

# (((i))) Fault Lines

Newspaper of the SF Bay Area Independent Media Center



## The Seeds of Discontent

*"The media system has been set up to serve the interests of those who make the policies behind closed doors—large profit-driven media corporations—while the broad and vital interests of the population have largely been neglected. This system has contributed to a political crisis of the highest magnitude and unless it is confronted directly will severely limit our ability to make progress on any of the other major social and political problems."*

*—Robert W. McChesney, from The Problem of The Media, 2004*

The corporate elite's stranglehold on the media is not a conspiracy. It is a fact. In recent years, the US government has bowed to corporate pressure, slashing regulations on media ownership. Diverse, independent newspapers, book publishers, movie studios, and television and radio stations have been swallowed or squashed by the five monstrous conglomerates that now own the vast majority of all media outlets. Over one-third of the fifty wealthiest Americans generated the majority of their fortunes through media and related industries. The mission of this oligarchy is to generate profits and it is accomplished by suppressing the truth.

Our mission is truth.

The Zapatistas are an indigenous insurgency movement demanding political and economic democracy in Mexico. In 1997, Subcomandante Insurgente

Marcos, the voice of The Zapatistas, called out from the remote mountains of Chiapas to all oppressed cultures for the creation of an independent media network. He said: "It is necessary not only for independent voices to exchange information and to broaden the channels, but to resist the spreading lies of the monopolies. The truth that we build in our groups, our cities, our regions, our countries, will reach full potential if we join with other truths and realize that what is occurring in other parts of the world also is a part of human history."

Two years later, his call was answered by the activists who converged upon Seattle during the World Trade Organization protests. In 1999, this resistance spawned the first Independent Media Center, and, in only five years, this global network of community-based collectives has sprouted almost 150 chapters reaching from Mumbai to Montreal. The explosion of this phenomenon proves that the public refuses to accept the corporate account of our world. Mainstream news coverage is distorted to present profit-driven, ecologically destructive, socially irresponsible ideologies. Independent Media Centers are spreading the word that this belief system is fucked.

Just as the first IMC has transcended the conflict from which it emerged, the newspaper that you are now holding,

Fault Lines, will reach far beyond the biotech protests that have erupted throughout San Francisco now, at the time of our inaugural issue. Our mission is to unite the struggles of oppressed cultures throughout our city and across the world. By connecting the marginalized voices of these communities, we are fighting for a radical change in the socio-economic status quo.

We do not pretend to be objective. Fault Lines encourages those who are disgusted with the commodification of life and the commercialization of culture to join us. While we wish to clearly and accurately record the events of our time, we recognize that perception is inseparable from perspective. No one remains unaffected.

Our agenda will not be cloaked behind the myth of "professionalism." In Independent Media, bias and integrity are not mutually exclusive. We do not consider our legitimacy to be compromised by promoting our values.

Although we support "equality" and "freedom" we will not settle for paying homage to vague concepts and ideals. This publication is a tool for direct action. Knowledge is power, but facts alone will not dismantle the military-industrial complex, which profits from fabricated wars, the centralized clan of media executives who dictate our national discourse,

or the political system that allows them to thrive. Each issue will provide access to a growing infrastructure of individuals and organizations that are engaging in a constant battle for immediate results.

This is why we are Fault Lines. Each aspect of this struggle for revolution represents a crack in the system's façade. Only when these fissures are united will our movement be powerful enough to crumble this amoral structure.

This newspaper may only be a small tremor, but if you can feel it, then you know a massive shift is brewing in the underground.

*Dignity is that nation without nationality, that rainbow that is also a bridge, that murmur of the heart no matter where the blood lives it, that rebel irreverence that mocks borders, customs, and wars.*

*Hope is that rejection of conformity and defeat.*

*Life is what they owe us; the right to govern ourselves, to think and act with a freedom that is not exercised over the slavery of others, the right to give and receive what is just.*

*For all this, along with those who, beyond borders, races and colors, share the song of life, the struggle against death, the flower of hope, and the breath of dignity...*

*—Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, January 1996*



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**About Indybay**  
The San Francisco Bay Area Independent Media Center is a non-commercial, democratic collective of bay area independent media makers and media outlets, and serves as the local organizing unit of the global Indymedia network.

**Fault Lines  
Mission Statement**  
Fault Lines, the newspaper of the San Francisco Bay Area Independent Media Center, aims to give all communities the opportunity to actively participate in a collective process of media production and distribution. By operating with transparency, this newspaper hopes to achieve the goal of allowing the public, not corporate conglomerations, to set the agenda for news coverage. Our mission to train and empower marginalized voices is a commitment to disrupting the socio-economic status quo. This publication was created to be used as a tool for radical change in our communities by exposing the stories and raising the issues that the media plutocracy seeks to suppress. We are the people, we are the media and we are dissenting from the ground up.

**Get Involved**  
The IMC has an open door. You can write for Fault Lines, film events and rallies, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying entirely on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print working group reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

**Fault Lines Volunteers**  
Lani Riccobuono, Lauren Kay, Ali Tonak, Kelah Bott, Liam O'Donoghue, jankyHellface

**Fault Lines Thanks**  
Balazo Galleria, Christina, Myth of Progress, The Eddie Haskells, Dying in your Beauty Sleep, Middle Class Assassins, The Independent & Howard Quinn Printing

Union Bug



## Locked up - Locked down A jailed mother refuses to forget her child

The California Coalition for Women Prisoners advocates fundamental changes in the prison-industrial complex through education and community participation. The following is a letter from an incarcerated woman to her son. She is just one of many women whose rights CCWP is fighting to protect.

### Losing Peter, my son

I lost Peter when he was nine years old. He was the best mother's day gift and was created by my former husband and myself, but we were in an extremely bad relationship. His father, Anthony, was an abusive man. Not only did he beat me but he'd hit Peter too. A picture of my son's ear reminds me of Anthony's abusive nature. Peter's ear was badly bruised - Anthony dropped him and hit him so hard, that my son lost hearing in that ear.

One of the abusive things that he did snapped my spirit, and I did what I did. Anthony, Peter's father and my former husband, raped me. Afterwards I was bleeding to death and I couldn't get up. The next day, I did what I did to get me jailed. In my culture, you don't say my husband's hurting me and my child, so after I made my poor choice and was arrested- I couldn't say "but he's beating us". The last time I saw Peter was when he came in for a visit after I was already incarcerated. We had our visit, and the entire time I was embarrassed since I was wearing orange and we spoke through a glass. He asked me, "Mommy, what did you do?" and I said, "I broke the law and I'm going to be here until I fix the problem. But remember to be good and that I love you." That was the last time I saw him, and he was nine years old. That day, I felt in my heart that would be the last day that we'd see each other. Sad and depressed, I was worried about him. I was concerned for his well being, how he was handling the fact that his mother was in jail. It was painful ... it was painful, and it was one of the worst moments of my life. Yes, being separated from my son Peter was worst than hearing my sentencing.

After that last visit with Peter, I was taken back into my dorm and a neighboring woman was watching television. The t.v. cameras were inside the visiting room that day during my "special visit" with Peter. The prison system allowed me to have the visit, without telling me that cameras were taping it. One of my neighbors called out when I went into my cell, and said "your son is on t.v.", and in the dimmed lights I turned and saw Peter on the television. The newscaster twisted the story, and said that Peter was being removed from me - the parent who'd supposedly kidnapped him. Afterwards I couldn't sleep, and felt like I was having a heart attack because I couldn't feel my arm. I prayed to God, and said, "if You take my son from me, please don't get me sick in here too". I was on lockdown for two weeks, in a dorm with thirty other women and a small patio to get sun since we weren't allowed to go out. There wasn't much sun that month, and I didn't feel the rays from the sunlight on my skin nor in my heart. I only have one picture of him, and it was from that "special visit" - the last day we saw each other. The social services took pictures of him, and I have only a photocopy of it.

The County I was convicted in contacted my mother, and told her that Peter would be put into foster care if he had no immediate relatives that could care for him. So, my mother told the county that he had a father and the county called Anthony. My mother and I both felt it was better for Peter to be with his father, even though Anthony was abusive. We thought that if something was to happen, he'd actually be held responsible.

Peter was on the witness list to testify against his own mother, even after the court system wouldn't take the picture of his ear - so badly hurt by Peter's abusive father - into evidence. They said it was because the court couldn't determine Peter's age in it. Still, though, my son didn't testify.

During the prosecution, I was shocked to hear that Peter is wearing glasses. My heart dropped because my baby could've

been affected so much by not having me - that he lost his ability of perfect sight. My mind tells me that it's genetic, his grandmother wears glasses and so does his father. Even I wear reading glasses, but that day everything else was blocked out when I heard he was wearing them. I thought - but he's so young, this all affected him to that amount! I don't have peace in my heart, not knowing the answer to this and not knowing where Peter is. He may be a step, mile or state away, and I won't have peace until I see him again. Office and Mail

Now, four years later, I spend my time in here trying to do everything I can to get out - so I can find my son. I schedule my duties as a prisoner in such a way to make certain to not break any rules, and I keep to myself in here. I write Peter letters, it's a way to speak out to him, even though I cannot mail them to him. I don't have an address due to the fact that everything surrounding Peter, and finding him, has been denied to me.

### Fighting back

A lot crosses my mind now, and writing Peter letters is a way to get it all out. In these letters I ask him how he's doing, and hope that my heart reaches and finds him in the best of spirits. I don't ever want Peter to think I ever stopped loving him, but these letters remain unsent. Peter- how was school today, did you do your homework, what's your favorite subject, do you like sports and if you do- what kind? Peter, do you have any best friends? What are their names? Peter, are you eating your favorite food (spaghetti) still? Peter, my beloved son, how are you adjusting to your new life? Do you know that Mommy never stopped loving you, and I have your name engraved in me to remind me of you everyday?

I have no contact with my ex-husband, Anthony, and he has my son. If I had contact with him, I'd want to say that I'm terribly sorry for the poor choice I made. I pray to God everyday, that he's being a good father to OUR son because OUR son deserves to be happy. I want to tell other mothers that I know the pain they're feeling; the awfulness that comes because we don't know where our children are, the anxiety that comes around certain dates like birthdays. I know the loss of joy in those days, because they're not things to celebrate without our children. I know, because we're all facing the same problem of not being able to see our children due to the fact that we're convicted for violent crimes. I think it's more painful to not see our children, then the sentence we have to serve.

But we need to get our spirits and mentalities strong and together, to fight the good fight! We have to do whatever we can to work the program to heal our scared and scarred cores, and not let the prison system work us. Do your time, as "they" say, and don't let time do you. There is always tomorrow, and there is always hope. We cannot lose that hope, not now - not ever.

All names in this article have been changed to protect the identities of those involved in this incident.

*For information on how you can support women prisoners, contact the California Coalition for Women Prisoners at info@womenprisoners.org.*

## Contribute to Fault Lines

*Fault Lines* encourages our readers and members of the community to get involved in making media. Our goal is to train and empower marginalized voices to reclaim our lines of communication and speak truth to power. We welcome articles, reviews, news blurbs and letters to the editors in any language. Submissions of relevant and timely photos and artwork are encouraged as well. Your feedback about what we are (or are not) covering is necessary in creating a news source that truly is a voice of the people. Suggestions regarding our design and readability are also greatly appreciated.

