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Contours of the Next Four Years

The outcome of the election was disturbing, frustrating, depressing, and sobering to so many millions of people who fought so hard against the Bush agenda. In the “mourning after,” some withdrew, gave up. Yet, paradoxically many more did not collapse in despair or retreat into some cocoon of cynicism. Instead, they were motivated by a shockwave of indignation and went back to work. They found an antidote in action for change. Because they—we looked at the election and saw not just dark disappointment at the outcome, but hope. Hope in Ohio, where thousands of people waited for hours in the cold rain to cast a vote (that may or may not have been counted). Hope all over America, as the turnout climbed to over 60%, higher than it’s been in a generation. Hope in the renewed spirit of involvement and the energy, passion, and perseverance we witnessed last year. Hope that for all the talk from progressive activists about moving to Canada, no one has nor will. Hope that no Rove campaign strategy of lies, distortions, and appeal to fears and prejudices can keep Americans in the dark for long. Hope that no claim to a “mandate” can discount the sentiment of a majority of Americans today who believe Bush is leading us in the “wrong direction,” and that any U.S. “freedom” gains in Iraq have come at

“unacceptable costs in American and Iraqi lives.” (Even in the popular vote, Bush got the slimmest margin of any incumbent in 88 years.) Mostly, though, hope in our values of fairness, justice, building an egalitarian society, and waging a just peace—and our determination to fight on.

Tony Kushner writes, “Our despair is a lie we tell ourselves.” The truth, Paul Loeb entreats us in his *Citizen’s Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear*, is that we can change the world when we do two things: hope and act. Ukrainians, he reminds us, took to the streets and overturned a rigged election. Americans did not, and here we are. So, as Loeb titles his guidebook, *The Impossible Will Take a Little While*.

Take no step backward. Shake off the weariness. America needs us more than ever. The world needs us. Get busy again!

A Tale of Two Budgets

By now, the ominous forebodings of a second Bush presidential term are distinctly clear, and the shape it is taking is profoundly sharp and wounding. Emboldened by his reelection and suffering from the delusion that God is taking him by the hand, Bush has set his sights on military intervention and threat diplomacy abroad and more destructiveness at home—from privatizing Social Security, redistributing the tax burden in the wrong direction, and packing the federal courts with reactionary judges, to more assaults on our liberties, the environment, and federal programs providing essential services and support. The list is long. In the ideology that seems to drive the Bush administration, the primary functions of government are to project military power, to wage war, to grow the wealthy class, and to maximize the profits of corporations. It guides their strategies to delegitimize government as a force for social good in promoting the general welfare, and to throw the American people to the vagaries and wolves of the

private market. Harsh words, yet we can see clearly the shameless policy objectives in the federal budget proposal for FY'06 that Bush sent to Congress last month. The same can be said of the two-year state budget proposal Gov. Taft unveiled in February, too—mirroring as it does the woes of a cash-strapped state as an excuse to cut back, even eviscerate, essential social programs that radical conservatives never really liked.

Bush's new budget is not a pretty sight. In a nutshell: the president requested \$420 billion for the Pentagon, which does not include the costs for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (and Bush's latest request is for an additional \$80 billion). Even without the costs of the wars included, Bush has increased the Pentagon's spending by 42% since coming to office. At the same time, he proposes that 154 domestic programs be cut back or eliminated (to name a few—Medicaid, Medicare, toxic and radiological clean-up programs, federal subsidies for banks that loan money to students, college scholarship programs, environmental protection, seven HHS health programs and services, hospital construction, home-heating aid, vocational education, literacy program, emergency medical services for children, local law enforcement, local firefighters, National Park Service, American Indian schools, Amtrak, farmers' subsidies.) Bush's savings from the cuts are estimated at \$17.5 billion. Shucks, the Pentagon spends that in two weeks! And wait! There's more—more tax cuts for the wealthy.

For his part, Gov. Taft rolled out a budget that presents the slowest spending growth in 40 years, sweeping tax changes, a 20%-cut in state aid to cities and counties, spending cuts for libraries, more money for private school vouchers, and cuts in health care for the poor (including eliminating 25,000 people from Medicaid benefits by changing the level of income required to be eligible to receive benefits). And you shouldn't miss Taft's five-year tax "reform" plan—a multi-faceted concoction of regressive state fee and tax increases, including "sin" taxes, that does not disguise either the net reduction in taxes on corporations or the across-the-board cut in personal income taxes by 21% over five years.

Well, our work is cut out for us. It is up to some sane voices in the Congress, state governing bodies, and the courts—and to all of us, nonviolently—to restrain those who would take us on the wrong course, to check this "wrong direction."

What's Next? OCPJ Strategy Session Notes

Post-election hand-wringing was kept to a minimum at OCPJ's Strategy Planning Session in January. Board members had heard enough hokey from some election observers in the mainstream press and a lot of good and

encouraging information and advice from fellow travelers in the progressive movement. We had already analyzed the numbers, the polling, our campaign organizing, the recount mess, the electoral system, the money in politics, the candidates, the campaign strategies, the framing of the issues, the trickery and distortions, the messages that connected and didn't, the priorities of the voting public, and on and on. Although we weren't ready to "get over it," we weren't going to go away. We assembled to regroup, to recommit to our values and progressive vision, and to plan for what's next.

In short, we set the stage for our educational and action agenda for the foreseeable future by focusing on matters of great concern and where we believe we can and must make a contribution and a difference. Your friendly, neighborhood peace group prioritized the following:

- 1) Perpetual War/War on Terror/The Draft
- 2) Civil Liberties/Bill of Rights Defense
- 3) Walmartism/Corporatism
- 4) Policymakers/Decision-makers (elected & appointed)

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Join us. Become an active member if you can.

Connect with our progressive allies.

Volunteer a bit of time and send a few bucks wherever you think it will do some good.

Keep informing yourself.

Question all authority. Question all answers.

Speak out, pressing others you know to think critically.

Protest in any way you feel comfortable—with others, to the media, in letters to the editor, to our elected representatives.

