

DELAWARE COUNTY PLEDGE OF RESISTANCE



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Fall 2004

Speaking out at the RNC

by Ronald F. Coburn

I felt deep within me that I wanted to participate. Maybe it was hate of the Bush administration's policies that was driving me. One colleague said, "What's the point? The delegates to the Republican National Convention and the Bush administration will ignore protests, or worse, see protesters as terrorists."

I certainly knew that the Bush administration has not been sensitive to people who do not share their views and has not been influenced by demonstrations or by majority views of our people. There were other arguments against participation, i.e., that the antiwar theme would be diluted by multiple other agendas, that the mayor of New York City would not allow demonstrators to come in proximity to the convention, that the media would ignore the demonstration.

Some people were frightened by the aggressiveness of police, remembering the 2000 RNC demonstration in Philadelphia. However, I kept in mind Lyndon Johnson's writings on the anguish he felt when he looked out his window at antiwar demonstrations during the Vietnam war. This drove him to leave the presidency. I also remembered the power of the civil rights demonstrations a few years earlier and the World Trade Organization demonstrations more recently.

When the day came, the demonstration was massive and well organized! People from all over the country flowed into streets that fed into

the main procession. Group after group joined the march over a four-hour period. We marched on Seventh Avenue uptown toward Madison Square Garden, the site of the Republican National Convention, then returned downtown via Fifth Avenue, ending at Washington Square. The total number of people demonstrating was estimated by our organizers at 400,000 to 500,000.

I saw a man carrying a picture of his soldier son and a sign that said, "George Bush killed my son." I remember the feeling of togetherness. I remember that the march was peaceful and that the NYC policemen lining the streets were not frightening. I remember people leaning out of their houses shouting encouragement and the cries of "shame" directed at Fox, the most biased of major news coverage corporations.

We paused in front of the Madison Square Garden, the symbol that day of our decaying government. Delegates to this convention whom we passed must have felt the mass disapproval of the Bush administration policies. We were exhibiting a form of power through this demonstration. The multiple issues of the different groups all supported our emphasis on the folly of the war and occupation of Iraq, as well as the



Protesters carry mock coffins representing Iraq war casualties. An estimated 500,000 protesters against the Republican National Convention convened on the streets of Manhattan.

diversion of money from domestic programs. And yet, there was little media coverage of the demonstrations, and what there was certainly did not describe my feelings, emotions, and sense of encouragement.

Time has passed since the demonstration, and many things have happened as we continue in the election process. The trials and sentencing of people who were arrested are continuing. Memories of the emotion I felt at being part of this large event are fading. Still, I hope that the memories of the demonstrations held by RNC delegates have not faded. My dream is that, despite the warped media coverage, other massive demonstrations will occur which communicate our opposition to the American empire, the occupation of Iraq, and other sorrows. Think how terrible it would be if there were no visible "people" opposition to the destructive programs of the Bush administration.

Slavery—Still with Us

by Lynn Biddle

What is the first thought that comes to mind when you hear or read that terrible word “slavery?” The capture and forced transportation of black Africans to the Western Hemisphere to be slaves? We can all condemn that and thank our forebearers that it’s over. It’s finished.

But, slavery is as old as civilization and as modern as today. It doesn’t require chains or locked docks to make a slave. Poverty alone can do it. A lack of choices is a factor common to de facto slaves: no other job available, or nowhere else to go. Illiteracy or little education, language difficulty, poverty, fear, membership in a group targeted for discrimination, these are all things that limit one’s choices.

We hear about sweatshops in Mexico, Central America, and Haiti. Workers, mostly women and many only teenage girls, may be locked in their maquilas, not physically, but locked into abusive and poorly paying jobs. Now even these jobs are moving to Asia,



especially China, where pay is even lower than in Latin America.