In an age when information and news are so tightly managed and controlled by the corporate media, industry and government, a free, independent and alternative press is essential for any hope of creating a just world.

Submissions and letters to the editors may be published at:  
www.indybay.org/publish.php,  
e-mailed to: sfbay-print@indymedia.org,  
or mailed to: Fault Lines, 2940 16th St - Ste 216,  
San Francisco, CA 94103



# Starving for Justice

By Julio and Charles Houston

In 1967, normal proceedings of the California State Legislature came to a screeching halt as members of the Black Panther Party (BPP) stormed into the state capitol. This organized group of poor, but socially-conscious citizens had armed themselves in defense against police brutality. They entered the capitol to remind policy makers that “constitutional rights” have been promised to all people, not just the wealthy. The BPP fought to make lawmakers aware of the dire socio-economic conditions facing the urban black folk who they were supposed to be representing.

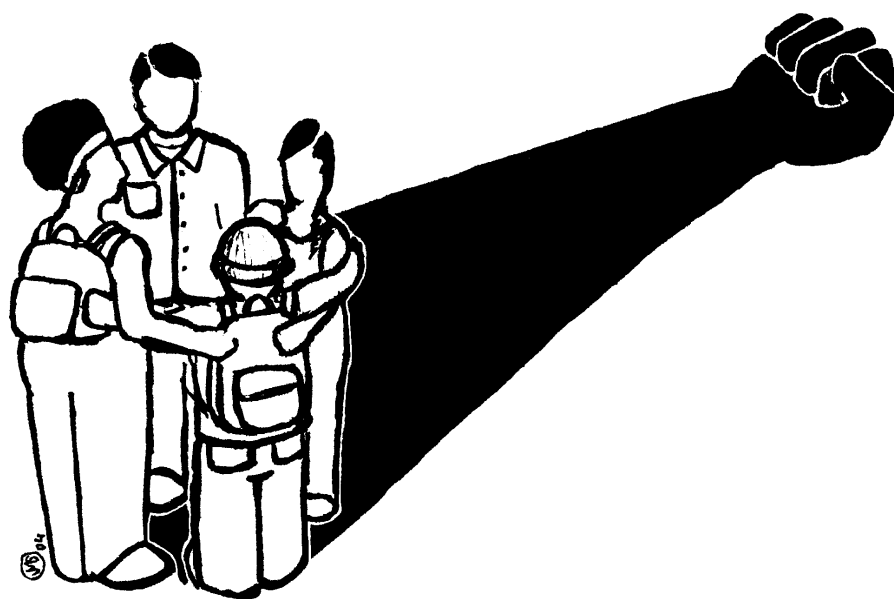
On June 4, at a SPEAK OUT meeting between the current state legislature and Fast4Education, a grassroots, civil and human rights movement committed to ending inequity in school funding, one of the Assembly members remarked, “Never before has the assembly floor been forced to stop business as usual and grant full attention to an issue as it did when those of you fasting for education rolled onto the floor, except once when the Black Panther Party stormed in, wielding rifles and shot guns.”

Thirty-seven years later, almost to the date, with the same urgency and passion for justice as the BPP, this multiracial, multi-generational group of concerned people known collectively as Fast4Education rose up from working-poor urban communities to demand the same attention from the same state legislature. They declared that there are still racist and classist funding structures that prevent poor people from gaining fair and equal access to public education. They needed to starve themselves for almost a month and be pushed onto the assembly floor in wheel chairs, but they made their voices heard, and they did it peacefully. Ironically, this action was taken on the 50th anniversary of the historic decision of Brown v. the Board of Education declaring segregation and “separate and [supposedly] equal” public policy, unconstitutional.

The Richmond, CA group responsible for starting this campaign, originally known as March4Education, was created in response to the disproportionate toll taken by the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) as a result of the disorganization (and budget deficit) the district inherited from past administrations, as well as the drastic effect of the Schwarzenegger budget cuts on both basic and extracurricular public school programs. Currently at Richmond High School, there are NO counselors, NO school psychologists, NO Librarians, indefinitely closed libraries and next to no athletic programs or art programs, let alone extracurricular activities.

In response to this crisis, March4Education organized an eight day march from Richmond to Sacramento, which included community members, parents, teachers and students during spring break vacation. Carrying signs bearing slogans such as “No Vacation for Education,” they persisted with the hope of meeting Gov. Schwarzenegger and urging him to listen to the children of Richmond and respond to demands of revitalizing and restructuring funding for public education in California. When they arrived in Sacramento, the marchers were greeted by a cold indifference. Very few assembly members who opened up their conference rooms to provide temporary relief to the activists, who had marched for many miles in the sun. At that moment it became clear that more drastic tactics were needed to be more effective in representing the urgency of this issue.

Through discussions and organizational meetings, the group decided to pressure the lawmakers into listening to their demands (the actual demands can be accessed at [www.fast4education.org](http://www.fast4education.org)) with the spiritual offering and profound statement made by a non-violent symbolic fast. At 12am, on may 10th, 2004, Gabriel Hernandez, David Johnson, Thomas Prather, Wendy Gonzalez, Karina Oliva, Fred Jackson, Jessica Vasquez, Cesar Cruz and Israel Haros-Lopez began their Fast4Education. They made a controversial



decision by start in the fast at Frank Ogawa Plaza in downtown Oakland because of its high visibility and easy access to BART and other methods of transportation. Police officials greeted them by confiscating their tarp and awning and threatening them with arrest, but they remained and were accom-

panied by a group of fifteen supporters their first night before they packed up to sleep in a downtown office. They returned and this process became a daily ritual.

On day nine of the fast, over 100 supporters came to a candlelight vigil to support the fasters. Some were invited, many had just heard of the fast on the news or in the papers. Letters had come in from the United Farm Workers of America and other organized labor groups, school boards, community and social justice organizations. On day four, Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the UFW, came out to show her support for the fast and for public education in California. Huerta, a veteran of many non-violent direct actions, recommended that the fast be moved to the steps of the State Capitol. On May 16, Oakland Mayor and former Governor of California Jerry Brown came out and signed a resolution in support of the fast and, inspired by this action, declared May 17 (the actual anniversary of Brown vs. Board) “Equal Education Day” in Oakland.

On “Equal Education Day,” the fasters and their small support team traveled to Sacramento and set up camp outside the Capitol. Again, they were greeted by police and threatened with arrest. Again, their first vigil drew a small crowd of about fifteen people. But they remained and their support team kicked into high gear. With the support of numerous state legislators, they secured a permit and the buzz grew within the Capitol and in the community. As local community leaders and dedicated Sacramento families joined, the support team grew and daily attendance to the vigils grew dramatically. Though some fasters had already broke their fast and many more would eventually step out for health and other reasons, the circle remained strong and several legislators and top-ranking California politicians began to pay daily visits to the fasters’ camp. When Dolores Huerta and key organizers with the Dolores Huerta Foundation arrived for the second time, the legislative support seemed to multiply. With the fasters’ health in jeopardy, she made personal visits to numerous legislators and before long, legislators were lining up to address the fasters’ demands at SPEAK OUT meetings. A resolution in support of the fast was signed by 41 members of the legislature in two days.

On day 25, the resolution was introduced to the Legislature as fasters watched

from the Assembly floor. The news was circulated that even Republicans were intending to sign-on en masse when a call was received by the Governor himself urging the Republican Assembly members to caucus. The resolution did not pass but the Governor’s aides were sent down to negoti-

ate with the fasters, their support staff, Dolores Huerta and Loni Hancock (Assembly woman from the Contra Costa area). Though the original three demands were not conceded to, significant concessions were made. The Governor had signed an agreement to refinance the loans taken out by the WCCUSD, lowering the interest rate from nearly six percent to less than two percent, saving the district at least \$600,000 annually. The Governor also agreed to pay a visit to the West Contra Costa Unified School District this coming fall.

All in all, the fast was the first successful action to force the Governor into negotiations and the first action to give faith to the movement for more equitable public education funding. On day 26, in the presence of a large group of parents (including their own), children and teachers from Richmond, California, the last two fasters broke their fast at Downer Elementary school, one of the public schools targeted for closure.

*While the successes of the Fast are undeniable, it remains clear that California public schools are still in crisis. Fast4Education urges everyone to remain involved and committed to taking action to continue the fight for equity in public schools and appropriate education in the classroom. Be on the look out for future Fast4Education.org action alerts and be proactive in suggesting possible future actions. Though this battle directly benefits West Contra Costa Unified, our heart remains committed to ALL children in ALL districts, starting in California.*

*Though the fast itself is over, the fasters are still struggling not only to recuperate physically but also financially as the fast cost them nearly a month’s wages and the logistical demands of the fast cost the fast4education thousands of dollars in rental car fees, cell phone bills and gas. Please visit the Fast4Education website to see where you can send donations, and where future Fundraisers will be held. La Lucha Sigue*

... Fast4Education vive.

## Poem from Elizabeth (Betita) Martinez

*Here’s a message for you, loud and clear,  
Mr Governor:  
Beware!  
When young people walk 70 miles in the heat  
Not to skip class, not for fun, not for  
money, but for knowledge—  
Beware!  
When young people starve themselves for  
24 days  
Not to skip work, not for fame, not for  
glory, but for education,  
Beware!  
Their sacrifice is a threat  
Their commitment is a threat  
Their courage is a threat  
Their self-respect is a threat.  
They threaten those who have little need  
for educated youth  
and want more prisons instead  
Their selflessness threatens the selfish.  
Look out your window, Mr. Governor  
And see the example they are setting  
Their example says that  
another California is possible  
And more than that:  
another world is possible.  
You are looking at the only future that can  
save us all, Mr. Governor.  
Beware of the beauty in that example  
It is more powerful than all who govern  
anywhere, everywhere  
It comes with the power of hope, justice,  
and the vision of a full humanity.  
Their example is a gift to us all.  
To us all.  
To us all, always*

# Breaking Ranks

Refusing to torture lands staff sergeant in jail by **Rob Eshelman**

## Art Censored by Thugs

SF's Capobianco Gallery has been forced to close after owner Lori Haigh received death threats and anonymous demands that her exhibit of works by East Bay artist Guy Colwell be shut down. Haigh was spat on, the gallery was pelted with eggs, trash was dumped in front of the entrance, her children were threatened, and she was called "anti-American" for showing Colwell's "The Abuse," which depicts Pfc. Lynndie England and another soldier smiling gleefully as they look upon a trio of naked, hooded Iraqi prisoners who are hooked up to electrical wires. In the background, a third American soldier is escorting a Muslim woman in a dress into the torture chamber. The painting is black and white, except for American flag patches on the soldiers' uniforms, which appear to be splattered with blood.

## Maxxam/Pacific Lumber Racks Up 325 Violations

According to state and federal regulators, Maxxam's Pacific Lumber has racked up 325 violations of environmental laws since 1999. The pattern of illegal cutting consists of destroying habitat for the endangered marbled murrelet and spotted owl, failing to acknowledge watercourses, and over-cutting boundary lines. About 75 percent of the violations degraded water quality. The new list of violations adds to the 250 previous violations accumulated from 1995-1997. A new report released by the Environmental Protection Information Center details the crimes of this notoriously destructive timber corporation.



## Turkish People Anxious to Greet Bush

Grassroots groups from across Turkey are mobilizing to greet NATO and Bush with fierce resistance. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will be having its annual meeting in Istanbul June 28th - 29th, and smaller, momentum-building protests across the country will take place almost every week leading up to the larger demonstration in Istanbul.

