

Spring 2007

How to Use Films to Make Change
Women Take Charge in Oaxaca

yes!

Building a Just and Sustainable World

Is the U.S. Ready for Human Rights?

ISSUE 41

Creating the Country We Thought We Were

Check Your Rights at the Border :: AND IN PRISON :: AND IN CLASSROOMS

Sometimes a Great Nation :: U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS HISTORY BY ERIC FONER

Think You Know Your Rights? :: THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION

A User's Guide to Taking a Stand

US \$6.50 Canada \$8.95



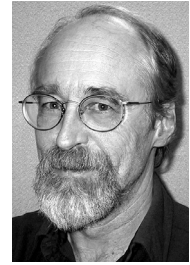


FAITH SU

Brooklyn, September 2006

“ America—this monument to the genius of ordinary men and women, this place where hope becomes capacity, this long, halting turn of the NO into the YES, needs citizens who love it enough to re-imagine and remake it. ”

CORNEL WEST, PROFESSOR OF RELIGION AT PRINCETON



Rights at the Crossroads

I am a child of an innocent time and place—the Great Plains in the golden years of the mid-20th century. I learned that the United States is the land of freedom and opportunity; the country that shows the way to rights for all.

But as I've learned our troubled history and seen our troubled present, I have come to question that story. I take no pleasure in my doubts. I am profoundly saddened when Manfred Nowak, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture says, "The United States has been the pioneer of human rights and is a country that has a high reputation in the world. Today, other governments are kind of saying, 'But why are you criticizing us, we are not doing something different than what the United States is doing.'"

The ideals I learned as a child are good ones: equality, prosperity for all, government by the people, and commitment to the common good.

Where are those ideals most clearly stated? The Bill of Rights is a good start. But the broadest statement is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It's been described as one of the most important documents in human history, been translated into hundreds of languages, and formed the basis for national constitutions, yet it is little known in the United States.

The UDHR was, in large part, a product of American idealism. President Truman appointed Eleanor Roosevelt to head the U.S. delegation to the United Nations Committee on Human Rights. Many considered her high-minded but naïve, and hardly up to the task. But her diplomatic skills and tough-minded moral leadership held the process together until the Declaration was completed.

There's an abridged version of the UDHR at page 20. We debated this presentation—some of our staff felt we should let the nobility of the document stand alone. But it's easy to glide through these idealistic statements and slip back into the belief that they pretty much describe this country. We decided it's worth taking a look at how the U.S. measures up.

That is our project in this issue: to step back from the comfortable notion that the United

States has nothing to learn about human rights. There is no denying that the country has been a leader at times, but where do we stand now?

The timeline that runs through our theme section shows what historian Eric Foner points out: the story of human rights in the United States "is the story of cyclical progress and retreat, of debate and struggle."

We are in a moment when even the rights we take for granted are in question. We were taught that people flee to this country to enjoy the full gifts of human rights. Yet we watch people come across the border to work, legally or not, and surrender rights as they enter the country. We watch as our country leads the world in imprisoning people. We watch as torture becomes official policy.

In the midst of this, we see people gathering to call this nation back to its best ideals. From the Poor People's Human Rights Campaign, to groups working for human dignity at the border, to prisoners' rights and capital punishment activists, the common ground of human rights unites people across issues.

The history of the struggle for rights shows that it is a long march. Our timeline shows the founding of the NAACP in 1905; it took more than 50 years to see major change. In the present it is easy to be discouraged as mass movements against war are ignored and the very foundations of democracy are under attack. In this issue, we see the growing movements for human rights. We cannot know how long it will take for them to bear fruit.

Is it idealistic to think that we can make all the rights in the UDHR a reality? We think not, because one true part of our national story is this: we cherish those ideals we learned as children. History shows that rights are not granted from above, they are claimed by the people. As we work to claim rights for all of us, we take the next steps on our historical journey.

Doug Pibel

Doug Pibel
Managing Editor

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is to support you and
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building a just, sustainable,
and compassionate world.
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ABOUT THE COVER



Photo by Krista Kennell

"I was covering the huge Los Angeles May 1 'Day Without an Immigrant' march. I took the picture at the beginning of the march. The energy was uplifting. The woman in the photo was listening intently to every word the speakers said. I was drawn by how beautiful she was, and the detail of her face paint. She seemed extremely proud and excited." www.zumpapress.com

FEATURES

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Documentaries: Ready, Set ... Action

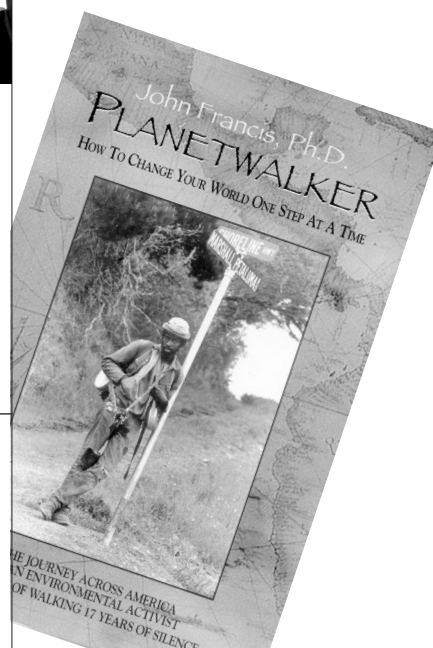
Documentaries could be just another form of entertainment. But some activists and filmmakers are teaming up to use film to change the world.

By Joseph Huff-Hannon

5I

In Oaxaca, Women Rise

Putting their personal lives on hold, women in the Mexican state of Oaxaca helped shut down the government, took over a TV station, and stood up to police violence. *By John Gibler*



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READERS FORUM

Tell us. Send your response to a *YES!* article, your stories about making the world a better place, and your ideas for connecting with *YES!* readers to editors@yesmagazine.org or to PO Box 10818, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110.



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Land Trust for Healthy Community

Another example of inspiring efforts to regain power over a basic element of community and economic health is the community land trust (CLT) movement. Over 150 CLTs across the U.S. are shifting control of land from the speculative market to the local community. By holding land as a community asset that can be leased to individuals to provide permanently affordable access to land for housing, farming, small businesses, etc., CLTs are creating a solid foundation for healthy, stable and diverse communities and local economies. For more information on CLTs, visit www.communitylandtrust.org.

SHELDON COOPER
Homestead Community Land Trust
Seattle, WA

Diet for a Cool Planet

I really appreciate *YES!* Magazine's social justice stance, and I enjoy sharing articles with my university students, so thanks for putting it online.

However, while the magazine talks about exploitation of the environment, it does not typically discuss the welfare or rights of the non-human animals that inhabit much of that environment.

I would like to see more focus on the connection between human and nonhuman animals, particularly our exploitation of them. There is a strong, documented connection between veganism and the environment, since an animal-free diet helps reduce pollution of our land and water and helps prevent the release of global warming gases. Veg-

anism also leads to a fairer distribution of world food resources.

CARRIE FREEMAN
Eugene, OR

Buying Local is Not Enough

"Buy local" campaigns are useful tools for raising consumer awareness, but to reverse the trend of corporate chains driving out independent businesses, we must take charge as citizens.

As Stacy Mitchell reveals in her excellent book, *Big Box Swindle*, the proliferation of chains has resulted as much from governmental policy as consumer decisions. To reverse today's dismal trends, those policies must change.

To that end, dozens of local Independent Business Alliances now help community-based businesses compete successfully. These Alliances organize group purchasing, cooperative marketing, and public education campaigns to shift consumer spending, but also engage locals as citizens to shift political power.

Many of these communities have defeated once-routine subsidies to chains and instead advanced public policies favoring local entrepreneurs. Ultimately, these



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ASSOCIATE EDITOR	Lisa Farino
ART DIRECTOR	Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn
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ONLINE SPANISH EDITION	Guillermo Wendorff, Lilja Otto

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Alliances can join forces to counter entities like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which push the agenda of transnational corporations—often while harming communities and the small businesses they purport to represent.

Promoting conscious purchasing decisions is important, but to revitalize communities and thwart corporatization, we must change more than our shopping habits.

JEFF MILCHEN

Co-Founder, American Independent Business Alliance
Bozeman, MT

A Convenient Web Site

After seeing Al Gore's movie *An Inconvenient Truth* and reading the summer issue of YES! Magazine, I was inspired to take action. I wanted to help people become aware of the complexities of the looming global crises while also finding their way to a sane response, one enlivened with hope, joy, and action. To do this,

I learned how to design a basic Web site and created "Living Well in a Global Crisis" (www.lwgc.net). This site includes great quotations and a page of useful links, as well as original photos, poetry, and songs.

Thanks so much for all the inspiration.

MICHAEL LEVY

Santa Cruz, CA

Health Care Primer

Our organization has been looking for a reader-friendly resource to provide new members an overview of health care in the U.S. I am excited to announce that we have finally found a great concise guide: the YES! Magazine "Health Care for All" issue. From rising costs, to an international comparison, to U.S. drug costs, to an overview of state efforts, to personal stories, the issue paints a complete picture for the universal health care argument.

IGOR GORLACH

Health Care for All Texas
Houston, TX



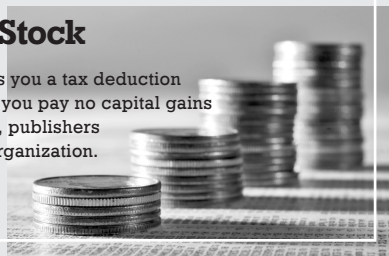
Hey, look! This is no ordinary dull white paper with occasional imperfections. The paper you are holding is New Leaf 100% recycled, 100% post-consumer waste, processed chlorine-free paper. Wow.

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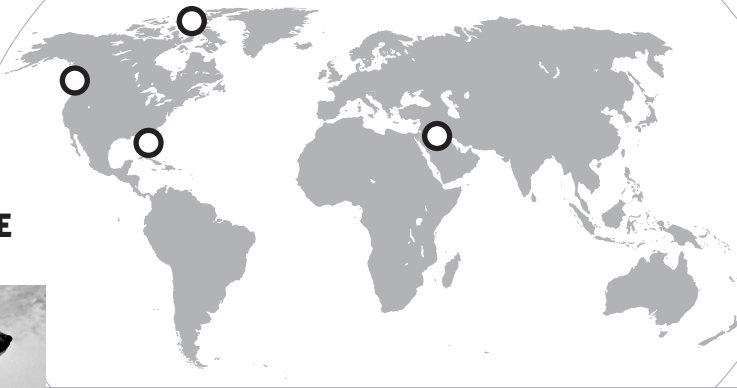
WEBSITE: www.yesmagazine.org

E-MAIL: yes@yesmagazine.org

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Signs of Life

SMALL STORIES ABOUT BIG CHANGE



CLIMATE CHANGE



JOHN PITCHER / ISP

Threatened Status for Polar Bears

👍 The Arctic is especially vulnerable to global warming, and the region is warming up much faster than other regions. This pronounced change has caused sea ice to melt, glaciers to shrink, and permafrost to thaw. That's bad news for polar bears, who rely on sea ice for mating, for

occasional respite from long-distance swimming, and for access to their main prey, ice seals.

A 2006 study by the U.S. Geological Survey found that polar bear cub survival rates in the South Beaufort Sea have been falling since 1989, when major changes to sea ice began.

The Bush administration recently acknowledged the bears' plight. On December 27, Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne proposed listing the polar bear as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

This proposal follows a petition submitted by the Center for Biological Diversity, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and Greenpeace. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may consider the proposal for one year before making a final decision.

If the listing is approved, the federal government would be required to develop a recovery plan to protect the polar bears. However, Kempthorne told *The New York Times* that the issue of climate change is beyond the scope of the ESA.

Kassie Siegel, attorney for the Center for Biological Diversity, disagrees. "The only way to avoid jeopardizing the polar bear is to reduce emissions," said Siegel.

In a dramatic example of just how fast the ice can change, 33.6 square miles of ice broke away from Ellesmere Island in northern Canada in less than an hour in August 2005. The event was discovered by Laurie Weir, who monitors ice conditions for the Canadian Ice Service, as she was reviewing old satellite images and noticed a missing section of the Ayles Ice Shelf. It was the largest event of its kind in the area for at least 25 years and included one island of ice slightly larger than Manhattan and approximately 100 feet thick.

ALSO ...

👍 The National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) published in December the results of a research study on the melting of Arctic sea ice. Their conclusion: the speed of melting is likely to accelerate so rapidly due to global climate change that the Arctic Ocean could become nearly devoid of summertime ice as early as 2040.

However, the NCAR scientists also found that if greenhouse gas emissions were reduced, the likelihood of rapid ice loss would decrease. "Our research indicates that society can still minimize the impacts on Arctic ice," said scientist Marika Holland.

Step It Up Close to Home

👍 Although awareness of the looming climate crisis is spreading, the largest street protest to date has consisted of only 1,000 people. Bill McKibben's Step It Up 2007 campaign is asking people to join in a massive protest united by a common message: reduce carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2050.

Rather than scheduling a single protest in Washington, DC, McKibben is calling for smaller events in local communities on April 14, the new National Day of Climate Action. The goals: show local members of Congress that their own constituents care about the issue and demonstrate that a growing movement is spreading across the nation. And, of course, protesting closer to home cuts down on carbon emissions.

—Michelle Wallar

—Catherine Bailey



FREDERIC WIDMANN

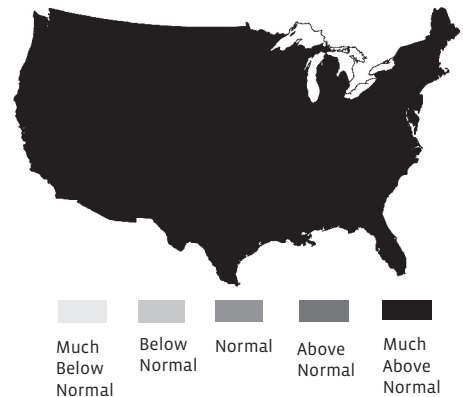
Polar bear bones in the Arctic's Svalbard Archipelago

“We have turned up Earth’s thermostat.”



PENN STATE ANALYST RICHARD ALLEY,
ON THE GOVERNMENT’S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT 2006 WAS
THE WARMEST YEAR ON RECORD IN THE UNITED STATES.

2006 National Average Temperatures Ranked by Area



Source: National Climatic Data Center/NOAA

YES! MAGAZINE GRAPHIC, 2007

DEMOCRACY

Voting Machines to Leave Paper Trail

The change of control in Congress may mean the end of paperless direct recording electronic (DRE) voting machines. Rep. Rush Holt has stated his commitment to passing his bill—introduced twice in the House, but not acted on—requiring a voter-verified paper ballot for all votes. Sen. Dianne Feinstein plans to introduce a similar bill in the Senate.

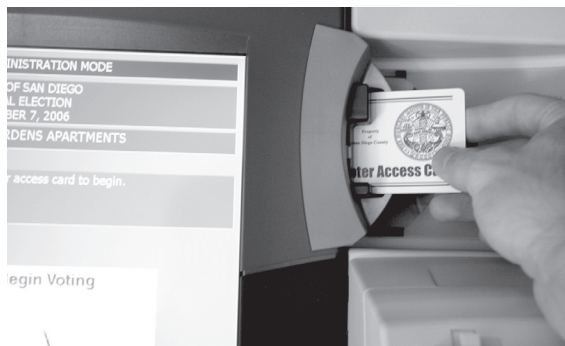
Meanwhile, the federal Elections Assistance Commission (EAC) has approved creation of a new federal program for testing and certifying voting systems. Although the program will be voluntary, 39 states currently require certification of voting equipment, and the new federal program is likely to become the standard for certification. The EAC will certify testing laboratories and procedures. This will be the first time that testing has been done under federal jurisdiction rather than by private laboratories.

The Technical Guidelines

Development Committee (TGDC), which advises the EAC, plans to have new guidelines for equipment and testing in place by July. Those guidelines will require voting systems to be “software-independent”—that is, they must produce a voter-verified record that can be independently audited. For the moment, the TGDC says, the only systems that satisfy that requirement are paper-based.

The increased interest in problems with DREs comes in part from trouble with the 2006 election. In Florida’s 13th District, a lawsuit is underway to require a new election for U.S. representative. In this hotly contested race, 18,000 ballots showed no vote for representative. In Democrat-heavy Sarasota County, 16 percent of DRE ballots showed no vote for the House race, as opposed to a mere 2.5 percent of paper absentee ballots. Since the DRE machines produced no voter-verified paper record, a true audit of the election is impossible.

—Doug Pibel



NATHAN GIBBS, [HTTP://NATHANGIBBS.COM](http://NATHANGIBBS.COM)

San Diego’s new machines leave paper trails.

IRAQ WAR

Active-Duty Soldiers Call for End to War

During the Vietnam War, more than 1,300 active-duty soldiers signed an open letter to *The New York Times* declaring their opposition to the war. A similar movement is now surfacing as more than 1,000 mostly active-duty soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen have signed an Appeal for Redress, a petition to Congress to bring the troops home from Iraq.

These petitioners reflect a growing discontent within the military about the way President Bush is handling the Iraq War. Nearly four years into the conflict, a *Military Times* poll found that just 35 percent of military personnel support Bush’s handling of the war, down from 63 percent in 2004.

—Julia Wingert

“We all swear an oath to protect the Constitution of the United States,” Lt. Watada says. “Sometimes that comes with a price.”

Lt. Watada had planned to offer testimony at his court martial that the war in Iraq is itself illegal, and that it is the duty of U.S. soldiers to refuse to carry out illegal orders. The judge ruled in January that no such testimony would be allowed. So a tribunal of citizens convened the weekend of January 20 at the Evergreen State College, near Fort Lewis, to hear the testimony the judge excluded.

Expert witnesses in international law and human rights, veterans of the Iraq conflict, and policy analysts made the case that the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq constitute crimes against peace, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

Lt. Watada, meanwhile continues to speak out: “The people have the power to stop the war.”

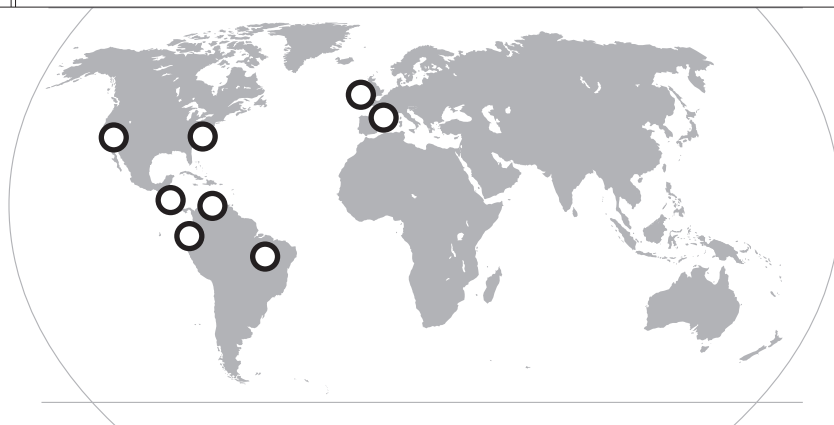
—Sarah van Gelder

ALSO ...

One U.S. military officer faces six years in prison for his refusal to deploy to what he calls an illegal and immoral war. Lt. Ehren Watada, the first officer to publicly refuse deployment to Iraq, will stand trial in Fort Lewis, Washington in February.

www.YesMagazine.org/iraq

A three-part series on what it would take to create peace in Iraq.



LATIN AMERICA

Poor People's Candidates Sweep Latin American Elections

With the January inauguration of a new president of Ecuador, a comeback president in Nicaragua, and a re-elected president in Venezuela, the tide of change in Latin America appears unstoppable.

Just a year ago, Bolivia's first indigenous president, Evo Morales, took office, and Brazil's left-leaning president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, was re-elected in October.

Within hours of his swearing-in ceremonies in Managua, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega signed on to Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), a trade pact that also includes Bolivia and Cuba and is widely seen as an alternative to the U.S.-supported Free Trade Zone of the Americas.

Chavez, whose swearing in was the same day, offered Nicaragua low-interest loans, discounted oil, and assistance with health care, housing, and education.

The new president of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, likewise signed an agreement with Chavez within hours of his swearing in. The bilateral



FERNANDO LLANO / AP

Newly re-elected Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez talks with the newly elected president of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, center, as President Evo Morales of Bolivia looks on.

energy deal furthers the growing integration of the region.

Other signs of this trend can be seen in the widespread rejection of U.S.-backed free trade agreements, the growing interest in the Common Market of the South (Mercosur), and a controversial pipeline proposal to link Venezuela, Brazil, and ultimately Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

An integrated Latin America—independent from the North and focused on solving the problems of the poor—is gaining strength.

—Sarah van Gelder

YES! editor Sarah van Gelder recently returned from a three-month study trip in Latin America.

GLOBAL WEALTH

The Great Divide Gets Larger

A new global study of personal wealth shows that the richest 2 percent of adults now own more than half of global household wealth. The study by the World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University, Helsinki was based on data from the year 2000. It showed that the richest 1 percent of adults (those worth at least \$500,000) controlled 40 per-

cent of global assets, and that the richest 10 percent of adults (those worth at least \$61,000) owned 85 percent of the world total. Meanwhile the bottom half (those worth less than \$2,200) together owned barely 1 percent of global wealth.

The United States is one of the world's wealthiest countries, but the wealth divide here is just as deep. The richest 10 percent of Americans controls 70 percent of the wealth.

While the median wage and salary income grew by only 11 percent between 1966 and 2001, the wealthiest 10 percent saw an increase of 58 percent, and the top 1 percent had an increase of 121 percent. Those in the top 0.1 percent enjoyed a 236 percent income increase in those 35 years, according to a report by Ian Dew-Becker and Robert Gordon of Northwestern University.

The rising disparity is alarming to most Americans, according to a December Bloomberg/Los Angeles Times poll. Nearly three-quarters of Americans said the income gap is a somewhat serious or very serious problem.

Of those making less than \$40,000 a year, 85 percent considered the gap a serious problem; more than three of five of those making more than \$100,000 agreed.

—Michelle Wallar

**“For the first time in 25 years,
motorists’ average mileage went down.”**



2007 REPORT **GASOLINE AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE**
BY CAMBRIDGE ENERGY RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

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LABOR

Work vs. Family?



Companies can boost employee satisfaction—and profits—by offering workplace flexibility (such as flex-time and telecommuting), support for working parents, and subsidies for after-school child care. That is the conclusion of a study by Brandeis University, released on December 8. The study surveyed more than 1,700 parents employed at three Fortune 100 firms.

Working parents of school-age children worry about what happens when school lets out, according to the study. This worry, which cuts across gender, age, and socio-economic status, can lead to reduced productivity.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 15 percent of U.S. workers have employer assistance for child care.

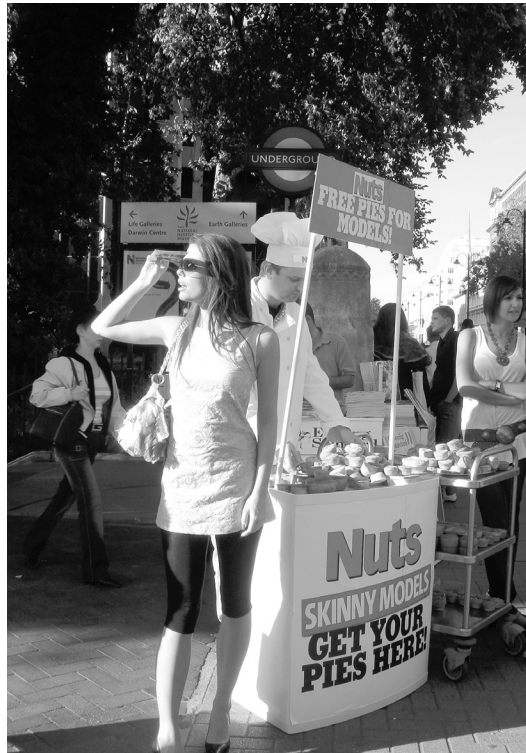
—Michelle Wallar

Interested? www.worktolive.info
www.timeaday.org

New Super Union



The British trade union Amicus has announced an international alliance with three other unions—the German IG-Metall and, in the United States, the International Association of Machinists and the United Steel Workers. The goal: to keep labor standards high and to make it harder for transnational corporations to play employees in different countries off one another. *The Guardian* reports that if Amicus follows through on a planned merger with the Transport & General Workers' Union, the international super-union will have over 6 million members.



JANET COLE

Opportunity strikes outside London's fashion shows.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

A Few Fashion Waifs Out of Work



In September, Madrid's fashion houses took a bold step toward reducing the societal pressure on women to be unhealthily thin. They banned underweight runway models. It was the world's first ban on overly thin models at a top-level fashion show, and they meant it.