But today, we hear about slavery in the U.S., too. Perhaps it’s the 27 people from southeast Asia found locked in a garment shop in crowded and dirty conditions. They’d been told that they must work until they pay off the cost of their transportation to the U.S. Meanwhile, they were being charged for room and

board! They had no hope of ever being freed. Or those found locked in the backs of trucks or in overseas shipping containers. When a crew captain goes to the rural south and picks up a truckload of poor black men and takes them far from their homes to work on farms in the North for the season, is that very different? I’ve gone to visit crew camps on Eastern Long Island. Living conditions are terrible. The men can leave if they choose to. But they have no way to get home, and often, aren’t really sure where they are. They have nowhere to go where they can find work and no money to get there.

Most of these camps have Latin American workers, many in this country illegally. An illegal worker doesn’t complain about abusive work conditions, forced overtime, or bad living conditions because he doesn’t want to be deported. He is a slave in a very real way. Jobs for unskilled and badly educated laborers are scarce, especially when they don’t speak English. She is afraid to do anything that would call attention to herself, even in time of need, and is often abused by employers, landlords, and anyone else out to make a buck.

Around the world, there are families who must give up their children to strangers because they can’t afford to keep them. Usually they expect their children to receive fair treatment. They may even be promised that the child will be educated. The reality, however, is rarely what they had hoped. These children become slaves to the households that take them in. They work long hours, eat poorly, are segregated from family members, are frequently beaten, and do not go to school.

Sometimes parents even sell one of their children into slavery, so that the others can have enough food. Other children are kidnapped, forced to do hard labor or to become sex slaves, or soldiers trained to kill, maim, or torture. Often they are kept high on alcohol and drugs. At the end of the war, when they return to their homes—if they survive—they are psychologically dam-

aged and most are useless for anything but fighting.

About four years ago, Global Exchange began a campaign against child slavery in the cocoa industry, the source of most chocolate. Since cocoa price supports ended abruptly, the price growers are able to get is so low that they can’t pay their workers living wages and often resort to using young boys who’ve been kidnapped in neighboring countries and brought to the Ivory Coast, source of most of the world’s cocoa. These boys are treated like animals, valuable only for their work. Rarely do any escape. They are beaten, starved, and overworked cruelly.

As in the anti-sweatshop campaign, Global Exchange hopes to use popular opinion to pressure chocolate manufacturers in the U.S., particularly big-name companies like M & M, Mars, to “do the right thing!” Global Exchange is asking them to make their candy with 5 percent Fair Trade (FT) cocoa. FT cocoa is typically grown on cooperative farms using sustainable practices. Just this small amount will enable growers and their workers to earn decent livings and to stop using child slaves. You can join the campaign by writing letters to candy manufacturers or speaking to store managers wherever you shop. Whenever possible, buy Fair Trade, whether it’s chocolate, coffee, tea, home furnishing, crafts, or gifts of all kinds. This guarantees a fair price and fair treatment for the people who actually make the goods.

The United Nations sponsored Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflicts, on the sale of children, and on child prostitution and pornography attempt to end abuses against children. These agreements have no enforcement mechanisms. Most country members of the U.N. have signed the conventions. But the United States has not. Perhaps, with reform of the U.N., there will someday be a way to enforce these agreements.

For information on how to buy Fair Trade chocolate and to whom you can write letters, see Global Exchange at <http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/cocoa/>.

No to CAFTA under Any Administration!