Follow the demonstrations on Istanbul  
IMC [istanbul.indymedia.org](http://istanbul.indymedia.org)

## Repression in Guadalajara: ACLUE Trade talks turn violent for protesters

Extreme police repression broke out at the ALCUE trade summit in Guadalajara, Mexico. Global justice activists demanding public participation and democratic debate over development policies, along with bystanders, were brutally beaten, gassed, and arrested. The majority of those detained were picked up in the street in the hours later as they attempted to retreat to safety. As they have refused to release the names, charges and locations of the arrestees, they are considered to have been "disappeared" by the authorities. Those arrested have faced severe physical abuse at

*continued in opposite column*



*"There has been poor strategic thinking in this. There has been poor operational planning and execution on the ground. And to think that we are going to 'stay the course,' the course is headed over Niagara Falls."*

*-Former commander-and-chief of the United States Central Command, retired General Anthony Zinni, in an "60 Minutes" interview aired May 23rd.*

Zinni does not stand alone in his harsh criticisms of pre-war motivations and war-time strategy by top civilian officials within the Pentagon such as Paul Wolfowitz and Donald Rumsfeld. His comments have been echoed by a growing number of former top military officers, including former General and National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft and former head of Central Command Norman Schwartzkopf. The dissent of such generally hawkish bigwigs signals a growing rift between the architects of the Iraq invasion and those who have actually spent time on the battlefield.

Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia has gone much further, and taken a much greater personal risk, in denouncing the Iraq occupation. By going AWOL in November, 2003, Camilo became the first conscientious objector of the second Gulf War. His motivations for this action spotlights war, in an often-overlooked moral context, and portends yet another fissure in the crumbling facade of "Operation Iraqi Freedom."

Camilo Mejia is the soft-spoken, 28-year old son of a Costa Rican anti-war activist mother and a father who wrote folk anthems for the Sandinista rebels in Nicaragua. As a teenager, he left a middle-class life in Nicaragua and moved to his mother's home in Miami, Florida. Camilo split from his family's anti-Yankee tradition and joined the United States Marine Corps in 1995 in order to feel more a part of American society. After completing his three-year service, he enrolled in college and enlisted in the Florida National Guard to help pay his tuition. In April of last year, only a semester away from completing a degree in psychology and Spanish, Camilo's National Guard unit was deployed to Iraq.

As a Staff Sergeant and squad leader, Camilo claims to have participated in and witnessed acts of abuse against Iraqi civilians and detainees. In an interview with *The Guardian (UK)* published May 14, Camilo described how his unit, while stationed at a military detention facility outside of Baghdad, was ordered to prepare Iraqi prisoners for questioning.

"We had a sledgehammer that we would bang against the wall, and that would create an echo that sounds like an explosion that scared the hell out of them," he said. "If that didn't work, we

would load a 9mm pistol, and pretend to be charging it near their head, and make them think we were going to shoot them. Once you did that, they did whatever you wanted them to do basically."

From the beginning of his service in Iraq, Camilo had reservations about the invasion. However, after participating in the torture of detainees and the abuse of Iraqi civilians while stationed in Ramadi, he had had enough. "There comes a point when you have to realize there is a difference between being a soldier and being a human being," he told the British paper.

Like thousands of other American soldiers serving in Iraq, Mejia is not a US citizen. Facing mounting immigration problems back home, Camilo was granted a two-week furlough, last October, in order to return to Miami and resolve the issue of his residency status. Camilo did not return to Iraq at the end of this temporary reprieve. Instead, he went underground.

Taking such precautions such as avoiding communication through cell phones and e-mail, Camilo lived clandestinely and plotted a strategy to become the first soldier serving in Iraq to gain conscientious objector status. While hiding out in New York City, Camilo consulted the advice of Gulf War veterans. They encouraged him to contact Tod Ensign, a lawyer and director of Citizen Soldier, a New York-based veteran's organization. Ensign agreed to work with Camilo in preparing his conscientious objector application. "We agreed after World War II not to carry on individual defense of this country unless we were directly attacked," Ensign said in a press statement, explaining one aspect of his plans for Camilo's defense. "We would work with international agencies. Clearly, in the case of Iraq we chose not to do that."

In March, after five months of preparing his case and successfully remaining beyond

**"If that didn't work, we would load a 9mm pistol, and pretend to be charging it near their head, and make them think we were going to shoot them. Once you did that, they did whatever you wanted them to do basically."**

the reach of authorities, Camilo surrendered himself to the military in Sherborn, Massachusetts. At a press conference prior to turning himself in, he denied the legitimacy of the Iraq occupation, calling it, "a war for oil."

In a '60 Minutes' interview taped prior to turning himself in, Mejia explained his refusal to return to his unit. "When you look at the war, and you look at the reasons that took us to war, and you don't find that any of the things that we were told that we're going to war for turned out to be true, when you don't find there are weapons of mass destruction, and when you don't find that there was a link between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda, and you see that you're not helping the people and the people don't want you there," he said. "To me, there's no military contract and no military duty that's going to justify being a part of that war."

In April, while Camilo was in custody and awaiting trial at Fort Stewart, Georgia, the first images of American soldiers torturing Iraqi prisoners held at the Abu Ghraib detention facility made

headlines around the globe, confirming rumors that had been circulating for months. International non-governmental organizations such as, Human Rights Watch and the Red Cross, had issued multiple reports and alerted members of the US armed forces, directly, about abuses inside the jail. In January, the senior US military commander in Iraq, Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez had even initiated an internal military investigation to probe these allegations.

Despite these indications, American news sources remained virtually silent on the allegations of torture. During numerous interviews with reporters, Camilo divulged his participation in prisoner abuse and psychological torture. Being forced into this systemic injustice was a main argument for gaining conscientious objector status. But until the photos were leaked, officials within the military and Pentagon had effectively kept things under wrap.

The photos created a public relations nightmare for the US government. Under mounting pressure, court-martials were issued to seven soldiers from the 372nd Military Police Company. In an effort to stem media scrutiny, the military and Pentagon tried desperately to spin the events at Abu Ghraib as an isolated incident carried out by a few rogues. Evidence to the contrary, such as Rumsfeld's approval of a list of acceptable interrogation methods and allegations of abuse at Bagram airbase in Afghanistan and other bases in Iraq, continues to emerge.

On May 19th, Specialist Jeremy Sivits, the first of the seven court-martialed soldiers to face trial, appeared before a military court inside the 'Green Zone' - the heavily fortified area in central Baghdad now home to the Coalition Provisional Authority. In pleading guilty, Sivits agreed to testify against the six other American soldiers implicated in abuses at Abu Ghraib.

Following a tearful apology, he was sentenced to the maximum penalty for his role in the abuses - twelve months in prison along with being discharged from the Army for bad conduct and a reduction in rank to private.

A dark irony unfolds when Sivits' punishment is compared to the sentence that Camilo Mejia received a few days later for refusing to participate in such abuses. Camilo got twelve months imprisonment, a bad conduct discharge, and a reduction in rank to private. Although he is now locked up, his statement before the military jury of eight soldiers, including six who served in Iraq, leaves no doubt regarding his commitment to oppose war. He said, "I respect this court but from the bottom of my heart. I sit here a free man. When I am behind bars - if you put me behind bars - I will be a free man as well because my actions and my belief against the war have set me free."

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# Speaking Out

## OPINIONS & PERSPECTIVES

# Leave Cary Verse Alone

by Lani Riccobuono

All parolees in California face extreme challenges upon release. If you have a felony conviction on your record, no matter where you go to apply for a job, potential employers will be sure to ask you about it. Without many job opportunities, it is easy for folks to fall into the trap of poverty. To make matters more complicated, "safety nets" for impoverished people, such as receiving food stamps and living in public housing, are unavailable to those with felony convictions. With parolees facing such desperate situations, it is no wonder there is such a revolving door pushing people back into prison. The situation is even worse if you are a parolee like Cary Verse.

Cary Verse is a convicted sex offender, and his sentence is an indefinite one. He was released from prison after serving 12 years, and went directly to a state mental institution where he was imprisoned for an additional five years. On top of all that, he has been chemically castrated and is monitored 24 hours a day by a global positioning system strapped to his body.

When was it decided that corporal punishment (e.g. chemical castration), purportedly abandoned long ago by our criminal justice system, is acceptable? It is not unimaginable, given the continuing trend of our criminal justice system towards extremes like three strikes and capital punishment, that the existence of chemical castration might be used to justify other forms of mutilation in the future. We also need to look at who has and who has not been subject to these forms of extreme punishment.

We need to ask whether a white businessman who molested a daughter or a niece would ever be sentenced to chemical castration. The answer? Probably not.

Sadly, Verse cannot get respite from public attention. Mainstream media has been vilifying him and making a spectacle of every move he makes. If you turn on the television on any day that Verse has had to leave yet another home he has been chased out of, the news will show people in the new neighborhood protesting his presence. Interviews are shown with people talking about buying guns and keeping their kids indoors. The news anchors tell us that the local police are ready and willing to come out and check the locks on our doors. Nice try, but unfortunately locking your doors will not end sexual assault. It is a valid precaution to take, but it is not part of any type of solution.

Sexual abuse will not stop because we mutilate the body of one man and pay close to 175,000 dollars a year to track his every move. It is a wider problem that we as a society must deal with together. Rose Braz, director of Critical Resistance, a grassroots organization seeking to reverse the state's reliance on prisons, has pointed out that this situation has not been dealt with in a way that promotes real security for our communities.

"Sexual abuse is a problem which cannot be resolved by banning people like Mr. Verse from the community," said Braz. "Studies show that specialized treatment, restitution, and collective community

responsibility are what truly work to prevent sexual abuse."

Why focus our precious time and energy harassing people who have served the sentence for their crime? There is a saying that forgiveness means giving up all hope for a better past. The best way to honor all people who have been sexually assaulted is to work towards REAL safety in our communities. People feel safe when there is accountability for individuals' actions, in addition to a chance to learn from their mistakes. These are things that take time, and require a lot of commitment from everyone involved, but are necessary if we are to create a society where we don't just lock people up instead of dealing with our problems.

Hassling people who have been paroled from prison will get us nowhere. What we really need are preventative measures and restorative justice, instead of "punishment," since that doesn't address the roots as to why such crimes happen in the first place. No one would ever argue that what Verse did is acceptable. But it is also not acceptable to act like no one can ever move beyond the mistakes that they have made or that something as inhumane as chemical castration or putting people in prison would prevent these mistakes from happening in the future.

*Lani Riccobuono is a member of the Fault Lines collective and an active prison abolitionist. For more information about the abolition movement, visit [www.criticalresistance.org](http://www.criticalresistance.org)*

the hands of the guards. In negotiations, police have proposed to ransom all but 9 of the disappeared in exchange for payment for property damage.



### Arrest and Felony charges for protester at Boston Military Recruitment Center

Joe Previtara, 21, was arrested on May 26 and charged with felonies for allegedly making a bomb threat after dressing as a hooded Iraqi prisoner in front of the Tremont St military recruitment center in downtown Boston military recruitment center in downtown Boston. In his arraignment on June 1st, a Suffolk County District Attorney suggested that the Boston College student's bail be set at \$10,000. However, a National Lawyers Guild attorney and Previtara's mother, also an attorney, persuaded the judge to free him on personal recognition.