Don't buy from corporations that support war, offshoring, low wages, Bush, etc., and let them know why.

Help someone you like run for office—or consider running

yourself. Or move some spineless Party organization to stand up for the people's rights and interests.

—LMK



End the Occupation of Iraq Bring the Troops Home

TWO YEARS AFTER THE INVASION OF IRAQ

When, on 20 March 2003, the unprovoked U.S. invasion of Iraq took place, many Americans and most in the international community believed this to be an international crime and the greatest political scandal of our time. While in Dec. 2004 58% of Americans supported keeping U.S. troops in Iraq until “civil order is restored,” today 70% of Americans believe that, given the costs, the war on Iraq was not worth the price. No official reason given for the war can support the U.S. quagmire and occupation of Iraq two years after the invasion. The costs in lives, dollars, freedoms, and security demand that the U.S. withdraw from Iraq. Indeed, U.S. withdrawal is an essential first step to meeting its moral and legal obligations to restore security and rebuild Iraq.

Cost in Lives

- To date (10 March 2005), more than 1500 U.S. and 280 “coalition” soldiers have been killed in Iraq. The last six months of 2004 were the deadliest for U.S. troops.

- At least 100,000 Iraqi civilians have died since the U.S. invasion two years ago as a result of U.S. military actions. [Study by public health officials from Johns Hopkins University, published Nov. 2004 in *Lancet*—www.thelancet.com/journal/vol364/iss9448] (The compiled tally of Iraqi deaths from published press reports counts between 16,142 and 18,414 Iraqi civilians killed as a result of the U.S. military intervention. [www.Iraqbodycount.net, 2 March 2005] “We don’t do body counts.”—Gen. T. Franks, US Central Command)

- More than 10,000 U.S. and 840 “coalition” troops have been wounded in Iraq (at a rate now of almost 1,000 a month).

- The city of Fallujah was destroyed, thousands of Iraqi homes have been leveled, and more than 10,000 Iraqi men have been detained without charges.

- Another generation of American soldiers faces post-traumatic stress disorder: medical personnel in the U.S. military report that more than 100,000 U.S. troops who have served in Iraq require mental health treatment.

- More than 5,000 U.S. troops have deserted; most were on “stop-loss” orders that force troops to stay in Iraq months beyond their discharge dates. [The Reserves are “rapidly degenerating into a broken force.”—Army Reserve General James R. Helmly, in a memo to the Army Chief of Staff]

- Over 580 U.S. and “coalition” civilian workers have been killed or injured.

Cost in Dollars to U.S.

- The U.S. has thus far spent more than \$167 billion on this war, with the current weekly price tag running at \$1 billion and the yearly price tag rising toward \$100 billion. The president has just announced a request for \$82 billion more in off-budget expenditures in FY 2005.[Congressional Research Service Report RL31701, 20 November 2004; National Priorities Project, www.costofwar.com; and U.S. OMB, www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/amendments.htm]

Cost in Freedoms

- Under U.S. occupation, Iraq is neither free nor sovereign—handing over “authority” and elections notwithstanding. U.S. and “coalition” forces maintain full control of Iraqi police, military, and political process. In addition, in violation of the Hague Conventions, the Geneva Conventions, and the U.S. Army’s own code of war, the Coalition Provisional Authority restructured the Iraqi economy, changing the local laws of an occupied country. The CPA’s Order 39 allowed for the privatization of Iraqi state companies, 100% foreign ownership of Iraqi businesses including media and public services, unrestricted repatriation of profits, and 40-year ownership licenses.

- Two years of occupation have failed to produce the adequate restoration of vital services in Iraq and the inalienable rights of Iraqis. Under international law, it is the duty of an occupying power to secure the basic needs of the population, including public order, basic utilities, food supply, sanitation, and healthcare (Fourth Geneva Convention Articles 39, 52, 55, and 56). Unemployment has risen above 60%, and the education system remains in shambles.

- 71% of Iraqis said that U.S. soldiers were occupiers, not liberators; 57% said that U.S. troops should leave immediately; and 50% said

that, in some circumstances, attacks on U.S. troops were justified. [USA Today poll, May 2004]

- The U.S. currently holds more than 10,000 prisoners in Iraq, without charges. The International Committee of the Red Cross reported that of the 43,000 Iraqis detained during the occupation, 70-90% have been innocent bystanders.

- The USA Patriot Act and subsequent Executive Orders gave the U.S. government new powers to spy on its own citizens without judicial review, and to arrest and detain “suspects” without charges for indefinite periods, severely restricting Americans’ freedoms and rights.

Cost in Security

- The number of attacks on U.S. and allied troops grew from an estimated 1,400 in September 2004 to 1,600 in October 2004 to 1,950 in November 2004. [Robert Burns, Associated Press] In January 2005, attacks averaged about 75 a day.

- The ranks of the Iraqi insurgents are growing. “The resistance [to the U.S. occupation] is more than 200,000 people.” [General Mohamed Abdullah Shahwani, Iraq’s Intelligence Service Director, quoted in Agence France-Presse] A small percentage of trained Iraqi security forces have even defected to the Iraqi insurgents.

- More Iraqi cities (Samarra, Ramadi, Karbala, Sadr City, and others) are now controlled by various insurgencies and essentially ceded by U.S. forces. [Congressional Research Service Report RL31701 and Iraq Index, Brookings Institution, 14 Feb. 2005, www.brookings.edu/iraqindex.]

- More than 50% of Americans believe the U.S. is less secure because of the Iraq war.

- 53% of Europeans believe that the United States is a threat to world peace.

The situation in Iraq shows no signs of “stabilizing.” On the contrary, the morbid pace of chaos is increasing, and the array of forces does not favor U.S. troops. The more brutal the U.S. response, the more the insurgency grows. Two years ago, many warned that invading Iraq would be a long and horrific invitation to insurgent reaction and terrorism. Now that the U.S. has bombed an insurgency into existence, it must learn that you cannot bomb one out of existence. It won’t work— never has. An occupied population will eventually oust the occupiers.