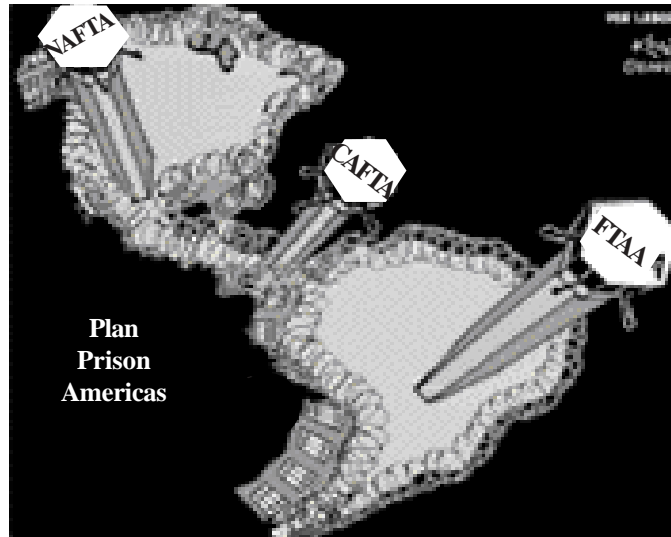
by Paula Bronstein

The Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) essentially expanded NAFTA to five Central American countries—Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Honduras—plus the Dominican Republic. President Bush signed CAFTA last spring and is waiting until after the election to present it to Congress. Modeled after the ten-year-old NAFTA, CAFTA is widely considered to be a stepping-stone to the larger Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), which would encompass 34 countries. CAFTA must be approved by the U.S. Congress and by national assemblies in the Central American countries before it becomes law. Whereas NAFTA took more than seven years to negotiate and the FTAA has been negotiated for almost a decade, CAFTA was completed in one calendar year, with limited public or congressional participation.

CAFTA is closely linked to the Plan Plebla Panama (PPP), a 10-year, multi-billion dollar mega development project that will create physical and industrial infrastructure throughout the region. Civil society groups in Mexico and Central America see the PPP as paving the way for CAFTA and FTAA. These groups have protested the PPP because of its devastating impact on the environment, indigenous communities, and local economies. Even if the labor clauses that Democrats advocated were implemented, CAFTA still would likely destroy the agriculture sector in Central America, and it still would include NAFTA's Chapter 11 properties that gives power to corporations to sue states for loss of potential profits.

CAFTA will:

- Extend new rights to corporations, including the right to challenge environmental and other public interest legislation.
- Require countries in Central



America to remove all taxes on imported agricultural products, hurting small farmers in the face of heavily subsidized U.S. agribusiness.

- Weaken existing mechanisms that enforce labor rights standards in Central America and the United States.
- Require governments to open up service sectors to transnational corporations.
- Extend patent protections to pharmaceutical giants for more than 20 years, making it even more difficult for governments in Central America to access lower cost generic medication.

If passed, CAFTA would usurp state decision-making authority over how state tax dollars can be spent. All 50 state governors have been asked by the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to bind their states to meet CAFTA's process regarding governmental purchasing. Among the policies at risk are requirements regarding renewable energy, recycled content in papers and other products, and sweatshop-free apparel, in addition to preferences

for employers providing a living wage or operating on a not-for-profit basis.

CAFTA also prohibits state governments from considering a supplier's qualifications beyond a company's ability to perform a contract. This could ban taking into account a supplier's environmental trash record or compliance with labor laws or cooperation with regimes with a poor human rights record.

If CAFTA passes Congress, the FTAA will still be alive. If we can defeat it, the entire corporate free trade agenda will be in deep crisis. Stopping CAFTA will completely change the terms of the trade debate in this country. Defeat of CAFTA would be a tremendous expression of solidarity by the people of the United States with the people of Central America. It would have broader impacts, too, throwing a roadblock in front of the U.S. strategy of driving countries around the planet into bilateral and mini-regional trade agreements that permanently pry open national economies to the multinational corporate colonizers. Web resources for more information at: www.tradewatch.org/cafta; www.wola.org/economic/cafta; www.pcusa.org/trade/cafta; and www.quioxte.org/cafta.

Sources: Citizens Trade Campaign, *Multinational Monitor*, Apr. 2004; *Public Citizen News*, July/Aug. 2004; Quest for Peace, July 2004.

Fraud in Venezuela?

by Brad Bradlee

In 1998 Hugo Chavez took his populist agenda to the people of Venezuela and was elected president. A year later his plans to rewrite the constitution and reform the political system won overwhelming support. In 2000, he scored a big re-election victory. A coup in 2002 was overturned, and Venezuelans reinstated their president.

