movement and its armed clandestine organizations that you participated in?

Laura & Marilyn: We feel that anti-imperialist politics and organizations made a number of important ideological contributions. We derived our strategy of revolutionary anti-imperialism from Che Guevara's speech to Cuba's Tricontinental Congress, and from the struggles his speech represented. To paraphrase his message: "Create Two, Three, Many Vietnams"—ultimately defeating the system of US-led imperialism by freeing the colonies (or oppressed nations) whose land, labor and resources provide the lifeblood of that system.

We were and are internationalists, meaning that we supported all anti-imperialist struggles around the world. We also accepted the particular responsibility to support those nations directly colonized and oppressed by our own government. We were (still are!) working for socialist revolution. North American (or predominantly white) anti-imperialist groups embraced the view that alongside the oppressed nations inside the US there exists an oppressor nation, made up of white people of all classes and organized by the power of white supremacy to function as part of any ruling-class strategy. White people, we believe, need to make a conscious decision and act explicitly to ally with the oppressed instead of the oppressor. As members of that oppressor nation, we tried to analyze the effects of white skin privilege on us and on our organizations, as well as to remain aware of its effects on the oppressed nations.

One of our main achievements was to recognize that white supremacy is an institutionalized system, in contrast to the more accepted view that racism is an issue of bad ideas and attitudes. This gave us a different viewpoint from which to fight white supremacy on its many levels. Our tactics included education, agitation, demonstrations, campaigns, confrontations and clandestine activities. In a variety of cities and over quite a number of years, many revolutionary anti-imperialists established a strong practice of work, including fighting the Ku Klux Klan and other right-wing organizations, defending Black and Mexican communities under attack, supporting Black and Puerto Rican prisoners, exposing right-wing groups, building campaigns against racist killer cops and Klan in the police forces, etc. We also established material aid campaigns and clandestine support work for national liberation movements inside and outside the US borders.

Our understanding of the importance of fighting white supremacy and supporting the Puerto Rican and Black liberation struggles also led us to support prison struggles. We initiated projects in solidarity with political prisoners and Prisoners of War. We worked to expose the FBI's Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO), which was responsible for destroying organizations, killing Black leaders like Fred Hampton, and putting others in prison. In our work to support political prisoners and POWs, we tried to educate people not only about the injustice and criminality of the system that imprisoned them, but also about who these revolutionaries are and why the government was so afraid of them.

The national liberation struggles and clandestine anti-imperialist allies acted to free political prisoners like Assata Shakur and William Morales. Nothing can ever cast a shadow on the importance of their freedom. These were achievements the public anti-imperialist movement played a role in as well; they created an atmosphere of support within the community and resisted police and FBI attempts to find the liberated prisoners. From 1967 to the mid-1980s, both the above-ground anti-imperialist

organizations and the armed clandestine groups marched, demonstrated, and fought. They staged mass militant actions and armed actions. We built material aid campaigns for most of the leading struggles for freedom around the world - from Viet Nam, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, the Congo/Zaire and Zimbabwe, to the struggles at Wounded Knee, Big Mountain, and in Puerto Rico, to the Black Panther Party and all the struggles for independence, land and political power led by revolutionary Black Nationalists.

Some of our errors included being unclear about what we meant when we said our strategy was carried out "under third world leadership." At times, we interpreted what the leadership of any given struggle was arguing for to suit our own politics. At others, we became involved in debates inside other movements that were inappropriate for us to be active in. It's fine to have

our own lesbianism. This was true even with some of our closest comrades in various third world liberation movements. We had been part of a strong anti-imperialist sector of the early anti-war and women's liberation movements, and building actions in support of Viet Nam and other national liberation struggles specifically as lesbians and women. But as time went on, we lost some of the aspects of our politics that embraced human liberation on a broad revolutionary scale.

David: Our first outstanding accomplishment was piercing the myth of government invincibility. In 1970, the conventional wisdom was that the Weather Underground Organization (WUO) wouldn't last a year because 'the F.B.I. always got their man'! But the WUO functioned for seven years—until we split and disbanded due to internal political weaknesses—and carried out more

engage in armed struggle or who have a somewhat different political line. These errors are dangerous because they cut you off from potential allies and at the same time encourage attempts to prove yourself by upping the military ante beyond what you can sustain.

Looking at the repetition of these well-identified errors, I have to say—it might not sound very political, but I think that it is—that ego is one hell of a problem. You can be attracted to a cause for the most idealistic of reasons, and endure personal sacrifices to build an organization, only to get caught up in all kinds of maneuvers for power and status. Once you're into this dynamic, it is easy to rationalize that your only concern is for the cause. Very decent people, once in leadership, would become highly manipulative; former iconoclasts, once they became cadre, would abandon their critical faculties in order to curry favor with leadership. These patterns recurred so often that I think recriminations over which individuals were better or worse miss the point—there's been a deep problem around process for building a revolutionary movement.

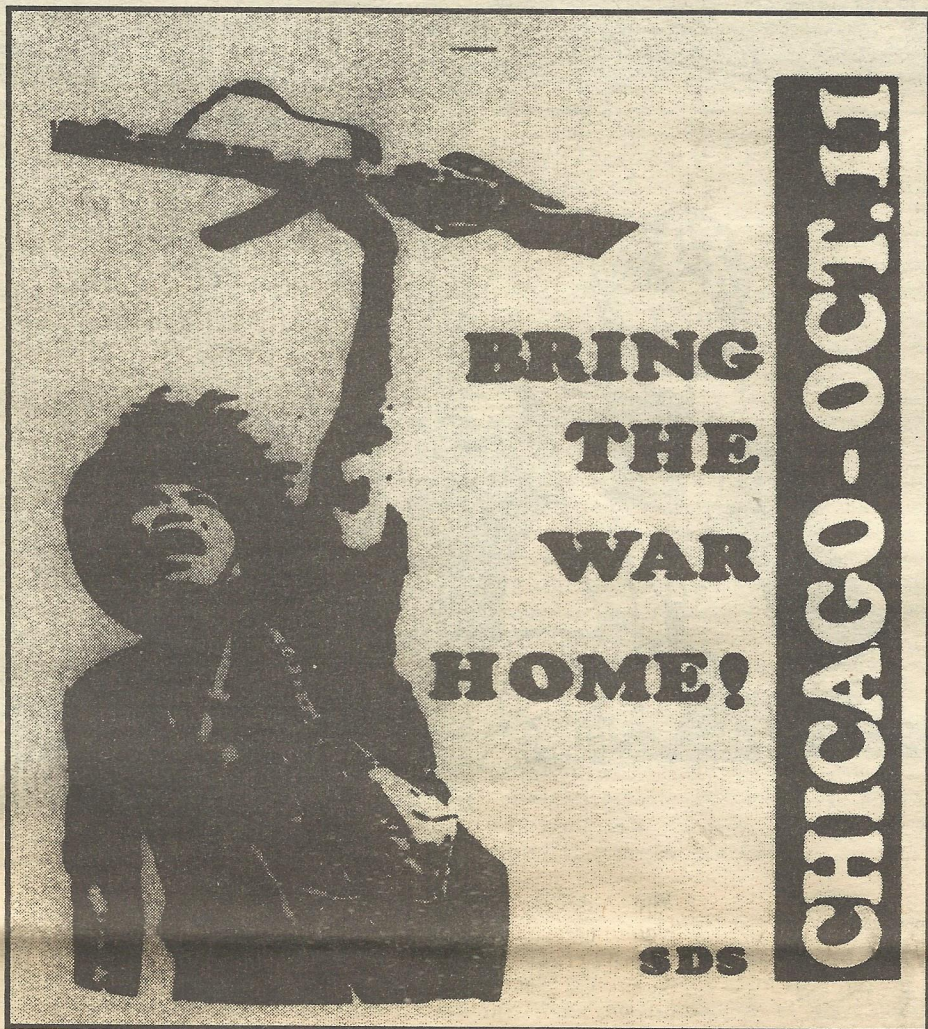
By process, I mean how we conduct political discussion, how we make and implement policy decisions, how we treat each other as individuals. The Leninist theory of democratic-centralism [which leaves final decision-making in the hands of a representative central committee] sounded beautiful, but in my experience resulted always in overly hierarchical organizations. So I can only conclude that the theory itself is seriously flawed. I don't know of any well-defined solution to these problems. The women's movement has done some valuable, if uneven, work in this area, and perhaps the Christian base communities in Latin America have as well. It is very difficult to achieve, simultaneously, a disciplined combat organization and a fully democratic and humane process—yet both are emphatically necessary. There is an important sense in which we have to try to implement the adage "the personal is political;" the ideals we express in our politics must also be put into practice in our human relationships.

Why hasn't there been more written on our errors? The danger of revealing security details to the state can be readily overcome by focusing on the political themes and lessons. So I believe the main problem has been our reluctance to face up to and analyze our errors, along with the lack of consensus about them. There is no way to sugarcoat it: this dearth of self-criticism and analysis marks a serious failure to carry out our responsibilities to the movement.

Marilyn, David and Laura's own analysis and self criticisms will be found, along with their thoughts for the future, in part two of this interview.★

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Meg Starr and Matt Meyer are members of R 'n B, a Brooklyn, New York-based affinity group which has published an unedited version of the above discussion. To obtain a copy, contact them c/o WRL, 339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012 or email: smb@igc.apc.org.



From a leaflet advertising the SDS-organized Days of Rage, 1969.

opinions and positions about the liberation struggles of other peoples who you support, but it was and is wrong to intervene in the middle of debates within a national liberation struggle.