The invasion of Iraq was immoral, illegal, and stupid in the first place. The occupation—equally immoral, illegal, and stupid—has been botched and is doomed by the civil war it has already created. Even the CIA predicts that by staying in Iraq, the U.S. may precipitate an all-out civil war. The Bush administration’s stated

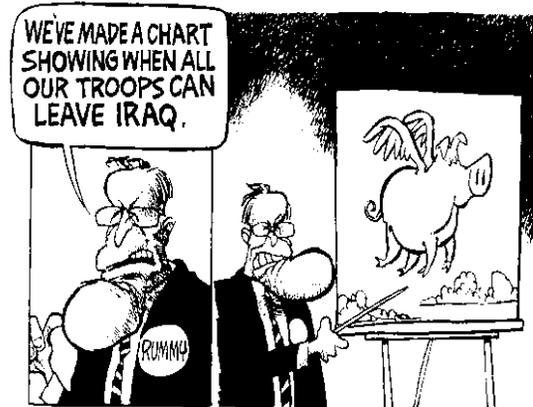
cause for staying—“until civil order is restored”—is hopeless. And while the U.S. bears a great responsibility for the tragic conditions in Iraq, it has neither the right nor the capacity to contribute to a solution.

On this second anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, and with other Americans throughout the country demanding an end to the U.S. war and occupation of Iraq—

We call on our government to take the following steps toward withdrawal to end the bloodshed, the war and the occupation of Iraq:

- **Cease fire:** Halt U.S. military actions immediately.
- **Declare a withdrawal policy:** Congress should pass a “leave no bases behind” resolution, declaring that U.S. policy is to withdraw all U.S. forces and bases from Iraq, making clear that the U.S. has no imperial ambitions in Iraq.
- **End the occupation:** Withdraw immediately U.S. forces from major population centers to remote temporary bases and shift to a limited role of providing border control and assuring Iraq’s territorial integrity until other security forces can take over (UN, multinational, and/or regional Arab peacekeeping forces—with Iraqi security forces).
- **Support true Iraqi sovereignty:** Fund Iraqi efforts to re-employ ministry staff and to train new police and security forces.
- **Nationalize reconstruction:** Give Iraqis control over reconstruction funds, terminate contracts with U.S. contractors and turn projects over to Iraqis, and provide transparent accounting of all U.S. contracts.
- **Stabilize Iraq:** Commit to long-term U.S. financial support for Iraqi-led reconstruction.

—LMK



Under the Bombs in Iraq

By Dahr Jamail

[Toledo peace activist, Vietnam vet, and friend]

Mike Ferner met Jamail, an independent Iraqi journalist, on one of his trips to Iraq, and regularly forwards Jamail's reports on life and death in his war-ravaged land. One of Jamail's reports, dated February, is excerpted here.]

One of the least reported aspects of the U.S. occupation of Iraq is the oftentimes indiscriminate use of air power by the American military. The Western mainstream media has generally failed to attend to the F-16 warplanes dropping their payloads of 500-, 1,000-, and 2,000-pound bombs on Iraqi cities—or to the results of these attacks. While some of the bombs and missiles fall on resistance fighters, the majority of the casualties are civilian—mothers, children, the elderly, and other unarmed civilians. In the case of Fallujah, where the U.S. military estimated 2,000 people were killed during the recent assault on the city, at least 1,200 of the dead are believed to have been noncombatant civilians.

Throughout much of urban Iraq, people tell stories of being terrorized by American air power, which is often loosed on heavily populated neighborhoods that have, in effect, been declared the bombing equivalent of free-fire zones.

“There is no limit to the American aggression,” says a sheikh from Baquba, a city 30 miles northeast of the capital. He agreed to discuss the subject of air power only on condition of anonymity, fearing reprisals from the U.S. military. “The fighter jets regularly fly so low over our city that you can see the pilots sitting in the cockpit,” he tells me, using his hand to measure the skyline and indicate just how low he means. “The helicopters fly even lower and aim their guns at the people and this terrifies everyone. How can humans live like this?”

Ahmed Abdulla, a gaunt 21-year-old Fallujan, described the plight of those inhabitants who were trapped in the city during the recent offensive. “Every night we told each other goodbye because we expected to die,” he said. “Every night there was extremely heavy bombing from the jets. My house shook when bombs hit the city, and the women were crying all the time. Why do the Americans bomb all of us in our homes?” asked Ahmed. “Even those of us who do not fight, we are suffering so much because of the U.S. bombs and tanks. Can't they see this is turning so many people against them?”

Another glimpse of what it's like to live in a city under attack from the air came from two sisters, Muna and Selma Salim, now refugees and the only survivors of a family of ten, the rest of whom were killed when two rockets fired from a U.S. fighter jet hit their home. Muna, still exhausted from her ordeal, wept almost

constantly while telling her story. Their mother, Hadima, 65 years old, died in the attack along with her son Khalid, an Iraqi police captain, his sister Ka-ahla and her 22-year-old son, their pregnant sister Adhra'a, her husband Samr, who had a doctorate in religious studies, and their 4-year-old son Amorad. She was speaking of her dead sister: “I can't get the image out of my mind of her fetus being blown out of her body. Why was our family bombed?” pleaded Muna, her body shaking as waves of grief rolled through her tiredness. “There were never any fighters in our area!”

Today fighting continues on nearly a daily basis around Fallujah, as well as in many other cities throughout Iraq, and for reporters as well as residents the air war is an omnipresent reality. Daily the jets roar overhead, and traumatized civilians await the next onslaught, never knowing when it may occur.

Mike Ferner adds to Jamail's account:

You simply cannot imagine the terror—the reeling, physical blow hurled at your entire body—by a fighter's jagged, screeching thunder if you've not been beneath one as it screams overhead. It must be experienced to be believed. And this goes on, day or night, steady or intermittent, always completely unannounced, always completely “out of the blue” without a second's notice.