In August 2004, a recall referendum was offered and the electorate rejected it soundly, 59 to 41 percent. Why should we be surprised? But, apparently the Venezuelan opposition was.

Either disingenuous or delusional, Chavez's political foes immediately claimed fraud and insisted the huge victory should be theirs. And though international observers, the employers' organization, Fedecameras (a prime backer of the April 2002 coup), and even the U.S. government have recognized the official results, the opposition maintains they *wuz* robbed.

Venezuelan society is polarized, split between those who see Chavez as a would-be communist dictator and those who embrace the president as a social reformer, a working-class savior who will use the nation's oil wealth to benefit the historically left-out majority. The chasm is enormous, but the referendum was supposed to settle the issue of Chavez's legitimacy democratically, one way or the other. The electorate would have its say, and the country would move on. Despite the president's landslide victory, it didn't happen that way. Venezuela's small middle and upper classes refused to recognize their defeat and set to work devising theories and explanations for the "fraudulent" results.

The Election

This referendum used touch screen voting machines. Voters chose "Yes" or "No," and the vote was recorded electronically. The machine printed out a paper ballot, which the voters deposited in a ballot box. The paper trail complicates fraud: rigging the machines is not

enough — the boxes need to be stuffed, too. When the government's National Electoral Council, along with international observers, audited the vote in a sample of 150 polling centers and compared the machine tally to the paper ballots, they found a nearly even match. (The 0.1 percent difference is statistically insignificant and is probably due to voters neglecting to deposit their paper ballots.)

Fraud?—The Cap Theory

The opposition argued that rigging the machines and stuffing the boxes to match is exactly what happened. It held that voting machines had been set to limit the number of Yes votes—the "cap" theory of electoral fraud.

In its role as observer, the Carter Center shot down this notion as nearly impossible to pull off. In charge of election material, the military would have had to reprogram 19,200 voting machines to print out new paper receipts showing the proper date, time, serial code, and number of Yes and No votes to match the machines. The ballots already deposited would have to be replaced with these new ballots. Given the time constraints and the wide geographical range of garrisons required, the cap theory seemed logistically improbable.

So the opposition raised another objection: a number of machines reported identical results; that must mean some government hanky-panky. No, explained a trio of Princeton computer scientists: all within the range expected by random occurrence. Still unwilling to accept the outcome, the opposition moved on to embrace a more sophisticated theory of government deception.

"Econometric" Results—High-tech Fraud?

A few weeks after the referendum, economists Ricardo Hausmann of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and Roberto Rigobon of the M.I.T.



Hugo Chavez

Sloan School of Management weighed in with a statistical analysis that alleged underhanded dealings in the Venezuela vote. Their results were reported by four major international news outlets and cited by both U.S. policymakers and the Venezuelan opposition to support claims of fraud. The Hausmann and Rigobon econometric theory doesn't require an inelegant ballot stuffing, but goes like this:

There are 4,580 polling centers. The corrupt National Electoral Council decides to rig, say, 3,000 of these. Of the total number of centers 1,580 are randomly chosen to be clean. The authorities know the vote is being audited. How to make sure the observers examine only the results of the clean centers? Cleverly, they fix the program that randomly selects a sample of 150 centers for auditing so that only centers on the clean list are chosen. The electronic results from these machines will match the paper ballots, and the observers can give the election their stamp of approval.

But upon Examination ...

The opposition, latching on to this thesis, insisted that the government had fooled the international observers with a phony sample program and requested that the Carter Center examine the program that was used to determine which centers were audited. The Carter Center accommodated this request, analyzed the program, and released a report concluding that the program was on the up-and-up. Their tests showed no voting stations were excluded as a possibility for audit.