A major problem of our work was our inability to organize larger numbers of white people to work with us. While many people over the years attended activities and actions that we held, our standards of commitment were so stringent that people wouldn't join our groups. Internally, our misuses of the process of self-criticism, and our strict or distorted methods of leadership served to weaken rather than to strengthen members and discouraged people from joining. Our sectarian approach to relations with other North American leftists also damaged our work on many levels.

Our analysis was that as women, we wouldn't win our liberation in a struggle separate from the defeat of imperialism and the transformation of society towards a more collective, socialist model. We rejected as reformist the struggles for "equal rights" in a capitalist context, and believed that women's liberation required a revolutionary confrontation with institutionalized male supremacy—a socialist revolution. Women in developing socialist countries confronted the harsh reality that the institutions and social attitudes of male supremacy did not automatically disappear with the victory of national liberation. Women have had to continue to struggle for their rights, and to redefine their roles long after liberation has been won. Despite these theoretical understandings we did not join in struggles specific to women which are important steps in the process to destroying male supremacy and its institutions.

This was even more true of lesbian and gay liberation. So many of us and our comrades were dykes, yet support for lesbian and gay liberation was barely a part of our program. We listed it as something we struggled for, but never did any programmatic work to give it life. We failed to even struggle against homophobia when it presented itself, and often kept closeted about

than twenty bombings of government and corporate buildings without so much as injuring a single civilian. Including other formations such as the United Freedom Front, there was a fifteen-year history of armed action carried out by white anti-imperialists.

Our other main achievement, as Marilyn and Laura have discussed, was fighting in solidarity with third world struggles. Our practice in this area was inconsistent and inadequate, but we did succeed at times in making this work a visible priority. It was also significant that so many women participated and were leaders in the clandestine organizations, although this did not mean that we were able to overcome our sexism in terms of our program or personal relationships.

A main problem was various forms of racism. It's amazing how deep this stuff runs, that even while consciously opposing it, we continued to make racist errors. We often wanted to be validated as "the most revolutionary white folks going," either through our own claim of overall leadership of a "multinational US revolution" or, once that was discredited, by getting the stamp of approval from a heavy third world group.

Another serious error has been militarism, which sees as all-important the military deeds and daring of a small group instead of the political principles and the concerted effort to build a movement at all levels. Militarism is usually bolstered by sectarianism and a contempt for those leftists who don't



From a cartoon illustrating Weatherman's experience of an antiwar march.

watch 206

(Continued from page 4)

L&R: What kind of positions do you have in place?

Merciful: Two or more cameras, one person taking down badge numbers and license numbers and whatnot. If [the cops take a person] to jail we'll follow them down and make sure they get there or if there's someone left [at the scene] when someone goes to jail we'll give them our card and tell them "If your friend needs some legal help, please have him contact us."

L&R: What laws do you have to know to do Copwatch?

Shukuza: Title IX of the revised code of Washington is the main one. That's the one on crime and punishment. Know all the law, from local to state to federal.

Jackson: Also case law and being on point with Supreme Court decisions. It helps you undermine their authority because you're showing and proving that you know more about the law than the law enforcer does.

Shukuza: It makes them either straighten up and learn the law and do it right or step down.

Merciful: And they hate to look stupid in front of people, so they keep quiet and leave you alone.

Jackson: Two good books as far as how to run a copwatch are *Seize the Time* [by Bobby Seale] and *Revolutionary Suicide* [by Huey P. Newton]. The Panthers used to say, "We're the sons of Malcolm." While we have the revolutionary politics at the forefront and we gladly build on that, you first have to begin with practical stuff right here right now. We know the law backwards and forwards not because we particularly believe in this country or think everything is great. No, it's a tool. It's a tool to try to get over.

Merciful: Because the contradiction is, how

can you [cops] tell us you want us to follow the law when you don't know it and you don't follow it? Jackson: And you carry a gun.

IS COPWATCH REVOLUTIONARY?

Jackson: [The key question is] what's your concrete material interest in the struggle? If you can explain that to people, they'll deal with you. What do you want out of it? It's pretty obvious what we want out of it. I'm still waiting for the plebiscite that the Panther Party talked about in point 10 [of

we put down the camera and we pick up something else.

Merciful: To fight a revolution, you need people. When I say fighting I don't just mean picking up guns because that's only a small part of it. The bigger part of it is mind work, organizing, networking. Knowing what to do and when to do it. You have to preserve your people long enough until they get to the point where they see that something needs to be done and they get proactive. That's what we're doing. We're trying to

burden of proof is on you. We pay you, not the other way around. Therefore, I'm your boss and in order to get the evaluation from me allowing you to function in the community, you have to show and prove you're worthy of it.

Shukuza: If they can profile us, we can profile them. If they can claim that a "crime history" justifies them being [in the Black community], well, your history justifies us being out here.

THE COMMUNITY AS COPWATCH

L&R: Earlier you said one of your goals was to make everyone Copwatch. Can you explain what you mean by that?

Shukuza: That's as simple as [when you] see a cop pull someone over, stop and watch. It's basically saying observe your community. See what's going on.

Jackson: That very basic concept he's talking about, that's the kernel of revolution. The power in the people. Showing them, "Yes, I am worth something. Yes, I am somebody." Or in the words of Fred Hampton, "I am a revolutionary!" Seriously, getting everybody to that level.

Merciful: We're not Supermen. We don't have no S's on our chest. If you shot me, I would bleed. It's just that we want to show everybody that look, me and you are one and the same. What I'm doing you can do. What I'm doing you should be doing, cos they could be shooting you. In fact, you probably have been harassed. If everyone does a little bit, no one has to do a lot.

L&R: It seems that one of basic lessons you'd give other copwatch groups is to root themselves in the community.

Merciful: Believe me, the police be knowing a whole lot of stuff. You gotta be twenty steps ahead of them. You know they have snitches everywhere, eyes and ears. So you gotta be out there talking to people. One of [the cops'] tricks is to ask, "What are you [Watch 206] doing about all these people being killed? Do you film all those crimes, too?" I always say, well officer, if you were really doing your job you wouldn't come and pick up the pieces, you would prevent the crime from happening, so don't even come to me like that. I'm here because we have seen continual police misconduct, and I'm gonna be here until I see it stop. I tell them, I'm not here to discuss that [crime], I'm here to deal with your officers and their misconduct.

Shukuza: Flip the script on them. Ask them, "What have you done to purge the racist cops out of your own precinct? What have you done in the way of education and providing resources to people so they don't resort to crime?"

L&R: What do you all do about boring moments on copwatch, when you're just sitting or driving around?

Merciful: We knock on wood cos as soon as you say that [laughter]...

L&R: So you appreciate the boring moments. On Minneapolis Copwatch sometimes we'd be like, "Man, it's boring, we went out all weekend and we didn't find nothing."

Merciful: That lets you know you're effective.★

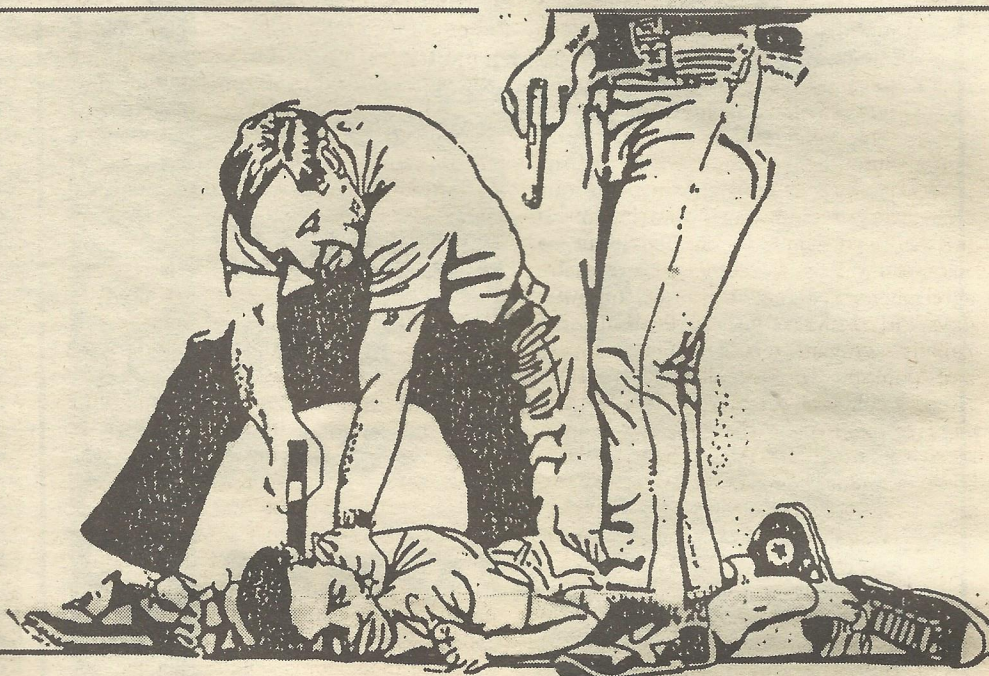
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the Black Panther's Ten-Point Program, which calls for a United Nations-supervised plebiscite in the Black colony to determine the will of Black people regarding their future-ed.]. I know the UN ain't gonna give me no freedom but I still want my plebiscite in order to decide. You see, that's real self-determination. We need the space to make that decision [regarding our future]: whether we want a state or a federation of communes or whether we want to repatriate. We want to actually self-determine what we want and that's what the movement generally still fails miserably to understand. We've had these ignorant socialists telling us that self-determination is racist. Man, you're straight on the pipe.