Madrid turned away 30 percent of the models agencies had lined up, including Spain's hottest model, Esther Canadas, who had a body mass index (BMI) of only 14.

Madrid's guidelines barred any woman with a BMI of 18. This means that a 5' 8" model

who weighed less than 122 lb. would be barred.

Then, as often happens in the fashion world, it became trendy.

In December, Milan also banned skinny models, as well as those under the age of 16. When Paris and London refused to follow suit, the world waited to see what New York would do.

In January, New York's fashion houses rejected a ban opting instead to issue guidelines for healthy body image.

The director of New York's Elite agency complained that the trend against "Size Zero" could harm careers of naturally "gazelle-like" models.

—Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn

HEALTH CARE

California Joins Move to Universal Health Care



On January 8, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger released a proposal for near-universal health care for California's 36 million residents. Estimated to cost \$12 billion per year, the plan calls for contributions from the government, employers who don't offer health insurance, and the uninsured themselves. The proposal would also require doctors and hospitals to contribute 2 and 4 percent of their revenue to the fund, respectively.

The state would mandate that each resident have health insurance. Low- to moderate-income families would be eligible for state-funded free or subsidized health care. Those making more would have to buy their own insurance.

The plan awaits approval from the California State Legislature. If implemented, California would become the fifth, and largest, state to offer near-universal health care for its residents.

Some consumer groups are objecting to requiring insurance without putting cost controls on health care and ensuring that the coverage is meaningful, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Jerry Flanagan of the Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights told the *Chronicle*, "If consumers felt they would really get an affordable product that would provide some real coverage, they would be willing to support a mandate that stabilizes the system."

—Sarah Kuck



Yvonne Zick

Mom's T-shirt makes a passion statement

YVONNE ZICK didn't start out as an activist. In fact, this self-proclaimed "soccer mom" says, "I'm a really average person. Most people wouldn't expect any sort of political action from me."

That all changed after Zick attended a neighborhood screening of *The Motherhood Manifesto*, a documentary focusing on the discrimination and lack of support that mothers face in the workplace. Zick left knowing that she needed to take action, but as a working mom, there simply wasn't much time.

Then Zick hit on a creative way to make a public statement: wear a MomsRising.org t-shirt every day until a proposal for paid family leave passed in her home state of Washington.

Wearing the shirt in public has garnered a lot of attention, much of it positive. It has also provided an ice-breaker for other women to approach her to discuss the issues facing moms in the workplace. "Women don't normally commune like that," Zick said. "But wearing this t-shirt gives women a way to start talking to each other."



PETER DIANTONI
HTTP://PETERDIANTONI.COM

Rob "biko" Baker

Recruiting hip-hop voters

IF VOTING IS COOL among Milwaukee's youth, at least some of the credit goes to hip-hop artist Rob "biko" Baker, whose work with the Campaign Against Violence brought out thousands of first-time voters in the 2004 and 2006 elections.

In 2004, Baker returned to his inner-city Milwaukee neighborhood to find an epidemic of youth murder. His response: interrupt his Ph.D. studies in history at UCLA twice to lead get-out-the-vote campaigns for Milwaukee's youth.

"Young people need to see that voting is in their self-interest," Baker says. "When you begin connecting the dots for them, they get it. I think we are only at the beginning of a new youth movement."

Baker believes that getting out the vote is a necessary part of stemming the violence that plagues inner-city communities.

"To stop violence you have to both motivate young people to believe in themselves," he says, "while systematically alleviating the structural problems they face on a daily basis."



MARIANNE COATES

Janine Licare

Kids can save the rainforest

AT THE AGE OF NINE, Janine Licare began selling artwork to raise money to save the rainforest. The problem? She later discovered that the money went to administrative costs rather than to purchasing the land she'd hoped to protect.

So with the help of her mom, Licare created an entirely volunteer-run nonprofit, Kids Saving the Rainforest. "Now any kid in the world knows exactly where their hard-earned money goes—a tree planted in the rainforest, maintenance of a monkey bridge, care for an animal in our rehab center, or purchasing actual land," says Licare, now 17, who has lived in Costa Rica since she was four.

Licare also teaches tourists, locals, and school children about the importance of saving the rainforest.

While some find it odd for a young person to devote so much time to volunteer projects, Licare finds it unremarkable. "It's part of my everyday life, so for me, it's normal."



OWEN OGLETREE
WWW.CLASSICCITYBREW.COM

Brother Joris

Unbowed before the money god

RAMP UP PRODUCTION and raise the price. What brewer would say no to these requests from international beer distributors?

The answer: Brother Joris of the Westvleteren Brewery at Belgium's St. Sixtus Abbey. The abbey produces small batches of beer, sells only to local consumers, and prohibits its beers from being resold or exported.

When top billing by a beer connoisseur website created a very un-Trappist black market for the abbey's beer, the distributors came begging. Brother Joris declined and asked consumers to forgo Westvleteren for other Trappist beers brewed in larger batches and exported legally.

For Brother Joris and his fellow monks, brewing beer is not about making money or growing a business. Rather, it's an integral part of pursuing a spiritual life. "Prayer and work are the two pillars of a Trappist life," Brother Joris explains. "There has to be a balance between work and monastic life. That balance is there. We earn our living. There's no reason to change that, or make more money."

COMMENTARY :: *Ted White*

BUILDING AN ECONOMY BASED ON TRUST

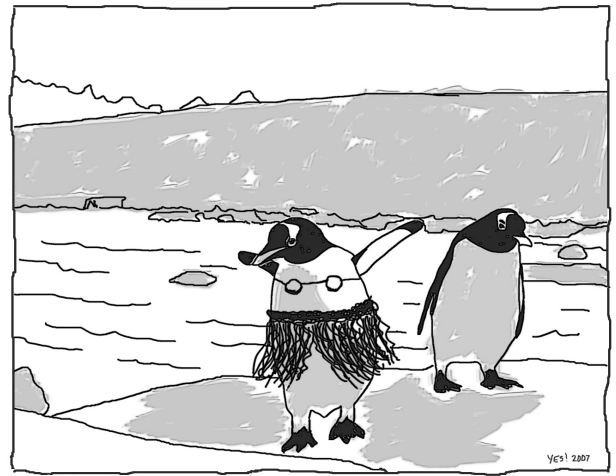
Much has been said of the culture of fear that has dominated American politics since 9/11. Besides terrorists, we're also taught to fear a host of others, from identity thieves to child-predators. In the commercial sector, the industries of mistrust (think locks, alarms, paper shredders, surveillance cameras, etc.) are flourishing. Many people make their living by selling products or services that rely on widespread mistrust.

Is everyone investing in a society and an economy based on suspicion and fear? I'm glad to say, no. One example is thriving where I live in the Pioneer Valley of western Massachusetts. At our many roadside farmstands, fresh locally grown food is sold through an informal honor-system—pick up your produce, then leave the money in an old coffee can or cigar box. No one supervises the transaction—you are trusted to do right. These farmstands—and there are hundreds of them—are sites of a regional trust-based economy.

Despite their great variety, these farmstands have some common—and striking—characteristics. Most are located on high-visibility arterial roads and attract attention without large signs, vinyl banners or neon. Instead they advertise in the most direct and understated tones, with hand-painted signs saying simply: “fresh eggs,” “sweet corn,” or “bouquets.” They're often made of an old picnic table shaded by an umbrella or a few rough planks built into a rudimentary display case, like a lemonade stand run by grown-ups. Agricultural zoning laws protect and encourage their proliferation, and their sheer abundance validates to customers that this is a culturally accepted way to purchase food. Like rural convenience stores, farmstands offer quick transactions, but with no buildings to enter and no spying surveillance cameras. And while there is the possibility of theft, most people don't steal. In fact, several farmers I've interviewed say that customers make a point of over-paying or leaving an I.O.U. note, even if it's just for fifty cents.

Farmers profit by selling direct. Customers benefit by having access to fresh locally grown produce at a good price. But perhaps best of all, these farmstands provide both a place and an opportunity to practice being trusted and to reciprocate by being trustworthy.

In recent years, the trust fashion has been spreading. In Europe, the belief in trust is being used in a new approach to traffic management. The tactic is to remove traffic signs in



*“It's a liberal myth, Mildred.
You're making a fool of both of us.”*

ANN ONIMUS

“Hula knew this party would heat up so fast?!”

TARE DROBNICK

*“I hate to burst your bubble, Hilda, but the humans may
actually get their act together and stop global warming.”*

STACY MAURER



www.YesMagazine.org/cartoon for more reader captions

order to make intersections safer. The thinking goes like this: the authoritative nature of traffic signs numbs our feeling of accountability. We drive according to the law. But what about driving from a perspective of respect and caring for other road users? If you've ever been at an intersection where a power outage has disabled the traffic lights, you know how people slow down and become more mindful. “The many rules strip us of the most important thing: the ability to be considerate. We're losing our capacity for socially responsible behavior,” explained Dutch traffic engineer Hans Monderman in an interview with the German publication *Der Spiegel*. “The greater the number of prescriptions, the more people's sense of personal responsibility dwindles.” Monderman's concept, on the other hand, is helping people to reconnect with trust. And it's working.

Are the various industries of mistrust really where we want to invest our time, money and cultural values? If we value trust, let's practice trusting. Let's dream of—and initiate—more ways to believe in, rather than fear, each other. The possibilities are limitless—if we trust in them. **Y**



Ted White is a documentary filmmaker and cultural geographer who lives in Amherst, Massachusetts. He teaches college courses in both film and geography and is researching examples of trust for a new book and film. He welcomes examples from readers by email at ted@igc.org.

How Films Can Inspire Us to Act



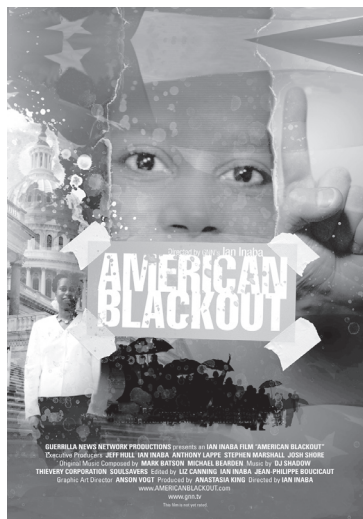
- 1 Start with a rousing documentary, like Robert Greenwald's "Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price."



- 2 Invite a bunch of people over for a viewing. Serve snacks. Moveon.org has instructions and advice.

Documentaries have been gaining steam over the last few years. Filmmakers are working with activists, advocates, and organizers to give new and exciting meaning to the term *cinema verité*.

Ready, Set ... Action



Joseph Huff-Hannon

A week before the 2006 mid-term elections, I found myself in a room full of strangers, packed like sardines in a neighbor's home a few blocks from my own. At the outset I knew nobody there except my roommate, but by the end of the night we were all exchanging information, ideas, and telephone numbers. The house party had been organized online; the only price of admission was a voluntary contribution of a snack or a handful of Halloween candy. At night's close our energy was high and our anger was focused, in part fueled by the documentary film we had come together to

watch, *American Blackout* (2006).

Winner of a Special Jury Prize at Sundance, the film exhaustively explores the voter suppression techniques employed in Florida (2000) and Ohio (2004), almost exclusively to the detriment of African-Americans, and to the benefit of the Republican Party and the president. After the screening that night, some of us spent a few hours making phone calls to voters in Virginia, Ohio, and California, sharing our frustration with the follies of the Republican do-nothing Congress, and urging a change come Election Day. As



3 After the movie, give people time for discussion and an outlet for action: Printed postcards to political leaders, or info on petitions or upcoming rallies.



4 Watch what happens.

Photos from Against The Wall and Brand New Films
YES! MAGAZINE GRAPHIC, 2007

subsequent events would bear out, we were hardly the only ones rallying for change. We also weren't the only ones moved by the power of documentary film to humanize complex issues, explore stories brushed aside or underreported in our sound-bite laden mass media, or compel people to action.

Many indicators suggest that the power of documentaries has been increasing over the last few years. The growing clout and commercial success of hard-hitting politically-charged documentaries (Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11*, Eugene Jarecki's *Why We Fight*, and Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*) and politicized feature films (Stephen Soderbergh's *Traffic*, George Clooney's *Goodnight and Good Luck*, and Hany Abu-Assad's *Paradise Now*) speaks to a growing audience for film that gives people real information and historical analysis about the world we live in. The exploding number of young filmmakers, videographers, and video activists speaks to this as well.

As the digital video revolution has exponentially expanded access to cameras and editing software, new forms of distribution have followed apace. As a result, films that don't break into

the theaters or get airtime on TV are increasingly reaching audiences thanks to festivals, netflix.com, youtube.com, and independent distribution and screening networks. But what is perhaps most interesting about the moment are the mutually beneficial ways that filmmakers are working with activists, advocates, and organizers to give new and exciting meaning to the term *cinema verité*.

"Docs are seen or not seen because of the grassroots," says Ian Inaba, director of *American Blackout*, and co-founder of Guerilla News Network (www.gnn.tv). "If you don't go to where people are already interested and engaged, you're fighting an uphill battle."

When his film was released, Inaba approached all of the usual suspects—festivals, distributors, and television networks—but he also approached groups on the ground doing the most tangible civil rights work on these issues.

"We made the film available to ACORN, the Rainbow-Push Coalition, the Urban League. We also really tried to reach young people in the black community," says Inaba. As a result, the film was widely discussed on black radio, and TV One, the black cable network, bought the film for a national television premiere.

Two months before the midterms, Inaba also launched Video the Vote (www.videothevote.org), which turned out over 1,400 video activists to polling places across the country on November 7th. Many signed up after seeing the film, spurred to put their cameras to use documenting evidence of irregularities or outright fraud. Although most progressives were happy with the outcome of the elections, Inaba points out that some of the volunteer footage documented serious flaws with electronic voting machines across the country, poorly trained poll workers, and confusing photo ID laws. Inaba and others are still working to distribute the footage to members of the media to keep the issue of the problems in the U.S. electoral system alive.

"It turns out that simply asking people to go out and spend a few hours filming an election is something that a lot of people are willing to do," Inaba explained. "What I realized through this process is that to get people motivated to action, you need to be direct."

This realization is one that many filmmakers and activists are starting to take more seriously. While some documentary filmmakers set out to tell a

»

Ready, Set ... Action

» story for the story's sake, many are passionate about an issue and want to see their films spur direct action or social change. In the same spirit, many activists, NGOs, and social movement organizations are learning how to better harness the cachet of film, and doing so in increasingly sophisticated ways.

A good example of this emerging strategic relationship between film and policy was the November 2005 release, simultaneously in theaters and on DVD, of Robert Greenwald's *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*. It was timed to coincide with a national week of action organized by Wal-Mart Watch, a coalition of over 200 labor, community, and environmental organizations working to publicize the more heinous aspects of the company's track record, and to demand reforms in the way the company treats its employees in the US and around the world. The film was widely reviewed in the mainstream media, aided immensely by the fact that the Wal-Mart Corporation publicly attacked it sight unseen on the eve of its release.



But the real secret to its success lay in its ability to connect to campaigns already on the ground. During the national week of action, it was shown on over 4,000 screens big and small across the country. "The coalition grew as the film grew, so while doing research for the film I was able to use those union and community organization contacts to find the people who we actually ended up interviewing," says Luisa Dantas, coproducer of *Wal-Mart*. I reached Dantas in New Orleans where she is working on a feature-length documentary on the reconstruction work being done by local chapters of ACORN and Common Cause, organizations she established relationships with during her work on *Wal-Mart*. "Getting it out to town halls, churches, and house parties is the key. With *Wal-Mart* this was also important for getting it out to an audience that doesn't necessarily already agree with you. An art house release in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco is not going to do that."

Interestingly enough, this relationship to the grassroots also makes a lot of sense on economic grounds. Brave New Theaters (www.bravenewtheaters.com), a new offshoot of this movement, is a creative online platform that cuts out theater chains and turns the living rooms of activists into movie houses.

"The dirty little secret about movie-making is that there is no way to make money showing films theatrically, especially documentaries," says Jim Gilliam, who developed the platform. "DVD sales are where films make money."

The site hosts a searchable database of screenings all over the country in homes, community centers, coffee houses, and churches. Besides selling DVDs, it also provides down-

loadable fliers, posters, and other materials, making it easy to organize and advertise community screenings. This alternative to the large corporate distributors also allows filmmakers to build a constituency by identifying where their audience is. The platform gives them the option of communicating with the people who are watching their films, soliciting feedback, or spreading the word about a new film.

"Film is a new frontier. If you can tap into that emotional and narrative context, there is a lot of energy there," says Laura Dawn, Cultural Director for MoveOn.org, the progressive organization of 3.3 million that grew out of an online petition in 1996. Dawn points to the many ways that MoveOn has publicized compelling issue-specific films (*Outfoxed*, *Iraq for Sale*), and popularized the experience of house parties and communal screenings. In that vein, MoveOn plans to use the summer 2007 release of Michael Moore's new film on the pharmaceutical industry, *Sicko* (which Moore describes on his blog as "a comedy about 45 million people with no health care in the richest country on earth"), to launch a campaign for health care reform legislation in the U.S. Asked why they would wait months for the release of the film to address such a pressing national issue, Dawn says, "We have a mandate to represent our members' voices to Congress, and we need to use that mandate in the smartest, most strategic way. Barring a reactionary legislative push in the meantime, it just makes good sense to piggyback any lobbying or media we do with the natural momentum of the film."

In the meantime, MoveOn has organized more than 1,800 community screenings around the DVD release

The theatrical presentation of Al Gore's climate change slide show does seem to be reaching people on a level that thousands of reports and hundreds of books about the impending climate crisis have only been able to scratch at.

“Film is a new frontier. If you can tap into that emotional and narrative context, there is a lot of energy there.”

of *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), Davis Guggenheim's documentary about Al Gore's climate change awareness crusade, and continues to organize more. Gore's Climate Project has teamed with the National Wildlife Federation to train nearly 1,000 people to present the film and lead discussions of it. The film grossed over \$25 million in theaters and is nominated for an Oscar.

Beyond garnering a lot of buzz, the film may be one of the crucial “tip-ping points” working to break the issue of global warming out of the environmental movement ghetto in the U.S. The year of the film's release, a sizeable contingent of high-profile evangelical pastors signed on to an “Evangelical Climate Initiative,” which calls for legislation requiring reductions in carbon dioxide emissions. While there are no hard numbers on how many of these traditional allies of the Republican Party have seen the film, the theatrical presentation of Al Gore's climate change slide show does seem to be reaching people on a level that thousands of reports and hundreds of books have only been able to scratch. This may be due to the simple fact that the presentation of irrefutable scientific consensus about global warming is done in a medium with which most of us feel comfortable and at ease: sitting in front of a screen.

But what do people do with the information they digest after the credits roll and it's time to take a stand? MoveOn and other lobbying groups are encouraging viewers to write their representatives in Congress to support legislation that would limit emissions. “After our screenings, we encourage people to write letters to the local media and to make formal complaints, since by law these are tracked by the FCC,” says Susan Keith, an activist affiliated with Georgia for Democracy who monitors media fairness. “We try to get people to call out the local news channels when important stories are left out.” Keith organizes at least a screening a week in the Atlanta area, many of which regularly

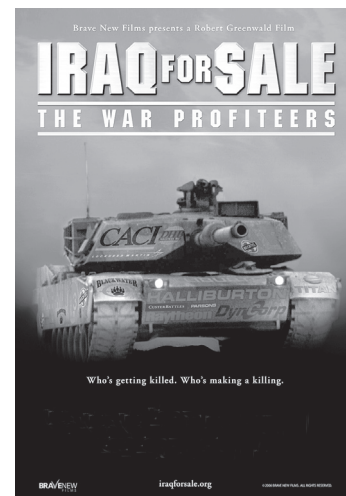
turn out over a hundred viewers.

Some reverberations are less immediate, but no less dramatic. Sometimes it just takes the right person to translate the compelling information and real life narratives of the best documentary films into far reaching action.

I saw this inspiring phenomenon up close a few years ago when I worked on a documentary called *The Take* (2004). Directed by Avi Lewis and Naomi Klein, *The Take* explored the burgeoning movement of occupied workplaces and democratic worker cooperatives in economically-devastated Argentina. After the premiere in Buenos Aires, the film was screened briefly in New York City, in the summer of 2004. Brendan Martin, a student of cooperative economics with a background in finance, attended the screening.

“The elections were coming up, and I guess you could say I had been searching out alternative news sources, watching a lot of documentaries that summer—*The Corporation*, *Control Room*,” Martin told me over coffee during a brief visit to the U.S. “I had also been studying cooperatives so it was interesting to me that more than one person called me up and told me to go see this film about Argentina, so I went. I really liked the fact that it taught huge concepts like neoliberalism and worker democracy, and brought it down to people's lives.”

After the screening, Martin spoke with director Avi Lewis and asked how he could help. “He turned the question around on me and said, ‘You tell me.’ I told him I wanted to help build a financial institution that supported the co-ops—a solidarity fund to supply the credit that local banks were unwilling to provide.” Two years later, Martin is living in Argentina coordinating The Working World (www.theworkingworld.org), which provides low-interest credit to over 150 different worker cooperatives that are unable to secure loans from local banks. These cooperatives employ thousands of people and produce every-

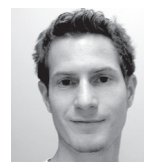


Robert Greenwald's “Iraq for Sale” is being distributed by Brave New Films largely through house parties and community screenings; since its release in October, there have been 5,000 worldwide. Brave New Films offers the DVD for sale in bulk along with kits and guidance for holding screenings. www.iraqforsale.org

thing from balloons and car parts to ice cream and shoes. In an interesting twist on art meets life, worker organizer Lalo Paret, who had played a “starring role” in the documentary, is now an invaluable consultant to the project.

“The film didn't teach Brendan anything new about cooperatives,” says Avi Lewis. “What it did was focus the beam of his attention and give it direction.”

Lewis describes The Working World project as “the living sequel” to the film, an apt description. The potential of the documentary medium to inspire and energize these living sequels is perhaps one of the most exciting aspects of the zeitgeist, one that filmmakers and activists (often one and the same) are increasingly taking to heart. **V**



Joseph Huff-Hannon is a writer on culture and politics based in Brooklyn, NY. His favorite film is Jim Sheridan's *In America*, not a documentary.

Number of U.S. documents classified as secret in 2001: **7.8 million**

Number classified in 2005: **14.2 million**

Cost to taxpayers for the U.S. government to classify 14.2 million documents: **\$7.7 billion**¹

Number of catalogs Victoria's Secret sends out per year: **365 million**

Number of virgin trees used per year for the paper in the catalogs: **74,885**

Number of protests the Victoria's Dirty Secret group has staged since 2004: **600**²

Number of years it took activists and the company to reach an agreement on environmental stewardship: **2**³

Percentage of greenhouse gases the world's air traffic was responsible for in 1992: **3.5**

Percentage of greenhouse gases air traffic is estimated to be responsible for today: **10**⁴

Amount Richard Branson of Virgin Atlantic Airways invested in 2006 to make a new ultraclean fuel for jets, cars, and trucks: **\$1 billion**⁵

Percentage rate of U.S. personal savings in 2006: **-1.4**⁶

Percentage rate of U.S. personal savings in 1933: **-1.5**

Number of full years in which the U.S. personal savings rate has dipped below zero: **3**

Highest percentage rate of U.S. personal savings (1974): **10.7**⁷

Total amount of U.S. consumer debt for 2006: **\$2.16 trillion**⁸

Year in which women's rights pioneer Elizabeth Cady Stanton omitted "obey" from her marriage vows: **1840**

Year the first women's rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, NY: **1848**

Year Susan B. Anthony was arrested for attempting to vote: **1872**

Year the 19th Amendment was ratified, allowing women the right to vote in federal elections: **1920**⁹

Amount of money spent per year worldwide on bottled water: **\$100 billion**

Amount per year needed to meet the United Nations' goal of giving everyone access to drinkable water by 2015: **\$11.3 billion**¹⁰

Number of days U.S. troops fought in World War II: **1,347**

Number of days U.S. troops fought in the Iraq War by Nov. 30, 2006: **1,348**¹¹

Number of times diners at a Puerto Rican café touched each other per hour: **180**

Number of times diners at a British café touched each other: **0**¹²

Number of hours per day spiritual leader Amma has been known to spend dispensing random hugs in her attempt to calm the world's stresses: **20**¹³

Complete citations at www.yesmagazine.org/ptc

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10. United Nations, Nov. 14, 2006 11. Michael Moore.com, Nov. 29, 2006 12. Daily Telegraph, Oct. 15, 2006 13. Associated Press, July 10, 2001

Is the U.S. Ready for Human Rights?

The United States has lots of human rights, and the rest of the world needs more. A comfortable story that was once largely true. Now the country's headed the wrong direction. Together we can turn it around.