In a nation so eager to fight terrorism, we have no idea—none—of what we are putting these people through day after day, for months on end. What our government defines as “spreading freedom and democracy,” I submit is massive torture of a civilian population. Beyond the killings and maimings, we must admit that we are truly terrorizing these people. But we will never call it that because...well, because we're doing it. If we truly want to fight terrorism, we should start with the world's largest sponsor of it: the U.S. government.

Preparing a CO File

[With permission, excerpted from Helen James's Help Your Peace-Loving Child Avoid the Draft, published in Mothering—The Magazine of Natural Family Living.]

On the eve of the first Gulf War, while I was marching for peace with hundreds of other protestors, I spotted a familiar mop of shiny red hair low in the crowd. Sure enough, it belonged to my then nine-year-old son Adam. I hadn't encouraged him to take up the politics of adulthood, but he and his buddies had convinced another parent to take them to the rally. We joined forces, and I walked with them as they struggled to understand the deeper meaning of that day.

As I stopped to take a photo of the boys with their handmade peace signs, a tired, frail-looking man, covered with war medals and peace buttons, began limping toward me as fast as he could manage. He'd broken ranks with his group, Vietnam Vets Against the War, and had a look on his face I will never forget. He came close and embraced me, then pulled back, stared into my eyes, and said, "If my mother had done that for me, I wouldn't be like this now." We shared a moment of silence, then parted with a handshake.

Adam is now 22. The photo is kept in a cardboard file box, along with a two-inch-thick sheaf of paperwork, clippings, and family history, all documenting how he was raised as a conscientious objector—a "CO." We kept adding to Adam's file through easier times, even when it seemed completely unnecessary. For a while, a combination of "smart weapons," smaller wars, high unemployment, long enlistments, the military's intensive multibillion-dollar recruiting efforts, and claims of educational and job-training benefits created what most considered a permanent solution to providing a shrinking military with ample volunteers.

Then came "the War on Terror." Politicians of both parties warn us that this war will last a lifetime. Troops are being commanded to serve more time than they signed up for, and according to some, army recruiting numbers are down. It's a fact of life—nations reinstate conscription whenever they really need soldiers. Most experts agree that opening a second war front means the draft may soon be back. Women could be forced to serve, and neither Canada nor college will provide refuge as they have in the past. Some politicians are calling for compulsory national service for all young people, 18 through 26—a noble-sounding enterprise that could be a prelude to military conscription.

At the same time, America is teaching children to "Use words, not fists!" Public schools now routinely teach conflict resolution, and quality children's television encourages kids to "talk it out." Especially after the tragedy of the shootings at the high school in Littleton, Colorado, children are being raised with the message that violence is not a solution. But will they then be drafted and taught to kill?

This situation could already be creating an internal crisis for some in the military. Who knows how many soldiers may find it difficult to rationalize how they were raised with what they are now being told to do? Many young civilian men are feeling a deeply disturbing inner conflict, and some are turning toward conscientious objection. National CO organizations report increasing numbers of callers asking, for example, how to register for the draft as an objector. [The current advice is to write, in ink, "I am a Conscientious Objector to war in

any form" across the middle of the registration form, and then make and keep a copy before turning it in.]

If the draft is reinstated, under existing regulations a young conscript wanting to claim CO status will need to prove that he has a "sincere" objection to all wars. He will have to show what he believes and why, how he came to believe it, and how his actions prove he practices what he believes. His belief, according to the law, must be religious, moral, or ethical, not political or pragmatic. It is unnecessary to prove church attendance, affiliation, or even a belief in God.

Even though the law requires objection to all wars, it is not necessary for a CO to know what he might have done in the past or would do in the future. This interpretation of the law protects COs from such hypothetical questions as "What would you have done in 1942?" or "What would you do if someone attacked your family?"

Nor must COs be pacifists. J.E. McNeil, director of the Center on Conscience and War, a Washington, DC-based interfaith peace organization, sometimes counsels COs who are also police officers, avid game hunters, former gang members, or involved in martial arts. She says, "A prize fighter could be a CO. Muhammad Ali was both. There are COs who favor the death penalty. What makes a CO is his/her deep opposition to war."



It is, however, necessary for a CO to prove his sincerity, and that's where documentation comes in. Conscripts may get as few as ten days to put together supporting evidence for a CO claim. Should my son ever want to prove the depth of his convictions, he'll already have a scrapbook full of documents tracing his beliefs over his entire life—letters that serve as character references and statements of family values;

letters calling for peace written by adult family members to legislators and newspapers; personal statements of one's own beliefs about war and peace; affiliations with peace organizations; documents about religious or spiritual practices—anything that shows a child's concern for life and the unity of nature. The documents in my son's file aren't so much "goody-goody" as examples of his healthy preference for pursuits that are not life-destructive but life-affirming. We also kept any and all evidence of his very autonomous thinking style and his not-so-mainstream upbringing. We have folded, stapled (but not put in envelopes), and mailed back to our family many of these documents in order to have the documents themselves postmarked, thus proving their dates. Some draft counselors suggest notarizing significant records.

Adam's file is neither a protest nor a political statement, but a record of his continuing hope for a peaceful world and a summary of his and his family's beliefs. Keeping the file was never much of a focus or issue; it was kept in the background. Still, it reminded us as parents to keep up age-appropriate discussions about the ethics of war and peace, violence and nonviolence while we worked together as a family of peace.

Adam's own growing introspection and reading contributed as much as or more than anything we adults ever offered him. I have no idea where his path will take him, and only he will determine what values he will hold tomorrow. But at least I know that if his beliefs about war are put to the test of a draft board, Adam will be able to show them the complete record of one young man's peaceful heart.

Editor's note: OCPJ and the Oxford Friends Meeting jointly established the Oxford Draft Counseling Service in 1991, after studying Selective Service System laws and receiving training for counseling from NISBCO/The Center on Conscience and War. While today this local service cannot be offered without the updating and retraining of our counselors, OCPJ can offer information, assistance, and counseling for documenting CO status and the requirements for COs in the U.S. military.