Shukuza: We've had socialists tell us, "Well, I don't see a Black community or a nation." Well, that proves how elitist you are because it's not for you to see us as a nation. Our ideology is based off practical work, not some ideology that we're trying to rigidly apply to the neighborhood. It always cracks me up when people say, "I read so-and-so and he said this." Well, do you know that this person you read actually went out and did something and then wrote the book?

Jackson: Show and prove your socialism or shut the fuck up.

L&R: As members of a revolutionary organization [Black Autonomy International], I assume that you would claim that doing copwatch has revolutionary implications. Would it be fair to say that there are revolutionary implications to watching the police? And how would you respond to charges that all this work is just reformist?

Jackson: Well again, we are the real civilian review board, meaning that the nature of our civilian review board is qualitatively different than anything the city or the left or the liberals will erect. The nature of it is fundamentally different: it's proactive, it's direct action. That's the first thing. The second thing is the reason why we deal with the laws and stuff is to keep the cops on point. The minute they violate the laws and consistently violate the laws,

save people's lives.

Shukuza: And when you're building a revolution you can't just fly out there, pumping your fist in the air, shouting "Kill 'em all" or whatever. You have to show people [why revolution is necessary]. Anything less than that is reactionary.

Jackson: And again, it's about showing and proving your socialism despite the constraints that we experience here. No one's getting paid to do this, we just do it. We give that woman whose son is at the precinct a ride because we're showing and proving our socialism. From each according to his ability, to each according to his need. Showing and proving.

L&R: People have told me that doing copwatch is reformist, but one thing I think it reveals is that, like you say, there's the law and then there's what the cops actually do. It shows that they can't obey their own laws. It comes to show that the law itself is flawed.

Shukuza: We're not elitist. Copwatch is a step. We gather the information and we see how people want to deal with it. However big we are, we do not represent the entire community. You cannot claim to have some mass movement and represent the community unless you have the input of that community.

Merciful: People aren't stupid at all. People saw the Rodney King incident, almost the whole country said those officers were guilty, guilty, guilty, cos cameras don't lie. So if we're doing the same thing all around the country, putting the microscope on the police, there's going to be a reaction.

Shukuza: And whatever the reaction is, you'll know one thing: it came from the community and not from somebody's dialectical line or somebody being swift with their words.

Jackson: They [cops] always say, "Oh, you try to paint the police as inherently bad." Well, basically it's like this: you as an officer [have to] show that you're not. The

A LOOK AT LENINISM

A Look at Leninism is a book by Ron Taber that exposes the authoritarian core of Leninism. Taber's critique is a valuable weapon in the hand of all revolutionary anti-authoritarians. Originally written as a series of articles, *A Look at Leninism* introduces the reader to the key concepts of Leninism and then demolishes the claims of Leninism as an ideology of liberation.

A Look at Leninism was the declaration of Taber's complete break with Leninism, and set the stage for his subsequent series of articles in *Love & Rage* critiquing Marxism.

A Look at Leninism is available for \$5.00 from:

Love & Rage
PO Box 853
Stuyvesant Station
New York, NY

Acteal

(Continued from page 1)

massacre was not caused by the low-intensity warfare being perpetrated against Zapatista supporters in Chiapas, but the result of a "family feud" internal to indigenous communities.

A MASSACRE FORETOLD

In Chiapas everyone was shocked but few were surprised by the massacre in Chenalhó. It was, in the words of Bishop Samuel Ruiz "a masacre foretold." Ever since the Zapatista uprising on January 1, 1994, the Mexican government has been waging a "low intensity war" against the indigenous communities that are the Zapatistas' base of support. This counter-insurgency strategy was first applied in the Northern region of Chiapas where paramilitary death squads like "Paz y Justicia" ("Peace and Justice") built up with the support of the Federal Army and the state police waged a campaign of kidnapping, murder and terror against communities that supported the Zapatistas. In 1997 the "dirty war" was enlarged to the Highlands region of Chiapas, in particular the municipality of Chenalhó. (A municipality in Mexico is roughly the equivalent of a county in the US).

Historically Chenalhó has been an area of absolute PRI rule. But with the 1994 uprising many of the indigenous Tzotziles of Chenalhó went over to the Zapatistas. With the support of a majority of Chenalhó's 33 communities, the Zapatistas established a democratically-elected, autonomous municipal government in opposition to the corrupt and fraudulently elected PRI government—a situation of dual power Zapatistas have also established in 17 other municipalities in Chiapas.

The round of violence in Chenalhó that lead up to the massacre in Acteal began on May 24, 1997 when paramilitaries murdered Cristobal Perez Medio, a school teacher and Zapatista sympathizer. For three months his widow, Federico, appealed to the special State Assistant Attorney General's Office for Indigenous Communities to investigate the crime. But the Attorney General's office was controlled by the (now-resigned) unelected PRI Governor of Chiapas, Julio Cesar Ruiz Ferro, widely regarded as a puppet of the the Zedillo administration. No investigation was undertaken; the responsible parties were reassured of their impunity.

The paramilitaries continued to build up their strength and in September their campaign of terror began in earnest. The litany of attacks which barely registered in the international press, overwhelms.

On September 17, 60 families were forced to flee from the village of Los Chorrros, a base for the paramilitaries, towards Naranjatik when the local PRI announced that it would launch an offensive to displace the autonomous council of Polhó and demanded contributions to buy more weapons. The PRI members arrested seven people and burnt down 17 homes. On September 19, the PRI-affiliated paramilitary group "Mascara Roja" (Red Mask) tortured 13 Zapatista followers and burned 70 homes in the communities of Miguel Utrilla and Puebla. Two days later groups of masked persons harassed Tzotzils Mariano Vasquez Jimenez, founder of the autonomous Zapatista community of Polhó, and Joaquin Vasquez Perez, from Los Chorrros.

On October 1, President Zedillo visited San Cristobal de Las Casas and met with PRI officials from the Highlands who requested a decree that would authorize civilians to have weapons in their homes. The next day in Limas Chitamucum, seven members of a family, including a young girl, were murdered by paramilitaries. Two days later paramilitaries from Los Chorrros attacked the village of La Esperanza. Fifty-two people were forced to flee and their homes were burnt. On October 15 two campesinos were killed and three injured in Tzanembolóm. Four hundred seventy-five people fled. Their homes, animals and fields were ransacked. On October 23 paramilitaries opened fire on the community of Las Laminas from a bus. One hundred thirty people fled. Between October 25 and 28 a series of confrontations left 19 in the communities of Oventic and Canonal with bullet wounds. On October 27 a second attack was carried out against the community of Chimix. Several Zapatista homes were destroyed and shots were fired. The next day when the paramilitaries returned they were repelled by the community. The same day, in Kanolal, Zapatista homes were burned

and the families fled. On November 4, Paz y Justicia attempted to assassinate Bishop Samuel Ruiz and his assistant Raul Vera. On November 10 the village of Yibeljoj was attacked by PRI members, 18 families fled and their homes were ransacked. Four days later Mariano Arias Perez, a school teacher and PRI member from Yibeljoj was murdered after he denounced the actions of his party. Two days later PRI members fired shots into the air at his funeral. Zapatistas in the community fled. The next day PRI members robbed people in Acteal. On November 18 a group of 30 presumed members of Mascara Roja armed with sub-machine guns invaded the community of Aurora Chica and opened fire killing six Tzotziles, including an 11-year-old and a 13-year-old. The next day three people were disappeared from Polhó including a nine-year-old boy. Homes were burned in Tzalalucum. On November 20 an armed group set fire to at least 50 houses in three communities inhabited by supporters of the Zapatistas. PRI members entered the communities of Tzahalukun, La Esperanza, Acteal, Chimix, and Pechiquil to burn houses. In Pechiquil over 20 homes were burned and others, with PRI emblems on the doors, were left intact. On November 21, two more Tzotzils in the community of Chimix were murdered.

On December 5, peace negotiations between the PRI and the autonomous municipality were began in anticipation of the visit to Chiapas by the Papal Nuncio Justo Mullor. On December 11 a ceasefire agreement was signed, but in the following days PRI members burned the houses of Zapatista sympathizers in Yaxjemel, Chimix and Majomut. On December 12 the EZLN issued a communique that detailed the state of seige imposed on the Zapatista communities and noted that the refugee population living without shelter in the mountains had grown to 6,000 people.

On December 15 General Secretary of Chiapas, Homer Tovilla Cristiani issued a statement that there were no paramilitary organizations operating in Chenalho, echoing an earlier statement by Governor Ruiz Ferro that the only armed group in Chenalho was the EZLN. Shortly thereafter it was revealed that Ruiz Ferro and Tovilla Cristiani had directed \$650,000 US in state social development funds to Paz y Justicia. The document directing the monies in three payments between August 1996 and May 1997 was also signed by Mexican Federal Army General Mario Renan Castillo of the 7th Military Region in Chiapas which includes Chenalhó.

These events offer just a taste of the reign of terror that existed for seven months prior to the masacre in Acteal. Each was reported in the Mexican national press while the state and federal governments did nothing to restrain the death squads they had financed, armed and trained.

THE STRATEGY OF THE DIRTY WAR

The activities of the government-directed death squads are part of a counter-insurgency strategy aimed at destroying the Zapatistas. And the timing of the recent escalation is no accident—it coincides exactly with the coffee harvest. While Zapatista sympathizers were fleeing into the mountains, their houses in flames, the paramilitaries seized their livestock and crops, most importantly the coffee beans ready to go to market. Refugees have been fleeing to more secure Zapatista communities which are now overwhelmed by legions of hungry mouths to feed.