### Starbucks Workers in NYC Attempt Unionization

First in the nation, baristas from the 36th St. and Madison Starbucks in New York City submitted union cards to the National Labor Relations Board last month (NLRB). Employees note the primary reasons for unionization is to fight back against recent cutbacks by management and reduction of hours, forcing them to poverty level standards. Starbucks -- considered by Forbes to be one of the top 100 corporations to work for -- made a record \$268 billion in profits last year, yet is only able to pay workers \$7.75/hr in one of the highest cost of living cities in the nation. Recent moves by Starbucks to fight unionization include hiring the union-busting law firm Akin Gump to file motions to the NLRB to nullify the union's request for voting.

### G8 Meeting Means Repression for Protest Organizers

From June 8-10, 2004 the leaders of the world's richest industrialized nations (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States), who are known as the "Group of 8" or G8, will meet at Sea Island, Georgia. At the meeting, Bush and company will discuss the war on Iraq, terrorism, the global economy, and the policy in the Middle East. Protest organizers have been planning actions and events to resist the G8, but have had to change many of their arrangements because the Governor of Georgia has declared a state of emergency from May 24th through June 20th. This means that the Governor is allowed greatly expanded powers, such as the right to "seize any property, public or private, close down events whether public or private regardless of permit status, detain citizens without charging them with crimes, impose curfews, override local ordinances and law enforcement, and to use military personnel for civilian law enforcement."

# No Exclusion, No Oppression

Reportback from the Trans-Form Feminism Conference 2004 - by Lauren Kay

On May 8th, 2004 in New Paltz, New York, over two hundred people gathered on the State University campus to explore the intersection of the transgender and feminist movements. The event was the Trans-form Feminism Conference.

The participants were reminded to be respectful of the safe space the conference would create for the discussion of sensitive and personal themes dealing with gender. We learned to respect anyone's right to define themselves and never assume how they identify from external cues.

Dexter, one of the main organizers of the conference, gave a presentation of the history behind his interest in organizing a much-needed discussion on how gender-politics have played a great role in shaping his feminism. He began to do this important work in the feminist movement to become an ally to those who do not neatly fit into one gender or the other or do not find love with solely those who are of the "opposite" gender. Reshaping our ideas about specific gender roles and how some folks are unable and/or not wanting to maintain those roles was one of goals of the conference. Dexter explained how being able to transition from his assigned gender was a liberating experience that was assisted by his studies in feminism.

Other "feminist" events like The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (MWMF), with its policy of only admitting

"womyn-born womyn" into their event, accentuate the need for this conference. Camp Trans, an organization Dexter was involved in last summer, has been protesting this policy of "don't-ask-don't-tell" intended to discourage transsexual and transgender folks from attending. The closeting of those who do not adhere to the strict binary gender system sets up a double standard for those "out" in sexual orientation.

One of the workshops I chose to attend was intended to discuss feminism and masculinity, dealing with issues like those faced at the MWMF. It was labeled appropriately "An Imperfect and Ongoing Dialogue." The group examined the effects, expectations, and challenges that trans men face when they "transition" to the socially constructed ideal of the male gender expression (i.e. begin to be "read" or to "pass" as male). Folks grappled with the reality of sexism and the newly granted privileges of being male as a trans man. Some methods of combating the myths that are associated with identifying as male were attacked and dissected. A few that the group brought up included the false assumptions that "real" men don't speak up and act against violence against women, that all guys are sexist and misogynist, and that all privileges that are granted to bio-men (men that identify with their assigned gender from birth) are given to trans men. The "locker-room" was a commonly used scenario to explain the

dangers and oppression trans men face when they do not "pass." The determination to view these myths as prejudices against trans men is work that the feminist movement must take on to understand further the complexities of sexism in order to dismantle it. Feminists must also attack these misconceptions in an effort to form stronger ally status with folks of all genders or no gender, and commit to fighting these multiple oppressions.

The masculine gender identity was not the only one considered, as Intersex, male to female (ftm), genderqueer, and genderpirate(!) identities were represented and differentiated. The experience of one trans person does not represent the experiences of all trans people. Time was limited, so the attendees dispersed, hopefully with more knowledge on how feminists can be better allies beyond just the use of a new vocabulary.

It was important for me, as a radical feminist, to see how the binary gender system (one that separates men/women, gay/straight, masculine/feminine, and pits them against each other as opposites) oppresses people of all genders. I encourage those who wish to make gender equality a reality and a feminist issue to attend the proposed second Trans-Form Feminism Conference next year (see [www.transform-feminism.com](http://www.transform-feminism.com) for more information).

*Lauren Kay is a member of the Fault Lines collective*

**Newsire** ((i))

# CONTAMINATION

## Biotech Profit Motive Undermines Academic Freedom - by Ali Tonak

*"I am living proof of what happens when biotech buys a university. The first thing that goes is independent research. The university is a delicate organism. When its mission and orientation are compromised, it dies. Corporate biotechnology is killing this university." - Ignacio Chapela, Feb. 2004*

Tenure, a reward of permanent employment given to exceptional university professors, is an essential aspect of academia. This status allows researchers to ask controversial questions without fear of losing their livelihood or academic opportunities. Tenure is meant to encourage free thought and critical thinking, but the case of Ignacio Chapela, an assistant professor in the Environmental Science Department at the University of California-Berkeley, it was used as a weapon. According to those who question the increasingly cozy relationships between supposedly public universities and corporations, this was not an isolated case, but a warning to other professors not to oppose private funders and an indication of a growing trend.

In 1998, pharmaceutical giant Novartis signed a \$50,000,000 deal with Berkeley's College of Natural Sciences, without the consultation of the faculty. In exchange for the funding, Novartis gained exclusive patent rights to one-third all of CNS's research. Among other perks, the contract explicitly grants Novartis direct influence over the scope of the college's research. Ignacio Chapela, along with several other colleagues, criticized the deal, warning that the influence of the world's second largest pharmaceutical corporation would dictate priorities. The legitimacy of this concern was quickly justified.

### Illicit Exposure

Chapela's long-standing relationship with the agricultural community of Oaxaca, Mexico began when he helped set up a laboratory that facilitated the export of profitable Shitake mushrooms to Japan. While examining the native maize population in Oaxaca in October of 2000, one of Chapela's graduate students, David Quist, made a shocking discovery. Despite a ban imposed by the Mexican government upon genetically-engineered(GE) corn in the birth place of modern maize domestication, there was clear evidence of genetic contamination.

DNA, the fundamental genetic unit is found in every living organism, is a biological fingerprint. The DNA of every organic organism holds a unique genetic code, making it useful in criminology and other legal matters, such as determining parent-hood. In Mexico alone there are 59 distinct races of corn each with large numbers of sub-varieties. The presence of DNA from genetically modified corn revealed by Quist's discovery presented a serious threat to the biodiversity of the native specie, because genetically-modified crops have the potential to cross-breed with native crops, altering the evolution of the entire population.

While indigenous farmers rushed to preserve their heritage by saving seeds and plants, Chapela and Quist began to investigate the source of the contamination. Since the Monsanto Corporation was the first company to incorporate biotechnology into agri-business, the researchers examined the Oaxacan maize for the presence of a particular, Monsanto-patented genetic sequence. In five out of seven samples, this turned out to be the case.

Further tests indicated a match with synthetically-created DNA constructs manufactured by several corporations, including Berkeley's sugar daddy, Novartis.

Advocates of genetically modified organism(GMO) development dismiss ecological safety concerns by pointing out genetic manipulations designed to prevent contamination, such as "Terminator" seed technology. While tinkering with DNA to create more productive and pest-resistant crops, they also program the plants to be sterile. Since these GMOs can't reproduce, they reasoned, genetic changes will be contained to the individual plant. The transgenes found among the Oaxacan crops shattered this hypothesis. Both Monsanto and Novartis, the world's two largest producers of transgenic corn were implicated by these findings.

Genetically modified pollen can travel great distances via wind and water currents. It's not uncommon for genes to cross between species through vectors such as viruses and bacteria. The factors contributing to gene flow are numerous and, at this point, non-computable. While the origins



of Oaxaca's maize contamination remain unclear, the cultivation of GE corn had been outlawed by the Mexican Department of Agriculture since 1998. This precautionary measure was obviously not enough.

### Attribution

Fearing that this discovery would not be taken lightly by the millions who eat corn tortillas 3 times a day, Ignacio Chapela was contacted by the director of Mexico's bio-security commission, Dr. Fernando Ortiz Monasterio. Monasterio met Chapela, one of the few trusted liaisons between the secretive biotech industry and lush, green fields of the Mexican campo, in an abandoned building. In a scene reminiscent of a mafia movie, a furious Monasterio berated Chapela for exposing the biotech industry to a potentially disastrous backlash. "You have gotten yourself into some serious shit this time," Monasterio reportedly shouted. "But you will not stop us — no one will stop us!"

In an attempt to save face, Monsanto hired the Bivings Group, a Washington PR firm. To discredit Chapela and Quist's research, an e-mail criticizing their methods and findings was sent to the mailing

list of AgBioWorld, a major portal for the biotech industry. The supposed author of this e-mail, "Mary Murphy", was soon revealed to be a fictional character created by someone "working for Bivings" or "clients using our services," as Todd Zeigler, head of the PR firm's online department, admitted in a BBC interview. This confession came as a result of an investigation by a British anti-GM campaigner, Jonathan Matthews of the Norfolk Genetic Information Network, who traced the origin of the e-mail to a computer operated by Bivings.

Despite this revelation, serious damage had already been inflicted upon the legitimacy of Chapela and Quist's research by "Murphy's" critique. In response to the controversy created by this e-mail, Nature, a leading scientific journal, published the following notice in April 2002: "In light of these discussions and the diverse advice received, Nature has concluded that the evidence available is not sufficient to justify the publication of the (Chapela and Quist's) paper. As the authors nevertheless wish to stand by the available evidence for

had showered Berkeley with \$50,000,000.

Last summer, Chapela protested the kowtowing of University administrators to private entities by moving his office, piece by piece, onto the lawn. In an online article published in Counterpunch he explained his motivation for this action:

"Beginning at 6 o'clock this morning, as I enter the final days of my contract as a faculty member at the University of California at Berkeley, I intend to mark and celebrate them, by doing what I believe a professor in a public university must do: to further reason and understanding. For the brief time that remains of my terminal contract at Berkeley, I shall sit holding office hours, day and night, outside the doors of California Hall. This is the building housing the Budget Committee of the Academic Senate, and the office of the Chancellor, the two arms of our university governance in charge of my file."

Chapela's tenure decision remained in limbo for another 6 months, but eventually, last fall, a rejection was delivered by Chancellor Robert Berdahl. An uproar ensued as hundred of letters supporting Chapela poured in to the Chancellor's office. Many academics wrote to Berdahl, questioning his decision and demanding greater transparency in the tenure process. Recently, the Graduate Assembly of the University voted unanimously to further pressure Berdahl into exposing the factors contributing to his rejection. "We're just being supportive of the transparency of the process," said Jessica Quindel, president of the Graduate Assembly told The Daily Cal. "There's been a lot of secrecy about this—we just want to know why he was denied tenure."

This fall Berdahl's term as Chancellor comes to an end. This change of administration has encouraged Chapela to fight for his tenure at Berkeley. The new Chancellor will have the power to reverse Berdahl's decision, so there is still hope, but if Novartis has it's way, Ignacio Chapela's days of unveiling biotech fallacies at Berkeley will soon be history.