Conscription—the compulsory draft—was abolished in 1973, near the end of the Vietnam War. But in 1980, the Selective Service System was commissioned to begin registering young men again in stand-by readiness for a possible future draft. Requiring Congressional authorization, the draft has not been reinstated.

Organizations that provide information and other resources on SSS registration and the draft, or work to counter military recruiting and militarism in schools include:

- AFSC Youth and Militarism Program
215-241-7176 www.afsc.org/youthmil.htm

- Center on Conscience and War/NISBCO
800-379-2679 www.nisbco.org
- Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO)
215-563-8787 510-465-1617 www.objector.org
- Committee Opposed to Militarism and the Draft (COMD)
619-265-1369 www.comdsd.org
- Project on Youth and Non-Military Opportunities
760-634-3604 www.projectyano.org
- War Resisters League
212-228-0450 www.warresisters.org

Haiti—Worse Than Ever

With Iraq dominating the news, most media ignore Haiti. When there is coverage, as when Secretary of State Colin Powell visited in January to celebrate a U.S. "success," it is brief and distorted.

Haiti is in far worse condition today than before the U.S. removed democratically elected President Jean Bertrand Aristide in February 2004. Arguably, it is in worse shape than during the previous coup or under the Duvaliers. Poverty—already the worst in the hemisphere—has deepened. Common crime has escalated. Basic services only partially exist: trash removal, water, electricity, education, and healthcare. Some schools have not re-opened after holidays, for lack of funds or political reasons. Doctors are on strike because they have not received pay for three months.

Now a new human rights report from the Center for the Study of Human Rights at the University of Miami (Florida) has documented some of the worst abuses committed directly by the Haitian National Police, and in some cases by the UN forces accompanying them. Attorney Thomas Griffin and other investigators include horrendous photos they took of boys as young as twelve, lying unattended in pools of their own blood in the General Hospital, where doctors refused to treat them. Other photos show bodies left in the streets and hundreds of bodies rotting and piled high at the morgue after the police and UN invasions of Port au Prince slums targeted as Aristide strongholds. Interviews with police and others make it clear that there has been a systematic campaign of political repression and assassination aimed at Aristide's Lavalas Party. The report ties the abuse directly to training and funding of police by U.S. non-governmental organizations with support from USAID.

(See www.ijdh.org/cshrhaitireport.pdf)

The puppet regime installed by the U.S., France, and Canada, and propped up since June by a Brazil-led UN force (MINUSTAH), has committed far more human rights abuses than the worst claims against Aristide's government.

In a New Year's message from South Africa, Aristide claimed 10,000 killed and 1,000 illegally detained since his "modern-style kidnapping" in February 2004. Mainstream media have documented 200 murders of Aristide supporters since September and up to 700 political prisoners by late last fall. The Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) has documented dire prison conditions and prisoner deaths.

Former Haitian soldiers, including convicted human rights abusers, control some Haitian cities. They refuse to be disarmed, and regularly commit violence. One group invaded Aristide's former home. The Haitian government's response was to award them \$4800 each in "back-pay" since Aristide disbanded the army, totaling \$30 million.

The role of Brazil is puzzling. Brazil's President Lula was long known for opposing U.S. policies. Yet the Brazil-dominated force has accompanied the Haitian National Police in several attacks on Aristide/Lavalas neighborhoods. In December, however, Brazilian commander, General Augusto Heleno Ribeiro, insisted, "We are not an occupying force...yet, we are under extreme pressure (from the U.S., France, and Canada) to use violence."

As Haiti slips further into chaos, some urge that it be put under a UN protectorate. U.S. officials like the ultra-right-wing Roger Noriega, continue to support the current regime. The U.S. announced jointly with Canada, France, and the Haitian "government," that \$41 million will be given to support Haitian elections next fall.

Brian Concannon, of the IJDH, an American attorney who successfully prosecuted human rights abusers from the previous coup, disagrees that the options are either the current mess or a UN protectorate. "What about democracy?" he asks, noting that many observers from all sides—most recently including the Canadian ambassador—have said the Lavalas party would win again. But, unless human rights abuses are stopped, such elections are highly unlikely.

To keep up with Haiti, visit: www.ijdh.org; www.haitisupport.gn.apc.org; www.haitiaction.net; www.coha.org

—LMK

[Sources: Report on Haiti by the Center for the Study of Human Rights, and Dr. Thomas Reeves's political report on Haiti for Interconnect]

Our Fight for Civil Liberties Grows

In the three years since the USA Patriot Act was signed into law, 372 communities, four states, and hundreds of organizations, including the American

Library Association and the National League of Cities, have registered their opposition to certain sections of the Act and to what they see as a general erosion of civil liberties. That means that 55 million people—one in five U.S. residents—now live in cities, counties, or states with resolutions condemning parts of the Patriot Act, making this one of the largest mass movements in U.S. history. Hundreds more communities, with active Bill of Rights defense committees, are looking at the Act and considering taking action to defend the rights of their residents.

The national Bill of Rights Defense Committee, formed in late 2001 to support public education and debate about the impact of the Patriot Act, marked the 3rd anniversary of the Act's passage by sending a full set of all the resolutions and ordinances opposing the Patriot Act to President Bush. It made quite a statement—the number of pages that arrived at the White House was more than triple the size of the 350-page-long Patriot Act.

In the past three years several bipartisan bills that would nullify this or that provision of the Patriot Act have been introduced in Congress, garnering co-sponsors and other support. While some bills are still in the legislative pipeline for consideration, requiring our intensive lobbying efforts, only one has come close to passage. The Freedom to Read Act that would have nullified Section 215 of the Patriot Act failed on a 210-210 tie vote. (A year ago, though, the U.S. House showed its support for the right of local communities to decline to assist federal authorities with Patriot Act-related surveillance operations, when it voted 322-102 to defeat an appropriations bill amendment that would have withheld federal funding from any community that refused to provide such assistance.) A preponderance of radical conservatives in the Congress—some introducing legislation that would only enhance the worst of the Patriot Act powers or that would make these powers permanent, not subject to the Act's sunset provision—seem likely to thwart attempts to restore our Constitutionally guaranteed rights and liberties. Yet, the people's fight for our civil liberties only grows.