Documents from the Mexican Ministry of Defense exposed in the January 4 issue of the newsweekly Proceso clearly spell out the government's strategy. One document authored by General Antonio Riviello Bazan and 7th Military Region Commander Miguel Angel Godinez (now a member of the House of Deputies), explicitly calls for the government to create paramilitary organizations, force the concentration of the Zapatistas' bases of support and deprive them of life's necessities in order to destroy their morale and break their support for the EZLN.

The deliberate concentration of refugees in a handful of Zapatista communities bears a chilling resemblance to the "Strategic Hamlets" of US counter-insurgency strategy in Viet Nam. If the people are the sea within which the EZLN swims, the government is out to drain that sea.

POLITICAL CRISIS

The Acteal massacre was the natural outcome of the government's counter-insurgency strategy, but it also testifies to the weaknesses of that strategy. The massacre has precipitated a profound political crisis

in Mexico. While the government has insisted on its innocence, its obvious involvement has caused upsets within its own hierarchy. The powerful Secretary of the Interior, Emilio Chuayffet and the unelected Governor of Chiapas Julio Cesar Ruiz Ferro were both forced to resign by the scandal surrounding the masacre.

The massacre and the increasing militarization of Chiapas have sparked renewed national and international interest in the situation in Chiapas. Every day has brought new demonstrations in different parts of Mexico. Zapatista supporters have maintained a presence at the Monument de Angels in Mexico city since the Acteal killings and a series of demonstrations there have grown progressively larger. On January 5 youth from the Zapatista National Liberation Front (the FZLN, a civil organization that supports the EZLN) took over the Stock Exchange and two radio stations in Mexico City. Demands for a serious investigation of the massacre came from heads of state including Bill Clinton, while a rising tide of protests in the streets in Europe and North America demanded the demilitarization of Chiapas, compliance with the San Andres Accords and an end to US military aid to Mexico. On January 2 demonstrations were held in at least 20 US cities. January 12 was called as a national and international day of protest against the massacre.

MILITARY MOVES

In the days following the massacre the EZLN warned that the government was going to use the massacre as a pretext for moves against the Zapatista communities. The government dismissed these accusations and insisted that they were determined to bring those responsible for the massacre to justice and that the 5,000 additional troops being sent into Chiapas were going to be used to protect the communities from the paramilitaries. To emphaize this point the Army was instructed to carry out "Social Work" among the refugees by distributing food, clothing and medicine.

The Zapatista communities forcefully demonstrated their strength and determination when the refugees—hungry, cold and sick—refused the government aid. They insisted that the government was behind the massacre and the paramilitaries' reign of terror; they would not be used to cover up this fact.

On January 3 the EZLN's predictions of renewed military action against their communities came true. That morning the Mexican Army encircled La Realidad, the headquarters of the top military leadership of the EZLN. The soldiers told residents that they were going to capture Subcomandante Marcos. One campesino was tied up and beaten by soldiers with rifle butts for refusing to answer their questions. His testimony to the press the next day was given in sign language and interpreted by his daughter as he is mute. Refugees from the community of Guadalupe Tepeyac, which was occupied by the Army in its offensive against the Zapatistas in February 1995, fled from La Realidad into the mountains.

Over the next several days similar scenes were repeated in Zapatista communities across Chiapas. Oventic, another regional center of the Zapatistas, was evacuated when the military approached. Soldiers attempted to enter Morelia on the January 3 and were chased off by women and children with sticks and stones. Two soldiers were separated from the main troop and surrounded by women from the community. They surrendered and handed over their weapons to the women of the community (which were later retrieved by the military). In the town of Xoyep in Chenalhó 200 refugees surrounded a newly-constructed military encampment and after a four hour confrontation forced the dismantlement of the encampment. On January 5 soldiers entered the community of the 10th of April and seized property after residents fled to the mountains. On January 6 soldiers entered seven communities in the municipality of Mitonic. On January 7 soldiers entered the community of La Union and attempted to detain two international observers. They were prevented from doing so when the members of the community appeared with machetes, sticks and stones and threatened to attack the soldiers. On January 8 soldiers entered Sibacja and searched peoples' houses. On January 9 soldiers entered Patihuitz and Galeana.

All of these actions have been carried out under the pretext of enforcing the Federal Firearms Law. After a token search for weapons in a few paramilitary strongholds in Chenalhó the Army has directed all of its efforts against Zapatista communities. This

is in such blatant violation of the Federal Law passed to promote the dialogue between the EZLN and the government, which prohibits military actions in the Zapatista communities, that the new Interior Secretary Labastida was forced to insist that the Army wasn't trying to disarm the Zapatistas. The supposed arms caches found in these searches have either been crude plants or comically puny. The government sought to justify the 17 hour encirclement of La Realidad on the basis of an arms "cache" discovered in a house outside the community. When the nature of the "cache" was revealed it turned out to be a single .22 caliber rifle, several boxes of .22 ammunition and some green hats.

The EZLN has accused the government of attempting to provoke a military confrontation that would serve as a pretext for even more aggressive military action. Accordingly they have responded by attempting to avoid such a confrontation while still asserting their control over their own communities. In many communities this has meant that the majority of the men have fled the communities into the surrounding mountains leaving the defense to the women and children. This puts the Army



EZLN members seize a Mexico City radio station to protest the Mexican Army's renewed offensive against the Zapatistas early in January. Their targets included another station and the stock exchange whose opening they delayed for 45 minutes.

in a very awkward position. It has also demonstrated the peoples' depth of commitment to the Zapatista cause. The courageous actions of the women and children, armed with sticks and stones, against M-16 toting Mexican Army soldiers has had a powerful impact on public consciousness in Mexico.

CONCLUSION

As of this writing the situation here in Chiapas is still in flux. The increasingly aggressive posture of the Army could lead to open warfare. At the same time the political crisis that is unfolding could reach even higher and seriously destabilize the Zedillo government. International protests against the massacre have had a profound effect and have given the movement in Mexico the kind of support it really needs. In either case the situation cries out for a powerful and militant international solidarity movement that will keep the pressure on the Mexican state and the international institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that are behind the neo-liberal policies that have precipitated the current crisis.

The EZLN has built a kind of genuinely democratic counter-power that is not to be found anywhere else on earth. They have reinvigorated the idea of revolution and demonstrated that the New World Order of global capitalist domination is not a sure bet. Their example is an important inspiration to all the millions of victims of neo-liberalism around the world. We must join in solidarity with our Zapatista brothers and sisters. We must not allow the martyrs of Acteal to have died in vain. We must build as broad and militant a movement as possible to fight for the following demands:

1. Stop US aid to Mexico.
2. Demand the implementation of the San Andres accords for indigenous autonomy.
3. End the militarization of Chiapas.

This article is dedicated to all those murdered or wounded in Acteal on December 22, 1997. ★

US Arms Mexico

(Continued from page 1)

the 1970s, the ruling elite no doubt knew that the austerity measures it imposed risked renewed popular revolt. While the PRI slashed public services they beefed up the Mexican military—with quiet but unparalleled assistance from the US. In all categories of military assistance, including military training, Mexico received more aid from the US between 1982 and 1990 than it had in the previous three decades.

Immediately after the 1994 Zapatista uprising Mexico embarked on a dramatic expansion of the military in terms of size, equipment and training and in terms of political power. In 1995 alone the military budget grew by 44% to about \$4.5 billion a year and the armed forces appear to have been expanded to a current estimate of over 200,000 troops. Many parts of rural Mexico have been placed under military control since the Zapatista uprising and the appearance of the Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR) in 1996. 25,000 soldiers are based in 40 military encampments in the conflict zone in Chiapas, with another 40,000 troops in the immediate area.

The establishment of military rule in many areas is complemented by the increasing domination of the police forces by the military across the country. Active or former military officers now direct state police forces in 21 out of Mexico's 31 states. The whole command structure of the Mexico City police force was replaced with military officers and the entire Federal police force of Baja, California is being replaced with soldiers.

No surprise that along with this militarization comes a dramatic disintegration of human rights. In Mexico City elite units of the police recruited from the military have made mass arrests in working-class neighborhoods and summarily executed suspects. Mexico leads the world in political murders of journalists. Members of the opposition parties and other political organizations are routinely arrested and frequently "disappeared." A report by the Latin American Federation of Associations of Families of the Detained and Disappeared documented 1,300 such disappearances, 80% of them from the indigenous communities of Oaxaca, Chiapas, Guerrero and Puebla. These numbers don't include the political murders of over 400 members of the Revolutionary Democratic Party (the PRD, a center-left opposition party). In the militarized zones of Mexico, government-sponsored paramilitary organizations have taken the government's war of counter-insurgency into poor and indigenous communities to sow division. A

special counter-insurgency unit of the military called the Rainbow Task Force coordinates these efforts to disrupt the indigenous resistance movement. Right-wing paramilitary organizations in Chiapas have terrorized many indigenous communities, particularly in the North of the state and more recently in Los Altos.

HIDING MILITARY AID

The militarization of Mexico and the dirty war being waged against the Mexican people has been made possible by a dramatic escalation in US military aid to Mexico. The US and Mexican states badly want to hide their new relationship for a couple of reasons. US military involvement in Mexico is very unpopular among Mexicans and its exposure would only further undermine an already unpopular government. The US government hopes to avoid the development of a mass movement in the US like those of the 1980s that demanded an end to US military aid to the right-wing dictatorship in El Salvador and the Nicaraguan

interdiction, or, even provides assistance to the trade it claims to be fighting, it supports the Mexican military at the price of further misery and violence in the impoverished urban centers of the US.