Genetic engineering has taken place for hundreds of years by the farmers of the world. A fruit that tasted better than another was selected to be planted year after year increasing its abundance. Others were artificially mated with each other to produce tastes and odors pleasant to our senses. The problem arises when profit coupled with irresponsible science dictates these choices rather than the producers and their particular needs. The giants of Biotech have no concern in the preservation of the biodiversity for future generations of animals and plants; they are looking to maximize their shareholder values next month or next year. The tenure system has also historically preserved the integrity of research conducted in the university, selecting the ripe minds and nurturing them over the years. Today both UC Berkeley and the global population have reached a critical turning point where the decisions concerning tenure and nourishment are dictated by capital.

*Tenure Justice Now! If you are disturbed by corporate influence on a public university, especially concerning the safety GMOs, visit [www.tenurejustice.org](http://www.tenurejustice.org) and take action now.*

# FOREFEED

US pushes GM "aid" on Africa - By Jamie Hurlbut

One major issue in the debate over genetically-modified(GM) " Frankenfoods" has been the US's attempts to force it upon developing nations. Tactics include tying loans to GM food purchases and Congress' passing of the HIV/Aids Act, which links health assistance to acceptance of GM food aid. The refusal of several post-colonial African governments, including Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, to accept GM food aid recently brought this controversy to a boil. African leaders who reject GM food aid should be tried "for the highest crimes against humanity in the highest courts of the world," according to US Ambassador to the UN Food Agencies Tony Hall (Reuters News Service, December 9). Condemnations of the African refusal generally range vitriolic, as in Hall's case, to dismissive, as typified by the business press, who classify the African behavior as "silly." The "liberal" media portrays the African people as starving victims of the powerful urban elites controlling their government. Examining the case of Zimbabwe, however, illustrates the entangled nature of the forces vying for power in Africa.

The colonial history of southern Africa is marked by greedy overseers appropriating land and labor from the native populations. Because of their proximity to South Africa, where the first colonizers arrived, the people of Zimbabwe are no strangers to exploitation. Lured by tales of gold riches, the British South African Company invaded the lands of the indigenous Ndebele and Shona people. They were led by a British entrepreneur named Cecil Rhodes whose forces seized on the conflicts between the ethnic groups to

consolidate power through force and imposed British rule by the less than 5 percent white minority of the population. Britain's acquisition was named "Rhodesia" in 1895. European settlers then immigrated en masse and Rhodesia was split into Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia, separate from South Africa. Repressive measures were enacted to control the Africans such as the imposition of a hut tax, which forced them to seek employment at slave wages from the colonizers.

Disappointed by the lack of gold, the whites stole the vast majority of arable land on Zimbabwe's high plateau and the people's cattle as spoils of war. They expelled most of the Africans to the middle and low lands called Native Reserves. Africans were barred by law from doing skilled work and served as cheap labor for the huge farm plantations that the whites set up with generous bank loans. Failed liberation wars left Africans disenfranchised and their political parties faced constant persecution. After the collapse of the neighboring colonies of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, which became Zambia, the settlers of Southern Rhodesia declared Independence from the British Empire in 1965. With the outlaw colony increasingly alienated, African guerrilla groups began to attack the large white farms while operating out of newly liberated Zambia and Mozambique in an attempt to expel the settlers.

The settler government and the main political leaders of the guerrilla movement eventually signed a truce conceding that the land of the colonizers would not be stolen but bought for

adequate compensation. Today the balance of appeasing the western powers and appealing to the people's call for economic justice continues to be the major force guiding Zimbabwe's government. Robert Mugabe's Independence Party won the first all race election in 1980 on a Marxist platform of land and wealth redistribution. At the dawn of Mugabe's regime, whites were less than three percent of the population but had a third of the best lands. The new government was forced to confront the challenge faced by many post-colonial African leaders. They had won political independence but not economic independence.

Zimbabwe's economy was based on agriculture, but the large export farms were still owned by the whites, who constituted less than one percent of the population. African farming was largely subsistence. The decade of fighting amongst pre-Independence political and guerrilla groups created bitter rivalries that hindered the fusion of a popular national agenda. This discord and the extreme corruption of Mugabe's administration allowed Zimbabwe's economic policies to be dictated by international financial institutions, which called for all harvest surpluses to be sold on the market for profit rather than stockpiled creating volatile conditions and hampering progress.

In light of its history, Zimbabwe is particularly cautious in negotiating with the foreign powers. Increasing international pressure and mounting humanitarian crises forced Zimbabwe and a few other countries to accept GM food aid. They fought to prevent contamination of the local crops by demanding only milled grain, but USAID refused this demand, leaving the countries little choice but to accept the potentially devastating donations.

By refusing to mill the grain or provide non GM aid, USAID makes clear that their primary

purpose is to internationalize state power not to provide aid. The industry leaders at BIO 2004 want to move the productive aspects of farming from the field to their lab. They plan to steal the farmer's resources by tying him to their off-farm seed product. By creating the conditions for the farmer's exploitation, they will be able to extract the value from his labor and soil in the familiar industrial lab setting directly instead of exploiting the farmer for the harvest of his crop. Also, by forcing other countries to pay for repackaged seeds of indigenous crops agro-business plans to steal the huge social wealth that comes from centuries of crop cultivation in those local communities.

Some critics argue that Zimbabwe's famine problems arise from the redistributing of the large productive farms that were owned by the whites and the government's stubborn foreign policy. They argue that with the (white) managing of large farms the problem will be solved through profits on the market. But with only a few large farms creating a limited variety of crops which are primarily sold on the market, the country's real problems of self-determination will not be solved. There will always be a large mass of unemployed farmers who will be unable to buy food and unable to do their own subsistence farming because the arable land is used by the large industrial farms.

The intensified contradictions by today's corporate rulers are creating the conditions for a massive amount of unrest in Zimbabwe and across the world. As the corporate elite become more dependent on the work of people in other countries, the work of generations past, and the genetically rich material of the countries of the global South, they are at the same time pushing for the privatization of knowledge and genetic material. It's creating a pressure cooker that is sure to explode with great force.

# BIO-MEDERLOSION

By Kelah Bott



Since the first commercial growth of genetically engineered crops in 1996 there has been a growing debate about the potential dangers and unforeseen consequences of biotechnology. From the advent of GE corn, cotton and soybeans less than a decade ago, the global biotech crop has increased 40-fold. Currently, more than seven million farmers in 18 countries utilize biotechnology, raising the need for global awareness.

Environmentalists, consumer and animal rights advocates, and socio-economic justice activists have long been wary of the potentially devastating effects of tinkering with genetics. Although agricultural biotech supporters argue that GE crops could end world hunger, the long-term effects on public health and biodiversity are unknown. But while public discourse around the biotech industry is almost exclusively focused on the genetic engineering of our food supply, agricultural research actually represents a small fraction of the industry. A study by Bio Economic Research Associates reports that only ten percent of the US's 1200 biotech companies specialized in agriculture (both plant and animal) in 2003, while the bulk of the industry focused on biomedical research.

One crucial aspect of the biomed industry's ability to make profits, fueling this recent explosion, is genetic patenting. Since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled to allow General Electric patent rights on a human-made bacterium capable of breaking down crude oil in 1980, there has been a landslide of corporations rushing to claim patents on everything from vegetables to human genomes. The legal and moral implications of allowing individuals, corporations and universities to own the genetic structure of living beings has stirred a global controversy. The Canadian Supreme Court, for instance, ruled in

2002 that higher life forms (living, sentient beings) are not patentable. The case which resulted in this ruling involved a transgenic mouse for use in cancer research developed by Dr. Philip Leder of Harvard Medical School. He engineered a mouse specifically designed to develop cancer. After obtaining the US patent on the "oncomouse" (onco means tumor) he licensed it to DuPont, the corporation that funded his research.

Jeremy Rifkin, President of the Foundation on Economic Trends, compared the modern patent craze to the enclosure of public lands - the commons - throughout the 16th century Europe in his book, *The Biotech Century*. Privatization originated with the parceling of land that had once belonged to the village or community for cattle grazing. The concept of land ownership changed the nature of people's relationships and "the customs and traditions of generations were declared null and void." Rifkin cited the impact that land privatization had on society as an indicator of the enormous consequences that the privatization of "the genetic commons" could hold. According to Rifkin, "The most intimate commons of all is being enclosed and reduced to private commercial property that can be bought and sold on the global market."

The biomedical industry rationalizes their patenting of higher life forms by it's claims that their "inventions" such as the transgenic mouse could help researchers find the cure for cancer. Non-human animals have been used for centuries as models to study human illnesses, but the results of such animal-based research has been mixed. The pharmaceutical industry - a significant field in biomed - uses animals to test all of their products, but their reliance on animals has often led them in the wrong direction. Humans and animals do share many similarities, but on the cellular and molecular level even subtle differences can manifest in large differences in the body. Humans regularly take ibuprofen (Advil) for minor aches and pains, but give that same drug to your dog or cat and it could prove fatal.

Many people use products of the pharmaceutical industry with little thought of the potential hazards. It is assumed that the mandatory testing of pharmaceuticals on animals has ensured a safe product. However, the pharmaceutical industry is littered with failures in this regard. In 1997 the diet drug combination Fen-Phen (fenfluramine, phentermine, dexfenfluramine) was taken off the market when it was discovered to cause heart-valve abnormalities in humans. No such abnormalities were ever found in the animals used to test the drug.

The first SSRI anti-depressant (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor) was found to cause a paralytic illness that was never evident in animal tests of the drug. There are hundreds of such instances in which the animal model did not anticipate the human reactions with disastrous results for public health.

Another potentially dangerous use of animals in biotechnology is their utilization in xenotransplantation. Xenotransplantation is the transplantation of organs or tissue from one species to another. Scientists are researching ways to genetically modify pigs and baboons in order to make good candidates for animal to human transplantation. Whether it's pigs or baboons supplying the organs, the threat to public health remains the same. The possibility that an animal virus could jump from one species to another and create a new epidemic is a real one. Scientists could unwittingly breed a new contagion with the transfer of genetically modified tissue between species. In 1996, Dr. Robert Michler wrote in the *Emerging Infectious Disease Journal*, "The risk for zoonoses is likely to be restricted to the xenogeneic tissue recipient. Nevertheless, one must consider and anticipate the potential for zoonotic transmission through the human population, constituting a public health concern."

Those opposed to GE agricultural crops claim that biotech is simply too unpredictable; once unleashed, unforeseen threats to biodiversity could be irreversible and devastating. With the burgeoning population of transgenic species and widespread exploration of GE tissue and organs, this argument can easily be applied to biomed, as well. Mice can fit through remarkably small holes, and transplant recipients with transgenic organs may someday live among us. There is reason to be concerned with what may happen when GE life forms mingle with their non-transgenic counterparts. As Jeremy Rifkin has said, "The artificial creation and propagation of cloned, chimeric, and transgenic animals could mean the end of the wild, and the substitution of a bioindustrial world."