Where our positions and demands have been validated is in the federal courts—where we foretold that any testing of certain Patriot Act powers would favor our Constitutional rights and liberties. The U.S. Supreme Court handed down two important decisions last June that disagreed with the Bush administration concerning the rights of "enemy combatants," and three federal judges have found parts of the Patriot Act unconstitutional. In September 2004, a New York federal judge struck down Section 505, which had allowed the government to use

National Security Letters to demand sensitive customer records from Internet service providers and other businesses, without judicial oversight. When a three-judge panel of the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled unanimously last October that public demonstrators may not be searched, the court ruled, “Fear of a terrorist attack is not sufficient reason for authorities to search people at a protest demonstration. Sept. 11 cannot be the day liberty perished.” (One more reminder of the importance of the courts and the appointment of independent federal judges in our society.) More such decisions are expected.

Bill of Rights Defense in Oxford

After a year of collaborative effort on a campus resolution, we were so pleased to announce to the community in our annual Bill of Rights Day newspaper ads the passage of a strong anti-Patriot Act, pro-civil liberties resolution by the Miami University Student Senate on November 30. Kudos to author and major sponsor, Senator J.M. Downey, and OCPJ Board member Rich Erlich for his guidance and for pressing the case! The measure was supported by a 4-to-1 majority and sent to University Senate for its consideration and action. See www.orgs.muohio.edu/muasg/legislation.htm.

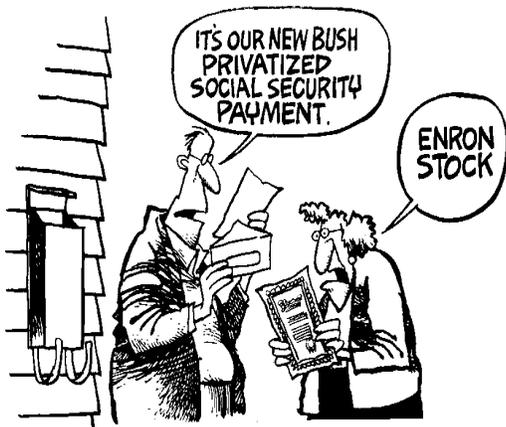
When OCPJ’s Bill of Rights Defense Committee organized for public education about the threats from the Patriot Act and for passage of a City Council resolution in the fall of 2002, there were fewer than 50 resolutions passed in other U.S. cities, none in Ohio. With steady lobbying and careful negotiation on our part, Oxford became the first Ohio city to have passed an anti-Patriot Act resolution, on 19 August 2003. We hadn’t planned on resting on our laurels, and now we know why we shouldn’t. Not much has changed. In fact, the federal and state programs to implement the Patriot Act, the Homeland Security Act, and Executive and Justice Dept. Directives have been put in place now and are operating.

Out of the public eye—in secret—Patriot Act powers are being exercised. We promised our City Council that we would keep them updated and would likely be back for more, and that’s the plan we’re working on now. We’ll soon be calling on City Council to pass a second, new resolution as an aid to implementing the original resolution, one that identifies reporting measures to help determine how Patriot Act powers are being exercised. The Patriot Act itself requires the Attorney General to report to Congress on these matters. The public, too, has a right to know. **We will alert you when the resolution comes before Council. It is essential that we demonstrate the support of many.**
Here Comes the Ohio Patriot Act—Ohio S.B. 9

As if in response to the growing Bill of Rights Defense movement and the number of Ohio cities working toward passage of anti-Patriot Act resolutions, Ohio Senator Jeff Jacobson (Dayton) introduced a bill with no name in late January, which was quickly dubbed “the Ohio Patriot Act” by its critics. The bill was put on fast-track in the Senate: weekly committee hearings, committee approval, then a full Senate vote. On March 9 the Ohio Senate passed S.B. 9 and sent it to the House.

Alarms were raised from the start of this bulldozing attempt to codify and expand upon some of the most troubling provisions of the federal Patriot Act. In our lobbying efforts and letters-to-the-editor, we pointed out a few of the most disturbing from its thirty pages of provisions:

- It mandates state and local compliance with the federal Patriot Act, even prohibiting municipalities from passing civil liberties resolutions that are deemed to “hinder or prevent state or local employees from cooperating with state or federal immigration services and terrorism investigations.” (The penalty for that infraction by a municipality would be ineligibility to receive any homeland security funding from the state.)
- It creates a program disturbingly like McCarthy-era loyalty oaths for state employees by mandating compliance with the Patriot Act, including provisions that may violate the U.S. and State Constitutions, which many of those employees have sworn to protect.
- It creates several categories of criminal offenses that unnecessarily duplicate existing state and federal crimes, while creating new criminal offenses so broad and sometimes vague that they could sweep in all sorts of activities that are not nor meant to be criminal, and often when people would have no notice that they had even done anything suspicious or even approximating a crime.
- It requires that American citizens provide name, address, and date of birth to any law enforcement officer who asks for it, with no provision to prohibit police from abusing this power. It invites police harassment of anyone deemed “suspicious.”
- It mandates that applicants for state-issued licenses disclose whether they have given material support to terrorism-related organizations, even if they don’t know, and even when they cannot reasonably be expected to know, they have done so.
- It tramples upon the free speech rights of citizens and municipalities, their rights to privacy, assembly, and to petition their governments for redress of grievances, and their freedoms from unreasonable searches and seizures. It hands state authorities a blank check to enforce a law that seems eerily designed to even control thought.



WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Write, call, or e-mail our state representative Shawn Webster with your message of opposition to the recently passed S.B. 9 in the Senate. Ask him to take notice of the serious and strong opposition in his district to this bill. Regardless of the intentions of the original sponsor, this bill is duplicative, unnecessary, ineffective, and costly—with the greatest costs to be borne by Ohio citizens whose personal civil rights and liberties would be uselessly and unconstitutionally restricted. What, you might ask, could our state legislators possibly be thinking to consider curtailing our rights and freedoms for some statewide dragnet likely to produce no more than traffic violators and common criminals, if that?!