Rights for All. The U.S. led the world on human rights. As it loses its way, we're the ones to bring it back.



Universal Declaration. In 1948, the World agreed on this Magna Carta for all humans. Read yourself your rights.



Mixed Messages. From the founding to the present, the U.S. has proclaimed the value of rights. Sometimes, it's protected them.



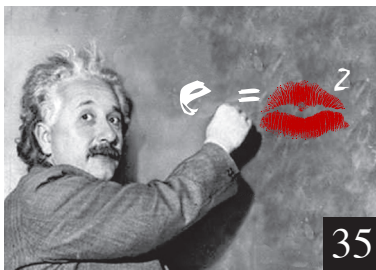
Today's Defenders. A Kennedy Center project celebrates these champions with portraits by Eddie Adams. Pages 25, 27, 41, 48.



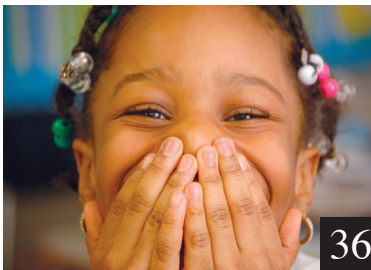
Humanity at the Border. Workers displaced by economic policies seek jobs in the U.S. Are they less human once they cross the border?



Invisible Rights. We'll protect your right to vote. But not to eat. Economic human rights are in the Universal Declaration, but not in the U.S.



Just the Facts. Who says making things more fair is too expensive? It's just a matter of higher math.



Teach the Children. How do we build a school system that serves the needs of all students? Human rights provides a solid foundation.



Rights in Lockup. Are we less concerned about rights in hard cases? Increasingly, the answer is yes.

We Can Turn It Around

Doug Pibel

In 2001, four countries—Austria, France, Sweden, and the United States—vied for three seats on the U.N. Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR). For the first time since the founding of the UNCHR in 1946, the United States was not elected to the Commission. How could such a thing happen?

President George W. Bush said what many Americans were thinking: “The decision was an outrageous decision. To me, it undermines the whole credibility of this commission—to kick the United States off, one of the great bastions of human rights, and allow Sudan to be on.” Congress promptly voted to withhold a final \$244 million payment of U.N. back dues until the United States was restored to the Commission.

It was, after all, absurd. The United States is the global gold standard for protecting human rights within its borders and advancing them without. The United States protects freedom worldwide, and with it, human rights.

But what if it was the right decision?

Unremarked in the uproar was the fact that the election was not between Sudan and the United States. Utterly overlooked was the possibility that the election was a bit of a rebuke to the one country of the four that has refused to ratify treaties on the rights of women and children, and on economic rights.

The level of discourse around this supposedly purely political decision reinforces survey results from 1997: more than three-quarters of Americans had never heard of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

By the standards of that document, which defines the rights that belong to all humans, how is the United States doing? We’ve grown comfortable with the received wisdom that we lead the world in human rights. Even if we have some problems, we’re surely better than the many serious rights abusers in the world.

Is that the standard by which we want to judge ourselves? “As long as China is worse, we’re still the leader.”

There are areas where the United States does very well: free expression, free exercise of religion, ownership of property, the right to political participa-

tion. These are what most Americans consider human rights. And the United States has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, a treaty that makes those rights law.

But the UDHR includes a broader set of rights, enforced under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The United States has never ratified that treaty; 155 other countries have. Official U.S. policy is that such things as social security, work for a fair wage, a guaranteed adequate standard of living, and mandatory rest and leisure are fine aspirations, but not rights.

These are not rights made up elsewhere to embarrass this country. The United States had a strong voice in crafting the UDHR. But the richest country in history has never recognized the right of all its people to be free from want. This cannot be the position of a world leader.

Now, the country is heading in the wrong direction, retreating even from the rights it has ratified. A long history of criticizing torture in other countries is diminished by the legalization of forms of interrogation widely considered torture. A proud tradition of offering asylum to the






oppressed has given way to increasingly severe treatment of people at the border.

This is not the first time the United States has retreated from protecting human rights. The history of those times makes one thing clear: setting things right is the job of the people. The translation of rights from rhetoric to reality has always come from citizens demanding recognition of those rights.

Eleanor Roosevelt, who led the drafting of the UDHR said, “Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home. ... Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

Looking at where the United States stands on human rights—all of them, as opposed to just the ones we prefer—is initially jarring, perhaps even painful. But so is living in the cognitive dissonance that proclaims our devotion to human rights even as we see them trampled around us. We cannot begin to close the gap between our cherished national story and reality until we take a look in the mirror.

In 2006, the UNCHR was reconstituted as the U.N. Human Rights Council. One change, demanded by the United States, was greater scrutiny of the human rights record of members of the Council. The United States is not a member of the new council. Facing the possibility that it might not get the required 96 votes, it chose not to seek election.

It is time for us to return to a human rights leadership role. The country that led the way to creation of the UDHR must embrace the rights defined in that document for all its people. That will happen, as has always been the case, only if the people demand recognition of the rights they own by birth. 

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS on the next page is an abridged version prepared by the staff of YES! Magazine. Research on U.S. footnotes by Sarah Kuck, Catherine Bailey, and Doug Pibel.



www.YesMagazine.org/udhr
The unabridged version

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights



With the horrors of World War II fresh in their minds, the members of the newly formed United Nations came together to agree on the rights that belong to all members of the human family. These are rights we have without regard to nationality, race, gender, or religion. They are not the gift of any government; they cannot rightly be taken away by any ruler. It took two years for the first United Nations Commission on Human Rights, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, to produce the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was adopted in 1948, and stands as the first comprehensive, internationally approved statement of rights. Here is an abbreviated form of the document Mrs. Roosevelt hoped would become “the international Magna Carta.”

[Plus a few facts—for better or worse—to help show how the United States is doing.]



1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

[The U.S. was founded with a declaration “that all men are created equal.”]

2. We are entitled to all the rights and freedoms in this Declaration.

[Congress has ratified half of the items set forth in this document.]

3. We have the right to life, liberty and security of person.

[The Declaration of Independence says certain rights are unalienable, “that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”]

4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.

[The 13th Amendment makes slavery and involuntary servitude illegal in the U.S., except as punishment for crime.]

5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.

[The Military Commissions Act of 2006 permits any interrogation method that does not cause “extreme” pain or other extreme injuries.]

6. We have the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

[In 2003, about 680 suspected terrorists from 42 countries were held at Guantanamo, without access to courts.]

7. We are equal before the law.

[Blacks and Hispanics constitute about 60 percent of all state and federal prisoners.]

8. We have the right to a remedy by national tribunals for acts violating our rights.

[The Alien Tort Claims Act allows foreign victims of rights abuses to sue perpetrators who are present in the U.S.]

9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

[Since Sept. 11, 2001, at least 70 men living in the U.S.—all Muslim but one—have been placed in indefinite detention without charges.]

10. We are entitled to a fair and public hearing by an impartial tribunal.

[People detained under the Military Commissions Act have no right to challenge their detention in court.]

11. Everyone charged with a crime is presumed innocent until proved guilty.

[The prosecution bears the burden of proving guilt in U.S. criminal trials.]

12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation.

[The National Security Agency has been collecting the phone records of millions of Americans, using data provided by telephone companies.]

13. We have the right to freedom of movement.

[The TSA's secret "no fly" list prevents thousands of Americans from boarding airplanes.]

14. We have the right to seek in other countries asylum from persecution.

[Asylum-seekers in the U.S. are often detained indefinitely and confined with criminal prisoners.]

15. We have the right to a nationality.

[Children born in the United States are entitled to U.S. citizenship.]

16. Men and women have the right to marry and to found a family.

[The last laws prohibiting interracial marriage were declared unconstitutional in 1967.]

17. We have the right to own property.

[The 5th Amendment states that private property cannot be taken for public use without just compensation.]

18. We have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

[The First Amendment guarantees freedom of religion. Article VI prohibits any religious test for holding public office.]

19. We have the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

[The Supreme Court says freedom of expression is "the matrix, the indispensable condition of nearly every other form of freedom."]

20. We have the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

[In 2006 the Pentagon gathered information on anti-war protesters using sources from Homeland Security, local police and FBI.]

21. We have the right to take part in the government of our country.

[The Voting Rights Act of 1965 stands for the principle that everyone's vote is equal, and that neither race nor language should shut any of us out.]

22. We have the right to social security and are entitled to realization of economic, social and cultural rights.

[In 2004 the U.S. Social Security system paid out almost \$500 billion in benefits.]

23. We have the right to work and to form and to join trade unions.

[The National Labor Relations Board recently reclassified 8 million people as managers, preventing them from joining unions.]

24. We have the right to rest and leisure.

[The U.S. is the only Western industrialized nation that does not legally require vacation time.]

25. We have the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being.

[In the U.S., 35.9 million people live below the poverty line, including 12.9 million children.]

26. We have the right to education.

[Federal law prohibits discrimination in education on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age.]

27. We have the right to participate in the cultural life of the community.

[The U.S. has more than 9,000 public libraries, 155,000 public internet terminals and 17,500 museums.]

28. We are entitled to a social and international order in which these rights and freedoms can be fully realized.

[The U.S. has not ratified treaties on the rights of children and women, banning land mines, or creating the International Criminal Court.]

29. We have duties to the community.

[At the time of the 2004 elections, 72.1 percent of the population was registered to vote. Of these registered voters, 63.8 percent actually voted.]

30. Nothing in this Declaration may take away of any of the rights set forth.

Sometimes a Great Nation

A HISTORY OF PROUD IDEALS AND MIXED RESULTS

Eric Foner

From the beginning we Americans have considered our nation a “universal” one—the embodiment of ideals that other nations should and would adopt. As early as 1776, in his great pamphlet *Common Sense*, Thomas Paine identified the cause of America with the fate of liberty throughout the world. An independent United States, he proclaimed, would be a unique embodiment of liberty in a world overrun with oppression, an “asylum for mankind.” Six months later, Thomas Jefferson began the Declaration of

Independence by invoking “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”—rights not confined to any one country or people but to be enjoyed by all humans.

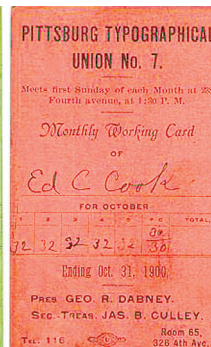
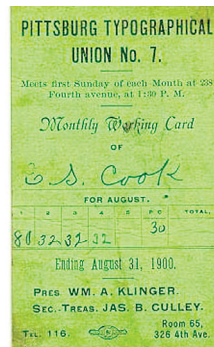
Through the intervening years, the notion that the United States is a showcase for freedom has been a central part of our political culture, coupled with the belief that our nation is obligated to spread—by example, persuasion, or force—basic rights throughout the world.

But the realization of human rights in

TIMELINE

100 Years of Human Rights in the U.S.

● Successes ○ Failures ● People in action



Research:

Sarah Kuck, Catherine Bailey, and Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn

Image Sources:

National Archives and Records Administration, Library of Congress, U.S. Government Graphics and Photos, Wikipedia Public Domain Image Gallery

IMMIGRATION: In 1903, epileptics, professional beggars, and anarchists added to list of those excluded from entry: convicts, prostitutes, “coolies,” lunatics, idiots, and those unable to take care of themselves.

RACE: Jim Crow laws codify segregation.



W.E.B. DuBois and others meet in Niagara Falls in 1905, leading to creation of the NAACP.

In 1906, International Typographical Union successfully strikes for an 8-hour day.

Two years later, women garment workers strike in New York for better wages and working conditions in the Uprising of the 20,000. More than 300 shops eventually sign union contracts.

IMMIGRATION: Imbeciles, the feeble-minded, tuberculars, persons with physical or mental defects, and those under 16 without parents excluded from entry as of 1907.

The realization of human rights in the United States is not a story of steady evolution toward a predetermined goal. It is the story of cyclical progress and retreat, of debate and struggle over the definition of human rights and over who is entitled to enjoy them.

the United States is not a story of steady evolution toward a predetermined goal. It is the story of cyclical progress and retreat, of debate and struggle over the definition of human rights and over who is entitled to enjoy them. Time and again in American history, the definition of freedom has been transformed by the demands of those denied its blessings—racial minorities, women, workers, and others.

Taking the Lead

At times the United States has worked to realize its founding ideals. For much of its history, the nation has been an asylum for immigrants seeking rights denied them at home. In the 20th century, American leaders played a central role in articulating the ideal of world-wide human rights and in drafting documents that tried to define them. Even before the United States entered World

War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke of the Four Freedoms—freedom of speech and religion, freedom from fear and want—that inspired the struggle against Nazi tyranny, and of his commitment to their enjoyment “everywhere in the world.”

The atrocities committed during World War II, as well as the global language of the Four Freedoms, forcefully raised the issue of human rights in the postwar world. After the war, the victorious Allies put German officials on trial at Nuremberg for crimes against humanity, establishing the principle that the international community may punish gross violations of human rights.

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), drafted by a committee chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt. It identified a broad range of rights to be enjoyed by people

everywhere, including political rights such as freedom of speech, religious tolerance, and protection against arbitrary government action, along with social and economic rights like the right to an adequate standard of living and access to housing, education, and medical care.

However, the document had no enforcement mechanism. For that reason, some considered it an exercise in empty rhetoric. But its core principles—that there is a definable set of rights belonging to all humans and that a nation’s treatment of its own citizens should be subject to international evaluation—slowly became part of the language of world affairs.

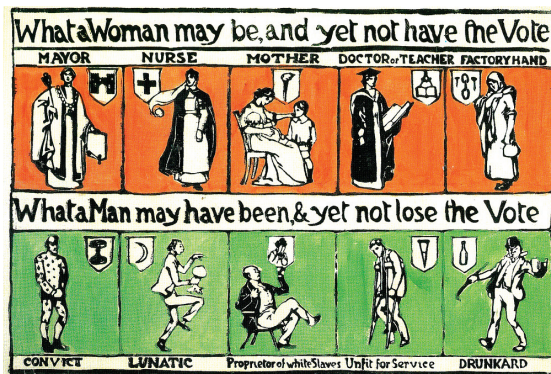
During the Cold War, the idea of human rights became a propaganda tool. Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union could resist emphasizing certain provisions of the Universal >>

1910s



Mother Jones demonstrates on behalf of women's rights, prison rights and steelworkers' rights.

In 1913, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns work toward the passage of a constitutional amendment to give women the vote. The group is later renamed the National Women's Party.



DEMOCRACY: 17th Amendment ratified in 1913 allows Senate to be elected directly by the people instead of state legislatures.

WORKERS: In 1913, Department of Labor is formed to protect the rights of workers. A year later, Clayton Antitrust Act legalizes nonviolent strikes and boycotts.

IMMIGRATION: California law prevents aliens ineligible for citizenship from owning land.

*In 1914, Margaret Sanger calls for legalization of contraceptives in her monthly newsletter *The Woman Rebel*, which the Post Office bans as obscene.*



RACE: “Grandfather clauses” used in South to block black voting declared unconstitutional in 1915.



U.S. IN WORLD WAR I 1917-1918

» Declaration while ignoring others. The Soviets claimed to provide all citizens with social and economic rights but violated democratic rights and civil liberties. Many Americans condemned the non-political rights as a step toward socialism (by this time, FDR's "freedom from want" had disappeared from the political dialogue).

Eleanor Roosevelt had seen the UDHR as an integrated body of principles, a combination of traditional civil and political liberties with the social conditions of freedom. But to make it easier for member states to ratify the document amid Cold War tensions, the U.N. divided it into two "covenants"—Civil and Political Rights, and Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. It took until 1992 for Congress to ratify the first. It has never approved the second.

Ambivalent History

The mixed reception of the UDHR illustrates the complex, contradictory story of human rights in the American past and present. No idea is more fundamental to Americans' sense of themselves as individuals and as a nation than freedom. The central term in our political vocabulary, freedom—or liberty, with which it is almost always used interchangeably—is deeply embedded in the documentary record of our history and the language of everyday life. The Declaration of Independence lists liberty among mankind's inalienable rights; the Constitution announces as

its purpose to secure liberty's blessings. The United States fought the Civil War to bring about a new birth of freedom, World War II for the Four Freedoms, the Cold War to defend the Free World.

Yet the American Revolution, which proclaimed freedom as a universal human right, gave birth to a republic resting economically in large measure on slavery. When Jefferson wrote the Declaration, he owned more than 100 slaves, and slaves comprised one-fifth of the population of the United States. Even as Americans celebrated their status as an "empire of liberty," in Jefferson's phrase, the constitutional definition of those entitled to enjoy the "blessings of liberty" was defined by race. The first Nationalization Act, passed in 1790, barred non-whites from emigrating to this "asylum for mankind." No black person, declared the Supreme Court on the eve of the Civil War, even if born in this country, could ever be an American citizen or enjoy the rights of white persons.

The slavery issue illustrates a central element of the development of human rights in this country. Our modern notion of human rights as a set of entitlements that transcend the boundaries of race and nationality owes less to the founding fathers than to the abolitionists, white and black, who struggled to end slavery and redefine freedom as a universal birthright, a truly human ideal.

The crusade against slavery, wrote

Angelina Grimké, the daughter of a South Carolina slaveholder who became a leading abolitionist speaker, was the nation's preeminent "school in which human rights are ... investigated." Moreover, she added, "the investigation of the rights of the slave, necessarily led to a better understanding of my own," helping to inspire early feminism. "I know nothing," she continued, "of men's rights and women's rights"—it was human rights for which she contended. Although it took many decades for women to gain legal and political equality, the principles of birthright citizenship and equal protection of the law without regard to race, which became central elements of American freedom, were products of the antislavery struggle.

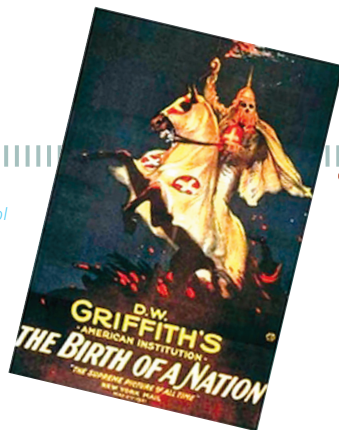
Losing Freedom to Preserve It

The tension between the ideal of human rights and periodic violations of them persisted well after the end of slavery. Wars fought in the name of freedom have produced significant deprivations of liberty at home. World War I witnessed the most massive suppression of freedom of expression in American history, outbreaks of racial violence in major American cities, and severe restrictions on immigration that once again contradicted the image of the United States as an "asylum for mankind." During World War II, Roosevelt's Four Freedoms were juxtaposed with the internment of more than

CIVIL LIBERTIES: In 1915, Supreme Court upholds law banning any film that is not of a "moral, educational, or harmless and amusing character." States quickly set up movie censorship boards.

Oct. 16, 1916: Margaret Sanger opens the first U.S. birth-control clinic in Brooklyn, N.Y. Clinic is shut down 10 days later, and Sanger is jailed. In 1918, she wins court appeals.

NAACP protests D.W. Griffith's film "Birth of a Nation" for its negative portrayal of blacks.



WOMEN: First woman elected to Congress in 1917.

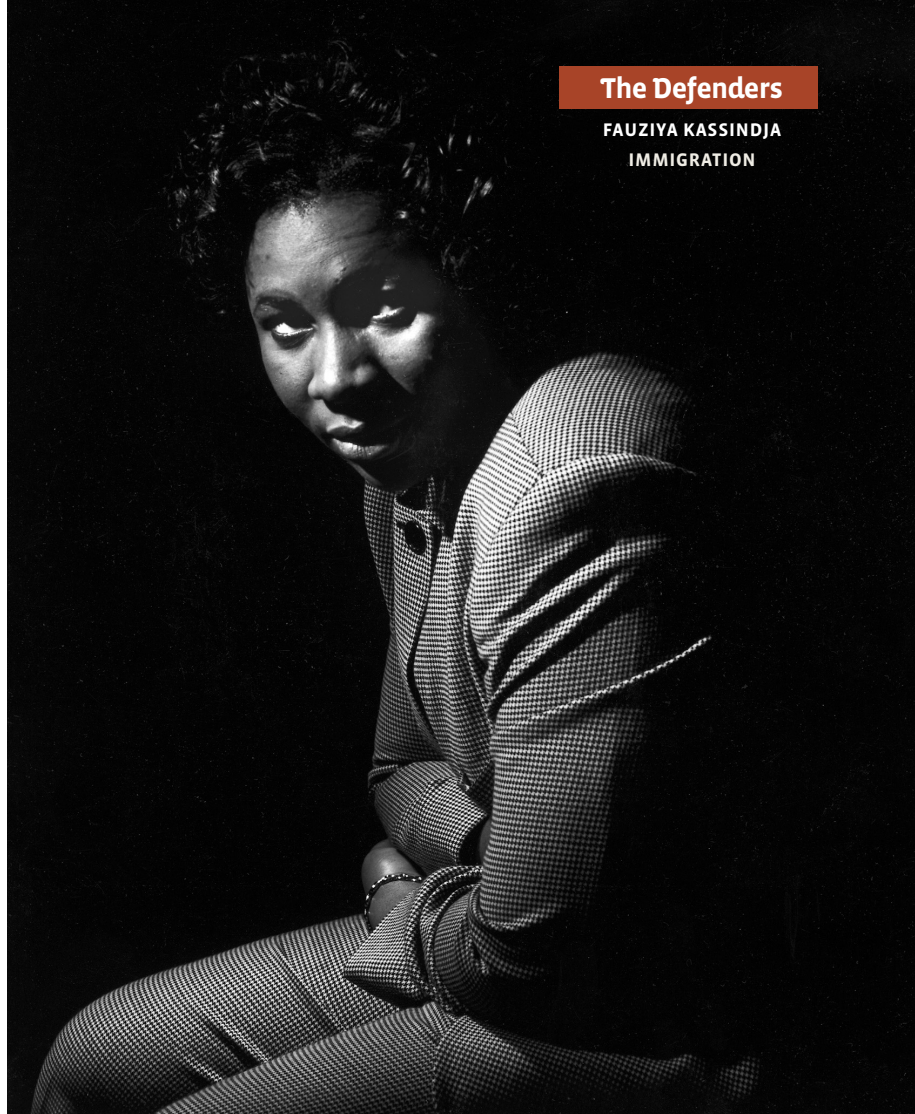
During WWI women take heavy industry jobs in mining, chemical manufacturing, auto, and railway plants. They also run street cars, conduct trains, direct traffic, and deliver mail.

DRAFT: Selective Service Act, 1917, gives president power to draft men for military service.

In 1919, a record 4 million workers strike. A strike by Boston police is the first ever by public safety workers.

The Defenders

FAUZIYA KASSINDJA
IMMIGRATION



"On Thursday they said I'd be married. On Friday they told me they'd cut me. At midnight I escaped." Fauziya Kassindja escaped genital mutilation by fleeing from her village in Togo and making her way to the U.S. where in 1994, she sought political asylum. U.S. officials proceeded to strip the 17-year-old orphan naked, put her in chains, imprison her, and send her through the nightmare known as the U.S. immigration system. After extensive advocacy by a law student at American University and an appearance on the front page of *The New York Times*, Kassindja became the first person to receive asylum based on the threat of genital mutilation. She has since spoken out about the difficulties she faced in the U.S. immigration system.

PORTRAIT BY EDDIE ADAMS, 2000 / WWW.SPEAKTRUTH.ORG

THE "SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER" PROJECT

"Speak Truth to Power" began as a book of interviews by Kerry Kennedy of 50 human rights advocates with portraits by Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Eddie Adams. The project examines the quality of courage in the women and men who are dramatically changing the course of events in their communities. "Speak Truth to Power" later became a play by Chilean writer Ariel Dorfman, then a touring photo exhibit of "The Defenders," then a PBS documentary film, then an education curriculum. More information, www.speaktruth.org.

100,000 Japanese-Americans.

Similar contradictions between rhetoric and reality have sometimes characterized American foreign relations. During the Cold War, the stated purpose of foreign policy was to defend freedom worldwide against the threat of communism. Yet to do so, the United States formed alliances with, or helped install, some of the world's most brutal dictators, who systematically violated the human rights of their own citizens. The "Free World" of the Cold War era included such nations as Iran under the Shah, the Philippines under Marcos, and even South Africa under apartheid.

President Jimmy Carter believed that in the post-Vietnam era, American foreign policy should de-emphasize Cold War thinking. In a 1977 address, he insisted that foreign policy could not be separated from "questions of justice, equity, and human rights." He attempted to curb the murderous violence of death squads linked to the right-wing government of El Salvador, an ally of the United States. But he often found it impossible to translate rhetoric into action. The United States continued its support of allies with records of serious human rights violations, such as the governments of Guatemala, the Philippines, South Korea, and Iran. A similar contradiction, between insistence on America's role as an international emblem of freedom and alliances with dictators abroad, marked the administration of Ronald Reagan. >>

END OF WWI 1918

CIVIL LIBERTIES: In 1918, Sedition Act is added to the Espionage Act of 1917. It prohibits speech, writing, or publications critical of the form of government. More than 2,000 people are convicted.