Finally, a certain amount of military aid is directed to Mexico by proxy. Israel and Argentina (both prime recipients of US military aid) train Mexican police forces in counter-insurgency tactics much in the same way that Israel aided the military dictatorship in Guatemala and the apartheid regime in South Africa in the 1980s when US public opinion made it impossible for the US to offer such aid directly.

MILITARY SALES AND DONATIONS

The US is the Mexican military's main foreign source of arms and other military equipment. US military transfers to Mexico are 16 times those from France, Mexico's second largest source of arms and equipment. Publicly reported US arms sales to Mexico from 1987 to 1996 totaled over \$358 million. The biggest single annual increase took place



Military patrol in La Realidad June, 1996.

Contras. Extensive US investments in Mexico and the threat of social unrest spilling over the US/Mexican border mean that popular insurgencies in Mexico pose a much more dire threat to the interests of the US corporate and financial elite than all of the revolutionary movements in the rest of Latin America combined. And so the US and Mexican ruling classes have great stake in keeping their policies free from public scrutiny and dissent.

While the public record reveals a dramatic increase in US military aid to Mexico since the Zapatista uprising, a great deal of military aid arrives in Mexico under the cover of anti-drug trafficking assistance and is therefore not reported to the US public. A June 1996 US Government Accounting Office report documents the use against the Zapatistas of equipment training and intelligence assistance intended for anti-drug purposes. The shipment and distribution of large quantities of military equipment of US origin reported in the Mexican press cannot be accounted for in publicly-reported US military assistance. The US can hide such aid in two ways. The Arms Control Export Act requires that the administration only notify Congress of international military sales in excess of \$14 million. By parceling such sales into smaller units the Clinton administration avoids the reporting requirement. On top of this, reduced price or free Excess Defense Article transfers are not covered by the Arms Control Export Act. By defining various items as military surplus and offering them to Mexico for free or at a discount the administration can avoid reporting such aid to Congress. The second route for covert aid is through intelligence agency budgets. The CIA houses its largest Latin American office in Mexico City. Even the FBI maintains an office in Mexico City. Intelligence agency budgets are kept secret; they provide a perfect cover for such military assistance.

Despite huge US expenditures on curbing drug trafficking from Mexico there has been no reduction in the flow of narcotics. The Mexican military (which receives much of the anti-drug assistance) is actually heavily involved in the drug trade. Mexican newspaper *La Jornada* reports that an estimated 40% of the profits of that trade go to the Mexican police and military. In so far as the US engages in ineffective attempts at

in 1994 when sales jumped from \$16 million to almost \$54 million. Other sources reveal \$78 million in authorized sales that year. An additional \$37 million in military "draw downs" of excess equipment has also been reported as well as a \$1 million grant for special training for 200 Mexican soldiers. As documented in *La Jornada* and by the Federation of American Scientists, US military equipment delivered to Mexico in this period includes:

Bell 212 helicopters; 20 Bell UH-1H Huey helicopters (plus 12 more inoperable Hueys for spare parts); 6 Sikorsky helicopters; 4 satellite guided UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters; 6 Blackhawk transport helicopters; 22 McDonnell-Douglas helicopters; F-5 aircraft; 13 Cessna observation planes; 78 fixed wing planes; 20 C-130 transport planes; 4 C-26 reconnaissance planes; 23 Tanks; 7,500 bullet-proof Humvee armored troop carriers; Anti-Riot vehicles and Water Cannons; 1,500 other military vehicles; 1 survey ship, 2 auxiliary ships, 1 salvage ship, and 2 Knox-class frigates; 1,615 machine guns; 3,300 flame throwers; 360,000 grenades; 266 electric prods; 1,000 parachutes plus hundreds of thousands of other items including: combat rations, helmets, flack vests, canteens, night vision equipment, electronic command and control equipment, radar units, semi-automatic rifles, ammunition, gas masks and other equipment.

THE WAR ON DRUGS

The "War On Drugs" has provided some of the best cover for US military aid to Mexico. General Barry McCaffrey, Clinton's Drug Czar, only two years ago headed the US Armed Forces Southern Command, responsible for all US military activity in Latin America. Almost all of the military helicopters as well as C-130 troop transport planes were provided to Mexico under the auspices of drug interdiction efforts. Their use in the initial military response to the Zapatista uprising in January 1994 in blatant violation of the requirement that they only be used for anti-drug activity is well documented and was widely reported in the *National Catholic Reporter* and *La Jornada*. In spite of this violation there has been a steady increase in Drug War assistance to Mexico. Much of the equipment provided in the name of the War On Drugs is being used in Chiapas

and other southern states even though the heaviest drug traffic takes place in the northern states of Mexico that border the US.

US officials acknowledge the 'versatility' of military assistance by the US in pursuit of the drug war. In an internal Southern Command memo exposed in *Covert Action Quarterly* (Winter 96-97), Staff Judge Advocate to Gen. McCaffrey, Col. Warren D. Hall, said "It is unrealistic to expect the military to limit use of the equipment to operations against narcotraffickers. The light infantry skills US Special Operations forces teach during counter-drug deployments can be used by armed forces in their counter-insurgency as well." Such 'unrealistic' expectations that the US abide by its own laws remain so in part due to the loose and inconsistent US oversight process. Until recently, mandated inspections of the use of US-supplied equipment occurred once a year and always with advance notice. This policy was officially modified in September 1996 under pressure from Congress to allow unannounced inspections but there is no evidence of any change in the actual practice and little reason to expect such a change since the use of Drug War equipment for counter-insurgency purposes clearly and conveniently secures both states' interests in crushing oppositional movements in Mexico.

In addition to equipment and training, the US provides Mexico with considerable assistance in the area of intelligence in the name of the War On Drugs. Over the past five years the portion of the US anti-drug budget allocated for military surveillance has increased 400%. Much of this money is going to operations in Mexico. According to *La Jornada* US Condor spy planes with silent flight capacity and infrared sensors have been used to gather information on the location and movements of the EZLN since May 1994. US intelligence information was used to determine the supposed real identity of SubComandante Marcos prior to the February 1995 military offensive against the Zapatistas. Given the Mexican military's heavy involvement in the international drug trade US intelligence on drug activities given to the Mexican military might just as well be handed to the drug traffickers themselves.

The use of Drug War assistance against the Zapatistas is particularly perverse since they strictly enforce their own laws against all drug and alcohol use in the territories within their control. Zapatista territory is probably the most drug-free area in the Americas. In Zapatista territory the military has been trying to pressure campesinos into growing marijuana, providing them with seeds and offering to buy their crop when they harvest it. This is clearly meant to both divide the Zapatista communities by encouraging the violation of Zapatista laws and to create a pretext for intervention in Zapatista territory.

THE SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS

Another major form of US aid to the Mexican military takes the form of training at the School of the Americas (SOA), otherwise known as the School of the Assassins because of the atrocious human rights records of so many of its graduates. (See sidebar on this page.) The SOA has trained its students in practices such as torture, executions, and false imprisonment. Mexico now sends more students to the SOA than any other country. In 1995-96 a record 500 students from the Mexican military and police forces are believed to have attended a special "anti-drug" course at the SOA. SOA graduates are well represented among the generals in charge of counter-insurgency operations in Chiapas and other southern states. This includes the majority of commanders under General Armando Soto Correa, in charge of Rainbow Task Force counter-insurgency operations at the Mexican Army's General Headquarters in San Quintin, 15 kilometers from the Zapatista command in La Realidad. When the Zapatista uprising took place in 1994 three of the generals in the 31st Military Zone based in San Cristobal de las Casas in Chiapas were SOA graduates: Gaston Menchaca Arias, Miguel Leyva Garcia, and Enrique Alonso Garrido.

Another SOA graduate, General Juan Lopez Ortiz, commanded the troops that took the town of Ocosingo back from the Zapatistas in early January—an attack that included some of the worst atrocities of the military response to the Zapatista uprising. Troops under Lopez Ortiz tied the hands of

(Continued to next page)

600 Arrested Protesting US Torture School

Two thousand people marched November 16 on Fort Benning, Georgia, on the eighth anniversary of the murder of six Jesuit priests in El Salvador to protest the training school there called the School of the Americas—also known as the School of the Assassins. Police arrested more than 600 protesters.

Of 26 Salvadoran officers charged with killing the priests, 19 were graduates of the School of the Americas.

The school has taught officers from Latin America how to carry out sophisticated methods of torture and interrogation.

On January 21, a US Judge convicted 22 protesters of criminal trespass and handed down the maximum sentence of six months in prison and a \$3,000 fine. Most defendants rejected an offer to lift the fine if they would agree not to enter the post again.

Rev. Roy Bourgeois, a veteran of this struggle who pled no contest along with two others in November and received the same sentence, said after his sentencing: "We are going to come back in greater numbers until that school of assassins is shut down. They will not kill this movement." ★

US Arms Mexico

(Continued from previous page)

Zapatista prisoners behind their backs before shooting them in the back of the head in the town's market. Lopez Ortiz had distinguished himself earlier in the 1970s waging a dirty war against the Party of the Poor in the state of Guerrero. Hundreds of campesinos were "disappeared" in the course of his campaign to stamp out that insurgency. SOA graduates have not confined their activities to Chiapas. In June, 1995 a massacre of campesino activists took place near Aguas Blancas in Guerrero. The commander of the military region was General Adrian Maldonado Ramirez, another SOA graduate, who was eventually removed from the post as a result of public outrage at the massacre.