Others have studied the methodology behind the econometric model and found it flawed. According to the theory, the audited sample of sites was, in fact, a sample of clean sites. The large size of this sample should reflect the actual, non-fraudulent referendum results. The audited sample had 41.6 percent Yes votes. But the opposition claimed the true Yes vote was 59 percent. The chances of getting an audited sample of 41.6 percent Yes if the true overall vote was 59 percent Yes? Less than one in 28 billion trillion, calculate critics of this scenario. Even if the recall

(See Venezuela, page 6.)

FILM REVIEW

Rosenstrasse

by Bob Small

(126 minutes, German with English subtitles, 2004.)

Rosenstrasse shows a hidden piece of World War II history. It documents the previously untold story of a group of German women who stood in nonviolent resistance in order to free their Jewish husbands, marked in 1943 for deportation and death, and won. This is said to be the only internal case of successful nonviolent resistance to the Nazi regime. Director Margarethe Von Trotta uses a back-story in the present to return to 1943 and back again. The film is subtitled, but its effect is not minimized by this. The film is based on the book *Resistance of the Heart* by Nathan Stolfus.

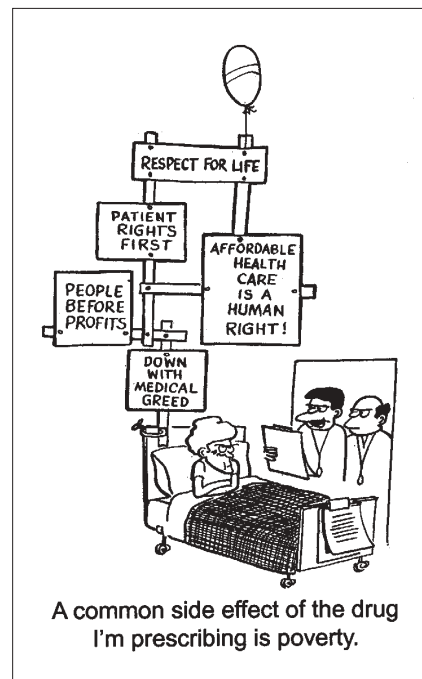
There were other examples of nonviolent resistance to the Nazis—The White Rose Society inside Germany and the successful transport of Danish Jews to Sweden—but these stories are generally underreported and minimized.

Why is that? First, many of these resistance efforts did not receive needed outside support or approval that might have led to more success. Secondly, a number of these were led by the Left, communists, or socialists, and our media tends to demonize rather than lionize the politics of these groups. Thirdly, this view would somewhat negate the view of victims who could only be saved by outside military intervention. Most importantly, this particular era of history seems to have been written with the view that this war, and all wars, was both necessary and inevitable.

The League of Nations was toothless; isolationism ruled the air, and Germans never stood against Hitler, etc. By sanctifying this war as an inevitable good war, by postulating the U.S. as the rescuer, we not only justify war and the use of force but grasp at using this justification in other areas and eras. Obviously, by December 7, 1941, war had become the only option, but why had that become the reality. *Rosenstrasse* leads us to the question of what could

of been, might have been, if ...

In 2004, we are writing our own history of nonviolent resistance against the wars of our times, against other demonizations, against the given of war and use of force as the solution. Hopefully, we are not entering an era of war without end, amen. But, if nothing else, we are giving voice to our opposition.



Life in Haiti

by Anne Bradley

This past August, I went to Haiti to care for my sick mother. I observed a people struggling to keep their hope high but finding it more and more difficult to do so.

Not so long ago, many Haitians thought of their country as a paradise, reflecting our pride in our people, culture, and past resources. Now, as my plane landed, I realized that not even nostalgia could support this delusion. The lush mountains that used to welcome me back were smooth and bare. Only an occasional plot of grass broke through the brown landscape and tin roof slums crawling up from the sea. I felt the pain of a native returning to a

troubled homeland. Haiti is slowly drifting away, and I wondered if anyone cared.

Passing by the many SUVs and big houses that were built in the last few years, you realize that some people have gotten richer. Life for the majority of Haitians, though, has gotten much worse. You could see it in the eyes of children standing on the street corners begging for a quarter. Most Haitian people live in intense poverty, making the contrast between rich and poor even more striking.