Later, courts uphold "clear and present danger" standard: speech that threatens national security can be censored.

» During Bill Clinton's presidency, reports by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch strongly influenced world public opinion. Human rights emerged as a justification for intervention in matters once considered the internal affairs of sovereign nations. The United States dispatched the military to distant parts of the world as part of international missions to protect civilians. NATO's intervention in the Balkans to stop "ethnic cleansing" during the breakup of Yugoslavia gave the organization a new purpose. New institutions like the European Court of Human Rights emerged with the power to overturn national laws and court decisions that violated international human rights standards. Commentators proclaimed the birth of an international era of human rights.

Yet at the same time, the 1990s drew attention to the challenge to human rights arising from the rapidly accelerating process of economic globalization—the unregulated international flow of capital, labor, and investment. Globalization raises profound questions about the relationship between political sovereignty, national identity, and human rights. Despite the existence of international institutions dedicated to human rights, rights have historically been derived from membership in a nation state, and freedom often depends on the existence of political power to enforce it.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 brought a new retreat from human rights as official U.S. policy. Even

before the attacks, the Bush administration had made clear its unwillingness to adhere to international agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol on global warming. Now, in launching a "war on terrorism," it repudiated the U.N., the new International Criminal Court, and long-standing treaties governing the treatment of prisoners of war and those accused of crimes.

As in previous wars, the idea of an open-ended global battle between freedom and its opposite was invoked to justify serious infringements on civil liberties at home. Legal protections—including habeas corpus, trial by impartial jury, the right to legal representation, and equality before the law regardless of race or national origin—were curtailed. The Justice Department argued in court that both non-citizens and citizens accused of assisting terrorism could be held indefinitely without a charge—a policy that violates centuries of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence, the Constitution, and human rights law. That policy was carried out in practice at Guantánamo Bay, where hundreds of detainees have been held for up to five years without charge or trial. It was codified in the Military Commissions Act of 2006 (MCA), which strips the courts of any ability to review detentions ordered by the executive branch. This provision of the MCA has already been challenged in the courts and its fate is uncertain.

Officials of the Bush administration also insisted that the United States need not be bound by international law in pursuing the war on terrorism. They

were especially eager to sidestep the Geneva Conventions and the International Convention Against Torture. White House counsel Alberto Gonzales, who later became attorney general, advised the president that the Geneva accords were "quaint" and "obsolete" in this "new kind of war." The Defense Department approved methods of interrogation that most observers considered torture, a policy now made law in the MCA. In addition, the CIA set up a series of jails in foreign countries outside the traditional chain of military command and took part in the "rendition" of suspects—that is, kidnapping them and spiriting them away to prisons run by countries like Egypt, Yemen, and former communist states of Eastern Europe, where torture is practiced. The photographs of Abu Ghraib prisoners abused by American soldiers, which spread around the world in newspapers, on televisions, and on the Internet, did more than any event in living memory to undermine the reputation of the United States as a country that adheres to standards of civilized behavior, human rights, and the rule of law.

Return to Cooperation

If this brief history proves anything, it is that, as an 18th-century jurist remarked, "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance." Despite the vital role the United States has played at certain points in our history in promoting the idea of human rights, respect for these rights cannot be taken for granted.

1920s

WOMEN: Aug. 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote, is signed into law.



WORKERS: Covenant of the League of Nations requires members to "endeavor to secure and maintain fair and humane conditions of labor for men, women and children" and "secure just treatment of the native inhabitants of territories under their control."

IMMIGRATION: Quota Act of 1921 sets annual ceiling at 350,000. The law especially restricts flow of immigrants coming from eastern and southern Europe.

In 1921, Margaret Sanger founds the American Birth Control League, which evolves into Planned Parenthood.

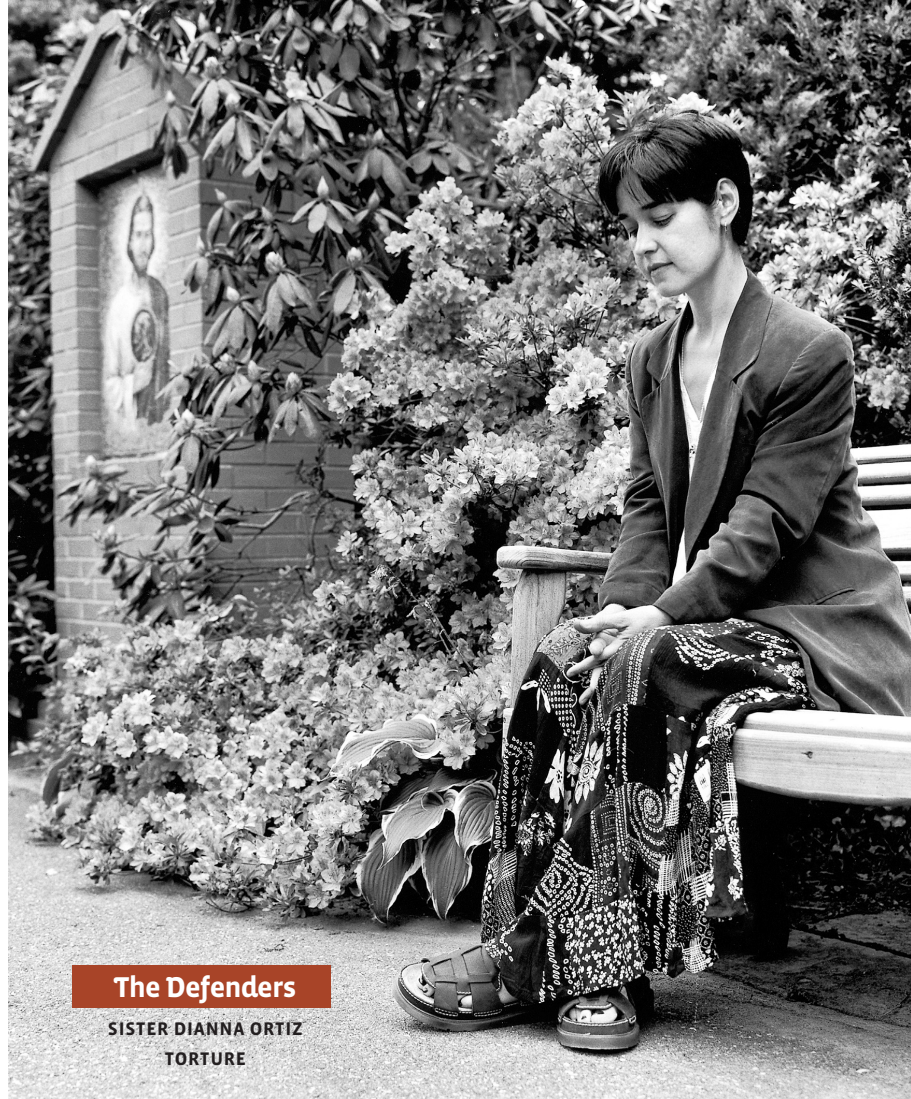
RACE: A bill making lynching a federal offense passes in the House of Representatives in 1922 but fails in the Senate.

Shortly before his death in 1970, the historian Richard Hofstadter was interviewed by *Newsweek*. The result was a melancholy reflection on a society confronting what he called a “crisis of the spirit.” He referred to the turmoil of the 60s—the anti-war movement, the black revolution, alienation of the young. Ultimately, he said, American society’s conception of itself must change. “I think that part of the trouble is that our sense of ourselves hasn’t diminished as much as it ought to.” The United States, he seemed to say, needs to accept limitations on its power to shape the world.

National humility will be bitter medicine for a nation that has always considered itself a city upon a hill, a beacon to the world. Yet American independence was proclaimed by men anxious to demonstrate, as Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence, “a decent respect to the opinions of mankind.” If our nation’s commitment to human rights at home and abroad is to be reinvigorated after the dark era we are now living through, it will have to be, as it has been in the past, by Americans acting in cooperation with one another, and with the rest of humanity. No unilateral effort to reshape the world in our own image can succeed—not even in the name of freedom. ♣



Eric Foner, DeWitt Clinton Professor of History at Columbia University, is one of this country’s most prominent historians, and a prolific author. His latest book is *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction*.



The Defenders

SISTER DIANNA ORTIZ
TORTURE

“To this day, I can smell the decomposing bodies, disposed of in an open pit. I can hear the piercing screams of other people being tortured.”

Dianna Ortiz is an Ursuline nun from New Mexico who journeyed to Guatemala in the early 1980s as a missionary, teaching Mayan children. After months of receiving threats, Ortiz was abducted and brutally raped in November 1989. One of the men overseeing the torture appeared to be American. Ortiz’s ordeal did not end with her escape. Her torment continued as she sought answers from the U.S. government about the identity of her torturers in her quest for justice. Ortiz’s raw honesty and capacity to articulate the agony she suffered compelled the United States to declassify long-secret files on Guatemala, and shed light on some of the darkest moments of Guatemalan history and American foreign policy.

PORTRAIT BY EDDIE ADAMS, 2000 / WWW.SPEAKTRUTH.ORG

STOCK MARKET CRASH OCT. 29, 1929

WOMEN: In 1923, Supreme Court strikes down a minimum-wage law for District of Columbia women because, with the vote, women are considered equal to men. This ruling cancels all state minimum wage laws.

IMMIGRATION: U.S. Border Patrol is created, 1924.

In 1924, J. Edgar Hoover takes over BOI, precursor to the FBI, and will direct it for 48 years.



RACE: Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 grants all Native Americans the rights of citizenship, including the right to vote in federal elections.

IMMIGRATION: National Origins Act of 1924. Annual ceiling of 150,000 made permanent. This basic law remains in effect through 1965.

In 1926, a group of black women is beaten by election officials while attempting to register to vote in Birmingham.

We have the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

We are entitled to an international order in which our rights and freedoms can be fully realized.

from **Articles 6 and 28** of the **UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

CHECK YOUR RIGHTS AT THE BORDER

Justin Akers Chacón

Rising from the heat of the Sonora Desert, from the thickets of ocotillo and saguaro, is the border town of Sasabe, Mexico. It used to be a cattle town. But its economy has been redefined by its position along a migrant corridor. Today its outskirts are a staging area and waystation for the cast-off workers of Mexico and Central America seeking economic refuge in the United States.

I have come here to gain insight into the experiences of migrant crossers, and I quickly observe that profit-seekers have found ways to capitalize on displaced workers at every stage of their journey. I walk past a row of vendors hawking supplies to prospective crossers—jugs of water, portable snacks. A Pepsi truck unloads cases of pop to sell.

In the distance, men loll in the shadows of trees, waiting for their *coyote*, the smuggler they've paid handsomely to get them to the next stop on the journey northward. Immigrant smuggling

is a labyrinthine exercise, with numerous exchanges and pay-offs along a globalizing underground railroad. It lies at the center of a developing human rights crisis.

Unequal Crossings

When we think of immigrants, we generally picture people from poor countries moving to rich ones. But only about a third of the 200 million people who comprise the global migrant populace moves from developing to wealthier nations. Another third moves between developing nations, and the remainder moves from wealthier nations to developing nations.

Why do they go?

Of the many forces that drive individual immigration from developing countries, neoliberal capitalist policies are among the most significant. They have disrupted traditional and protected economies in nations like Mexico and Guatemala. "Free-trade" agree-



JUSTIN AKERS CHACÓN

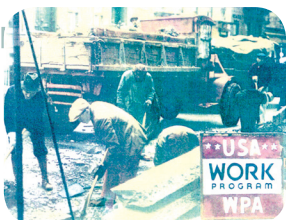
If José does make it across successfully, he will find multiple tiers of U.S. enforcement arrayed against him—in an economy that depends on his labor.

ments like NAFTA (and the impending DR-CAFTA) have lowered tariffs and abolished the government subsidy and welfare programs that have sustained the campesino classes of these nations for generations. Absorption into the competition of the "world market"—dominated by heavily subsidized American agricultural corporations—has led to the clearing of indigenous peoples from their land at a rate that reproduces the Cherokee "Trail of Tears" weekly. Displacement in rural regions is matched by urban out-migration, as the "Wal-Martization" of the economy accelerates the rate of deindustrialization.

1930s

THE GREAT DEPRESSION 1929 TO 1940s

WORKERS: In 1933, Congress passes first "New Deal" reforms to stabilize economy, create jobs, and provide relief to the needy.



NATIVE AMERICANS: Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 returns some land and self-government rights to tribes.

SOCIAL SECURITY ACT OF 1935: Half of elderly lack the income to support themselves.

EXECUTIONS: Decade of 1930s has highest levels in U.S. history—average 167 per year.

WORKERS: Wagner Act of 1935 affirms the right of workers to unionize and bargain collectively with employers.



STEEV HISE, DETRITUS.NET/STEEV

The U.S. border wall in Nogales, Sonora, an hour south of Tucson, Arizona, is covered with large versions of milagros, the tiny metal votive offerings which, in Hispanic tradition, are given to saints for answered prayer. Borderlinks, a nonprofit group (www.borderlinks.org), organizes trips to the Nogales area to teach about border issues.

Overall, the undertow of “economic restructuring” pushes about a million workers a year to risk unauthorized migration across reinforced borders.

Ironically, these same policies make national boundaries increasingly irrelevant for migration in the reverse direction. During the last decade, according to U.S. State Department estimates, the number of Americans living in Mexico has soared from 200,000 to 1 million—a quarter of all U.S. expatriates. But we don’t call these people “immigrants.”

They are “retirees.” They are the “managers” and “technicians” in the maquiladoras. They are the “commuters”—the working poor of the United States, gentrified out of inflated housing markets like San Diego and seeking refuge in more affordable Tijuana.

José’s Journey into Uncertainty

I speak with José, a young migrant crosser who could be from Chiapas, Veracruz, Michoacán, or any of a number of exporting states in the interior of

Mexico or Central America. He shows me his one connection to the other side: a piece of paper scrawled with a 10-digit phone number.

José is about to enter the shadow of globalization, where he will be reduced to “an illegal,” a nonentity without the basic rights guaranteed to him by international law.

José arrived at the pick-up spot this morning, but others have been waiting here for weeks. Some are among the approximately 850,000 Mexicans >>

WORKERS: Walsh-Healey Act of 1936 sets safety standards, minimum wage, overtime pay and child labor provisions for federal contractors.

In 1937, United Auto Workers Union signs a contract with General Motors after sit-down strike in Flint, Michigan.

NAACP sues for equal pay for black and white teachers.



WORKERS: The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 establishes minimum wage and overtime pay; outlaws child labor.

NAACP seeks 1 million signatures supporting an anti-lynching bill.

RACE: Legal challenges begin to chip away at the separate-but-equal doctrine.

» who, according to the Mexican Interior Ministry, try crossing each year, get caught, and are deported. Most will try again, because about 350,000 Mexicans do successfully make it to their destinations each year. And about 500,000 people from Mexico and farther south do find work in the U.S. each year.

This is José's first crossing. The odds are against him—not just because the amount of enforcement has increased, but because its nature has changed.

Since 1994, the U.S. enforcement strategy has been two-pronged: criminalize the immigrants and militarize the borders. The U.S. has choked off traditional urban crossing points by building double and triple walls, increased the number of agents, and introduced military technology and personnel into routine activities. This policy has made the journey more dangerous by pushing crossing points into remote, hazardous regions in desert and mountainous terrain, or into the equally dangerous underworld of human smuggling—through ports of entry as container cargo.

Funding for border enforcement has increased from \$1.3 billion in 1994 to \$7.3 billion in 2005, and the yearly death toll during that period has mushroomed from 23 to 473.

In all, more than 4,000 men, women, and children have died in the act of looking for work in the U.S. But the rate of unauthorized crossings has not slowed.

If José does beat the odds and cross successfully, he still faces multiple tiers of U.S. criminal enforcement and the possibility of imprisonment, for

the crime of looking for work in an economy that depends on his labor.

During the past year, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) has issued 3,667 “administrative violations,” which generally involve the apprehension of undocumented immigrants at work sites—up from 485 in 2002.

Another 24,000 people were picked up separately during Operation “Return to Sender.” Although it was theoretically a plan to arrest those with criminal records, two thirds of those apprehended in this operation had committed no crimes at all but were detained as “collateral arrests.”

Noncitizens generally do have immigration hearings with a judge and are supposed to be notified of the charges against them before they can be deported. And they have the right to counsel—but only if they can afford one.

Benita Jain, attorney with the Immigrant Defense Project of the New York State Defender's Association, says that while noncitizens do have some rights, “many of these rights have become meaningless—the laws have changed to make deportation a ‘mandatory minimum’ for many people, where the judge has no discretion to prevent deportation.”

At least 25,000 undocumented migrants are imprisoned in more than 200 immigrant detention centers across the country. But there is still an overflow. So detainees en route to deportation hearings are routinely housed in local and state prisons, integrated into

the general population there, and subjected to a host of foreseeable problems. Since 1995, about 1.5 million people have been ejected from the U.S. through this process.

Deportations have tragic consequences for families. They separate parents from children, husbands from wives, and same-sex partners from each other. An estimated 5 million children in the United States—at least 3.1 million of them U.S.-born citizens—have parents who are undocumented immigrants.

Deported parents, hoping that they can soon return, commonly leave citizen children with relatives. But current immigration law dictates that if an undocumented person is deported or leaves the country voluntarily, he or she cannot re-enter the United States for 10 years. Worse, anti-immigrant opponents have proposed legislation to deny “birthright citizenship,” so that the children of undocumented migrants born in the U.S. would be denied the right to citizenship that has historically been granted by the Constitution to all people born in the United States.

State and local governments, too, are leaping on the anti-immigrant bandwagon. In 2006, 570 immigrant bills were introduced in 32 states, mostly to implement such restrictions. Local governments have enacted restrictions on renting or providing services to migrants without proof of residency, passed “English-only” ordinances, and empowered local police to check immigration status as part of their normal routine.

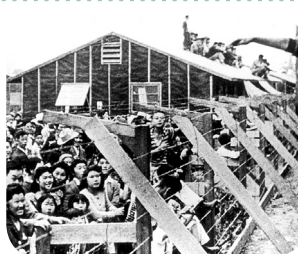
1940s

U.S. IN WORLD WAR II 1941-1945



President Roosevelt, in a 1941 speech to Congress, identifies “Four Freedoms” essential for all people: freedom of speech and religion, freedom from want and fear. Roosevelt forbids racial and religious discrimination in government programs.

Roosevelt and Churchill adopt the Atlantic Charter, “that all men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from want and fear.”



INTERMENT: After the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, both Japanese Americans and Japanese nationals are interned at inland prison camps.

IMMIGRATION: In 1941, Congress extends citizenship rights to Chinese living in U.S.

In 1943, blacks protest exclusion from civilian defense jobs in Detroit.


Why Not Just Enter Legally?

With all these dangers arrayed against him, why doesn't José just get in line and come to the U.S. legally?

"For most Mexicans there is no line to get in," explains sociologist and immigration expert Douglas Massey.

Despite the virtually open borders for the migration of American capital and people *into* Mexico (90 percent of the 2,000 foreign-owned firms in Mexico are U.S.-based), many layers of obstruction prevent Mexicans from obtaining authorization to work in the north. For one, displaced laborers or subsistence farmers like José are categorized as "unskilled," and the U.S. distributes only about 5,000 visas each year for unskilled workers globally. In 2005, only two of those went to Mexicans.

Human Rights-Based Immigration

The trajectory of human rights for migrants in the United States not only fails the test of international standards, it fails the test of common sense. Surely we can find an easy, orderly way for working people to cross our southern border. Instead of persecuting these workers, we should be thanking them for their efforts, and ensuring every means to extend equal rights to them while they are here. 



Justin Akers Chacón is professor of Chicano Studies in San Diego, California, and co-author of *No One Is Illegal* with Mike Davis (Haymarket Books, 2006).



MICHAEL HYATT

This image of Mike Wilson leaving water for border crossers appears on the cover of "Mercy on the Arizona Migrant Trail," a CD featuring Tucson songwriters. Proceeds benefit border organizations. For CD information, email: mhyatt2@mindspring.com.

Humanity for the Crossing

In the scorching heat of the Sonoran Desert, bright yellow Border Patrol signs bear a stern warning. The message, written in Spanish, translates to: "Caution! Do not expose your life to the elements. It's not worth it!"

Since 1998, more than 2,000 Mexicans have died trying to cross the border. The leading causes of death are not unnecessarily violent law enforcement or car accidents, but heat stroke, dehydration, and hypothermia.

Working with other volunteers from **Humane Borders**, Mike Wilson of the Tohono O'Odham tribe leaves fresh water for those desperate enough to brave the desert crossing. Another grassroots organization called **No More Deaths** follows a similar mission, and also provides medical attention to those who need it.

These groups are part of a larger movement to end the hardship immigrant families must endure, both in their passage across the border and in their struggle to find equal rights once they arrive. Organizations like **The Border Action Network** and **The Border Network for Human Rights** work tirelessly to educate border residents about their human rights, and to ensure that their voices are heard by government representatives. **Samaritans** and **BorderLinks** facilitate programs that promote sympathy and understanding between U.S. and Mexican citizens.

— Catherine Bailey

RACE: In 1944, Supreme Court rules blacks cannot be denied the right to vote in primary elections.

G.I. BILL provides college funds for returning veterans, as well as unemployment compensation and loans to buy homes and start businesses.

WAR: On Aug. 6, 1945, U.S. drops nuclear bomb on Hiroshima and later Nagasaki, killing about 210,000 people. The overwhelming majority were civilians.



END OF WWII AUG. 15, 1945

Oct. 24, 1945: United Nations is formed to promote "respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all." Unlike the League of Nations Covenant, the Charter underscores the principle of individual human rights.

WOMEN lose their industrial jobs to returning servicemen, although surveys show 80 percent want to continue working. Almost 7 million women had joined the wartime workforce.

RACE: In 1946, Supreme Court bans segregation in interstate bus travel.

As members of society, we have the right to social security and are entitled to realization of economic, social and cultural rights.

We have the right to work and to be paid enough to ensure an existence worthy of human dignity.

We have the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being.

from Article 22, 23, and 25 of the UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

WHO'S AFRAID OF ECONOMIC HUMAN RIGHTS?

East Village, New York City
September 2006



P. VILLERIUS

Carol Estes

In 1948, before the ink was dry on the new Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the United States was backing away from its commitment—particularly to economic human rights.

George Kennan, then head of the State Department's policy planning staff, wrote, "We have about 50 percent of the world's wealth, but only 6.3 percent of the world's population. Our real task in the coming period is ... to maintain this position of disparity. ... We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford today the luxury of altruism and world-benefaction. ... The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are hampered by idealistic slogans, the better."

Although Kennan was talking specifically about the Far East, he articulated a widely held set of assumptions that shaped both domestic and foreign policy in the United States for the next 60 years.

But are they true? Are they correct in the practical, factual sense? Are they right in the moral sense?

The large majority of the world's nations—the 155 nations that have ratified the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights—have answered a resounding "No!" to all of the above. But in the United States, to argue that economic justice is achievable is to brand oneself either naive and unrealistic or, until very recently, a Red.

Nevertheless, a committed minority of U.S. leaders, poor people, and people of conscience have risked articulating a vision of a nation without poverty. Among the leaders were Franklin Roosevelt, who included "freedom from

want" among his "four essential freedoms"; Eleanor Roosevelt, who chaired the U.N. committee that wrote the UDHR and first articulated economic, social, and cultural rights; and Martin Luther King, Jr., who orchestrated the Poor People's Campaign of 1968, a "crusade to reform society in order to realize economic and social justice." Alongside them marched thousands of poor people and people of conscience, including those working for economic human rights today through the Poor People's Campaign for Economic Human Rights.

Human Rights Divided

The UDHR, like the U.S. Declaration of Independence, was not intended to be enforceable. The plan was to follow it with a covenant that would have the force of a treaty and make these rights "justiciable," that is, enforceable in a court of law.

But in 1948 the Cold War was already heating up, the political will was cooling down, and good intentions were evaporating. The Soviet Union refused to support political and civil rights, arguing that these "luxuries" must be preceded by economic rights. The United States refused to support economic rights, arguing that they implied a commitment to socialism. And there the world remained stuck for almost two decades.

Eighteen years later, to break the impasse, a compromise was put forward that was an enormous disappointment to the UDHR's supporters: the fundamental human rights named in the Declaration were broken apart and cod-

ified in two covenants instead of one: the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights, which the United States ratified, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which it did not.