Find the text and summary of S.B. 9 at

www.legislature.state.oh.us

Find Ohio Representative Shawn Webster at the address, phone number, or e-mail address listed in the Activist's Directory in back. Keep speaking out until we're heard!

—LMK

Ohio H.B. 1 Campaign Finance Deform

The politicians missed it. The media missed it. Even some grassroots citizens groups missed it.

"It" is the legalization of direct corporate contributions for certain political purposes for the first time in Ohio in 96 years.

"It" is a provision in the recently passed Amended Substitute House Bill 1 at breakneck speed by the lame-duck Ohio General Assembly, called into special session (the first in nearly 30 years) in mid-December to deal with "campaign finance reform." And there were several other provisions in H.B. 1 that made sweeping election law changes, which seriously diminish the rights

of working families and the less fortunate, and dangerously expand the influence of big corporations and the wealthy.

The bill, signed into law by Gov. Taft on Dec. 30, was touted as much needed campaign finance reform that would require full disclosure of campaign contributions and contributors and limit soft money in political campaigns (provisions that could have been passed on their own). Promoters of the measure didn't publicize its other features, though. Community leaders testified against the bill in hearings. In fact, not a single witness supported the election law changes. Legislators had almost no time to consider more than 103,000 calls, letters, and e-mails opposing it. Many of the legislators who voted for it barely read the 138-page law.

Among the many ways this law further corrupts our election system and what's left of our democracy:

- It gives corporations an open door to pump millions of dollars into election campaigns.
- It raises the limit on individual contributions by 400%—from \$2500 to \$10,000—giving the wealthy even more influence in determining election outcomes. Under the new law, for example, a two-person household could donate \$100,000 to a candidate by giving the maximum of \$10,000 each in both the primary and the general election period and \$30,000 each to the state party fund.
- It restricts the rights of workers to make political contributions and to decide how their own union dues are spent.
- It inhibits the ability of citizens groups to gather signatures to place issues on the ballot.

Scrambling for ways to repeal this law before it goes into effect, a large coalition of concerned groups and leaders have organized a referendum campaign to give Ohio voters the right to decide if this unjust law should be repealed. At this writing, signatures are still being gathered on petitions all over the state to place the issue before the voters on this November's general election ballot. Many thousands of valid signatures from Ohioans are needed. But, by Ohio law, the deadline for authenticating the requisite number of signatures from each Ohio county is short—the end of March for this November's election. The petition drive will continue thereafter if the required number of signatures hasn't been collected by then, but the long-shot goal of petition circulators is to place this issue before the voters this year.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: H.B. 1 has got to go!

A few OCPJers are trying to reach as many signers as possible in the last three weeks of this referendum petition campaign. If you haven't connected with one of our circulators, stop by

the Peace Center any afternoon but Thursday to sign. The minimum number of valid signatures from registered voters in Butler County is 2,700. Your signature will help grow our numbers.

-LMK



Bits and Peaces

Sometimes there is good news. In almost all of these cases, the good news was brought about by the hard work and activism of ordinary citizens. Thank you for all you do to effect change for peace and justice.

Here are just a few peaces of very good news.

• **M.U. Student Senate defends civil liberties.** On Nov. 30, 2004, the Miami Univ. Student Senate adopted by a 4-to-1 majority the "Resolution to Support the U.S. Bill of Rights and that of Ohio Within the Miami Community" with a strong and elaborate challenge to some Patriot Act powers and Executive and DOJ Directives.

• **Fair Trade Coffee now at Miami.** Thanks to the educational and lobbying efforts of the members of Students for Peace & Justice over many months, Fair Trade coffee is now available at several dining service locations on campus, at no additional cost. Gearing up for expanding Fair Trade offerings at Miami, 20 SPJ members will see first-hand the impact of U.S. trade policies on coffee farmers in Nicaragua, where they are traveling during spring break as part of a Witness for Peace delegation.



• **The Mount Olive Pickle boycott is over.** After five years of a public action boycott of Mount Olive pickles by Ohio's own Farm Labor Organizing Committee, FLOC (AFL-CIO) reached a precedent-setting agreement with the North Carolina Grower's Assoc. and the Mount Olive Pickle Co. in September 2004. Over 8,000 "guest" farm workers in North Carolina became the first such workers in U.S. history to win union representation and a contract!

• **Boycott of Taco Bell ends.** The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), a Florida-based farmworker organization, called off its 3-year boycott of Taco Bell when they reached an agreement that CIW says "sets a new standard of social responsibility for the fast-food industry." For its part, Taco Bell announced on March 8 that it will fund a penny per pound "pass-through" its suppliers of Florida tomatoes directly to the farmworkers, and will undertake joint efforts with the CIW on several fronts to improve pay and working conditions in Florida's tomato fields.

• **Workers in two states get a raise.** The federal minimum wage shrinks every year in inflation-adjusted dollars, and the latest attempt to raise it just last month by some in Congress met with defeat. But in Florida and New York workers will get a raise. On Nov. 2, Floridians voted by a 2/3 majority to raise their state's minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.15, and on Dec. 6 legislators in NY voted to override Gov. Pataki's veto and lifted the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.15 by 2007.

• **Congress says "No" to new nuclear weapons.** In late November, in its vote on the omnibus appropriations bill for FY 2005, Congress deleted all funds for the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (aka the bunker buster) and other advanced concepts for new nuclear weapons.

• **"Clear Skies" bites the dust.** On March 10, the Senate Environment Committee deadlocked over Bush's dirty skies bill, killing it for the time being. Tens of thousands of messages sent to senators from grassroots activists made the difference in blocking one of the worst pieces of

anti-environmental legislation to come to Congress. A hard-won victory in defense of clean air!