The threats to the health and integrity of our natural environment and everyone in it are clear, but in the growing world of biotech, ethical concerns often take a back seat to the profit motive. Technology is allowing us to cross boundaries that were never before possible. Just as the enclosure of the commons during the middle ages turned land into a commodity, genetic patenting is turning our very bodies into commodities. In their noble quest to cure cancer and feed the hungry, the biotech industry is raking it in with annual revenues increased from \$8 billion in 1992 to \$34.8 billion today. As their profits soar, 20 million animals a year are killed and countless genetic wildcards are created. As Jeremy Rifkin said, "The biotech revolution will force each of us to put a mirror to our most deeply held values, making us ponder the ultimate question of the purpose and meaning of existence."

# The Next NAFTA?

## Bush Approves CAFTA, Opposition Unites - by Liam O'Donoghue



On May 27, the day before US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick signed a deal intended to expand NAFTA policies to include six Central American nations, the California Coalition for Free Trade and Human Rights (CCFHR) protested outside the Federal Building. With the approval of the Executive Branch, the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) now moves to Congress, but if several statements released by legislators last Thursday are any indication, the Bush Administration's current push for corporate globalization may have reached a dead end.

Rep. Nancy Pelosi took the protest as an opportunity to publicly condemn the treaty with Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua (negotiations with Dominican Republic are pending). Reading a letter from the House Democratic Leader, Dan Bernal, Pelosi's deputy district director told the protesters, "CAFTA is on a midnight train to nowhere...The integrated market cannot be built upon the suppression of workers."

Jesse Swanhuysen, Director of CCFHR, a united coalition composed of representatives from the AFL-CIO, Sierra Club, and various agricultural, religious and immigrant organizations explained why the group chose to gather outside of the Federal Building, which holds Pelosi's

office. "CAFTA is an opportunity for Democrats to draw a clear distinction between themselves and the Administration."

The protesters' suggestion did not go unheeded.

The day of the protest, six Democratic Reps., including California's Barbara Lee and Hilda Solis, released a letter blasting CAFTA. "We have already seen the damage that NAFTA has done, economically and ecologically," Lee wrote. "Just as with NAFTA, women and minorities will bear a disproportionate price for an unsound, unfair trade policy."

Since its 1992 passage, the free trade agreement with Canada and Mexico has caused more job loss in California than in any other state. Between 1993 and 2002, the Economic Policy Institute reports that NAFTA destroyed a net total of 115,723 California jobs, primarily in the manufacturing sector. At the protest, San Francisco Labor Council representative Alan Benjamin said, "The American work force has been devastated by NAFTA, and we won't let it happen again."

Besides labor concerns, a number of CAFTA provisions could reduce affordable access to vital human services including health care and medications, water, education and energy. The authority of public officials to protect health standards for professional licensing, environmental and occupational health, alcohol and tobacco protections, privacy rules, and patients' rights could also be undermined, according to a study by the Center for Policy Analysis on Trade and Health.

California environmental laws and even the authority of the Supreme Court have also been challenged by the Chapter 11 provision of NAFTA. Chapter 11 gives corporations the ability to sue foreign countries, which has resulted in cases of NAFTA provisions overriding national laws. These lawsuits are decided by panels of three judges who are selected by the plaintiff and the defendant nation from a pool of World Bank and International Monetary Fund officials. In a statement to the *New York Times*, John D. Esheverria, a law professor at Georgetown University said, "This is the

biggest threat to United States judicial independence that no one has ever heard of and even fewer people understand."

On June 7, a NAFTA tribunal will convene in Washington D.C. to decide if California's ban on MTBE, a carcinogenic gasoline additive that has made the water of communities across the state undrinkable, impinges on future, potential profits of Canada's Methanex corporation. If the panel decides in favor of Methanex, as they did in a nearly identical case in which Virginia-based Ethyl Corporation successfully sued the Canadian government to eliminate a MTBE ban, U.S. tax-payers will have to pay Methanex \$9.7 million or deregulate MTBE usage.



photo: Jesse Colorado Swanhuysen

**Under CAFTA, these Nicaraguan girls may be forced away from their rural homes in one of the few remaining Sandinista farming villages and condemned to a life of sweatshop labor.**

In another case, Glamis Gold Ltd, is suing California for the right to open a massive, open-pit, cyanide heap-leach mine in the Imperial Valley on the sacred grounds of the Quechan Indians. This method of mining has been banned in several countries and Montana. The precedent set by a recent tribunal decision that forced Mexico to pay U.S. Metalclad Company \$16 million when it refused to reopen a toxic waste dump that would have had devastating effects on the local population suggests that California may have to pay \$50 million or overturn its mining-operation laws in the name of free trade.

# Case Study in Exploitation

## Harken Costa Rica Holdings vs. Costa Rica

Harken Costa Rica Holdings - a firm with close corporate ties to Harken Energy of Texas, which just happens to be President Bush's former oil company, is already threatening Costa Rica with a CAFTA investment suit - even before the agreement is signed.

Harken obtained an agreement to drill for oil off of Costa Rica that was contingent on the outcome of an environmental assessment. The assessment determined that the project was incompatible with the country's environmental law. The drilling was to take place in Costa Rica's Talamanca region - one of the richest marine ecosystems on the planet, which contains reserves for three indigenous communities, an UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Cahuita National Park, and a UN-designated wetlands site.

In response, Harken tried to bring an international suit against Costa Rica demanding more than \$57 BILLION - almost THREE TIMES Costa Rica's annual GDP - for profits Harken claims it would have made from the project. Under the terms of their contract, however, Costa Rica was able to exercise its right to keep the case in domestic courts. Under CAFTA, they would have had no such choice. Harken would have been able to circumvent national courts and take its case directly to ICSID.

According to the local press and members of the Costa Rican government, both Harken and the Bush Administration have used the threat of the impending CAFTA as a lever to press Costa Rica to settle this case - either paying three times its GDP for the right to protect its environment and indigenous communities, or giving in to Harken and allowing the drilling.

- Antonia Jujasz

### International Forum on Globalization Assessment: Democracy vs. Corporate Rule

The situation is clear: the CAFTA will expand an agreement that is fundamentally at odds with democracy. In a democracy, there is a commitment to balance the many competing interests that exist in a society. Those doing the "balancing" are - most often - representatives of the people. One interest might be the ability of corporations to operate and make profits. Another interest might be the preservation of the lands and rights of indigenous communities, or the right of the citizens to clean and healthy drinking water.

Each of the laws in question here derived from a democratic process which began with affected communities who organized successfully to demand action by their elected officials, who then balanced the competing interests at hand to pass laws that served the overall public interest. That should be the end of the story.

Now, this is not to say that international courts are inherently flawed. Rather, it is to say that these rules and these courts are. They are thoroughly unbalanced, one sided and undemocratic. Therefore, for this reason alone, much less the hundreds of others will we reference today, the CAFTA must be rejected, the NAFTA must be rescinded and the real alternative policies that already exist must be applied in their stead.

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# Honduran Government Agrees to Campesino Demands

Resistance Negotiates Victory, But Threats Continue - by Jessica Pupovac



Last week, as President Bush signed the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), a tense showdown took place in the hills of Intibuca, Honduras between Honduran Special Police, known as Cobras, and a newly formed convergence of Honduran popular movements. The Regional Coordination of Popular Resistance (CRRP), a local branch of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH), formed unprecedented alliances among a broad spectrum of allegiances, joining campesino (farmer) and indigenous movements with labor unions, agricultural federations and the local Catholic Church. To combat the extreme poverty and profound exclusion that have characterized Honduran society for generations, CRRP took aim at local corruption and exploitation as well as global empire building, and this past month it struck an impressive first blow.

The actions began early on the morning of April 26, as members of the resistance movement flooded into the regional Ministry of Education offices. Once the initial camp was set up, the non-violent occupation of government offices spread to the Mayor's office. Before the work day began, the CRRP had moved into the regional joint office of the Honduran Foundation for Agricultural Research, the Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock and the Honduran Corporation for Forestry Development.

Their diverse and ambitious list of demands reflected the cornucopia of social and economic problems rampant in Honduran culture. Demands ranged from the banning of genetically modified potatoes, which could pose a serious threat to native crops, to more equal distribution of agricultural land. Maquila workers in local factories should be free from arbitrary dismissal and have the right to form labor unions, they demanded, and also called for the cessation of environmentally destructive mining and logging practices. They demanded that the local government stop exploiting economic desperation by inflating remittance taxes and stealing the contributions of loved ones working in the US. They demanded that public funds stop being misappropriated to private companies under the guise of development and also a halt to privatization schemes underway for education, water and healthcare services. They demanded the release of movement leaders being unjustly held in one of the world's most notorious prison

systems. Other demands include the resignation of specific individuals, such as a Director of Education, who has a long history of hiring and firing teachers based on political allegiances.

These demands were punctuated by several CRRP-related direct actions during the weeks that followed, including blockades of major thoroughfares, which prevented contaminated potato seed from getting in and freshly cut lumber from getting out. In one episode, 500 sacks of GMO potato seed were confiscated.

In an official statement issued May 1 expressing solidarity with anti-imperialist movements around the world, the National Coordination of Popular Resistance, Honduras' largest coalition of resistance groups, echoed the above demands, adding that their government must not sign away their futures by becoming a party to the imbalanced and exploitative CAFTA. Their final demand was that Honduran troops be immediately withdrawn from Iraq and that "American troops now entering our national territory be withdrawn" (The second statement was in reference to a new US military base being built on Honduran soil).

The government's backlash was swift, but ultimately ineffective. COPINH's phone lines were cut, death threats and acts of intimidation against various CRRP leaders grew more numerous and extreme, and Noel Pinel, President of the National Federation of Potato Producers (FENAPA), was charged with aggravated robbery and is currently awaiting trial. On May 20, 80 members of COPINH participating in a land recuperation in Tutule la Paz were awoken and arrested in the early morning hours by trucks full of police.

While demands remained unanswered and the various occupations continued, tensions grew as Cobras swarmed the cities. Rumors that paramilitary units, consisting of security agents working for the logging firms, were preparing to strike spread through the resistance. The resilience and organization of this newly forged alliance was proven by their steadfast response; in the face of this intimidation, they established a presence outside the county jail and increased the number of highway blockades.

Then, on May 22, representatives of the President's office, the Ministers of Defense, Education, Transportation and Agriculture finally agreed to sit down to

the negotiating table. After hours of deliberation, many of their local demands were met, including: the establishment of a "green belt" around the major municipal centers; the cessation of logging for a 40-day period of investigation, with community participation in conducting surveys; strict regulations regarding potato seed imports; the immediate firing of Director of Education Mario Roberto Cantarero; public audits of various local municipalities; a series of land reform resolutions; and the release of 77 of the 80 campesinos arrested during the land recuperation (the other three are to be released any day now).

Despite these victories, things have once again grown tense for the CRRP organizers in Intibuca. Professor Idalecio Murillo, a teacher involved with pushing for education reform within the CRRP, awoke on the morning of May 27, as bullets riddled his home. Later that evening, two armed men arrived at the COPINH offices, cocking their guns and trying to force their way inside. After banging on the doors and walls for almost a half an hour, the men fired two bullets into the house before finally leaving.

Local law officers have all but ignored these incidents and have refused to file reports. Witnesses, after describing the cars and authors of these acts of violence, have suddenly and inexplicably changed their

stories. The organizers of COPINH and of other affiliated organizations fear for their safety, but have vowed to continue to fight for just, inclusive development and for their rights to an education, a livelihood, and a life free from intimidation.

For information on how to support this struggle, please contact author at [jespup@riseup.net](mailto:jespup@riseup.net).