The Covenant on Political and Civil Rights contained such rights as freedom of expression and assembly, and freedom from arbitrary arrest—rights the U.S. Constitution already guaranteed. This covenant, then, was relatively easy for the United States to support.

But the rights codified in the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)—the right to work and to just conditions of work; the right to education; the right to the highest attainable standard of health; the right to clothing, housing, social security, and adequate food and nutrition, including the right to water—went well beyond the U.S. Constitution. So the United States refused to ratify the covenant that makes these rights enforceable, even though it led the way to their articulation in 1948. The 155 nations that have ratified the CESCR grant their citizens many justiciable rights that U.S. simply doesn't recognize.

Mere Aspirations

What difference does it make to you, if you are one of America's 37 million poor people, to know that people in other countries have economic rights that you don't?

In terms of immediate relief, not much.

It does explain why you are not entitled to housing, food, and medical >>

THE COLD WAR 1940s–1980s

CIVIL LIBERTIES: In 1947, the House Un-American Activities Committee subpoenas film actors, directors, and screenwriters to testify about their Communist beliefs. Hollywood blacklists follow.

Dec. 10, 1948: U.N. adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



RACE: Fair Employment Board formed to eliminate racial discrimination in federal jobs.

WAR: 1949 Geneva Conventions set standards for humane treatment of prisoners and other victims of war.

IMMIGRATION: Displaced Persons Act of 1948 allows entry for 200,000 World War II refugees; 1950 amendment allows 200,000 more.

» care, even though you live in the richest country in the world: these things are “goals,” not rights, according to the U.S. State Department. It also explains why, when you demand a decent standard of living, you are viewed as a freeloader begging for an undeserved handout, even though you are simply asking for the basic rights that all humans are entitled to by consensus of the international community.

Too, the fact that so many other nations have accepted economic rights means, according to some scholars, these rights have entered the realm of international “customary” law, which is enforceable, whether the United States ratifies the CESC or not. That means that you are gradually gaining access to international courts and legal remedies that you can’t get in U.S. courts.

Best of all, the widespread acceptance of economic rights around the world is the most powerful organizing tool the world’s poor have ever had. It unites poor people around their shared experience of poverty, across the divisions of race, ethnic group, religion, gender, and single-issue priorities, and it dignifies their fight to eradicate poverty.

A New and Unsettling Force

“There are millions of poor people in this country who have very little or even nothing to lose,” Martin Luther King, Jr., once observed. “If they can be helped to take action together, they will do so with a freedom and a power that will be a new and unsettling force in our complacent national life.”

King was killed just a month before his own Poor People’s Campaign got under way. But he might be encouraged

to know that fifty years later, another campaign, modeled after his, is busy harnessing that “unsettling force.” The Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC) lays out ambitious goals: “to unite the poor across color lines” in order to “abolish poverty everywhere and forever.”

“We’re coming together and we’re saying, ‘We want a world where everyone does have a house. We want a world where everyone does have healthcare,’” says Devin DiBernardo, manager of the systemic change program at Sisters of the Road. Her organization, which assists and advocates for the homeless, is one of about 70 organizations from across the nation that have joined the campaign, most of them led by poor people themselves.

These people fight hard for a world without poverty. They orchestrate marches, like the March of the Americas in 1999, where members of the PPEHRC met up with organizations from Central and South America in Washington, D.C., then turned their backs on the U.S. capitol, marched to New York, and presented their grievances to the U.N. They document economic human rights abuses by going door-to-door in poor neighborhoods, walking urban streets, visiting hospital waiting rooms and employment offices to record the stories of poor people. They file lawsuits in U.S. courts. They use international legal mechanisms like the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to demand redress of U.S. human rights violations.

This summer, they held a National Truth Commission in Cleveland, Ohio, where poor people from across the coun-

try came to be seen and heard, fighting the invisibility that isolates them from the mainstream. As we go to press, they are in Nairobi, Kenya, presenting information about poverty in the United States at the 2007 World Social Forum.

Uniting poor people across color lines is one of the goals—and the successes—of this campaign, as it was for the Poor People’s Campaign in 1968. That part of their work hasn’t been as difficult as it might seem, DiBernardo says, because of the shared experience of poverty, particularly when poverty is combined with parenthood. “A lot of people involved in the campaign are parents who don’t want their kids to have it as hard as they did.”

Another of the campaign’s themes would sound familiar to King, too—the idea that wasting the nation’s resources on an immoral war makes it impossible to win a war on poverty at home.

What will it take, then, to assure the economic rights of poor Americans?

The solution isn’t easy, but it’s simple. All of us will have to shoulder some responsibility for the way things are and the cost of fixing them. We’ll have to work hard to create the political will to address the deep, systemic problems. We’ll have to insist on changing our national spending priorities to pay for the changes. But most importantly, we’ll have to surrender our worn-out belief that self-interest is the only political game in town.

Can we do this? It’s time we tried. ⑦

Carol Estes is a human rights activist, YES! contributing editor, and guest editor of this issue.



1950s

KOREAN WAR 1950–1953

RACE: Supreme Court victories in 1950 for black graduate students in Texas and Oklahoma erode “separate but equal” provisions.

DRAFT: Military draft expanded in 1951.

ENVIRONMENT: Air Pollution Control Act of 1955 is passed as a result of civil unrest concerning air pollution deaths in Donora, PA.

Civil Rights Movement begins 10 years of bus boycotts, sit-ins, freedom rides and social movements to fight racial discrimination.



RACE: *Brown v. Board of Education* of Topeka outlaws segregated public education facilities for blacks and whites. May 17, 1954.

In 1956, 77 members of the House along with 19 Senators sign The Southern Manifesto condemning that Supreme Court decision.

Just the Facts

Human Rights Actually Are Quite a Bargain

Cut world hunger in half: **\$24 billion**
 Reproductive health care for all women: **\$12 billion**
 Universal literacy: **\$5 billion**
 Immunize every child: **\$1.3 billion**
 Clean drinking water for all: **\$11.3 billion**



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Makeup and perfume: **\$33 billion**
 Pet food in Europe and U.S.: **\$17 billion**
 Ocean cruises: **\$14 billion**
 Furs in U.S.: **\$1.8 billion**
 Ice cream in U.S.: **\$21 billion**

But We Bought a War Instead

Money spent on the Iraq War: **\$360 billion**

=

3 million units of affordable housing



OR 17 million 4-year scholarships to public universities
OR health care for 216 million children
OR 6 million public school teachers



Average household net worth of the top
 1 percent of wage earners:
\$10.2 million

~~=~~

Average net worth of the bottom
 40 percent of wage earners:
\$1,900



And There's That Gap

Where Could We Find an Extra \$56.5 Billion?

2006 tax breaks for the wealthiest 1 percent: **\$56.5 billion**

=

Health care for 16 million people



OR 58 million homes with renewable electricity
OR 188,000 elementary school teachers

Research by Sarah Kuck, YES! Magazine. All numbers are per year and current at the time of print:
 worldwatch.org, costofwar.com, nationalpriorities.org, www.pbs.org (Edward N. Wolff, "Recent
 Trends in Wealth Ownership, 1983-1998," April 2000), Dairy Farmers Association

Everyone has the right to education...

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms...

from Article 26 of the UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

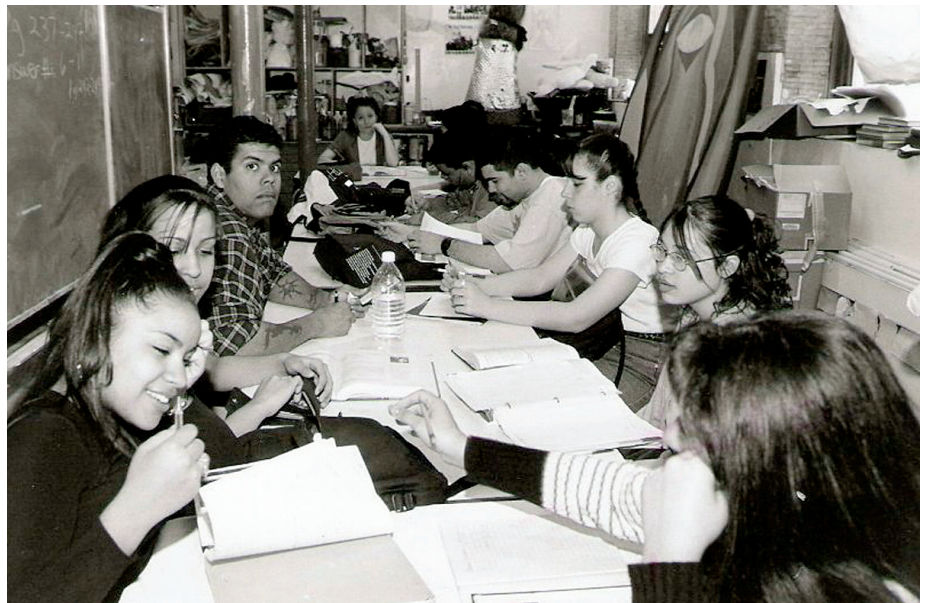
EDUCATION, BY RIGHTS

Liz Sullivan and Cecilia Blewer

The El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice is a New York City high school that focuses on the holistic development of young people so that they can become informed and inspired leaders in the struggle for human rights. The curriculum reflects this focus, with an emphasis on community development projects, non-violence, and social change.

The El Puente Academy was created in 1993 to reflect the values, practices, and culture of the community in which it is located. Under the leadership of Frances Lucerna, the founding principal, the school developed an integrated curriculum that teaches young people to use the knowledge and skills they learn in the classroom to achieve social justice and human rights in their own community.

The students' community projects become part of their portfolios and are used to measure their academic progress. One senior class, for example, used math, along with research and organizing skills, to create a community garden



El Puente Academy students work on portfolios. Instead of a focus on high-stakes testing, students demonstrate their mastery and document community projects in portfolios, which are like mini-theses incorporating research, writing, and a formal presentation. The goal is for students to use the knowledge and skills they learn in the classroom to achieve social justice in their own community.

1960s

President Eisenhower delivers his farewell speech, Jan. 17, 1961: "We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex."

Eleanor Roosevelt heads the President's Commission on the Status of Women.

Kennedy establishes the Peace Corps. March 1, 1961.

Silent Spring, published in 1962, sounds the alarm about harmful pesticides and launches environmental movement.

CONSUMER SAFETY: In reaction to the Thalidomide drug tragedy, Congress requires extensive testing before a drug can be sold in the U.S.

In 1965, President Johnson initiates the Great Society reforms to eliminate poverty and racial injustice.

WOMEN: Equal Pay Act of 1963 makes it illegal to pay a woman less than a man receives for the same work.

...UNTIL JUSTICE ROLLS DOWN LIKE WATERS
AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE A MIGHTY STREAM

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Aug. 28, 1963: Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. delivers "I Have a Dream" speech during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Nearly half a million people attend.

in an abandoned lot in their community.

As the first public high school for human rights, the Academy has been recognized and studied as a national model. When the school was first founded, students were required to take New York state graduation tests and consistently scored among the highest in the state. The Academy has a graduation rate of over 85 percent and nearly all graduates go on to college. As a result of its success, the school has received permission from the New York State Education Department to grade students based on their portfolios rather than their test scores.

Human Rights and Schools

Inspired by examples such as El Puente, the Independent Commission on Public Education (ICOPE) in September 2005 began building a citywide dialogue about how to redesign the failing New York City public school system to guarantee the human rights of students, their parents, and communities.

According to the National Assessment of Education Progress, 45 percent of fourth graders in New York City schools are reading below grade level. Less than 40 percent of high school students are graduating in four years.

For students of color, graduation rates are even lower—only 32 percent of African-American and 30 percent of Latino students are graduating on time, compared to 58 percent of white students.

Students face policies, practices, and conditions that stifle their development and disengage them from learning. Schools lack adequate resources,

forcing students to struggle to learn in sub-standard facilities and overcrowded classrooms. A focus on high-stakes testing has narrowed the content of education and pressed teachers into a test-driven curriculum. Abusive discipline policies create destructive school climates and push youth out of school.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that children have the right to a quality education that develops their full personality and potential, not an education that limits their ability to learn, violates their dignity, and fails to graduate half of our children. These conditions reflect the same economic inequalities and institutional racism in U.S. society that deny some communities the right to decent housing and health care.

For decades, attempts to reform this broken school system have failed. Since 2002, when the New York State Legislature gave Mayor Michael Bloomberg control over this vast school system, parent and community participation in school system decision-making has become even more difficult and school policies even less transparent.

“Our children are being denied their human rights by a school system focused on raising test scores and policing school hallways instead of supporting the full development of children. We need a new system of public education based on human rights.”

These are the words of a public school parent who spoke on the steps of City Hall in Manhattan on September 28, 2005, at the launch of the Educa-

tion is a Human Right Campaign. On that day, students, parents, community organizers and educators from across New York City came together to support ICOPE in their work to create a new vision for the public school system.

For positive change to take place, we at ICOPE believe that the system’s structures, culture, and relationships must be fundamentally altered and the school system must be redesigned.

In April 2006, the National Center for Schools and Communities at Fordham University launched Task Force 2009 in collaboration with ICOPE to develop a vision and legislative proposal for how to design a new system. The Task Force, made up of educational leaders, community organizers, parents and youth, is charged with developing recommendations for 2009 when the state law that gave the mayor control of the school system will be up for reconsideration. This legislative timetable provides the public with an opportunity to develop an alternative community-based vision for schools.

A New Vision for New York City Schools

Human rights provide a common framework that allows people from different racial, socio-economic, language and age groups with different personal interests and passions to work together to build a common vision. In particular, for community activists and parents used to fighting against the negative practices and policies in schools, a human rights framework pushes them to think in terms of the positive vision that communities want for their schools. >>

VIETNAM WAR 1960s–1973

ENVIRONMENT: Wilderness Act of 1964 protects 9 million acres of public land from development.

CIVIL RIGHTS ACT, signed on July 2, 1964, outlaws discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is established to investigate complaints and impose penalties.



Anti-war sentiment grows. Students for a Democratic Society and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee lead a march in Washington D.C. with about 25,000 protestors.

WAR: Aug. 7, 1964. Gulf of Tonkin Resolution increases U.S. troops presence in Vietnam.

HEALTH: Medicare and Medicaid become law.

RACE: President Johnson signs National Voting Rights Act on Aug. 6, 1965.

Bloody Sunday, March 7, 1965: In Selma, 600 civil rights marchers are attacked by police. Two weeks later, 3,200 marchers set out from Selma; by the time they arrive in Montgomery, they are 25,000 strong.

» Human rights are universal, indivisible, and interdependent. In other words, all people have human rights as their inalienable birthright; there is no hierarchy of rights, all rights are equally important; the fulfillment of one particular right depends in whole or in part on the fulfillment of all others.

Some of the work of designing a new system of public education based on human rights has already been done by schools and school districts around North America—even though they might not have framed their innovative work under a human rights umbrella.

Some school districts involve parents, teachers, students, and others in locally controlled schools, rather than relying on the top-down corporate-style bureaucracy we have in New York City. The Edmonton Schools in Alberta, Canada, for example, have developed an internationally recognized system of school-based budgeting that gives maximum control over resources to local schools.

In the Chicago public schools, locally elected school councils hire the principal and decide whether to renew his or her contract. In McComb, Mississippi, parents and community members brought health education and health care services into the schools.

Our vision of a human rights-based school system for New York City includes a governance structure that gives parents, students, and community members decision-making power. Governance must be transparent and free of corruption. Parents, students, and community members must have the support, training, and information necessary to fulfill their roles.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that every child has the right to an education “directed to the development of the child’s personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.” This concept of education goes far beyond the current focus on high-stakes testing, which narrows and distorts education as teachers are forced to “teach to the test.”

Other school districts have been able to implement alternative assessment techniques. For example, the state of Nebraska was able to convince the federal government to allow them to integrate the No Child Left Behind requirements into their own teacher-based assessment process, which combines a portfolio of classroom assessments, locally developed tests, and a limited number of state and national tests.

Our vision of a human rights-based school system includes art and music, field trips, teaching methods that adapt to the learning styles of different students, curricula that teach social and civic skills, emotional education, critical thinking and ethical reasoning, and an individualized system of assessment.

Getting Organized

Before launching the Education is a Human Right Campaign, ICOPE asked a wide range of education advocacy organizations to contribute “planks” to the campaign’s human right “platform.”

Endorsers of the campaign include:

Black New Yorkers for Educational Excellence, an organization that works to ensure that school staff, curriculum, and teaching methods respect and promote the diverse histories and cultures

of students of color. The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that education should develop respect for each child’s “own cultural identity, language, and values.”

Class Size Matters. Although there is no specific human right to small class sizes, human rights require that there are adequate numbers of teachers and classrooms to meet students’ needs.

Prison Moratorium Project, which fights to get police officers—whose presence and involvement in discipline create destructive school climates—removed from schools.

Center for Immigrant Families, which conducted a five-year investigation of how schools serving mostly middle-class families on Manhattan’s Upper West Side had been turning away low-income students of color.

Human rights are a tool for mobilizing and empowering communities to fight for their right to education. A parent in the Bronx who is a part of the Education is a Human Right campaign said, “I realize now that most of the things that are happening in schools that I don’t like are violating my children’s human rights, and I have a right to do something about it.”

In April 2006, ICOPE recruited more than 60 parents, community activists, educators, and youth to serve on five Independent Borough Education Commissions, one in each of the five boroughs of New York City. These commissions gather input from the community and do outreach to build a grassroots movement.

ICOPE has also launched a youth action research project that will engage

CONSUMER SAFETY: Consumers win Fair Packaging and Labeling laws.

May 5, 1965: 40 students hold first public burning of a draft card.

June 1966: Sierra Club publishes full-page newspaper ads opposing a planned dam that would flood the Grand Canyon. Two years later, plans for the dam die.

The National Organization for Women founded June 30, 1966.

WAR: Number of U.S. troops in Indochina peaks at over 500,000

1967: Anti-war demonstrations throughout the country.



April 22, 1970: More than 20 million people participate in first Earth Day.

ENVIRONMENT: National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 adopted. EPA and Clean Air Act follow in 1970.

youth ages 16 to 21 in gathering information about the lived experiences of New York City public school students.

Looking back to move forward

On December 2, 2006, ICOPE hosted a dialogue that brought members of the campaign together to learn about the history of the 1968 civil rights movement for community control of New York City schools. Participants gathered lessons from the struggle of African-American and Latino communities in the Lower East Side, Harlem, and Oceanhill-Brownsville in Brooklyn, who 40 years earlier, fought for their vision for quality public education.

During the meeting, a high school student noted that his school doesn't teach students about the 1968 struggle. Unfortunately, 40 years after that struggle, parents and students are still fighting to gain accountability from a school system that continues to ignore and undermine the needs, values, and stories of strength of communities in New York City.

ICOPE's goal for the future is to kick-start a movement for change by creating networks of committed community members. In doing so, ICOPE works within a broader human rights movement that is emerging in the United States to challenge inequalities in every aspect of American life. **V**

Elizabeth Sullivan is the education director of the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative.

Cecilia Blewer is a parent and a co-founder of the Independent Commission on Public Education (ICOPE), 718/499-3756, <http://icope.org>.



Loring Nicollet Alternative School is a member of the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign. Students decide which of the campaign's events they want to participate in. Michael Gabrelcik and two other students attended the January 2006 World Social Forum in Caracas, Venezuela.

Teaching Respect

On the south side of downtown Minneapolis, Minn., about 45 students of different races and ages, life experiences, and socio-economic backgrounds are attending a school that takes a human rights-based approach to education. At the **Loring Nicollet Alternative School** (LNAS), the credit and graduation requirements are the same as other schools. But something more is taking place in the classrooms of LNAS: students and teachers are collaborating to develop the curriculum, and incorporating human rights through explicitly respecting students' rights.

LNAS focuses on creating respect for individuality, on having a curriculum that is multicultural and free of gender bias, and on building a community, said Kelly Place, a science teacher at LNAS.

LNAS is a member of the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign. Students participate in the Campaign by raising money, taking part in protests, and attending events as close as Saint Paul and as far away as Venezuela to speak about the rights of poor people.

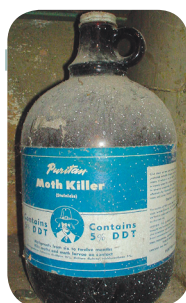
LNAS believes in teaching the next generation about human rights because all people have value, Place says. In order to instill the idea that everyone is entitled to human rights, we have to teach students what those rights are.

"If we don't recognize this, and show that we value [human rights] in an educational setting," Place said, "we are going to continue to live in a world where some people are not even seen, are oppressed, are discriminated against, and even abused."

— Sarah Kuck

1970s

May 1970: National Guard kills four Kent State students at a protest; police fire on Jackson State protesters, killing two. A nationwide student strike follows, with more than 4 million students closing 900 colleges and universities.



ENVIRONMENT: DDT banned, and Water Pollution Control Act passes in 1972.

War tax resistance soars to more than 200,000 who refuse to pay the excise taxes on phone bills or income tax.

END OF VIETNAM WAR

DRAFT: Military draft ends in 1973. U.S. moves to all-volunteer force. Draft evaders eventually get full pardons.

WATERGATE

WOMEN: Jan. 2, 1973. *Roe v. Wade* establishes a woman's legal right to abortion, overriding the anti-abortion laws of many states.

ENVIRONMENT: Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 directs EPA to track the tens of thousands of industrial chemicals used in the U.S. and to ban those that pose a threat.

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.

We have the right to be presumed innocent, and to all guarantees necessary for our defense.

We have the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

We are equal before the law.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

from Articles 4, 6, 7, 9 and 11 of the UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

MERE JUSTICE

Jesse Wegman

The plea was straightforward, Chris O'Bryant's court-appointed lawyer told him: Take a life sentence on each of two counts and get out in 25 years, maybe sooner.

O'Bryant had wanted to go to trial and claim voluntary intoxication—after all, he didn't remember robbing anyone or shooting at a police officer. He hadn't even hurt anybody. But his lawyer told him there was no such defense and urged him to plead guilty instead. O'Bryant, only 23 at the time, trusted his lawyer and did as he was advised.

The problem was, the lawyer was dead wrong: there *was* such a defense. Even worse, the lawyer had misunderstood the terms of the plea, which in fact put O'Bryant in prison for life without the possibility of parole. And because of a 1996 law limiting his right to get these errors addressed through a writ of habeas corpus, there's nothing he can do about it.

The Great Writ

A writ of habeas corpus is an extraordinary legal remedy available to a person in government custody. The "writ" itself is a court order requiring the state (or federal government) to prove that it has a legal right to hold you in jail or in prison. When the government is served with a writ of habeas corpus, it must prove that your federal constitutional rights have not been violated. If the proof is not there, the court may order a new trial or sentencing, or even release you outright.

Habeas corpus has been a touchstone of Anglo-American jurisprudence for nearly a millennium. It is protected explicitly in the Constitution, and the Supreme Court has called it "the fundamental instrument for safeguarding individual freedom against arbitrary and lawless state action."

It is also a universal human right. It appears in, among other places, the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the American Convention on Human Rights. In short, it is a constitutional right, enshrined in international law, that offers a last line of defense for an imprisoned individual against the indifference of or abuse by the State.

But why should we care whether someone like Chris O'Bryant is able to challenge the legality of his sentence? After all, he doesn't deny that he shot at a cop. Isn't habeas corpus really a concern for, say, those Middle Eastern men sitting in cramped cages at Guantánamo Bay, unable to challenge their detention in any civilian court? Surely it is, and since soon after September 11 there has been no shortage of coverage of the clashes between the three branches of the federal government over this fundamental question.

But obscured by these headlines is a bigger story: the decade-long rollback

EXECUTIONS: 10-year moratorium ends with the execution of Gary Gilmore by firing squad in Utah, Jan. 17, 1977.

Oklahoma becomes the first state to adopt lethal injection as a means of execution.



Sept. 17, 1978: Camp David Accord sets framework for peace between Egypt and Israel.



ENVIRONMENT: March 28, 1979. Three Mile Island meltdown, the worst accident in U.S. commercial nuclear power generating history.

May 17, 1980. Emergency at Love Canal alerts the public to hidden dangers of soil and ground water pollution.