You realized how bad it was when people with jobs were finding it hard to meet their needs: fuel for the car cost more than \$200. When we went food shopping, I had to put some back when I found that less than half a grocery cart of provisions would cost \$400. I remembered the Haiti of the early 1980s:

food was not so hard to find and pay for. Haitians were friendly and trustworthy. Now many are aggressive, angry, and tired. What happened?

I felt like crying for justice for a land of forgotten people. I felt like screaming for the children being raised on bare mountains. I was heartbroken for my own family, worn thin by depression and discouragement.

Should I lose hope like so many Haitians I saw during my short stay? Haiti still produces resilient and hard working people, and I still hope that Haiti will again be a land of forested mountains and hopeful people. I vow to do my part to bring Haiti back: one child, one garden, one hope at a time. When the basic needs of all people are met we can truly work towards peace. That is when we can say we truly love our neighbors.

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Address correction requested

Community Calendar

Venezuela (continued from page 4.)

Nov. 14—Brandywine Peace Community's monthly potluck supper/program, 2nd Sunday of the month, 4:30 pm, University Lutheran Church, 3637 Chestnut St., Phila., PA. "A Post-Election Assessment" by Professor Edward Herman, renowned economist, media critic, author. Bring main dish, salad, or dessert to share.

Nov. 27—Thanksgiving holiday, noon-5 pm, Lockheed-Ville Shanty-town demonstration, Lockheed Martin Mall & Goddard Blvds., Valley Forge, Pa. (behind King of Prussia Mall)

Dec. 22—Christmas Vigil for Peace, 7 pm, Lockheed Martin, Valley Forge, Pa.

Jan. 17—Make War No More, Martin Luther King Day nonviolent civil disobedience, noon, Lockheed Martin, Valley Forge, Pa.

Stay connected with the nonviolent resistance campaign at Lockheed Martin—ongoing efforts to stop the war in Iraq, support for war resisters, and more for peace. Make sure that you are on the Brandywine Peace Community mailing & e-mail list. Brandywine Peace

Community, P.O. Box 81, Swarthmore, PA 19081. 610-544-1818; brandywine@juno.

had succeeded with only 50.1 percent. Yes, the odds of an audited sample of 41.6 percent would be less than one in a million.

The Conflict Continues

The improbability of fraud and the reality of a pro-Chavez landslide are really beside the point when we look at the agenda of the elite opposition. The outcome of the referendum was pretty much known to everyone before election day—every reliable pre-election poll had the recall effort failing.

The anti-Chavez campaign was simply another opposition weapon in the class war being conducted in Venezuela. The coup, the oil-industry shutdown, the calls for violence, and a transitional dictatorship all show an establishment committed to maintaining its position using any means necessary. In the past its efforts have left Chavez on shaky ground, but with this latest victory, Chavez has clearly gained the initiative.

Sources: Dupret, *Le Soir*, Sept. 14, 2004; Jones, *National Catholic Reporter*, Sept. 8, 2004; Weisbrot, Rosnick, and Tucker, Center for Economic and Policy Research, Sept. 20, 2004.

Iraq War Protesters Jail-bound

by Bob Smith

Some 107 people were arrested on March 20, 2003, the day after the U.S. bombardment and invasion of Iraq began in the Iraq Pledge of Resistance blockade of the Philadelphia Federal Building organized by the Brandywine Peace Community. Since December 2003, a number of people have been sentenced to seven days in the Philadelphia Federal Detention Center for refusing to pay the court imposed fine. Six more people—Michael Brix, Marion Brown, Jason Fults, Cassie (Heino) Haw, Chris Haw, and 90-year-old Quaker peace activist, Lillian Willoughby—were jail-bound on October 20. Stand with these war resisters as they face court and jail for choosing peace, democracy, and continued resistance to the war. Contact Brandywine at 610-544-1818 or brandywine@juno.com.