STOP US MILITARY AID TO MEXICO

Mexico's dirty war against the popular movements of poor and indigenous peoples thus depends heavily on US military aid. The stakes in Mexico are very high. The US ruling class has considerably more to lose in Mexico than it had in Viet Nam or in any other conflict since World War II. Colonel Rex Applegate, who represents US military and police equipment companies in Mexico has said that US interests in Haiti and Cuba, for example, "pale by comparison" to the threat of a revolution in Mexico. A January 13, 1995 Chase Manhattan Bank memo on

Zapatista Dream

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indigenous communities—an army that is one part of the indigenous movement of resistance among many other forms of struggle. We didn't understand this, for us the armed struggle was the backbone, the highest stage, etceteras. I think what allowed the EZLN to survive and grow was accepting that defeat. If the EZLN had not accepted it, it would have been isolated, it would have remained small, the EZLN that emerged on January 1, 1994 would never have been born. It's an army of thousands of combatants, even if poorly armed they are thousands, and to find thousands of people ready to fight until death is not an easy thing.

It is very difficult when you have a theoretical schema that explains all of society to you and you come to society and find that your schema explains nothing. It's a difficult thing to accept: to recognize that we had dedicated all of our lives to a project and that this project is fundamentally crippled.

The situation in the city was grave. The urban part of the organization didn't grow, it continued to stagnate. What then happened was that the indigenous youth who had joined us in the mountains and that had to learn medicine, communications, carpentry—all that an army needs to maintain itself, we sent them to the city and with them we sent the virus. If was as if the tactical indianization of the EZLN had moved and contaminated the urban part of the EZLN and it was indianized as well. The majority of the members of the army were indigenous and the majority of the urban structure, which was very small—I'm talking about a few dozen people—was also of indigenous origin. Thus it produced the contamination, even if it had less effect. We really suffered a process of re-education of remodeling. As if they had disarmed us. As if they had taken apart all the elements we had—Marxism, Leninism, socialism, urban culture, poetry, literature—everything that formed a part of us and also things we didn't know we had. They disarmed us and then returned our arms to us, but in a different form. And this was the only way to survive.

AN ARMY IS BORN

Until 1988 our contact with the communities was still sporadic. The people of the villages started to go to the mountains, to the encampments, to the celebrations of April 10, November 17, and September 16, the historical celebrations of Mexico or the EZLN. Still we didn't go to the villages, except in hiding and at night. There weren't "controlled" villages as we say, villages where everybody are Zapatistas like here.

In any case in that period from '89 to '90 we went from hundreds to thousands of combatants. And the villages in which some families had supported us came to be entire

investments in Mexico stated bluntly that "The government will need to eliminate the Zapatista insurgency in Mexico to demonstrate their effective control of the national territory and security policy." Less than a month later the Mexican Federal Army launched their brutal offensive against the Zapatista communities.

The powers that be understand that a revolutionary situation in Mexico could have profound implications within the US. *The Next War* by Peter Schweitzer and former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger poses the scenario of a US war with Mexico as a result of massive immigration to the US and social breakdown in Mexico. They argue for the need for a US invasion of Mexico under such circumstances. A 1994 Pentagon briefing paper disclosed in *La Jornada* of August 31, 1996, argued similarly that it was "conceivable that deployment of US troops to Mexico could be received favorably if the Mexican government were to confront the threat of being overthrown as a result of widespread economic and social chaos."

If our rulers take the possibility of revolution in Mexico seriously, shouldn't we? By launching a movement for an end to US military aid to Mexico activists in the US have a unique opportunity to offer concrete assistance to the struggling people of Mexico. Consider this scenario: a successful revolutionary movement in Mexico would open up huge possibilities for renewed social struggles in the US. Attempts by the US to stop the movement of immigrants across the US-Mexican border will very likely inflame social struggles on the bor-

villages, canyons, areas, regions of areas that were completely Zapatista. We could walk in a canyon, day or night, entirely among compañeros, knowing who came and who went, we had absolute control over what occurred in the canyons in those years. It was a Zapatista boom, a phenomenal expansion so all out of proportion such that we quickly began to fill the organizational chart that had been a dream or a nightmare in '83-'84: companies, battalions, divisions: that army quickly became possible. We began to organize it as a people's army. That is to say an army for fighting and for production, that was not only prepared for combat, but that worked in the service of the communities. Our army worked collective cornfields, it had what we have now built in the Aguascalientes—clinics, meeting centers, sports fields—where the military units would come together to work and build a playground, things in the service of the community.

FROM THE CONQUEST TO THE CCRI

In 1992 we didn't perceive a question that was very important to the indigenous communities, that was the character of the Conquest, what the discovery of America signified, as they were then celebrating the 500 years since the discovery of America and planning big official celebrations. Within the indigenous movement, I don't know about nationally, but at least locally, a kind of restlessness started over what this signified and the necessity of demonstrating, and they set out to remember the 500 years as they really had been, as a movement of resistance against domination. The process of radicalization accelerated, the villages now came to a point of no return on the question of going to war, expressed through the indigenous leaders, the leaders of the communities and of the regions that would later become the CCRI (Clandestine Indigenous Revolutionary Committee). The indigenous leaders proposed to start the war in '92. The military leadership, in agreement with the comandancia, of which I was a part then, we put forward that the conditions weren't there, that the international situation wasn't favorable, that the national situation as well was unfavorable for any attempt at change, even more for armed struggle.

Together we decided that it was necessary to consult the people: this was the first consulta in the villages on what was going to be the Zapatistas line of work. This is in the second half of 1992 and it coincided with the indigenous mobilization for the celebration of the 500 years, the big October 12 march on San Cristobal that the indigenous people posed as the last civil appearance of the indigenous movement that has already become Zapatista.

At this time, in these communities the consulta happened: an explanation was made in each village about the conditions in the communities, in the ethnic groups, what the international situation was, the national situation, and the question at hand was whether it was time to start the war. In these

der. A successful revolution in Mexico would also be a signal to the rest of Latin America and indeed the whole world that US imperialism can be beat. Attempts by the US to intervene militarily in Mexico would very likely raise contradictions within the US Armed Forces and within the poor and people of color communities whose sons and daughters fill their ranks. Opposition now to military aid to Mexico would lay the foundation for future struggles against direct US military intervention in Mexico.

Such a campaign should begin with education. We need to go to schools and churches and educate our communities about the uses of US military aid to Mexico. But one of the most effective tools for educating people is action. We need to get into the streets, demonstrating at Federal Buildings, Mexican Consulates, the offices of Senators and Congressional representatives and the corporate offices of weapons contractors even if at first our numbers are small. We need to make

months, in September, October and beginning of November as well, the consulta was made in 400 or 500 communities of the four ethnic groups, among the Tzotziles, Choles, Tojolabales, and Tzeltales, in Los Altos, the North, and the Selva, and the majority of the population participated in this consulta: the women for the first time as a special sector, and the youth, who before had not participated in decisions of the communities, and even less those of this type. It was a kind of referendum by means of recording each of the proceedings, and after the march in October the votes were counted.

A broad majority came out definitely in favor of starting the war immediately, and the communities gave the formal order to the EZLN to make the war together with them. This provoked problems for us in logistical, tactical, and strategic terms. We weren't an army prepared to take the offensive. From when we were a political-military organization, we set out that war was going to come at some moment, but not that we were going to look for it. And after our contact with the communities we had conceived our military role in defensive terms. We supposed that the communities would be attacked, that the army would



Zapatistas in traditional Chorro dress chat with students at National University of Mexico, September, 1997.

come in or discover us, or that there would be evictions and we would have to resist, to fight the Guardias Blancas and behind the Guardias Blancas would come the police and behind them would come the army. Therefore we had a defensive military plan that covered all of Las Cañadas and the most important points in Los Altos.

When we had the results of the voting there was a meeting in December, 1992 between the leaders of the indigenous communities and the EZLN comandancia in the mountains in which the necessity of changing the decision-making structure in light of the plan for war was put forward. The indigenous communities must take control over the whole organization of the EZLN, even in the city, and it was posed that it was necessary that the war not be a local one, but rather in the whole national territory, or at least in all the states where the EZLN was to be found. In this moment—

US military aid to Mexico an issue in the minds of the people by using our own media but also by capturing the attention of the capitalist media through demonstrations, direct actions, and acts of civil disobedience aimed at the responsible parties. There exists both the

potential and a crying need to build a mass movement against US military aid to Mexico. It is our responsibility to make it happen.★

This article relies heavily on information from "The Slippery Slope, US Military Moves Into Mexico," an well-researched, four-part series by S. Brian Wilson. Available at: www.nonviolence.org or from the Mexico Committee, Bill Motto VFW Post 5888, P.O. Box 664, Santa Cruz, CA 95061 Tel.: (408) 429-8345.

I'm speaking of the end of 1992—the comandancia of the EZLN remained formally in the hands of the political-military organization, but in reality it already resided in the leadership of the communities, those we then called the responsables of each zone and ethnicity, of the three regions, and of the four ethnicities.