The Defenders

SISTER HELEN PREJEAN

DEATH PENALTY



of the right to petition for habeas corpus aimed at the more than 2 million people held in U.S. federal and state prisons. Tens of thousands of prisoners try to file habeas petitions each year: some of them claim innocence; most claim some form of constitutional error in their arrest or trial—but all of them are entitled not to be imprisoned illegally. By preventing them from exercising this basic human (and constitutional) right, we undercut the integrity of the criminal process, as well as the principles on which this nation was founded. And that's a threat you don't need to sympathize with a prisoner to comprehend. >>

"The death penalty legalizes the torture and killing of our own citizens and imitates their violence in order to deter or punish. I came to this realization only after my first witnessing of a state execution." In 1982 Sister Helen Prejean had just moved into St. Thomas Housing Project, one of New Orleans' most violent neighborhoods, when a friend asked her to be a pen pal to death row inmate Pat Sonnier. Viewing the proposal as an extension of her ministry to the poor, she accompanied Sonnier through the next two years, until the day the state shaved his head for the electrodes, strapped him into the chair, and executed him. Thus began for Prejean a lifetime commitment to the abolition of the death penalty. She recorded her experiences in her deeply moving best-selling book, *Dead Man Walking*. Made into an acclaimed motion picture (for which Susan Sarandon won an Oscar in 1995 for her portrayal of Sister Helen), the book and movie's publicity propelled Prejean's worldwide campaign against capital punishment. The United States is the only Western country that still uses the death penalty: nearly 400 people currently await execution here. Meanwhile, also recognizing the needs of the families of victims of violent crimes, Prejean created SURVIVE, an advocacy group with which she continues to work closely.

PORTRAIT BY EDDIE ADAMS, 2000 / WWW.SPEAKTRUTH.ORG

1980s

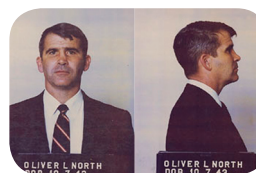
ECONOMIC RECESSION 1980s

HOMELESSNESS: Industries move from urban centers to suburbs with lower taxes and weaker environmental regulations. As a result, unemployment and demand for social services increase, tax bases decline and social programs fail. Low-income housing disappears and homelessness rises.

ENVIRONMENT: Superfund created in 1980 to set aside money to clean up hazardous waste sites.

DRAFT: Selective Service registration resumes.

SOCIAL SERVICES: Reaganomics slashes social spending and increases tax cuts mostly for the wealthy and for corporations.



WAR: U.S. invades Grenada. Oct. 25, 1983.

Reagan administration supplies money and weapons to El Salvador and Honduras, finances paramilitaries in Nicaragua, sells arms and gives aid to forces in Iran, sub-Saharan Africa, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Public finds out Nov. 1986.

» The End of “Prisoner-Coddling”

On April 24, 1996, President Clinton signed into law the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. AEDPA, as it is known, was triggered by the Oklahoma City bombing a year earlier. It was enacted in part to speed up the death penalty appeals process (that is, to execute more people, faster). But another central purpose of AEDPA—one which the bill’s backers had sought for a long time—was to restrict dramatically the availability of habeas corpus to all prisoners.

“Habeas corpus reform ... is the Holy Grail [of AEDPA],” said Representative Henry Hyde in the days before the bill became law. “We have pursued that for 14 years.”

The groundwork Hyde was referring to was laid in the ‘70s and ‘80s, as an increasingly conservative Supreme Court began to retreat from rulings of the previous two decades that had made it easier for prisoners to file habeas petitions. (That availability had itself been a long time coming; until the 20th century, convicted prisoners were largely prohibited from petitioning for habeas corpus.)

Around the same time, the number of habeas petitions filed increased dramatically—100 percent between 1987 and 1996—and public pressure to stem the flow intensified. It did not seem to matter that the increase was due primarily to the ballooning national prison population—in fact, the rate of habeas filings per thousand inmates decreased during the same period. Nor did it matter that many inmates were raising potentially meritorious claims of innocence or major trial error. Habeas had

become a vague yet powerful symbol of prisoner-coddling, and politicians were eager to find a way to attack it.

AEDPA, passed by overwhelming majorities in both houses of Congress, codified the retrenchment that had occurred during the ‘70s and ‘80s. Among the roadblocks it set up were a one-year filing deadline and a near-total prohibition against filing more than one petition, even if new evidence comes to light later on.

But hardest to overcome was the “unreasonable” requirement: in order for a federal court to overturn a state court’s ruling on a prisoner’s federal constitutional claim, it must find that ruling not simply wrong, but “unreasonably wrong.” Of course state courts can, and not infrequently do, misapply federal law. But under AEDPA, unless the error is unreasonable—and it is rarely found to be—the federal court must go along with it.

Even though AEDPA drastically curtailed crucial, hard won constitutional and international human rights that have existed, in some form, for centuries, it was surprisingly easy for politicians to sell to the average voter. “The people back home won’t understand what you’ve done, but they will understand that you’ve made it harder for people to get out of prison, and that’s a good thing,” says Bryan Stevenson, executive director of Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama, and a professor at New York University School of Law.

Stevenson, who has spent his career defending death-row inmates throughout the South, was among the many critics who argued that AEDPA was

the wrong approach. “Instead of saying, ‘We’re convicting a lot of people illegally, we’re convicting a lot of innocent people, let’s fix that,’ what I think most politicians have said is, ‘Let’s just turn off this complaint valve. We shut this down, then it’s just not going to be a problem for us,’” Stevenson says.

Blowback

AEDPA may have made politicians look good, but its longer-term effects have become a problem for nearly everyone else.

For starters, the law was so confusingly drafted that much of the habeas litigation of the past decade has revolved around making sense of what it means. And as a result of the ever-growing prison population and the scramble to meet the new filing deadline, the rate of habeas petitions actually increased after AEDPA’s passage—from 13 filings per 1,000 inmates in 1995 to 17 per 1,000 in 2000. This irony was not lost on the law’s supporters, who countered with a proposal for a stronger dose of the same bad medicine: the Streamlined Procedures Act (SPA).

Introduced in May 2005, the SPA is ostensibly aimed, once again, at speeding up executions. But, like its predecessor AEDPA, it would set new roadblocks in the way of any prisoner seeking to challenge his or her conviction on any grounds.

So far, the bill has run into intense opposition. But it is not yet dead, and there’s no guarantee that the new Democratic Congress will defeat it.

“It’s not as if the Democrats are against restricting habeas and the Republicans are in favor of it,” says »

EXECUTIONS: Supreme Court bans capital punishment for insane persons.

IMMIGRATION: In 1986, amnesty granted to illegal immigrants who entered the U.S. before 1982.

WORKERS: Sexual harassment declared a form of illegal job discrimination.

Dec. 8, 1987. U.S. signs Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty



Nov. 20, 1989. U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child. U.S. and Somalia do not sign.

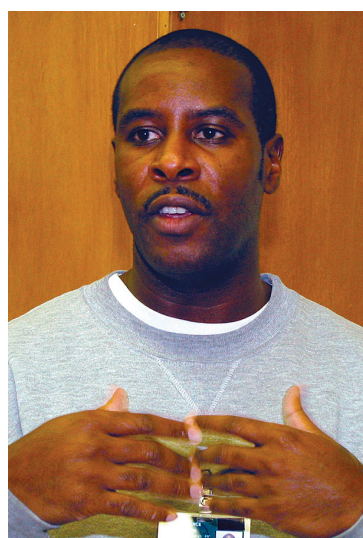
EXECUTIONS: Supreme Court rules that those who commit crimes at age 16 or 17 can be executed.



ANTHONY WRIGHT
 “Just keep in mind, the court processes are not as thorough as they seem.”



KIMONTI CARTER
 “Sometimes it’s money that gets you over the hump, and when you’re in a situation where you don’t have any, you’re less fortunate.”



VANCE BARTLEY
 “If you’re going to take somebody’s liberty, give them ample defense, and give them an ample right to appeal.”



SHERWOOD KNIGHT
 “I want to be punished according to the law. No more, no less.”

SUSAN FRIEDMAN

From the Other Side of the Bars

To learn more about the roadblocks to getting back into the courts once you’ve been imprisoned, Catherine Bailey and Carol Estes spoke with four members of the Black Prisoners Caucus at Washington State Reformatory, a close security prison in Monroe, Washington.

“The system is made up of human beings, which means it’s fallible, and mistakes happen,” says **Vance Bartley**, a young man who’s been “struck out” by Washington’s Three Strikes Law. “A person should be held accountable for committing a crime, but the state should also be held accountable to convict that person *by the rules*.” Bartley, who has learned what he knows about the law in prison, explains that a prisoner must file a federal writ within 15 months of his conviction. After that, his right to habeas corpus is gone. Short of a few rare exceptions, the time-bar rule cannot be overcome.

And writing an appeal is no easy task. **Sherwood Knight** says that “learning the law is like learning Chinese—and they expect you to learn it in less than a year, when it takes [lawyers] eight years of schooling.” The state assigns appellate attorneys to some prisoners, but due to limited budgets and the number of cases given to each lawyer, prisoners can receive woefully inadequate counsel. The complex trial of **Anthony Wright** went on for more than three weeks, yet the appeal submitted by his attorney was only five pages long.

In Bartley’s case, extensive research in the jail’s law library revealed an issue that every one of his lawyers had overlooked—one that might result in his freedom.

The documents and resources necessary to form a solid appeal are available in the law library, but the majority of prisoners enter at a disadvantage. Aside from being psychologically overwhelmed, many have never even finished high school. When they turn to pro-

fessionals for help, they run into an economic barrier. Says Wright, “Some people wanted \$7,000 just to *look* at my case.” The approximate cost of a professionally written appeal is \$50,000. With a maximum salary of \$55 a month for a man behind bars, such costs are insurmountable obstacles. If prisoners try to file their own appeal without the expertise of a professional, they risk filing a “mixed petition”—an appeal containing a combination of exhausted and unexhausted claims. In that case, the court tosses out the whole petition, and the prisoner’s future access to habeas corpus is denied. “In other words,” Bartley says, “appeal over.”

Kimonti Carter and his co-defendant were involved in the same crime, but Carter received a much longer sentence, simply because the court named him the “principal” and his co-defendant the “accomplice.” Carter was barely 18 when the crime was committed, and wants to appeal for a lighter sentence. But as Knight warns, “If you *do* have a good issue, you are afraid to take that step, for if you mess it up, it’s gone forever... When [AEDPA] was put out, it was basically to prevent death-row inmates from repeatedly filing over and over and over, and the backlash just kind of came down to everybody else.”

—Catherine Bailey



www.YesMagazine.org/prisoners

Expanded interviews with these prisoners

» Stevenson, pointing out that it was Bill Clinton who signed AEDPA in an effort to strengthen his own tough-on-crime credentials.

Despite its historic importance as both a civil and a human right, habeas corpus has never been a get-out-of-jail-free card. Federal courts grant the writ in a minuscule number of the 20,000 to 25,000 petitions filed each year, statistics that lead some prisoners and prisoner advocates to downplay the importance of AEDPA and related legislation.

"If you look at the number of successful habeas petitions, it's like winning the lottery," says Paul Wright, who served 17 years for murder in Washington State, during which time he became a respected jailhouse lawyer and started Prison Legal News, an inmate-written legal newsletter he still edits today.

To Wright, the main concern is what happens before a habeas petition gets filed—that is, in the state courts of appeals. These courts—often populated by elected judges who run under tough-on-crime platforms—cursorily deny the vast majority of criminal appeals that come before them. Combine that problem with the extreme deference AEDPA requires of federal courts reviewing state-court rulings, and habeas corpus petitions often seem to be no more than a formality.

As a result, Wright thinks that the "Great Writ" looks a lot more powerful than it is. "It's like saying you have a spoiler on the back of your car. It looks nice, but what does it actually do?"

Bryan Stevenson agrees that there

have always been obstacles to the granting of habeas—such as getting lawyers, developing the evidence, getting someone, anyone, to care. The difference, he says, is that those obstacles "weren't the law itself." He adds, "Your opportunity, if you were innocent, to get out of jail was still dramatically greater throughout most of our history than it is today."

Prying open the courtroom doors

Even if you're not innocent, but you want to challenge the constitutionality of your trial, your plea, or your sentencing, habeas corpus is essentially your only hope. That's Chris O'Bryant's problem: even though his trial lawyer later admitted his errors, O'Bryant missed the one-year deadline for filing his habeas petition—thanks to being hopped up on a regimen of anti-psychotic drugs prison officials prescribed shortly after he arrived.

Today O'Bryant is off medications and understands the law much better—so much so that he has become a jailhouse lawyer, assisting other prisoners with their legal claims. Like him, many of them are time-barred under AEDPA from filing their own habeas corpus petitions, regardless of the constitutional issues they may raise. O'Bryant is likely to see many more of these men: now 35 years old, he will live out his days

in a cell at the Columbia Correctional Institution in Lake City, Florida. ⑦



Jesse Wegman is a writer and lawyer living in New York.

Partners in Justice

Prisoners' rights often fall in the blind spot of the public eye. These are just a few of the groups whose efforts are helping to correct our vision. Please visit our online resource guide (see p. 50) for more.

The American Civil Liberty Union's National Prisoner Project strives to soften the government's "no mercy" approach to crime by replacing the harsh (sometimes unconstitutional) treatment of prisoners with reformatory programs.

The National Legal Aid and Defender Association supports attorneys who work with low-income clients.

The Prison Activist Resource Center provides information to prisoners and their families, educators, and activists to combat race-biased incarceration and expose human rights violations in prisons.

Equal Justice USA fights to abolish the death penalty. Legislation for or against its elimination is categorized by state.

Books Not Bars combats the problem of youth incarceration in California by making education resources more available to at-risk youth.

Stop Prisoner Rape seeks to end all forms of sexual aggression against the incarcerated.

1990s

GULF WAR 1990–1991

WAR: Operation Desert Storm is authorized by the U.N. U.S. part of 30-nation coalition.

U.S. sanctions China, Iran, Cuba, and Kuwait for sponsoring terrorism, engaging in proliferation of WMDs, and human rights abuses.

April 29, 1992: Los Angeles erupts in riots after acquittal of officers who beat Rodney King. They are retried under civil rights laws, and two are found guilty.

1994: North American Free Trade Agreement.

1995: Student-led campaign delivers the Environmental Bill of Rights to Congress with 1.2 million signatures.

SOCIAL SERVICES: 1996. Controversial "Back to Work" Welfare Reform.

1999: World Trade Organization meets in Seattle. 40,000 protest in first major mass event of U.S. anti-globalization movement.



EXECUTIONS: 1999. U.N. Human Rights Commission Resolution Supporting Worldwide Moratorium on Executions. The U.S. does not sign.



NAVEEN JAMAL, FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/NAVEENJAMAL

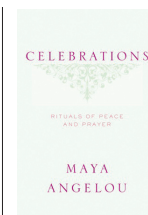
Excerpt from *A Brave and Startling Truth*

Los Gatos, California
December 2006

We, this people, on this small and drifting planet
Whose hands can strike with such abandon
That in a twinkling, life is sapped from the living
Yet those same hands can touch with such healing, irresistible tenderness
That the haughty neck is happy to bow
And the proud back is glad to bend
Out of such chaos, of such contradiction
We learn that we are neither devils nor divines

When we come to it
We, this people, on this wayward, floating body
Created on this earth, of this earth
Have the power to fashion for this earth
A climate where every man and every woman
Can live freely without sanctimonious piety
Without crippling fear

When we come to it
We must confess that we are the possible
We are the miraculous, the true wonder of this world
That is when, and only when
We come to it.



Maya Angelou
"Celebrations: Rituals of Peace and Prayer"
Random House, October 2006

Maya Angelou's "Celebrations" is a collection of poems that have become an integral part of the global fabric. Several works have become nearly as iconic as Angelou herself, such as "A Brave and Startling Truth," which marked the 50th anniversary of the United Nations.

Yes. We're Ready.

Larry Cox and Dorothy Thomas

Looking at the United States through the lens of human rights illuminates persistent inequities in U.S. society and offers an alternative view of how it can and should be changed. The United States has been rightly proud of its historical leadership in global human rights. As the country's conduct slips away from its aspirations, it is time to reclaim that leadership role by bringing human rights home.

The movement for human rights in the United States promotes this alternative vision. It seeks a revolution of values in the United States that makes affirmation of human dignity and equality the center of domestic and foreign policy.

But no theory of change can be realized without firm grounding in practical reality. In a world of fear-based politics and official policies of trading rights for promises of safety, what evidence is there that a human-rights based approach can succeed in the United States? The work that produced the Ford Foundation report *Close to Home: Case Studies of Human Rights Work in the United States* revealed abundant evidence. Here are the factors we identified that are making a human rights movement in this country a reality.

A Changing Domestic Environment

Activists and others consulted for *Close to Home* find that, across the American Indian, civil, women's, worker, gay, immigrant, and prisoner rights communities in the United States, a powerful new politics of social justice is emerging. This new politics favors multi- over single-issue work, understands discrimination in terms of compound rather than singular identities, conceives of rights holistically rather than in terms of outmoded hierarchies, and situates those most affected at the center of advocacy.

"There is simply no better way to broaden the influence and effectiveness of all our struggles for social justice than through human rights," says Loretta Ross, a pioneering civil and women's rights, and now U.S. human rights activist who founded the National Center for Human Rights Education. The human rights vision readily accommodates new forms of U.S. social justice activism and also offers powerful means for their expression.

Engagement with the Larger World

The emergence of a U.S. human rights movement also reflects dramatic developments outside the United States. The horrific attacks of September 11, 2001, shattered probably forever the separation of foreign from domestic concerns. For the first time since the Cold War, the United States is engaged in a vast public conversation about its role in the world and the implications of that role at home and abroad.

This hard-earned global consciousness has spawned a growing domestic interest in multilateralism, and in the

2000s

SEPT. 11 ATTACKS

WAR: U.S. invades Afghanistan, Oct. 7, 2001.

CIVIL LIBERTIES: Homeland Security and USA Patriot Act, 2001. Eight states condemn the Act for attacking civil liberties.

IRAQ WAR 2003-PRESENT

WAR: U.S. invades Iraq, without U.N. approval, March 20, 2003.

Feb. 15, 2003: Millions in over 800 cities protest impending U.S. invasion of Iraq. It is the largest anti-war protest in history.

VOTE: Reports of fraud in 2004 presidential election.

ENVIRONMENT: The EPA informs 31 states that the air quality in their states does not meet federal standards.

GULF COAST HURRICANES AUGUST 2005



SOCIAL SERVICES: FEMA slammed for Katrina and Rita hurricane response and treatment of evacuees.

EXECUTIONS: Supreme Court rules capital punishment unconstitutional for those who were under 18 when they committed crimes.

international legal and political system, especially among people concerned with the defense of fundamental rights.

"Our struggle never has been a purely local struggle," says worker and human rights activist Jaribu Hill, who co-founded The Mississippi Worker's Center for Human Rights. "It's just that we can no longer afford to disregard the global link. Whatever happens 'over there' has implications here."

The development of a U.S. human rights movement is driven in part by the desire to reclaim the full legacy and meaning of international human rights. It is also driven, perhaps more than anything else, by the potential of human rights to restore to U.S. social justice work a sense of the underlying commonality of simply being human that is often lost to all of its divisions by identity, geography, issue area and belief. As Cheri Honkala, an economic human rights activist who heads the Kensington Welfare Rights Union, puts it, "We base our vision in the essence of being human."

Many factors have contributed to the beginning of a potentially transformative human rights movement in the United States: dynamic changes in U.S. social justice activism, increased awareness of the importance of U.S. multilateralism and the relevance of the international legal and political system to domestic as well as foreign rights policy, and an instinctive desire to reassert the common human dimension of all social justice work. What remains at issue is how this movement can strengthen U.S. social justice work that is increasingly global in character, indivisible in approach, diverse in con-

stituency, and righteous in process as well as effect.

Strengths of Using Human Rights

The idea of using a human rights framework to promote change in the United States is relatively new. As it gains currency, those using it find it offers tools not available in other settings.

Broad vision

By all accounts, the single greatest value of employing human rights in U.S. social justice work is its vision of rights as intrinsic to the status of being human. Indeed, human rights are the expression of what is required to be fully human. These rights are not dependent on recognition by an external authority. They are not a reward for certain behaviors or for enjoying a certain status such as citizen or property owner or white person. They belong to all human beings equally.

Human rights assert the inalienability of rights in a much broader sense than has ever been expressed constitutionally. The preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." The simple use of the term human rights instead of women's or workers' or prisoners' or immigrants' rights, for example, elicits an understanding of rights as inherently the same for all people rather than as defined by this or that particular status.

To some, this may all seem like little more than semantics. But, as Widney

Brown, former deputy program director of Human Rights Watch puts it, reframing one's work in human rights terms "takes you back to the primacy of equality and dignity no matter what the circumstance. Once you reassert that basic principle, people's perceptions of the problem change and new avenues for advocacy open up."

Expansive legal framework

One of these "new avenues" is clearly the legal arena. For many activists who work in a framework of the Constitution and domestic statutes, the idea of an alternative, inalienable, universal source of legal rights is something of a revelation. Given the longstanding determination of the United States government to shield itself from any meaningful international human rights obligations, it is usually met with skepticism.

But U.S. legal experts are increasingly converting their skepticism about human rights into a growing appreciation of its use, as environmental justice attorney Monique Harden puts it, "to break out of the chokehold of domestic law." The context for this conversion is remarkably similar across issue areas: the growing conservatism of the courts, diminishing remedies for grievous abuse, and, especially after September 11, the attack on established rights and liberties, including due process, access to counsel and the courts, equal protection, and freedom of information, all of which limit or block the use of purely domestic remedies for rights violations. "I was as skeptical as the next person about the relevance of human rights to domestic legal advocacy," Anthony Romero, the executive director of the

»

TORTURE: U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney endorses torture known as "waterboarding." U.S. claims prisoners at Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo are not entitled to Geneva Convention protections.



CIVIL LIBERTIES: Illegal government wiretapping.

ENVIRONMENT: Kyoto Protocol takes effect 2005: 141 countries pledge to reduce emissions of global warming gasses. The U.S. does not sign.

MARRIAGE: New Jersey and Massachusetts allow marriage for same-sex partners.

Spring 2006: Millions protest in hundreds of cities in favor of human rights for immigrants.

IMMIGRATION: President Bush signs off on plans to build a 700-mile fence along the U.S.-Mexico border.

» ACLU, told a group of human rights funders in July 2003. “But in the last five years or so I’ve undergone a conversion, particularly post 9/11. Human rights give us another place to go.”

That “other place” involves interpretive and binding uses of human rights law, which often offers stronger protections than U.S. law, in both U.S. and international courts. The National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, for example, uses a combination of grassroots organizing and legal advocacy to frame the death penalty in the United States as a violation of human rights.

As a result of its efforts, and those of other anti-death-penalty activists, the Supreme Court ruled in 2002 that

execution of mentally retarded people violates the Eighth Amendment. That decision was followed by a 2005 ban on the execution of people who were juveniles when they committed their crime. In addition to finding such executions unconstitutional and a violation of public consensus, the Court noted that they violate the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In other cases, human rights law, with its greater protections, is used in a more binding manner. At times, when all avenues of domestic relief have been exhausted, such binding human rights decisions are pursued in regional or international bodies. In the last two

years, human rights groups have participated in providing shadow reports to United Nations bodies monitoring U.S. compliance with treaties and conventions. More than 140 groups presented evidence to the Committee Against Torture and the Human Rights Committee as those bodies examined the United States’ official reports on fulfillment of its obligations under international law.

Participatory methods

While the legal community takes a gradual stance toward incorporating human rights values, community-based educators, organizers, and fact-finders take a more immediate approach. Human rights involves an

“There is an organization for just about every conceivable issue you can come up with. What makes a difference is getting political leadership behind you.” In 1969, Lt. Bobby Muller led an assault up a hill in Vietnam until a bullet hit his back and severed his spinal cord. But the real misery didn’t begin until Muller was confined to a veteran’s hospital. During his first year, eight people on his ward committed suicide. His experiences there led him to become a leading advocate for veterans’ rights. In 1997, Muller led efforts to ban landmines that eventually won the Nobel Peace Prize. Today, Muller continues to focus worldwide attention on war’s impact on civilians.