## Celebrating successful negotiations, COPINH leader Berta Caseres issued the following proclamation:

*Today we can scream VICTORIA! Tonight there are community festivals of every kind and the people are collecting signatures on the agreements... but this is only a recess, because it is now time to organize for the next big event: the National March of the NATIONAL Coordination of Popular Resistance, from every end of the country... So, please prepare actions in front of the Honduran embassies in the US, because among other issues there is still more work to be done on water and forest preservation, against the mines, and on the EXPULSION OF GRINGO TROOPS FROM HONDURAS! We do not forget one struggle when another is won... This is the end of one battle, but not the war!*

## Fair and Balanced or Racist and Distorted?

- by Sarolta J. Gump

On February 1, Maria Esperanza Hernandez, an undocumented Mexican worker was on her way to a 4 a.m. shift in the laundry room of a local nursing home. Her usual ride was unavailable that morning, so her daughter, known to family and friends as Carmen, offered to accompany her on the four-mile walk from their home in Newark, CA. On their way through the quiet Fremont neighborhood, these women were brutally murdered. The assailant, described by neighbors as a six foot tall white male, allegedly beat both women to death with a large tree branch. The brutality of this crime, Fremont's first double homicide in almost two decades, was largely ignored by the media, besides a smattering of coverage in a few local papers.

According to a report issued in June 2000 by the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR), immigrant women are among the most vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and human rights violations in the U.S. An excerpt from 'Hands that Shape the World,' an NNIRR report, states: "the U.S. government has not only failed to protect the rights of immigrant women, but has implemented new legislation negatively impacting the well-being, health, employment, and family life of immigrant women."

The lack of media coverage directed to legislation, such as Gov. Schwarzenegger's proposal to repeal a law that allows undocumented workers to apply for drivers' licenses, seems to legitimize this assess-

ment. Media complicity regarding this agenda of "whitewashing" becomes even more evident when comparing the disproportionate coverage of two other unrelated murder cases involving Bay Area women recently. Both were pregnant at the time of their murder and each case is being investigated as a result of domestic violence.

The body of Laci Peterson, 27, a white woman from Modesto, was discovered in April 2003. In July 2002, the torso of Evelyn Hernandez, 24, a resident of San Francisco, surfaced in the bay along the Embarcadero. Evelyn Hernandez and her 5-year-old son had been missing since May. Her son Alex is still missing along with any substantial press coverage, even within the local press. Meanwhile, the case of the white woman, Laci Peterson generated national coverage and the trial of her husband continues to garner front page coverage.

This contrast implies not only institutional racism, but the sensational coverage of Laci Peterson's case has generally failed to examine the case in terms of a nationwide epidemic of domestic violence. The legislation that now bears her name will not secure more funding for battered women's shelters, affordable daycare, or other feasible means of attempting to mitigate an unrelenting social problem that affects one out of four women across all socio-economic barriers. Instead 'Laci and Connor's Law', treats unborn fetuses as victims separate from their mothers in a court of law, distorting the true context of this crime.

# PSYCHO INC.

Interview with *The Corporation* Director Mark Achbar  
by Liam O'Donoghue

Despite being the top-grossing Canadian documentary ever, *Manufacturing Consent*, an exploration of Noam Chomsky's media control theories directed by Mark Achbar, has never aired on a commercial network or major cable station in the US. His latest film, *The Corporation*, has already surpassed *Manufacturing Consent*'s success in his homeland, but don't bother looking for this one in TV Guide either. The film's theme - that the corporate entity is a psychopath - might make advertisers a little squeamish. So even though *The Corporation* has triumphed at film festivals around the globe, including an Audience Award win at the Sundance Film Festival, the only way to see it in the US is during its limited summer tour of selected cities.

*The Corporation* parades a mind-boggling series of facts: AOLTime-Warner owns the rights to "Happy Birthday," a corporate cabal led by DuPont, Goodyear, and JP Morgan attempted to covertly overthrow FDR during the New Deal-era, Fox News tried to pay investigative reporters to lie. The unique framework of this comprehensive indictment makes what could have become a sensory overload accessible and even humorous. Since the corporation is considered a legal individual by law, the filmmakers apply the actual diagnostic criteria of the World Health Organization to gauge its personality. Going down the checklist of psychotic traits ranging from amorality to callous deceit, even a FBI psychologist agrees - it's a psycho.

Achbar's conclusions aren't without their detractors. Between clips of early newsreels, corporate propaganda films and explosive free trade summit footage, high-ranking (and invariably smiling) business figures such as the CEO of Goodyear, the former chairman of Shell, and Nobel Prize-winning economist Milton Friedman give their opinions on capitalism (lest the right wing call the progressives unfair). Critics like Chomsky, Howard Zinn, and Michael Moore face off in the other corner, but the truth is apparent - corporations value profits above life. Here, Mark Achbar discusses some of the issues raised in *The Corporation* and solutions to reforming this dominating and amoral system.

**Fault Lines:** History has humbled every formerly dominant institution from the Roman Empire to communism. You've said that the corporation is unlikely to become the first to defy history, but with globalization, corporations are becoming more pervasive and powerful than ever. Is a reversal of this trend likely any time soon?

**Mark Achbar:** I'm starting to see a groundswell of people no longer willing to acknowledge the legitimacy of this institution. If you would've said that the Berlin Wall was going to fall, two years before it did, nobody would have believed you. There comes a tipping point, and you never know when it's going to happen... but you get a sense of things.

There's certainly been a move towards reform, there's more of a consciousness of

the institution itself, and this film is a part of that growing consciousness.

**FL:** But corporate ideology is so inescapable, as if this system were a foregone conclusion and there are no alternatives. How do you get outside this envelopment to get a critical detachment?

**MA:** You go see this movie (laughs). It's very hard to escape unless you move to an island, and even then airplanes are going to fly overhead and stuff is going to wash up on your beach, so I don't think escape is a goal. We need to diminish the harmful effects of industry or we might not have a world to debate the modern business structure.

**FL:** Ray Anderson (CEO, Interface, world's largest commercial carpet manufacturer) is portrayed almost heroically in the film. His goal of 100 percent sustainability for his company is very radical now, but do you see environmental consciousness as a growing corporate trend?

**MA:** Ray is very unusual, but he's a model for businesspeople who want to take an environmental initiative. Right now, by cutting waste, he's managed to make money by instituting his environmental objectives. The real question comes when you have to sacrifice profit to meet environmental goals, and publicly traded corporations aren't prone to do that unless forced to do so by regulation.

Plus, there's a lot of greenwashing. Some of the worst violators, like the oil companies, try to portray themselves as environmentally conscious. The nature of the institution is to manipulate and lie in order to preserve its self-image; it's one of the items on the psycho checklist. There are sincere people like Sir Mark Moody-Stuart (former Chairman of Royal Dutch Shell, who's shown in the film serving tea to a crowd of Earth First! activists after they hang a "Murderers" banner from his roof) fighting for reform from within a very slow bureaucracy. But, the professional imperative says it's easy to make money when you're flaring gas in Nigeria and creating a lot of pollution, because it's far away and nobody notices.

Ray Anderson is a leader in terms of his vision of corporate sustainability, but we can't rely on epiphanies of CEOs across the land to solve the crisis. We, as consumers, need to put a great deal of pressure on the manufacturers of the goods we consume to instill a sustainable chain of production and disposal, but the pressure needs to come from legislators, as well as the public and the corporations, themselves.

**FL:** Well, the film shows the public outcry when it was revealed that little kids in Honduran sweatshops were making the clothes for Wal-Mart's Kathy Lee Gifford line, and Kathy Lee apologized and stood up for these kids, but Wal-Mart still exploits cheap labor and they haven't crumbled. It seems like America demands more accountability from its celebrities than its corporations.

**MA:** Kathy Lee's public image matters to her a lot- and I think she genuinely cares about how kids are treated- so it made strategic sense to expose her, because she

had to respond. She's the human face of one aspect of the Wal-Mart brand, so they made her publicly accountable. Wal-Mart can deflect bad publicity, because it's so huge, but when Kathy Lee takes a hit, she's got to come up with some answers.

**FL:** So how can the public work towards increasing corporate accountability?

**MA:** Demanding progressive legislation from politicians is a good start. With all the deregulation that's been lobbied for, look at how the Bush administration has systematically reduced constraints on air polluters. It's a case study in the film's thesis, because the euphemisms used to justify it are stunning in their duplicity. It's Orwellian - good is bad, black is white, and the Clean Air Act puts more pollution in the air. But accountability can start locally. The film shows Arcata, California, doing this, and there's a community near Minneapolis that's trying to pass a law saying, "Officers of corporations have a duty to make money for their shareholders, but not at the expense of human rights, the environment, etc."



**In theory, the invisible hand will take care of companies that completely stomp on their workers, because people won't work there, but workers are desperate, so they do.**

**FL:** But how do you enforce the well-intentioned legislation that manages to get passed? Sam Gibara (Chairman and former CEO of Goodyear) seems to be taunting the public in the movie when he says, "Governments are powerless compared to where they were before." When breaking the law is profitable, corporations are notorious for simply paying fines for violations. The film even shows how 57 US multinationals were fined in one week for trading with officially recognized enemy states, but they just write a check and it's back to business as usual. This seems ludicrous, because under California's "Three Strikes" law, for example, repeat offenders can get 20 years for stealing a candy bar, so why aren't corporations held to the same standards?

**MA:** There's actually people like Robert Benson at UCLA who advocate "Three Strikes" legislation for corporations. I think the problem is a question of equality, like with these "triple P's" (Public-Private Partnerships). They can be good. We cer-

tainly wouldn't have gotten this film made without the (Canadian) government, but industry wants to be perceived as an equal. They should be subordinate to the government and the public, not the other way around.

**FL:** In some cases, like certain aspects of biotechnology shown in the film, where corporations have begun patenting living organisms and discoveries relating to the human genetic sequence, there doesn't seem to be much of a question as to who's writing the rules. What are the implications of these developments?

**MA:** I'm not an expert in that field, but I just find it deeply offensive that some corporation has any claim to my genetic makeup. It's morally repugnant that they're divvying up the genetic commons. We need to find another system of incentives to allow the research to be done. I'm not saying, "Let's all be luddites and not explore how to cure diseases;" but there must be a system of public ownership and management of these research facilities.

**FL:** What about universities?

**MA:** Maybe, or it could be an international body or a section of the UN.

**FL:** The film paints a very negative picture of privatization, from the genetic patenting to the revolts in Bolivia against Bechtel's ownership of the water supply (including rain), but some public institutions are so bureaucratic and inefficient. Couldn't privatization benefit, say, American public schools?

**MA:** That's a tough question, but it seems to me that the incentives are all wrong. What do you do if a school isn't profitable? Shut it down? That could be pretty disruptive and the children could suffer greatly. Call me old-fashioned, but there's just something not right about the public education system being manipulated for profit.

**FL:** But isn't this already happening?

**MA:** Well, there's the infiltration of schools by advertising, with McDonald's serving lunches, etc. Then there are actual for-profit schools that are owned by publicly-traded corporations. This means that their principle motivating force has to be profit, which seems to clash with what it should be - education.