The CCRI was born in January, 1993. There was a meeting with representatives of the compañeros from the city, of the regular troops of the insurgents, and of the villages. At this meeting the possibility of the war was discussed, because it was an initiative of the indigenous communities and it didn't resonate in the city. If we looked at the proposal with skepticism, they looked at it with even more, because they had a better handle on information. Everything was in place for it to be a complete fiasco. Therefore, after a long discussion that lasted several days it was decided that the political-military organization would cede control, that it had to opt for a democratic mechanism for making decisions in which the greater part of the organization would decide on the course of action and would carry it out, and the greater part of the organization was the communities. Then

the indigenous representatives, the leaders, approved the results of the consulta, voting for war, as the villages, the communities, had already voted. Thus they took formal command of the EZLN. They constituted themselves as the comandancia of the army, and the responsables of the ethnic groups and the zones took the name and the rhythm of work of the Revolutionary Indigenous Clandestine Committee (CCRI). Then the leaders of the four indigenous ethnic groups met for the first time, now as leaders, now with the title of comandantes to resolve to work together and make war as indigenous people and not as one ethnicity, but as the four principal ethnicities of the state. The general character of the war was also established, that it was for national demands, not just indigenous ones, but national ones. The principal demands, the banners of the struggle are: democracy, liberty, and justice.★

Guatemala

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Abelino Mendez embraces a comrade upon return to his home of Todos Santos after 15 years of exile.

ployment, and the shut-down of factories." Julio Diaz echoed this observation, "When you work for an industry that gets privatized, the bosses come and say to you, 'If you renounce yourself from the union, we will protect you', then they say 'You can quit or move to the Peten [the Siberia of Guatemala]'. In October of 1996, Diaz was given the order to

transfer to the Peten. He refused, and has not received a paycheck since.

According to Diaz, "The government shuts down any industries that are unionized or that give to the communities." He cited two examples: BAMBI was the bank of housing, giving low interest loans for

Despite the Peace Accords the situation for 98% of Guatemalans is not improving. It appears that the system has simply refined and modernized itself, quickly undermining any slight democratic gains that may have been achieved by the Accords

THE SITUATION TODAY

The social climate in Guatemala today is shaped by fear. When the powerful student movement was violently crushed in 1994, things quieted down in Guatemala for the first time in 40 years, but the problems did not go away. Many organizations still work hard for human rights, but support has been cut out from under them by the fear instilled by past government violence and present day undermining of economic, political, and social security. Many organizations are viewed by the public as leftist, but do not publicly self-identify as leftist because of fear of retribution.

Said Orozco, "There are still death threats, torture cases, and disappearances, but people are too scared to say anything. There is only silence."

Guatemalans are frustrated. People have begun taking justice into their own hands--in the form of lynching. On October 13, a mob in Almolonga, a neighboring town of Quetzaltenango, attacked two boys from Quetzaltenango whom they caught stealing radishes. The boys were beaten, doused with gasoline, and burned to death. On April 30, approximately 1,500 villagers of Huehuetenango detained and lynched three men suspected of robbing bus passengers. The three men were taken to the cemetery, killed, and buried. Residents of

Suchitepequez lynched two men on May 5 who were suspected of having raided local stores and of having caused the death of a minor. The bodies were burned. These stories are commonplace today in Guatemala.

SOLIDARITY NEEDED

Guatemala no longer plays the crucial role to US interests in Latin America that it did in the past. Transnational corporations prefer Mexico because of the wide-open doors of NAFTA, and Panama has become the US portal to South American riches since the invasion in December of 1989. So to benefit its ruling class Guatemala needs to do nothing more than be a good client of US business interests and keep its people from getting out of hand.

But the organizations have no plans to be quiet. Toj concluded, "It is now time for us to get our autonomy and the respect we deserve. We need the solidarity from all outside countries. For example, publicity in other countries needs to occur when violations take place. We don't have the money and the publishers are threatened. We want you all to know that there is hunger, repression, and injustice. Only in speaking the truth is true justice found."

And as the Syndicate of Municipal Workers and of the Electric Company of Quetzaltenango concluded their Declaration, "Porque un pueblo con hambre ... es un pueblo sin paz." (Because a people with hunger ... is a people without peace.) While neoliberal policies grow and continue to undermine the social security of Guatemala's people, as well as any possible benefits from the Peace Accords, Guatemalans will continue to be a people without peace.★

Colombia

(Continued from page 7)

Defense Minister and several congressional representatives. Despite the Samper administration's connection with drug cartels, the US government continues to offer military aid to the Colombian government to fight its "drug war." However, there is not one Colombian military unit devoted exclusive-

recent Amnesty International report stated that the armed conflict in Colombia has caused 1,000,000 people to be displaced in the last ten years. 24% of the displacement is attributed to guerrilla activity, while 60% is attributed to paramilitary and security forces. The remaining 16% of forced migration is attributed to aerial bombardments by government military forces.

Colombian workers protested these IMF driven policies with the largest general strike in 20 years on Feb. 11. More than 800,000 workers participated in a strike led by government workers. A rash of prison uprisings and escapes in the past year have

their land by large landowners and their hired thugs, often grow coca in order to survive. There is some truth in the government's assertion of guerrilla involvement in the drug trade but their hands are far from clean. Some groups of the ELN and FARC have been known to provide security for coca fields, processing and shipping facilities. It is widely believed that they get the majority of their financial resources from taxing illegal cultivation in the zones under their control. The guerrillas deny this, claiming independence from the drug trade. At the same time, the ELN and The FARC have conducted numerous offenses against military installations in reprisal for government efforts to eradicate coca. They claim that a government completely entangled with the drug traffickers has no right to destroy the only means of survival for thousands of people and that they attack the military installations in defense of the people, not in defense of cocaine.

Despite the US government's reluctance to support the corrupt and weak Samper administration, the US still feels obliged to help the Colombian government in its attempt to stem the revolutionary tide. Colombia is the biggest recipi-

ent of US military aid in the Western Hemisphere. Clearly, Samper has used the US aid for anti-drug efforts to attempt to put down the rebels.

WHO ARE THESE GUERRILLAS?

The assassination of presidential candidate Jorge Eliecer Gait in 1948 began a five-year civil war, known as "La Violencia." During this period, independent peasant groups formed to defend themselves against the rich landowners, who amid the chaos of the civil war grabbed land indiscriminately. After the civil war ended, many of the peasant groups remained armed and eventually formed "Independent Republics." In the 1960s a broad mass movement developed called the Frente Unido del Pueblo (FUP), lead by revolutionary priest Camillo

Torres, who later joined the ELN.

In 1964, one of the armed peasant groups, influenced by the Communist Party, became The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). At the same time, a guerrilla combat group, basing itself on Che Guevara's strategies formed, which called itself the National Liberation Army (ELN). A number of other guerrilla organizations formed throughout the 60s and 70s, most notably M19, which became internationally known.

Both the FARC and the ELN use kidnappings, bombings of strategic targets, and attacks on military installations as their tactics of struggle. Because of high ransoms and taxes paid from drug traffickers that grow coca in guerrilla territory, FARC is completely financially independent. Politically, FARC began as a pro-Soviet force, and today claims, "We have spent the last 32 years in the armed struggle for the seizure of power to achieve our objective: The construction of socialism in our nation." The ELN, inspired by the Cuban Revolution, claims, "The ELN is based on Marxist-Leninist principles, but beyond that we have other roots. We have learned a lot from revolutionary Christians, from Che, and from other Latin Americans. The ELN is fighting for national liberation but is still an internationalist organization." On paper ELN claims that "The democracy we are striving for has to be found in the 'Juntas de Accion Comunal' formed by peasants and neighborhoods, in the assemblies in the neighborhoods and factories, in trade union groups, and in attempts at a 'solidarity economy' shown in cooperatives and soup kitchens. As well as in the popular militias that protect the new forms of power." While the rhetoric of the ELN may be more democratic than that of FARC, both groups' actions and words reveal them as authoritarian, state-capitalist, Marxist-Leninist organizations.

With very little in the way of a strong, organized libertarian force in Colombia, the prospects for genuine social revolution from the bottom-up seem slim. Anti-authoritarian revolution is not on the agenda in Colombia right now. And the majority of Colombians, particularly those in rural areas are turning to the guerrillas in greater and greater numbers to fight back against political repression and the physical violence perpetrated against them by the state, the ruling classes and their cronies. Colombian people have the choice between a state capitalist revolution that at best might win Colombia some marginal independence from the International Monetary Fund and its deadly neoliberal policies and allow independent groups a little more political space, or continuing under the present murderous and incompetent regime. US political support for the Samper regime is lukewarm. In the case of an all-out civil war, the Colombian government may not be saved from the wrath of the people.★



In Guasca, a voter waits his turn in front of a voting booth while a soldier stands guard.

ly to counter narcotics.

The Colombian government has been accused of widespread human rights abuses, particularly with regard to its support of paramilitary organizations. The popular movement--unions, peasant organizations, and progressive political organizations along with the armed revolutionary groups have suffered intense repression over the last decades at the hands of the Colombian government. Human rights groups in Colombia document political murders of as many as 10 people a day at the hands of the army or right-wing death squads. Samper's government has also created over 100 "Community Associations for Rural Vigilance," nothing more than paramilitary groups designed to combat the popular movement. It is not just political opponents that are subject to human rights abuses. A

also put the Samper administration on the defensive. In more than eleven seemingly unconnected rebellions across the country, prisoners rose up against bad treatment, overcrowding, bad food, and in support of the ELN and FARC. More than 130 rebel prisoners escaped or were liberated from prison by insurgents in the last year.

DRUGS: EVERYBODY'S DOING IT

Cocaine is Colombia's most important export product, bringing in approximately \$1.5 billion a year. Fighting between warring drug cartels costs hundreds of lives every year. Drug lords control much of the government apparatus by buying off politicians. The government endures scandal after scandal linking them to the drug trade. Campesinos, who have been run off

Temps

(Continued from page 3)

and force temp agencies to provide living-wage pay, benefits, and good working conditions. "When a temp works for the TWU agency, Progressive Temps, they are getting a better deal than with Kelly or Manpower," says Ray. "They're also effectively on strike against those agencies. And there's nothing Kelly can do about it. It's totally legal."