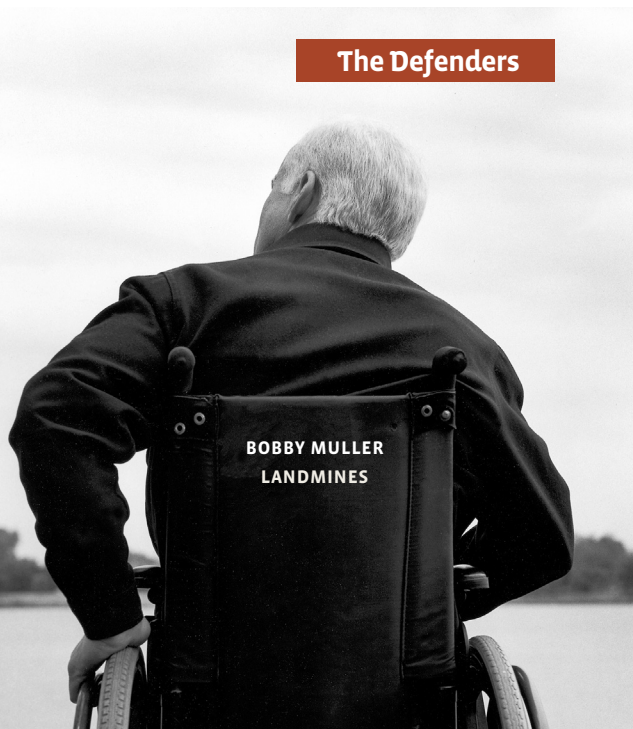
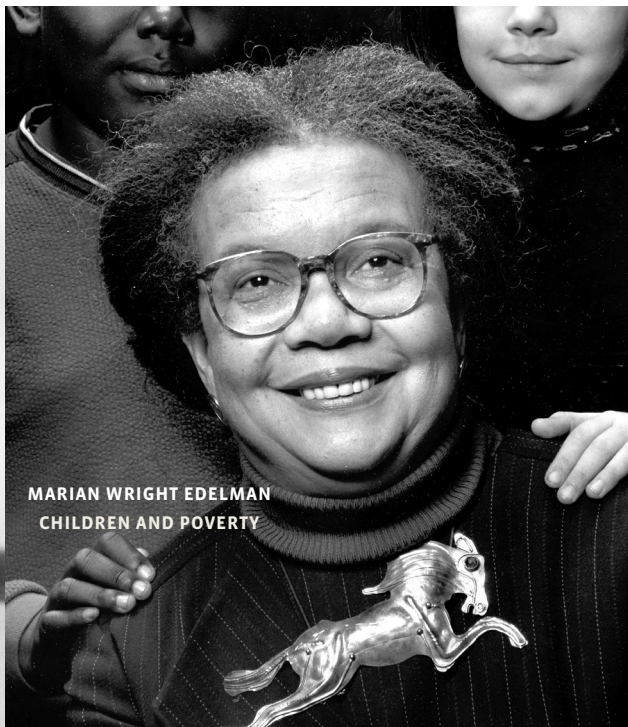
“Here we have poverty killing children, more slowly, but just as surely, as guns, in a nation that has been blessed with a \$9 trillion economy.” Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children’s Defense Fund, is one of the great inspirational leaders of our time. After joining civil rights protests, she went to Yale Law School and became the first black woman admitted to the Mississippi bar. She directed the NAACP Legal Defense and Education office in Jackson, Mississippi. Under Edelman’s direction, CDF provides an effective voice for poor and minority children and those with disabilities. Hers is ultimately a wake-up call, imploring us to find our soul and save our nation.

PORTRAITS BY EDDIE ADAMS, 2000 / WWW.SPEAKTRUTHTOPOWER.COM

The Defenders

BOBBY MULLER
LANDMINES

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN
CHILDREN AND POVERTY



affirmation of dignity and equality that resonates powerfully with the often impoverished, abused, and structurally decimated communities in which many of them work. "As welfare reform kicked in, we were concerned that poor people would turn against each other over the crumbs that trickle down," Ethel Long-Scott of the Women's Economic Agenda Project says. "The Universal Declaration allowed for a common vision of opportunity and well-being for all people."

For many of the most affected U.S. communities, this common vision of opportunity and well-being for all can be revolutionary, but only if they know it exists. "To have a human rights movement," Loretta Ross told us, "people first have to know what their human rights are."

Human rights have the potential to alter the dynamics of social change work, in which the "affected" and their advocates can become somewhat estranged. As poor people, workers, immigrants, women, gays, prisoners and others become aware of their human rights and organize to defend them, they gradually become the agents rather than the objects of social change. This begins to alter the power balance between those who experience human rights abuse and those who act on their behalf, moving them from a client/professional relationship toward a more equal partnership. To some observers, this may seem like a subtle shift. But its value in terms of sustaining long-term, community-based advocacy for social change may be far-reaching.

A unifying framework

As human rights help to transform U.S. social justice methods, they also support the emergence of new, multidimensional advocacy strategies.

In pursuit of cross-identity advocacy, for example, the Women's Institute for Leadership Development for Human Rights used human rights to take an integrated approach to the elimination of gender and race discrimination in San Francisco. The institute found that, absent a human rights framework, the city's anti-discrimination policy was too compartmentalized and reactive to pro-

tect women and girls, particularly those of color, from bias and abuse. The use of human rights enabled anti-discrimination activists, who were otherwise segregated by identity and issue area, to come together under a common framework, focus their efforts and make policy more responsive to the double burden of gender and race discrimination in the lives of women and girls.

The search for a similar link led Jaribu Hill to found the Mississippi Workers Center for Human Rights. Hill, a veteran of both the civil and workers' rights movements, saw in human rights a way to link the disparate and at times even antagonistic strands of civil rights and economic justice. In her view, to think of civil and economic rights as separate is simply no longer responsive to the experience of poor people of color in the South, in the country, or in the world. By putting them together, Hill says, "human rights lead to more systematic change."

Changing Attitudes

When all the dimensions of a human rights approach—vision, framework, method, and strategy—come together in one focused effort, they produce an immensely powerful effect. But the further development of a movement for human rights in the United States is not a magic bullet. Any demand for full-scale application of international human rights law, even those parts already ratified by Congress, faces resistance from those steeped in American exceptionalism. People raised on the notion that the United States is the world's standard-bearer for human rights will not lightly surrender that belief.

Exceptionalism is not new in U.S. domestic and foreign policy. In the last half of the 20th century, the United States opted out of international agreements on arms control, the environment, international justice, economic rights, and rights for women, children, immigrants, and prisoners. The beginning of the new century saw a movement backward on issues such as torture and civil rights. But there are signs that those trends are not without limits; that there may be a point beyond which Americans will no longer tolerate

the gap between image and reality.

Human rights advocates also encounter mistrust of a new and unfamiliar approach. Giving up single-issue advocacy in favor of the embracing concept of rights based on humanity may seem dangerous. Yet those working with the human rights framework universally report that their work becomes both stronger and more inclusive as they move away from a single-issue approach.

Human rights work challenges the notion of U.S. superiority that is part of the national identity. Americans are justly proud of their Constitution and of the country's historical position as a human rights leader. The news that a broader framework exists and is being implemented elsewhere frequently leads to questions about patriotism.

This suggests that among the challenges facing the U.S. human rights movement—the exceptionalism of the U. S. government, the concerns of social justice advocates, and the attitudes of the public—one of the deepest is how to communicate its message. This task is complicated and will have to be tackled with considerable patience and expertise.

Ultimately, the need to disrupt the increasingly worrisome connection between unilateralism and patriotism in the United States is one of the major reasons why activists argue that U.S. human rights work is so crucial. They see efforts to make concrete links between local and global rights activists, and between domestic and international systems of justice, as one way to help change the increasingly popular perception in this country that cooperative engagement with the world is somehow un-American. In this sense, human rights activists in the United States are trying, along with their counterparts in many other disciplines, to reclaim the traditions in this country that contributed so much to the creation of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, as Langston Hughes once so memorably wrote, "let America be America again." ❶

Larry Cox, a veteran human rights advocate, is executive director of Amnesty International USA.

Dorothy Q. Thomas, a human rights consultant, is senior program advisor to the US Human Rights Fund.

1

LEARN MORE

The UDHR defines our rights as human beings, yet many of us have never even heard of it. Consider your rights. Understand them. Appreciate their meaning. Then help others learn to do the same.

Begin by reading **The American Civil Liberty Union's** reasons why you should care about defending human rights. It refers specifically to our U.S. civil liberties, but the message can be applied more broadly. http://action.aclu.org/site/PageServer?pagename=AS_why_care_about_civ_lib.

The People's Movement for Human Rights Learning works for socio-economic transformation by expanding the holistic human rights approach. Download manuals, read articles, or watch videos at www.pdhr.org.

Human Rights Tools is a 100 percent volunteer-run initiative dedicated to compiling the most comprehensive library of human rights resources on the Web. Their library links to stats on various countries, relevant Web sites, and pertinent books. www.humanrightstools.org.

The United States Human Rights Network strives to bring justice to the oppressed by putting them in touch with grassroots movements that enforce specific rights. www.ushrnetwork.org. 404/588-9761.

Universal Rights Network was created in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It offers a forum for people to submit testimonies, and recognizes heroes of the global human rights movement. www.universalrights.net.

The National Center for Human Rights Education unites the struggles for equality across the barriers of gender, sexual orientation, race, physical ability, and economic class, linking all movements to human rights education and enforcement. www.nchre.org. 678/904-2640.

+ MORE WAYS TO LEARN ONLINE

2

CONNECT WITH ALLIES

These are a few of the major advocacy groups fighting for specific causes within the framework of human rights. Choose a cause that inspires your passion, and learn how you can further it.

Amnesty International is a Nobel Prize-winning grassroots activist organization with more than 1.8 million members. It focuses on preventing and ending human rights violations by supporting programs that help people learn about human right and organizing volunteer activists. www.amnesty.org

Human Rights Watch is the largest human rights organization based in the United States. It investigates and exposes human rights violations, and hosts campaigns and film festivals to create awareness. www.hrw.org. 212/290-4700

Immigrant Solidarity informs you about the injustice faced by immigrants all over the country, and the specific steps you can take to catalyze change (www.immigrantsolidarity.org). Also, visit www.mayday2007.org to learn about the national mobilization to support immigrant workers on May 1.

Books to Prisoners Projects accepts used books from organizations and individuals, and distributes them to prisoners seeking an education. For a list of participating groups, visit www.prisonlegalnews.org/links/books_to_prisoners.htm.

Witness Against Torture is an interfaith group devoted to shutting down Guantánamo. Through marches and protests, they urge the U.S. government to condemn torture and either sentence or release prisoners immediately. www.witness torture.org.

The Right to Education Project believes a more educated population will improve the enforcement of all human rights, and thus creates programs that will make education accessible to as many people as possible worldwide. www.right-to-education.org.

+ MORE WAYS TO CONNECT ONLINE

3

TAKE ACTION

The power to create a world in which all human beings lead dignified lives is in our hands. Change starts with you. Be the spark that starts a fire of awareness and activism within your own community.

Host a documentary night at your house. Expose yourself and your friends to knowledge that will inspire (or outrage) you enough to take action. Borrow films like *Juvis* and *The Lost Boys of Sudan* online for free at www.thefilmconnection.org.

Celebrate Human Rights Day every year on December 10. Organize events and invite your neighbors. Pass out copies of the UDHR. Encourage others to take the time to understand the beauty and power of our rights, and the importance of enforcing them.

Combat inequities that feed division. Volunteer at a homeless shelter, or organize a food drive. Give old clothes or belongings to the poor. Help teach an immigrant English.

Hear other sides. Get your news from an international source at least once a week.

Connect with local youth. Create an opportunity for young people to explore human rights. Become a mentor, or start an after-school dialogue club. You can use our Issue 41 Discussion Guide to get conversation started. www.yesmagazine.org/discussion41.

Raise your voice. Call or email your senators and representatives (www.congress.org/congressorg/directory/congdir.tt). Write letters to the newspaper, or contact local media (www.congress.org/congressorg/dbq/media/). Share your opinions on human rights.

Consume consciously. Seek alternatives to goods and services that are made available through human exploitation.

Set an example. Report violations. Stand up to those disrespecting the rights of others. Your display of courage may encourage others, and liberate them to stand with you.

+ MORE WAYS TO TAKE ACTION ONLINE



www.YesMagazine.org

/resourceguide41 Comprehensive guide to learning more, connecting with allies, and taking action



JOHN GIBLER

Women face the Federal Preventive Police on the morning of October 29, as they prepare to enter Oaxaca City for the first time in the conflict.

In Oaxaca, Women Rise

John Gibler

“EVERYTHING IS THE MOVEMENT,” says Patricia Jimenez Alvarado, looking at me across her kitchen table. “You don’t have a personal life anymore.” She leans her face into her open palms, and weeps.

Jimenez, in her mid-forties, is a thesis advisor at Oaxaca State University by profession. But the government of Oaxaca accuses her of being an “urban guerrilla.” Her house and car have just been broken into and searched. She regularly receives text-message death threats on her cellular phone. A warrant has been issued for her arrest. And for the first time in her children’s lives, she has missed their birthdays—several months ago she sent 8-year-old Braulio and 14-year-old Metzli to live with her sister-in-law to keep them safe.

Sitting down with me for this interview is the first moment of calm she’s had since mid-June, Jimenez says. That’s when she and thousands of other women—many of whom had never participated in a march or rally before—orchestrated the takeover of the state television and radio stations and broadcast live their opposition to state violence. Their actions earned these women a place among Oaxaca’s most wanted activists, sought by the para-police gangs that serve the state government. »

In Oaxaca, Women Rise



JOHN GIBLER

Patty Jimenez leads other women during the December 17 march.

» Roots of the protests

In the beginning, the civil disobedience in Oaxaca was not organized primarily by women. It began on May 22 as a teachers' strike to demand higher federal and state education budgets. The striking teachers set up a protest camp in Oaxaca City, a tent city that filled the touristy town square and stretched out for blocks, housing tens of thousands of teachers from across the state.

In 2004, Ulises Ruiz Ortiz, of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, had been sworn in as governor under serious allegations of electoral fraud. But instead of mending bridges, he announced a policy of no tolerance for protests, even moving the state government offices into guarded compounds miles outside the city center.

Ruiz refused to meet with the teachers union or answer their demands. Then, at dawn on June 14, 2006, he sent state riot police using tear gas and helicopters to violently dismantle the striking teachers' camp, leaving scores of men, women, and children injured.

The city exploded. Thousands, including Jimenez, took to the streets

to help the teachers, tend the injured, and offer food and water. But to everyone's surprise, these citizens went one step further—they counterattacked, retook the town square, and drove the police out of town.

This spontaneous rejection of police violence, along with the outpouring of support for the teachers, ignited a five-month civil disobedience uprising. It would put a half million people on the streets in marches and tens of thousands in protest camps across Oaxaca City, paralyze the state government, and send the governor into hiding.

To encourage people's participation in developing strategies for long-term organizing, the teachers' union called indigenous organizations, human rights groups, and local unions into an assembly. Together these groups formed the Oaxaca People's Popular Assembly (APPO), which they opened to all who signed on to demand the ouster or resignation of Ruiz for ordering the police raid. The provisional leadership of the APPO was almost entirely male, with women relegated to lesser roles.

Meanwhile, back at the treasury

Undaunted, women formed neighborhood groups in order to join the APPO and participated in the marathon discussions that guided the protesters' actions. When the APPO decided to launch a civil disobedience offensive on July 26—setting up camps around the state legislature, courts, and the governor's offices to shut down all three branches of government—many women volunteered to set up camp outside the state treasury, a building low on the APPO's priority list. There, during the first nights at their protest camp, they cooked up the idea of a women-only march on August 1.

The march drew some 5,000 women, all banging on pots and pans with meat tenderizers, ladles, and soup spoons. The raucous cacophony had the women so jazzed that when they reached their destination (the protester-occupied town square), they decided to keep going, to the state-owned television station, Channel 9. The only statewide local station, Channel 9 failed to report on the June 14 police violence and later presented the protesters as vandals and hooligans. At first the women demanded only an hour on television to tell their version of the events of June 14 and why they wanted Ruiz out of office. But Mercedes Rojas Saldaña, the station director, refused. The women asked for less time, then even less, but were repeatedly rebuffed. Finally, they walked past the director, with pots and pans in hand, and took over the station.

As Jimenez and the other women rounded up the station's employees, several of her former students recognized her. One asked, "Teacher, what are you doing here?"

"Well, taking over the station," she said. "No choice."

Another asked: "Teacher, why are you dragging us into this mess? Aren't you an academic?"

"And so?" Jimenez replied. "I'm also one of the people."

Employees had taken the station off the air as the women stormed the office. Now the women scrambled to

Thousands of men and women, including Jimenez, took to the streets to help the teachers, tend the injured, and offer food and water. But to everyone's surprise, these citizens counterattacked, retook the town square, and drove the police out of town.

get the station back on the air before the police came to retake the station. Jimenez herself tried to figure out how to work the cameras.

But the police did not come. Instead, thousands of residents from the surrounding neighborhood flooded the streets to guard the station, taking over city buses and parking them across the street to block all approaching traffic.

One technician who knew Jimenez agreed to tell her where the antennas were and how to get the transmission going again if Jimenez would let her go. Jimenez told her, "Here there are no friendships and no privileges. Here we make the decisions in collective." Then she led the employee off to meet with the other women and negotiated the release of all the employees—none of whom had been harmed in the takeover—in return for their help in getting the station back on the air.

Within three hours, for the first time in Mexican history, a protest movement occupied a state television station and broadcast live. Viewers saw a tight group of women without makeup or designer dresses, pots and pans still in hand, all facing the camera. Their message: if the media insist on airbrushing state violence from the news and distorting social protest into an "urban guerrilla" movement, then the people will take the media in order to tell their own story of suffering, police repression, and organizing social protests.

Moving forward

Meanwhile, from late August through November, the conflict escalated. The government attacked Channel 9, destroying the station's antennas and knocking the women's revolutionary media off the air. Plainclothes police officers and PRI party militants regularly opened fire on protestors and, over the course of 3 months killed at least 16 people, including New York-based journalist Brad Will.

Protesters organized thousands of nighttime barricades across the city to prevent armed attacks. They also took over private radio stations to continue broadcasting their denunciations of state violence and to call for further protests to oust the governor.

On November 25, federal police cracked down on protesters after a small group began to throw rocks and fire bottle rockets at the police. The police rounded up and beat more than 140 protesters, then carted them off to federal prison in Nayarit, four states away. State and federal police patrolled the streets to grab organizers, and hundreds of people went underground. Jimenez cut her brown hair short, dyed it jet black, and sneaked out of town.

But two weeks later she was back to join a delegation of APPO protest-

ers set to hold talks with the federal government and then to stage marches demanding the release of those taken prisoner on November 25. In December she helped organize another high-energy march and a free outdoor concert where the Oaxaca-born musician Lila Downs joined in singing Christmas carols retooled to denounce state violence.

"We have shown that women's participation in these movements is fundamental," Jimenez said.

On January 8, I saw Jimenez again. She was on the way to an APPO assembly meeting. "We have to endure! We can't give up!" she said, her voice hoarse with a bad cold. "We can only go forward. There is no other way."

John Gibler is a Global Exchange Human Rights Fellow and writer based in Mexico.

The August march drew about 5,000 women, all banging on pots and pans.

JOHN GIBLER



A Transforming Pilgrimage in Silence, on Foot



John Francis
leaves Marin
County,
April 1983

ART ROGERS

Planetwalker: How to Change Your World One Step at a Time

JOHN FRANCIS

Elephant Mountain Press, 2005

280 pages, \$24.95

REVIEWED BY JONATHAN ROWE

I would see him almost every day, a large man with a long rolling gait, pushing a jogging stroller along the road near our home. It was a stride that you noticed for some reason, a kind of purposeful amble, the walk of a man who knew where he was going—or perhaps, why he was going—and in his own sweet time, thank you.

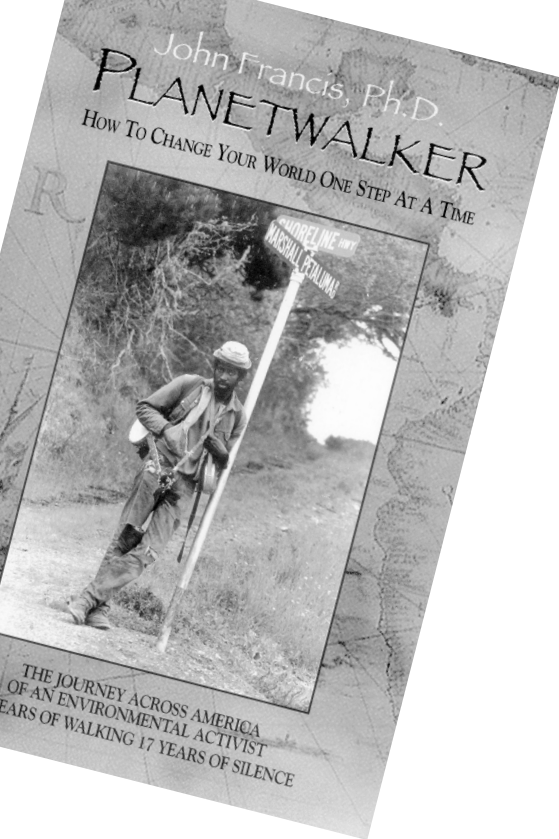
We had just moved out here to the Northern California coast. I didn't know that this was John Francis, and that these daily walks to town with his new son Sam were the latest leg of something that had begun more than three decades before. John had witnessed a massive oil spill in San Francisco Bay. Sea birds had died in his hands when he tried to rescue them from the ooze.

He decided then to forsake motor-

ized transportation. Not long after that, to quiet the contentious voices inside and out, he had sworn off talking too.

John kept his silence for 17 years. During that time he walked across the U.S. and much of South America; along the way he managed to get undergraduate and graduate degrees in environmental science. The Coast Guard hired him to write new oil spill regulations in the wake of the Exxon Valdez. One thing led to another, and he ended up back here in West Marin, where it all had started back in the late 1960s.

John is a friend now. Our sons are friends too. We chat often when we pick them up at pre-school, and at other times around town. I think that's part of why I did not get around to reading John's memoir, *Planetwalker*, until now. I knew John, and I had heard the story. Or so I thought.



EXCERPT FROM *PLANETWALKER* ::

I am surprised at the arguments that my giving up driving and riding in cars has caused in the community. Even though many people talk about wanting not to ride in cars because of the oil spill, everyone still does. ... In some instances I am told, "The reason you're doing this is just to make the rest of us feel bad." Granted, there is some truth to this. I naively expect at least part of the community to park their cars and pickups and, like the Pied Piper's children, walk off with me into an environmental utopia. This does not happen. However, the chief criticism the community has is put in the words of a close friend. "John," she says. "You are just crazy. One person walking is not going to make a difference in reducing air pollution or oil spills. In fact, it's just going to mean more gasoline for everyone else." The comment gives me pause. Maybe I am crazy. How can one person make a difference?

What I didn't know—one of many things, it turns out—is that John can write like this. *Planetwalker* has a limpid grace that is as quiet as the watercolors (his) that accompany the text. The voice is honest and without guile. There is a rightness to almost every word, a just-so quality. The images are not contrived, but seem to grow up out of the story itself.

"In the early years, when my silence was new, I seemed to have a palpable need to revisit my decision. It was virgin territory, this silent landscape, a narrow path through a ragged bramble. It twisted and turned uneasily up, down, and around in surprise and loneliness. I ached with old muscles unused and the growth of new ones. Words piled onto me. The later years have become more comforting, and silence more familiar, with watercolor views to everywhere. Meaning is rooted in action and lives, movement, the passing of clouds, the clarity of eyes."

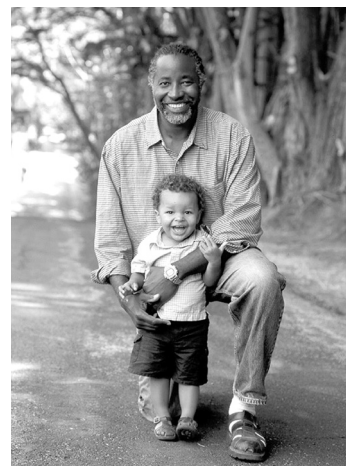
Planetwalker has been described as a social statement, which it is. But it is something more basic first—a journal of experience, told in a voice that has broken free to a remarkable degree from the noise and self-talk that besets us all.

I often have wondered what would happen to a mind that forsook the outlet (indulgence?) of spoken expression. Like John, I once harbored thoughts of joining a religious order to cleanse myself and still the anger that was running riot in my head. I imagined that the self-talk would increase, like repressed sexual energy in the Freudian model.

Instead, it seems that the opposite occurred. Knowing that he was not going to respond verbally, John gradually ceased to stew over his own verbal responses. Instead of listening out of half of one ear the way most of us do while we formulate our brilliant rejoinders, John learned to listen.

Planetwalker is a listener's journal. The "I" is minimal; the interest more on the unfolding scene than on the "me" who is engaged in it. At one point, early on, John is stopped by two men in a pick-up truck. They do not appreciate his presence in their parts, and their form of address—"Boy"—tells us why.

"I am thinking that maybe these guys are lost, and the thought is amusing. In fact I know that they are not lost. We all are where we are meant to be. I know this from the very core of my being as the driver's right hand



ART ROGERS

John Francis, who lives in Point Reyes Station, California, is talking again after 17 years of silence. His nonprofit group, Planetwalk, raises awareness about the environment and how one person can make a difference.

comes from beneath his seat, revealing the dark gunmetal of a .44 revolver, the barrel of which he places against my head. In this moment of crystal clarity I recognize the face of death. He is like an old friend I had forgotten, but who is always there."