**FL:** What about the theory that says what's best for the market is best for the people?

**MA:** I think the inequalities in society today prove that market forces need a little regulation. In theory, the invisible hand will take care of companies that completely stomp on their workers, because people won't work there, but workers are desperate, so they do. *Parecon* by Michael Albert is about participatory economics. It's completely different model for seeing how an economy could be run, and under what principles, and how to get the things we value enshrined in an economy. I think it's a model worth considering- or at least discussing. I'm not smart enough to design an alternative society, but it has to come as a result of the democratic process. It's important that there are some people who are thinking forward and trying to conceive of a system that's not what used to be called "communism" and takes the best things in terms of allocation and use of markets and put it together in a humane, equitable way that promotes good values. We need to keep our humanity intact.

# Arts and Action

## CULTURE, POLITICS & CRITICISM



### Glitch-Hop Apocalypse

#### D.C.'s Food For Animals Rages

#### Against the Bush Machine - *By OverDose*

Backpackers might not admit an obligation to respond, but it seems like the more formulaic and commercialized mainstream hip hop becomes, the harder the underground strives to shatter associations with its jiggy counterpart. When the first, stripped-down sounds of punk emerged during the 70s as a revolt against puffy arena rock, cultural and political repression, and basically everything except alcohol and safety pins, people called it "unlistenable." "Musical anarchy," they scoffed, and snorted down another rail of low-grade blow off a BeeGee's record sleeve so they could fit into tight pants.

"Unlistenable" is a term that today's bling-bling set would probably use to describe Food For Animals, 'cause if you tried to bounce your head to their debut, *Scavengers* (coming out this month on Muckamuck Records), you'd be likely to catch a seizure. It's a rusty corkscrew in your ear, sharp and twisted. This slab from D.C.-area duo Vulture Voltaire and Ricky Rabbit glitch-smacks the platinum teeth right out of the mainstream's mouth. Samples get chewed up, regurgitated by robotic monsters, and shotgun-hitched for the shuddering, bombastic beats. "It's a reaction to living in the suburbs," Rick Rabbit said of his chaotic programming. "Since everything else was the same, I just had to make chaos."

While Ricky plucks and mutilates snippets from across the musical spectrum to create his pastiche, Vulture spits wild reactions to political and artistic phoniness and stagnation. The line "Scavenger raps over scavenger tracks/I pick apart and salvage the wasteland. Street-style collides with cerebrum on rhymes like, "You're a cat with no claws/ I make you bust a mean Jackson Pollack in your drawers." This shit is disruptive like a preschool on Ritalin strike, running in 50 directions at once, trying to set the teacher on fire, pissing on textbooks, fingerprinting on the American flag.

There's plenty of MCs that drop rhymes like abstract origami--intricate, but confusing--who call themselves "verbal acrobats." Vulture's more like a boxer. "I love dissecting complex, poetic rhymes, and unraveling messages," Vulture said. "But sometimes I just want to say "Fuck Bush" and I don't need three sentences to do it. I can say it in two words."

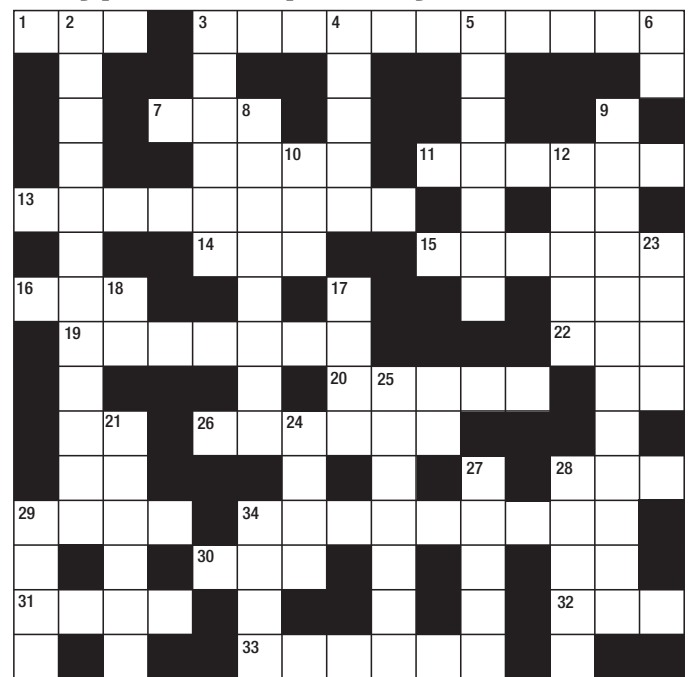
The convergence of so many twisted visions and influences on *Scavengers* sounds like the eye of a culture storm. Living in the belly of the Republican beast obviously played a role in the urgency of Vulture's various condemnations. "There are a lot of people who go to the protest or perform at the protest, just because it's expected or the cool thing to do, but they never make their own statement when they're outside the crowd," he said. "This record is our political contribution. Coming up with these lyrics changed me, because it made me question what I wanted to say about the system."

With lines like "Lookin' at your \$100 clothes where'd you get those/is that the total for your shit or your zip code" Vulture's social commentary is a hip hop reverse. How many MCs are dissin' folks for dressing too nice?

"We like existing outside the US money machine." Vulture said. "Adhering to one set of 'standards' or George Bush's moral center is going to bury us all. We want to explore, to take what we think is great and use it to create new things."

It's doubtful that "existing outside the US money machine is going to be a problem for FFA. As long as Vulture keeps screaming every verse like he's on a sinking lifeboat and Ricky's beats sound like Afrika Bambaata crashing a garbage truck through a Radio Shack, I don't think that they'll have to worry about what to wear on TRL.

### ■ Crypto - compiled by Iain Boal



#### Across:

1. Basque autonomists
3. TV staple?
7. Hub of noncorporate news
11. More heaven than hell?
13. Plant plunder
14. Governmental game
15. McNamara's fog maker
16. Shameful weapon?
19. Nordic nip
20. Fixed worth
22. Old Deal
26. Capital's 3D maps
28. Anarchist assistance
29. Modern fate
30. Boasting phase
31. No choice for thatcher
32. Sweat shop
33. Old mole's sidekick
34. The Spinoza crowd

#### Down:

2. White bloc?
3. Diminutive red
4. Dogged philosopher
5. Surprising lack of speech
6. Lovely bovine
8. Spanish saturnalia
9. Buttress against the state?
10. Stable Youth
12. Mother of communes
17. Painful attempt
18. Identical cut
21. Fundamental compound
23. Lather bar
24. Classical work
25. Chief WTO battleground
27. World-weary giant
28. Old proverb
29. Ceremonially correct
34. Creative companion

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June 4: Last Laugh Terror Squad & 3 bands  
June 5: Shotgun Wedding, Allegiere, Burn at the Stake, Versailles  
June 6: art and music, Time in Malta, Walken, Stars & Bars  
June 10: Hansel, Scrappy's Light Show  
June 11: Genevieve & Edward, TopR2 the Underground Rock Star, The Dead Hensons, art opening and fashion show, Adam Infanticide  
June 12: Panache magazine benefit (bands TBA)  
June 13: Needle Exchange Benefit - Dory Tourette And The Skirtheads, Two Gallants, Floating Corpses, Monster Friend  
June 17: Snow Cuts Glass, In Ink Please, Dear Nora  
June 18: The Coppertones & 2 bands  
June 19: hardcore show, Kaos Pilot 3 bands  
June 20: art opening of artist Ana Fernandez and friends  
June 25: a benefit for Femina Potens Gallery, featuring butcher & Smear, the Floating Corpses, Butch v. Femme, and Piper McKinzie  
June 26: hardcore show, featuring: Bright Calm Blue, Takaru, Lachance (L.A.), Roque State (L.A.), With Eyes Like Static, Coffin  
June 27: Agents of Satan & 3 bands

# Calendar June's Events

## June 8, SF: Protest G8 and BIO

[www.reclaimthecommons.net](http://www.reclaimthecommons.net)

Reclaim the Commons plans to shut-down the Biotechnology Industry Organization international convention, and an anti-G8 demo will reclaim the streets.

## June 8, Dolores Park, SF: Guerrilla Video Screening

The perfect cap for a long day of disrupting the BIO convention and reclaiming the streets, a free guerrilla video screening in the park. 9 p.m.

## Jun 8-10, Sea Island and Brunswick, Georgia: G8 [www.nog8.org](http://www.nog8.org)

The Group of 8 (G8) Summit will bring together the leaders of the world's richest nations to decide political, economic and social issues affecting over 6 billion people. Protesters face martial law and machine-gun toting military troops.

## June 9, New College, SF: History of Palestine

Presentation on the history of Palestine & benefit for ISM.

## June 10, Lake Merritt BART, Oakland: Protest BART Layoffs

BART continues to layoff transit workers while protecting its bloated management and administration. 8:30 a.m.

## June 11, ATA, SF: "BOOM: The Sound of Eviction"

Video screening benefiting the Eviction Defense Collaborative. 8 p.m., 992 Valencia.

## Jun 11,12,13,16, SF and Berkeley: ISM Training

Four days of International Solidarity Movement training for work in Palestine.

## June 12: International Day of Action and Solidarity with Jeff "Free" Luers

Jeff "Free" Luers is an environmental activist and political prisoner sentenced to 22 years in prison.

## June 12, Justin Herman Plaza, SF: World Naked Bike Ride

A clothing-optional ride to protest oil dependency. 11 a.m.

## June 14, SF: Memorial for Gloria E. Anzaldúa

Memorial for lesbian Chicana cultural theorist and creative writer. 10 a.m., 3543 18th St.

## June 14, SF: Reggae Benefit for California Prison Focus

Benefits women prisoners living in solitary confinement and California Super-maximum security prisons. 8:30 p.m., 295 China Basin Way.

## June 18, Fresno: "Occupied Territory"

Anarchist/anti-authoritarian gathering.

## June 19, Golden Gate Bridge: Health Care for All

Doctors, medical students, health practitioners, union members, activists, and allies will march on the Golden Gate Bridge to demand health care for all. Simultaneous marches will take place in many other cities. 7 a.m.-1 p.m., Crissy Field.

## June 25, Dolores Park, SF: Tranny March

The friday before PRIDE: The annual march of trannies, friends, allies and admirers.

## June 25, Justin Herman Plaza, SF: Monthly Critical Mass, 5:30 p.m.

## July 23-29, Belgrade, Serbia: People's Global Action (PGA)

[www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/belgrade](http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/belgrade)

PGA is a network of autonomous grassroots movements around the world, sharing an opposition to capitalism and commitment to direct action and civil disobedience.

## June 27, SF: SF Pride

The parade starts at Market and Beale at 10:30 a.m. and proceeds west to Market and Eighth Street.

## July 25-30, Quito, Ecuador: Americas Social Forum

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

NGOs and other elements of "civil society" will gather to discuss "alternatives" to the neoliberal order, within the bounds of global capitalism.

## July 26-29, Boston: Democratic National Convention

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

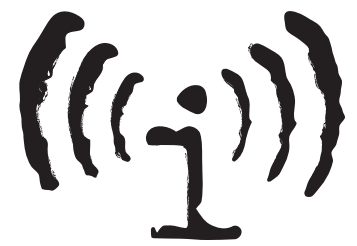
An unwelcoming party as Kerry and the rest of the corporate elite invades Boston.

## Aug. 27-Sep. 4, New York City: Republican National Convention

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

Hundreds of thousands of pissed-off protesters will confront the full force and might of Bush, Dick and their cronies.

For details and contact info, or to submit your event, visit [www.indybay.org/calendar](http://www.indybay.org/calendar)



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