Setting up a union temp agency is a way of dodging the tough legal issues that face unions who want to organize temps. Temps have two employers: the agency and the company they work for. The National Labor Relations Board, the government agency that holds union elections, refuses to recognize this, and usually tells unions they can only have an election with the temp agency. A union at an agency is virtually meaningless because companies can just switch to another, non-union contractor. To win, unions must demand recognition from the company and the agency.

These challenges have demanded new tactics from unions doing temp organizing, which have lead the way for more militant organizing in the labor movement at large. The AFL-CIO unions that organize most aggressively, UNITE and SEIU, have had to do so because the majority of workers in their industries are temps. Justice for Janitors, a multi-city campaign of SEIU, has won contracts for subcontracted workers who clean office buildings. The contracts are with the building owners, who denied responsibility for the workers until high pressure, public campaigns using civil disobedience forced them to settle. The agencies must follow the company's contract, or be without offices to clean.

In D.C., L.A. Denver and Milwaukee Justice for Janitors has institutionalized the temp relationship, but the workers are no longer in a position where they are unable to make deals. Justice for Janitors has moved the debate in the AFL-CIO around temp organizing away from legal reform and toward direct action, though there is still far to go.

The Communication Workers of America is using different tactics to fight temp

agency exploitation. CWA has organized a portion of the skilled labor force in the telecommunications industry via its apprenticeship program. This has made it possible for the CWA to negotiate contracts to provide temp labor with several national corporations and to leverage for full-time jobs. Other efforts have been led by the Atlanta Union of the Homeless, which fought to get legislation regulating day labor.

Probably the most aggressive organizing campaign yet is being planned by The Campaign on Contingent Work in Massachusetts. The Campaign, which is part of The Northeast Citizen Action Resource Center (NECARC), a network of labor and community groups throughout New England, opened a drop-in center in Boston's Kenmore Square this past May. They have worked in cooperation with the Chinese Progressive Association to support full-time Woolworth's employees, mostly elderly, immigrant, Asian women, who were being downsized and replaced with part-time workers without benefits. The Campaign also introduced a "Contingent Work Bill" in the Massachusetts Legislature. The bill, which has received good media coverage and support from legislators, would require equal pay for workers for doing the same work regardless of status, pro-rated benefits for all workers in part-time jobs, and it would strengthen unemployment insurance for part-time and contingent workers.

DIRECT ACTION TACTICS

According to Campaign organizer Pramas, the larger goal of the Campaign is to organize entire industries within any particular labor market and force all employers in that industry to provide good wages and working conditions. "Instead of being frustrated by labor law we want to use social-movement tactics—street heat, to force employers to provide good wages. Whether it's picketing, or publicity, we'll make it clear we'll be there until they agree," says Pramas. Since the goal is to force an agreement with the employer rather than having a union election and contract, progress could happen much more quickly than in the notoriously slow process some unions use. Aligning itself with an activist trend in the labor movement, the Campaign "...plan(s) to build up a union with broad divisions along occu-

pational lines that maintains its agreements through direct action," according to Pramas.

In addition to organizing, the Campaign on Contingent Work will provide access to group health care plans and legal advice at its Temp Center, and monitor temp agencies for racial, sexual, and age discrimination. The Campaign is also having preliminary discussions with other organizations about launching a national coalition, and about formulating a code of conduct for temp agencies.

Both Pramas and Ray from the TWU believe temp worker organizing will help build a broader radical movement and bridge labor and community struggles.



KEN JOHNSON ...

"Assuming that we have a political democracy, why does democracy stop at the workplace door?" asks Pramas. "Why can't we have a voice in what is produced? We want to help ask those questions."

"Temps are wage slaves," says Ray. "They are a commodity. When an employer likes your work and wants to bring you on full-time, he has to give two months pay to the temp agency. Buying and selling people should be illegal. We want people to start questioning why the government is always involved on the side of the employer. But in order to do that, you have to get people in the door first, not preach to the converted like we do on the left. One of the goals of the TWU is to help to get people in the door."

Both Ray and Pramas also stressed the need to build up directly-democratic organizations that respect the intelligence of their members; they expressed doubt in the ability of the AFL-CIO to do so.

"Big labor is shocked by how bad the situation is, and doesn't know how to

respond. But they do know that if they don't set a floor under union labor, unions will disintegrate," says Pramas.

Ray takes a much stronger stance. "People don't need another boss, which is what mainstream unions often are. It especially doesn't appeal to younger people. Decisions have to be made and carried out by the people they effect. That's what's going to help build a movement."

The workers' center models at the center of TWU and the Campaign for Contingent Work's temp organizing initiatives build on an important, and oft-forgotten legacy of the US labor movement. Workers coming



AND JUST A FEW OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SCREWED HIM OVER

together around identity, such as temps, or industry, as these janitors have is the only way to break out of job site isolation. Traditional union organizing by workplace is useless in this struggle. Workers' center-style organizing requires solidarity between all contingent workers, including part-timers, and full-time workers who are themselves just a reclassification away from contingent status. The workplace consciousness raising necessary for this task is partly the responsibility of unions which need to broaden and deepen their political education efforts around temp work. But much more so, it is up to us to spark these conversations in all our workplaces.

With the efforts of people like you, temp organizing could take off around the country. The need for organizing these workers is obvious. And beyond the issue's specific injustices, helping to build a massive, democratic labor movement holds great potential for improving people's lives and expanding possibilities for revolutionary change.★

Letters

(Continued from page 2)

WHITE WORKING CLASS

To the editors of *Love and Rage*,

I take exception to Christopher Day's characterization of the white working class and his hostility towards organized labor. In his response to letters critical of his article in the summer issue, he argued that "crude economic common interest is typical of the Marxist disregard for the ethical dimension of revolutionary politics".

Let me begin with a disclaimer: I am an anarcho-syndicalist and not a Trotskyite, so please avoid a sectarian and reactionary response. I think that the issues Day raised are crucial for everyone fighting for social change.

Firstly, "genuine workers solidarity" has everything to do with common interest. A quick look at US labor history makes it clear that uniting black and white workers has been key to successful organizing. When unions refused to organize African-Americans, the only winners were the bosses.

Blacks were often used as scabs (replacement workers) during strikes. Their poverty combined with their exclusion from organized labor at the time made this possible. In other words, black workers could feel no solidarity with whites when they were excluded. Solidarity is the key to victory for labor.

These issues are still relevant today. The capitalist class exploits the black underclass and actively underdevelops their communities, using them as a cheap labor source to intensify competition and depress wages. When all people are provided with a livable wage and humane working conditions, everyone wins.

In today's neoliberal global economic system, the bosses use the threat of relocation to Mexico to scare workers. The experience with NAFTA and the increase in

cross-border solidarity over the last few years demonstrates that we all have the same interests.

Secondly, the argument that "white workers in the US are among the most privileged in the world" is reminiscent of Maoist ideology (re: will the real Marxist please stand up?). It ignores a declining standard of living and an increasing polarization of our society. Our wages are going down and we are seeing our jobs "downsized". White working people deal with poverty, homelessness, inadequate health care and education, and all the other symptoms of capitalism. This does not mean that people of color do not face even more unemployment and discrimination. In fact, it is exactly because of this that is in the interests of white working people to "unite and fight" with African-Americans.

It seems absurd to argue that poor whites would support tuition hikes at CUNY. While this is clearly not in their immediate interests, Day argues that whites feel as though they are in competition with blacks. The logic is that whites would support a tuition hike to help make their own future more secure.

The notion that blacks or chicanos are taking our jobs is fundamentally racist and unreasonable. The bosses are taking advantage of a divided working class to eliminate all the gains of past struggle (e.g. "Welfare Reform"). To quote the preamble to the IWW constitution, the "working class and the employing class have nothing in common". To the extent that a feeling of white solidarity exists (and it is very real) it is the responsibility of a system that brainwashes and divides us. We have no interests as white people!

Christopher Day forgets that we still live in a society divided sharply along class lines. Working-class consciousness is the antidote to racism. An injury to one is an injury to all.

Adrian Sacks

Cross-Border Labor
Organizing Coalition
Portland, Oregon

Teachers Strike

(Continued from page 3)

education in the Province. The action soon opened itself to public support not seen since perhaps the symbolic "91 Days Of Action" strikes, held across the Province over the last three years of Tory rule. There was little mistaking its effect—to shut down the schools, nearly 100% of them. All of Ontario's 126,000 teachers struck, affecting 2.1 million students.

The Ontario strike was the largest and longest illegal strike by teachers anywhere in North America, with the biggest outpouring of public support for any strike we have ever witnessed. The strike should have and could have continued, if the kind of support we noted were taken into consideration by teacher 'leaders.' This seems less like rhetoric when you consider that the regular, everyday teachers, not known as militants, went without pay, and without real recourse to strike funds. These same teachers, when

the decision to end the strike was taken out of their hands, reacted bitterly and continued to chant "We won't back down!" and said that it would have gone differently had they been consulted. They have been left alone, to individual and local action, just at the time when all local power over education is being evacuated.

The next two years will mean irreversible damage to public education by a government which openly supports private 'charter schools'. There will be more user fees and more cuts of the kind already being experienced in places such as Detroit (see *June/July '97 Vol. 8 No.3 of Love and Rage*). Premier of the Province own son's school suffers the consequences as a classmate said the first day of the recent strike, "The quality of our school paper is so bad (it falls apart). We don't have enough text books to go around and most are falling apart too." Lastly, we are left to wonder if the Tory's offer of a \$40.00 a day relief fund per child per day for child-care costs during the strike, brings up the specter (to the Government) of universal day-care for all? 'Nuff Said!★

Clyde goes to a Hamilton area High School.



Pro-Zapatista demonstration in San Cristobal de las Casas, 1997.