We know already how it's going to come out. John is here to tell the

>>

» story. Still the scene is chilling, all the more because the account is so spare. John's silence gives it a dreamlike quality and makes him more vulnerable, like a man with no arms. The episode bristles with racial tension. But John doesn't name it. He conveys instead of saying, and in doing so, he reaches a place in us that speeches can't.

John is not given to speeches. He has strong views, but is chary with opinions. He tends rather to deflect them and turn the conversation in an unexpected direction. This is partly I think from a mischievous streak. He likes to keep people just a little bit off balance. But more, he feels instinctively uncomfortable with a comfortable opinion. And he likes to keep his options open. Who knows what might turn up at the next turn of the road?

I ASKED JOHN ONCE what his walking and silence had accomplished. He said that, among other things, other people had to make changes in order to accommodate him. If someone invited John for dinner, for example, they probably would have to invite him to spend the night as well. That one night might turn into two or three. Meetings had to be arranged far in advance; it would take a couple of days just to get to San Francisco. When you dealt with John, your time slowed down to his.

To communicate was not a casual matter. There were mime, notes scribbled on scraps of paper, the banjo John played as he walked for hours on end. Telephones were not much use. I didn't ask about this specifically, but I suspect that letters loomed large. That is not the worst thing.

John did not leave people where he found them. Even the paramedic in the ambulance that picked him up after a bicycle accident in Washington, D.C., had to deal with his insistence on walking to the hospital. "Well, honey," she said, "if you would just suspend your principles for five minutes, we can drive your butt to the hospital." She was mocking, but she will remember that encounter. Who knows where that memory might lead?

This is John's theory of social change. Don't lecture people. Change yourself and you will start to change the world. He himself is not a joiner. The one organization he is active in out here to my knowledge is not environmental. It is the local Lion's Club. His starting point for saving the environment—this is the one thing he says over and over—is to treat other people well.

John talks now, in a soft and gentle way, an echo perhaps of his father's native Antigua by way of West Philadelphia. There is still the quiet that surrounds him, the listening, the offbeat and unexpected response. John does not so much tell you when you are wrong as enable you to hear it for yourself. You find your voice slowing down a bit, your mental stride getting into synch with his.

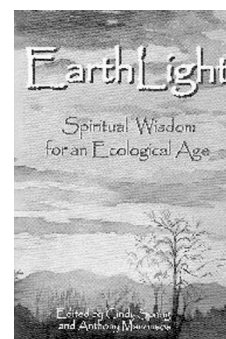
Planetwalker has this same effect. It is the antidote to the smarmy self-dramatization that has defined the memoir in recent years. The story is going to reach a wide audience, it appears. A Hollywood producer has optioned the movie rights. *Variety* reported recently that a prominent scriptwriter is on the job. The names of well-known actors have come up.

This leaves me conflicted to say the least. I am happy for John and the platform this will give him. But Hollywood? The story is all minor notes where the big screen wants major ones. It is about small things made big by the eyes that see them—the spaces between, where the silence is. Can someone in that land of brag and pitch—or anywhere else—write a screenplay about not talking?

John is not concerned. He'll be walking regardless. In the end, *Planetwalker* is a book of trust. We trust John's voice, and he trusts the road to take him where he needs to go. "Something will come up," he likes to say. "It always does."



Jonathan Rowe, a YES! contributing editor, is a fellow at the Tomales Bay Institute.



Earthlight: Spiritual Wisdom for an Ecological Age

CINDY SPRING AND ANTHONY MANOUSOS, EDS.

Friends Bulletin, 2007, 360 pages, \$20.00.

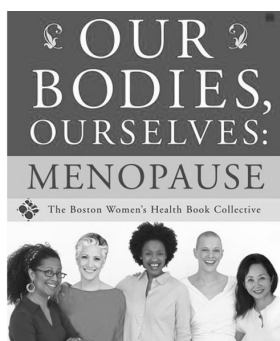
REVIEWED BY MARILYN SEWELL

"How shall the heart be reconciled to its feast of losses?" K. Lauren DeBoer invokes this question by Stanley Kunitz to introduce this beautiful collection of essays, interviews, and poems about spiritual ecology, all originally published in the Quaker magazine, *Earthlight*.

How shall the heart be reconciled to the loss of the giant sequoias? DeBoer asks. The buffalo? Our 20,000 fellow species that are gone for good?

How, indeed. The authors featured here have all plumbed the deep sorrow of our "ecological age," as well as the joyful abundance and mystery of our world. Each guides readers down a different path to a tender, if bittersweet, spiritual relationship with the Earth.

Susan Tweit writes of "Picking Up Roadkill" as a spiritual practice. Joanna Macy describes the process she calls "The Great Turning," through which "we begin to see the world as our body, and (whether we say the word or not) as sacred." In discussing the Great Work that humans must undertake to live in harmony with the earth, Thomas Berry writes, "Humans, more than any other living form, invent themselves." The unspoken question of this anthology is this: can we reinvent ourselves in time?



Our Bodies, Ourselves: Menopause

THE BOSTON WOMEN'S HEALTH BOOK COLLECTIVE

Touchstone, 2006, 368 pages, \$15.00

REVIEWED BY MARCY BLOOM

The Boston Women's Health Book Collective has had an incredible influence on the lives of women throughout the world. I still vividly remember, as a young feminist coming of age in the 1960s, how exciting it was to have information about our bodies that we could finally trust. *Our Bodies, Ourselves* was written by women for women and, for those patriarchal times, this was truly revolutionary.

Now, we baby-boomer women are encountering another life stage, and with it, new questions and health needs. We want to be healthy, sexy, vibrant, attractive, and productive as we enter this new phase of womanhood. The Boston Women's Health Book Collective comes to guide us once again. *Our Bodies, Ourselves: Menopause* helps women sort through the information overload with clear and comprehensible language in an empowering and accessible format.

This well-researched and well-organized book debunks the endless myths of menopause and aging by providing the medical, emotional, psychological, and societal context of the menopause journey. In our youth-obsessed society, menopause is still far too frequently viewed negatively. This

book challenges that view by demonstrating that menopause is a normal and positive part of a woman's life, a catalyst for a new source of female power, and a healthy transition that leads to the emergence of a completely evolved and unique woman with a treasure of accumulated wisdom.

While keeping the focus on the positive, the book does not overlook women's concerns about aging and our vulnerabilities—will we become invisible and devalued “old bags” with aging skin, weak muscles, sagging breasts, dry vaginas, facial hair, constant hot flashes, decreased sexual desire and desirability, and limited mental capacity? These concerns are tackled openly with up-to-date and concise information.

With a friendly and empathetic tone, the book includes a diverse array of candid first-person menopause stories. The varied cultural and spiritual beliefs of menopause are addressed. For example, while white women tend to perceive menopause as more of a medical problem, “African-American women are more likely to view the cessation of menstruation as a relief.”

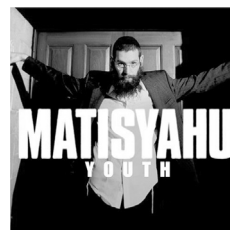
By openly and positively addressing women's concerns about menopause, this book prepares us to become better advocates for our lives and our health during this life-changing transition.

Beyond simply empowering individual women, *Our Bodies, Ourselves: Menopause* adheres to the feminist adage that “the personal is political.” The book's final chapter, “Knowledge is Power,” is a call to action that documents the growing number of women in the United States who are experiencing or about to enter menopause. As our numbers continue to grow, we can become a powerful force to advocate for political and societal changes that will support women's natural evolution through all stages of life.

Marcy Bloom, a freelance writer based in Seattle, is a life-long advocate for reproductive freedom and was recently awarded the 2006 William O. Douglas Award by the Washington chapter of the ACLU.

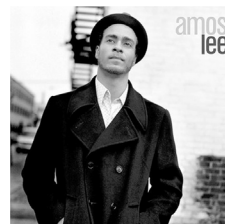
YES! PICKS ::

Musical inspiration while putting out this issue



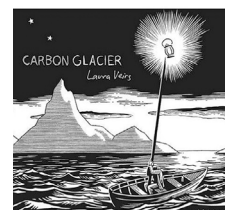
Youth

Matisyahu is not what you'd expect from a reggae artist. Dressed in traditional Hasidic clothing and refusing to perform on the Sabbath, Matisyahu blends reggae-style raps about Orthodox Judaism with the traditional Hazan style of Jewish cantors. The end result is a compelling CD filled with danceable music and uplifting messages that inspire people worldwide.



Amos Lee

Amos Lee is a thoughtful folk and blues musician who questions what's happening in the world with a critical—but not cynical—eye. “I'm in love with a girl who's in love with the world,” he sings softly, strumming his acoustic guitar.



Carbon Glacier

Laurie Viers' *Carbon Glacier* is the perfect tonic for moody weather blues. Plaintive, tender, yet hopeful, Viers' poetry is rooted in the forces of nature—snow caves, forests, the open sea—and backed by improv talents like Eyvind Kang and Lori Goldston.

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FILM ::



Black Gold

Filmed, directed, and produced by Marc and Nick Francis. 78 minutes.

California Newsreel will release the DVD later this year.

REVIEWED BY DEE AXELROD

In the opening scene of *Black Gold*, a documentary by British brothers Marc and Nick Francis, the camera pans a cavernous warehouse, where row upon row of burlap sacks of coffee beans are piled on palettes receding into an indefinite gloom. The sacks have accumulated in the Coffee Export Processing Center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, because the price of coffee on the international market has fallen to a 30-year low, the result of the 1989 collapse of the International Coffee Agreement that once regulated price.

The Francis brothers explore the complex impacts and dynamics of this problem by oscillating between a close-up story of the plight of individual farmers, who receive just a few cents of profit from each pound of coffee sold, to an overview of the international coffee trade and culture.

The constant that unites these two disparate worlds is Tedesse Meskela, an Ethiopian businessman who moves skillfully between the coffee farmers' cooperative union and the international trade shows where he peddles their Fair Trade product. His passion for his

country's high-quality coffee is rivaled only by his deep concern for the well-being of impoverished farmers who grow it.

By following these diverse aspects of the coffee trade, the web of global economics that binds us becomes indelible. Memorable images include the contrast between the New Yorker poised in a doorway to slurp an expensive Starbucks concoction and the painfully thin child turned away from an Ethiopian feeding clinic because stretched resources necessitate a heart-rending triage: the child is malnourished, but not severely enough to receive help.

While the Francis brothers present a stark contrast between the conditions of coffee producers and Western consumers, they do so without overt editorializing. However, viewers should not mistake the filmmakers' restraint for lack of passion. It is through the patient accretion of detail that the grotesque imbalance of the coffee trade, as well as the possibility for change, comes home.

Dee Axelrod, a former senior editor for YES! Magazine, is a freelance writer based in the Pacific Northwest.

FROM THE PUBLISHER



What does it take for an independent magazine to succeed? A village! That truth is poignantly apparent at year-end as your generous donations and gift subscriptions pour in and all of us at *YES!* hold our breath in hopes that the books will balance. Thanks to you they did, setting us up for a strong 2007. My heart goes out in gratitude—for your generosity and for the affirmation it reflects. Your gifts speak of your unflinching belief that together we truly can build a just and sustainable world. On behalf of the board and staff of *YES!*, I send heartfelt thanks to all the members of the beautiful village that make *YES!* possible.

Fran

Fran Korten, Publisher

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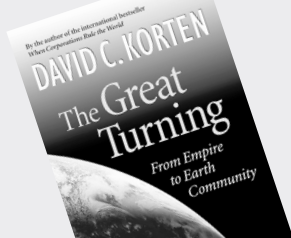
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WHO WE ARE ::

YES! Magazine is published by the Positive Futures Network, an independent, nonprofit organization supporting your active engagement in building a just, sustainable, and compassionate world. We give visibility and momentum to the visionary ideas and practical actions that point the way to a society where life counts more than money, everyone matters, and vibrant, inclusive communities offer prosperity, security, and meaningful ways of life.

NEWS AND NOTES ::



YES! welcomes new online editor

... In November Adam MacKinnon became the new online editor at *YES!* He creates our lively monthly email newsletters and keeps our website up to date. Adam comes from Edinburgh, Scotland, where he earned his degree in politics and modern history. His background and experience in arts administration, design, and communications make him a welcome addition to our team. Adam lives in an egalitarian community in Seattle with his wife, Kibby, and their three-year-old son, Theo. —Audrey Watson

Dal LaMagna talks with Iraqis ...

Last August, *YES!* Board member Dal LaMagna participated in an American citizen delegation that met with Iraqi leaders in Amman, Jordan. Out of this came a 10-point Iraq Reconciliation Plan. Dal returned to Amman in November with U.S. Congressman Jim McDermott (D-WA) for further talks with Iraqi leaders, who he finds are eager to talk with Americans, yet find it hard to reach U.S. officials. Dal now has gone to Washington D.C. to help get the new Congress to listen to Iraqis. You can find more on the trips and the Reconciliation Plan on the *YES!* website and at www.progressivegovernment.org. —Fran Korten

John Mohawk dies at 61 ... The *YES!* community mourns the passage of our beloved Contributing Editor, John Mohawk. Professor, historian, and tireless advocate of indigenous rights, John brought a deep understanding of Native history and perspectives to the pages of *YES!* With his wife, the late Yvonne Dion-Buffalo, he participated in our retreat series and at the time of his death was collaborating with Sarah van Gelder on a book on indigenous contributions to contemporary social and environmental challenges. We will miss his warm friendship, his generous spirit, and his creative pragmatism. —Fran Korten

Demise of the IPA ... We are deeply sorry that financial woes forced the Independent Press Association to close its doors. We loved the IPA conferences, learned a lot, and expanded our newsstand distribution, even though, like others, we lost some payments due us. The world of independent media will not be the same without the IPA. Our sympathies go out to all who struggled to make the Association work. —Fran Korten

Subscription Services move to Kansas ... You may soon note that your renewal notices and other subscription forms have a return address of Topeka, Kansas, instead of Bainbridge Island, Washington. No, we haven't moved the *YES!* offices. We've simply moved the order entry to Ogden Fulfillment Services in Topeka. If you phone us, you'll still get the same friendly people right here on Bainbridge. —Sally Wilson

YES! PICKS ::

Things To Do, Places To Go



www.YesMagazine.org/events

For an expanded listing of upcoming events

Facing Race

March 22-24. CUNY Graduate Center, NYC, NY. Facing Race will bring together key policy advocates, academics, researchers, organizers, and activists interested in exploring innovative strategies and successful models for changing public policy to produce more racial equity. Co-sponsored by the Applied Research Center and CUNY Center for Humanities. www.arc.org

Women, Action, & the Media—WAM!

March 30-April 1. Stata Center, MIT, Cambridge, MA. Join progressive journalists, activists, bloggers, students, and fed-up TV-viewers at this fourth annual conference. Share skills, information, and strategies, and inform and inspire one another. Keynote talks by Ellen Goodman and Thenmozhi Soundararajan. Sponsored by the Center for New Words. www.centerfornewwords.org

5th Annual BALLE Conference

May 31-June 2. University of California, Berkeley, CA. The Business Alliance for Local Living Economies conference will bring together hundreds of entrepreneurs and innovators to share ideas about creating an economy that preserves community character and vitality, promotes economic justice, and protects ecological health and diversity. Featured speakers include David Korten, Van Jones, Winona LaDuke, and Judy Wicks. www.livingeconomies.org

U.S. Social Forum

June 27-July 1. Atlanta, GA. Planning is in full swing for this unprecedented gathering of social change activists. 15,000 participants are expected to convene to build a broader national movement for social justice. The USSF will provide spaces for networking, workshops, and strategy sessions. Regional organizing is underway from Alaska to Appalachia, and working groups are developing programming, cultural events, and a strong presence for youth and women. Find out how you can bring your own vision and action to the social forum at www.ussf2007.



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WAX ON, WAX OFF

When I came home from a holiday party, I discovered a wax stain on my dress pants. I don't want to discard them, but the wax didn't come off in the wash. What's the best way to remove this stain?

When removing wax stains from fabrics such as clothing or tablecloths, all you need is a little white gift-tissue paper and an iron. Lay the stained fabric flat, wax stain face up. Then place the tissue paper over the top. Run a warm iron over it, switching to new pieces of paper once the "grease" saturates through, and voila! Remember, using leftover tissue paper helps you be even more sustainable. Now you can continue to save the world in your clean pants.—S.K.

REDUCE, REUSE, REREAD

At the school where I teach, we've just gotten some funding for new textbooks. How can I find a new home for the old books?

First, see if any local schools, colleges, prisons, or charitable organizations can use them.

If not, try donating them to larger organizations that distribute books nationally or globally. A list of organizations,

including their scope and contact information, can be found in the Directory of Book Donation Programs on the University of Albany's website at: www.albany.edu/~dlafonde/Global/bookdonation.htm.

Some of the featured organizations include Reader to Reader, which provides books to underserved libraries through the United States, and the Darien Book Aid Plan, which distributes to Peace Corps volunteers, teachers, libraries, and schools all over the world.

Another option is to donate your textbooks to Books to Prisoners, an organization that sends free books to people incarcerated throughout the United States. Among the books that are in highest demand are dictionaries, as well as math, chemistry, biology, physics, and foreign language textbooks. For a complete list of book needs, as well as contact information and shipping instructions, visit www.bookstoprisoners.net.

The U.S. Post Office has special discounted rates for books, so be sure to tell the postal clerk that you're shipping books.—S.K.

OUT TO DRY

I'd like to use my electric clothes dryer less, since I know it consumes a lot of energy. But I don't think I can give up my dryer

Our Issue 41 researchers

Sarah became an intern at YES! after earning her environmental journalism degree from Western Washington University. She enjoys advocating for environmental and media reform issues and plans to be the change she wishes to see in the world. Catherine is taking time off from her undergraduate studies to intern at YES! She plans to design a major in the Psychology of Human Activism.



Sarah M. Kuck



Catherine Bailey

completely, because sometimes I need my clothes in a hurry. And besides, I really like the soft, fluffy feeling my clothes, sheets, and towels have when they come out of the dryer. What can I do to save energy when drying clothes?

A good place to start is by purchasing an energy-efficient dryer. Look for the Energy Star logo. Appliances with this logo are significantly more energy-efficient than the average comparable model.

No matter what kind of dryer you use, there are several

things you can try to reduce energy consumption.

First, remove those gunky dust bunnies from the filter, so your dryer can breathe and dry your clothes faster.

Second, avoid fabric-softener sheets. They clog up the filter, create more waste, and leave chemical residue on your clothes.

With dryers as with life, timing is everything. Washing and drying your clothes early in the morning or late at night will reduce the amount of energy you use at peak hours.

This may save you money, since some utilities impose an extra charge during peak hours. Another perk: reducing energy consumption during these times reduces the need for your utility company to build extra generation capacity to meet peak demand.

The most energy-efficient solution is to hang your clothes up to dry. This not only saves energy and money, but also puts less strain on the fabric and extends the life of your clothes. Even during the winter, you may be able to dry clothes outside if the air is dry and windy or if you hang them on a covered porch. While you can dry clothes inside, this introduces excess moisture into the air, which can lead to the growth of mold in some homes.

Want to get those air-dried fabrics fluffy again? Once they're dry, pop them in the dryer on low or no heat for 10 to 15 minutes. The dryer's tumbling action will fluff them up nicely. It will also help remove excess lint, hair, and animal fur. Even better, this short stint in the dryer uses relatively little energy, since most of a dryer's energy consumption goes to producing the high heat needed for drying. —S.K.

RESPONSIBLE SHOPPER

I try my best to buy things used or make do without, but sometimes I just have to buy something new. Before I make purchasing decisions, I'd like to learn more about the social, labor, and environmental practices of the places I shop and the products I buy. Where I can go to find that sort of information?

I've been using Co-op America's Responsible Shopper program for more than five years to answer my own questions

about the places I frequent and the products I buy. The program provides a wealth of information about the pros and cons of each business, as well as information about how to get involved in grassroots campaigns to encourage corporations to improve their practices. Visit www.coopamerica.org/programs/rs to search for the businesses you are contemplating patronizing. —S.K.

CONSERVING FASHION

Can you recommend some simple methods for extending the life of clothing I already own?

Extending the life of your clothes can be a fun, easy, and creative process.

- Wash spills or stains by hand when you can, rather than running the item through the washer. The less you wash your clothes, the longer they'll last.

- Don't overload the washer. Overloading can cause irreparable contortions in the fabric.

- Fasten all buttons before washing. This helps protect the buttons and also prevents other items from catching—and potentially pulling or ripping—on the buttons.

- Have a stuck zipper? Save your favorite jeans or jacket with a little olive oil or soap. Greasing the zipper with either will get it moving smoothly again.

- Turn clothes inside-out before washing. The side that rubs against other clothes and the sides of the washer will fade more quickly.

- Minimize time in the dryer. The high heat of the dryer puts a great deal of stress on clothes. For tips on decreasing dryer time see "Out to Dry" above.

- Store clothes made from delicate material, especially

nylons, in plastic bags so that they don't catch on the inside of your dresser. Also, make sure your nails are in decent shape so they don't accidentally snag your delicate clothing.

- Fix small holes and frays before they grow. If you're not handy with a needle and thread and have a problem with a particularly expensive item of clothing, get an estimate on repairs from a professional tailor. Many small problems can be repaired for under \$20.

- Get creative! Iron-on patches on the inside of holes can prevent a raggedy appearance, and interesting patches on the outside can create a whole new look. —C.B.



BOOKMARK YES!

We may be a quarterly magazine, but YES! is an every-day attitude.

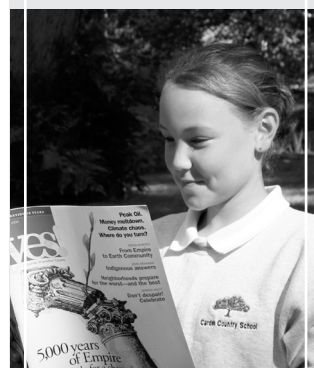
YES! PICKS :: Favorite Recycle Facts

Top 4 from Earth911.org

- Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run your TV for three hours. If you recycle that can, you can feel better about having that documentary marathon later.
- Enough paper is thrown away every year to make a 12-foot wall from New York to California. Recycling one ton of paper saves 17 trees and 7,000 gallons of water.
- We use enough plastic wrap to wrap up Texas every year. As fun as that sounds, do your part to conserve by reusing containers with lids, such as butter tubs or spaghetti jars, for leftovers. Maybe we can at least aim for Connecticut next year.
- Recycling one glass bottle saves enough energy to light a 100-watt bulb for four hours. Just enough time to light up your dark room and curl up with that great Vonnegut novel you've been dying to read.

—Sarah Kuck

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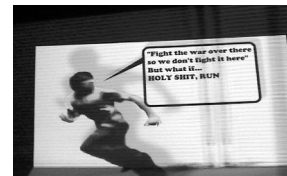
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IVAN MARTINEZ

At left, Miami's multi-million dollar performing arts center was built where there used to be makeshift homeless shelters. Says Martinez's boy: "WOW! How much did this cost? Looks nice, can me and a couple hundred of my homeless friends live in it?"



Some Excerpts:

"Fight the war over there so we don't fight it here. But what if ... holy shit. Run!"

"Kids with guns. Run!"

"Hurricane season! Is FEMA ready? Run!"

"I love downtown's revitalization, but where are the poor people?"

Street Artists Show There is Something to Fear

"Fear Itself" is a guerrilla projection project of Miami-based activist/artist Ivan Martinez. Martinez drives through the city projecting a boy "running scared" while typing his fears—our collective fears—into a laptop. Those fears are then projected in real time onto building facades. Sometimes the boy stops to catch his breath, or speak with someone, but then he is scared again and off and running.

In a slight twist, performance artist Paul Notzold uses cell phone SMS technology to allow an audience in a designated place to interact with his art by text-messaging their thoughts from their own phones. It's all in real time, uncensored, and anonymous.

Interested? www.woostercollective.com, www.martinezivan.com/fearitself.html, www.txtualhealing.com



Paul Notzold's question: "Who Are You Afraid Of?"
Answer: "The man I am becoming."



PAUL NOTZOLD

Another answer: "Does this gun make my butt look big?"



Join us at the new Chicago Green Festival.
We look forward to seeing you at the **yes!** booth.

who'd have thought that insisting
on purchasing biodegradable
cafeteria utensils would brand
joyce as the company . . .

subversive?

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green finances
eco-fashion
natural health and body
city of chicago
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natural home and garden
green technology
fair trade
renewable energy
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indigenous goods
organic food/agriculture
natural foods
green kids' zone

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david korten

*the great turning:
from empire to earth community*

richard m. daley

mayor of chicago (invited)

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