- **Liability in Romero assassination.** In September 2004, a federal judge in Fresno, CA, found a retired Salvadoran air force captain liable in the 1980 assassination of Archbishop Romero, ordering him to pay \$10 million in damages.
- **Court rejects media deregulation.** In July 2004, the U.S. 3rd Circuit Court nullified the Federal Communications Commission's June 2003 decision to weaken a set of media ownership regulations that set strict limits on corporate ownership of media markets. The decision was remanded to the FCC for "reconsideration."
- **Sinclair Broadcasting meets people power.** When Sinclair Broadcasting planned to force their 62 TV stations to play an anti-Kerry movie just days before the general election, more than 200,000 people protested. Advertisers pulled out, Sinclair's stock plummeted, and the network was forced to air more "balanced" coverage.
- **Civil liberties upheld.** In June 2004, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled, over Bush administration objections, that the U.S. practice of holding captured foreign nationals in indefinite detention, without counsel or the right to a trial or to know the charges against them, is unconstitutional—in effect, giving Guantanamo Bay detainees access to U.S. courts to challenge their detention.
- **Section 505 of the Patriot Act nullified.** In September 2004, a New York federal judge rejected the use of administrative subpoenas (called "National Security Letters") under Section 505 of the Patriot Act, striking down the government's use of the "Letters" to demand sensitive customer records from Internet service providers and other businesses, without judicial oversight.
- **Court challenges "rendition."** On March 13, 2005, federal Judge Rosemary Collyer (U.S. District Court, Washington) prohibited the U.S. government from transferring 13 Yemeni prisoners from the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay until a hearing could be held on their lawyers' fear that they might face torture if sent to another country. (After the Supreme Court ruling on the unconstitutionality of indefinite detentions with no access to the courts, the government turned to what it calls "extraordinary rendition" to get around the detainees' right to appear in court, i.e., sending suspected terrorists abroad to undercover prisons where they can be further "interrogated" in countries known to practice torture.)
- **Canada says "No" to Star Wars.** After informing the U.S., the Canadian government publicly announced on Feb. 24 that Canada will refuse any further participation

in the controversial missile defense system (Star Wars) that the United States is building. The announcement has reportedly left the Bush administration nonplused.

- **No impunity for Pinochet.** Early this year, as part of the ongoing investigation in Chile of "Operation Condor," former president Augusto Pinochet was indicted for murder and kidnapping, placed under house arrest, and deemed healthy enough to stand trial by Judge Guzman.
- **Quichua Indians take on Big Oil.** The six-year campaign of the Quichua Indian community of Sarayacu, Ecuador, to prevent big oil's exploitation of their ancestral lands reached a head last year when frustrated oil company workers picked up stakes and just left the area. The Sarayacu residents mobilized into 25 "peace and life camps," strategically placed along their territorial boundaries, and stood their ground. Their stance was validated by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (in Costa Rica) when in August 2004 the Court ordered the Ecuadoran government to protect the Sarayacu residents from the "grave risk from oil exploration."
- **Access to water as human right.** In Uruguay, more than 60% of the people just passed a constitutional reform that defines access to water as a human right and prevents water from being privatized.
- **Israel's wall declared illegal.** In July 2004, the International Court of Justice in the Hague declared the 370-mile wall, a quarter of which has been built, violates international law and should be dismantled. —
LMK

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• **Ohio Statehouse** (leave message for any legislator, request bill status information, general information): (800) 282-0253

Webs: www.ohio.gov www.legislature.state.oh.us

Fax (any representative if addressed to that person): (614) 644-9494



Help Wanted

There are immediate opportunities for OCPJ members who are concerned about peace and justice issues and would like to become more involved with social change activities. Experience is not necessary. OCPJ needs you. If interested in any item in the listing below, call the Peace Center, 523-6555, or the contact person listed.

> **Website Manager** – Keep a soon-to-be-created OCPJ website updated with information supplied by the Board or the Peace Center Director. Training available. Best if there can be a long-term commitment. Contact Mike Ball, 523-2360

> **Publicist** – List OCPJ meetings and programs in the Oxford Press and/or publicize in similar ways. Must be willing to contact newspapers and radio stations. Contact Linda Musmeci Kimball, 523-6555

> **Dispatcher** – Copy OCPJ’s e-mailed action alerts and announcements and mail to members who wish “mail-only” communication. Expenses will be reimbursed. Contact Mary Duerksen, 756-0020

> **Study/Action Committee Member** – Join a current committee for study/action in the area of your interest and choice.

> **Perpetual War/War on Terror/The Draft**
Contact Roland Duerksen, 756-0020

> **Walmartism/Corporatism**
Contact Leslye Sherman, 523-2458

> **Civil Liberties/Bill of Rights Defense**
(City and Campus)
Contact Lois Nelson, 523-1652, or Rich Erlich, 523-5265

> **Policymakers/Decision-makers**
(elected & appointed)
Contact Kathleen Knight Abowitz, 524-4257

OCPJ is an equal opportunity organization.

-MD

OCPJ MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please complete this form and return to:

OCPJ Peace Center
19 1/2 E. Walnut St.
Oxford, OH 45056

Choose your Membership:

- \$5 Student/Limited Income
- \$25 Individual
- \$40 Family
- \$75 Sustainer
- \$100 Patron
- \$ _____

Make your check payable to OCPJ :

- \$ _____ membership
- \$ _____ Bloom Peace Education Fund
- \$ _____ total enclosed

Indicate your preferred involvement:

- join the OCPJ listserv (post or read other postings)
- work on short-term projects(Bread not Bombs,

- fund raising, special events)
- receive information by (circle):
- volunteer in the Peace Center
- be part of an issue committee
- serve on the Board
- offer moral support and my membership

Indicate how you wish to receive legislative alerts and announcements:

___e-mail (occasional postings)
 ___mail

NAME (if family membership, list all names)

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

COMMENTS: _____

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Editorial policy: Your letters-to-the-editor, opinions, comments, and other contributions are invited. Send submissions to the Peace Center.