



NEWSLETTER

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Anti-Lou Dobbs Rally Raises Immigrants' Rights Issues

By KARA PHELPS

On Nov. 3, about 100 people marched up and down Lemon St. accompanied by drums. Lou Dobbs, invited by the Sarasota Reading Festival, was giving a speech at the First United Methodist Church, and protesters gathered to denounce his claims about undocumented immigrants and the U.S.-Mexico border.

Dobbs has been criticized for calling Mexican immigrants an "army of invaders" who intend to re-annex the southwestern U.S. into Mexico. His TV program, "Lou Dobbs Tonight," claimed that leprosy is on the rise in the U.S. and blamed it on increasing Latin American immigration.

"It's important not to think of any human [in terms of] 'us' and 'them,'" said Rita Yelverton, who participated in the protest.

One protester carried a sign that said, "Dobbs is a bad role model. Say NO to xenophobia!" Others held up their hands in peace signs, and others passed out information sheets titled "What's wrong with Lou Dobbs?"



Organizer Jose Godinez leads the Rally for Immigrant Rights

About 30 counter-protesters waved American flags outside the entrance to the church.

They carried signs showing support for Dobbs and displeasure with "illegals," and one began to sing "God Bless America" as the marchers passed.

"If we open up the borders there are a quadrillion people wanting to get in," said counter-protester Walter Flynt. "They're hurting American workers."

One counter-protester followed the march holding a sign saying, on one side, "These anti-U.S. folks want to destroy the fairness of our laws," and on the other, "These COMMIES are educated fools from uneducated schools." It drew cheers from the line of people waiting to see Dobbs speak.

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4th Anniversary of Sarasota City Commission's Resolution Opposing Portions of the "USA PATRIOT" Act

By JASON BOEHK

October 2007, marked the four-year anniversary of a local grassroots achievement of sorts, namely, the approval by the Sarasota City Commission of a "Resolution" reaffirming the City's commitment to defending civil liberties, and opposing portions of the so-called "USA PATRIOT" Act.

The assaults on liberty legislated in the "PATRIOT" Act have since been eclipsed by further legislative and executive outrages, but it's useful nonetheless for Sarasota citizens to remember the campaign that resulted in the passage of the Sarasota resolution.

The "USA PATRIOT" Act

Soon after the September 11, 2001 attacks, and virtually without any debate, Congress passed the "USA PATRIOT" Act, an overnight revision of the Bill of Rights.

The Orwellingly misnamed "PATRIOT" Act (an acronym for "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism") and related Executive orders undermined our civil liberties without demonstrably enhancing our national security.

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The "PATRIOT" Act, among other things, enabled the government to:

- Search your home and not even tell you (Section 213)
- Collect information about what books you read, what you study, what you buy, your medical history, and your personal finances (215)
- Take away your property without a hearing (806)
- Monitor your e-mails and watch what internet sites you visit (216)
- Spy on innocent Americans (203, 901)
- Put immigrants in jail indefinitely, deny them access to a lawyer, and not tell their families where they are (412)
- Label you a "terrorist" if you belong to an activist group (411,802)
- Wiretap you under a warrant that doesn't even have your name on it (216)

Paul Craig Roberts was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the Reagan administration. He was Associate Editor of the Wall Street Journal editorial page and Contributing Editor of National Review. He is coauthor of The Tyranny of Good Intentions.

GUEST COMMENTARY

The Iraqi Genocide

By **PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS**

Why has not the Turkish parliament given tit for tat and passed a resolution condemning the Iraqi Genocide?

As a result of Bush's invasion of Iraq, more than one million Iraqis have died, and several millions are displaced persons. The Iraqi death toll and the millions of uprooted Iraqis match the Armenian deaths and deportations. If one is a genocide, so is the other.

It is true that most of the Iraqi deaths have resulted from Iraqis killing one another. But it was Bush's destruction of the secular Iraqi state that unleashed the sectarian strife.

Moreover, American troops in Iraq have killed more civilians than insurgents. The US military in Iraq has fallen for every bit of disinformation fed to it by Al Qaeda personnel posing as "informants" and by Sunnis setting up Shi'ites and Shi'ites setting up Sunnis. As a result, American bombs and missiles have blown up weddings, funerals, kids playing soccer, and people shopping in bazaars and sleeping in their homes.

Not to be outdone, Bush's private Waffen SS known as Blackwater Security has taken to gunning Iraqi civilians down in the streets. How do Blackwater and Custer Battles killers escape the "unlawful combatant" designation?

One can only marvel at the insouciance of the US Congress to the current Iraqi Genocide while condemning Turkey for one that happened 90 years ago.

People seldom see the beam in their own eye, only the mote in the eyes of others. Every member of the Bush Regime is busily at

work denouncing Iran for causing instability in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, the US has invaded two countries, throwing them into total chaos, while beating the drums for war with Iran and conspiring with Israel to invade Lebanon and to attack Syria.

The indisputable facts are that the US and Israel have attacked four Middle East countries and are determined to attack a fifth. Yet, it is peaceful Iran, at war with no one, that Bush and Israel blame for causing instability in the Middle East.

Not content with its many wars in the Middle East, the Bush Regime is sponsoring wars in Africa and is setting up an African Command. The US government has been bombing and attacking other countries ever since the cold war ended. Instead of peace, the gang in Washington DC chose war.

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What is



???

We are a non-profit collective of independent individuals committed to creating community-based media in Sarasota. We do this by making our own media, whether it's through our website, newspaper, radio program, or any other means. We tell our stories and communicate the important happenings in our individual communities that are often ignored or misrepresented by other media outlets. We aim to empower the community by sharing our experiences, knowledge, skills and resources so that everyone's voice is heard.

Who Runs Sarasota Indymedia?

You, me, and anyone else that wants to create truthful reporting on community news stories that don't make it into mainstream media. Feel free to contact the general collective if you want to participate in any way, including if you need: journalist training, to borrow equipment, or anything else. Who runs Sarasota IndyMedia? As a volunteer organization, Sarasota Indymedia greatly appreciates donations to help defray our expenses. Email imc-sarasota@lists.indymedia.org to find out how you can make a difference.

African Leaders Share Stage in St. Petersburg

By SANDRA THOMPSON

On Tuesday, October 16th, Africa revolutionaries from South Africa, Sierra Leone and the U.S. spoke to local residents about their vision and work to unite and liberate Africa and African people everywhere. The audience of over 100 students and community members filled the gallery space of The Studio@620 in downtown St. Pete.

Mfanelo Skwatsha, member of the National Executive Council of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) of Azania, came direct from South Africa in the PAC's first U.S. speaking tour since the end of apartheid.

Led by Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, the PAC was the group that launched the mass protests against the pass laws that galvanized international support for the anti-apartheid movement.

Today, the poverty of the indigenous African population is worse than during apartheid. Skwatsha called for support for the



Mfanelo Skwatsha, member of the Pan Africanist Congress

PAC'S work to empower the African working class and poor peasants and to overturn the ruling African National Congress' policy of leaving 96% of arable land in the hands of foreign capital and white settlers.

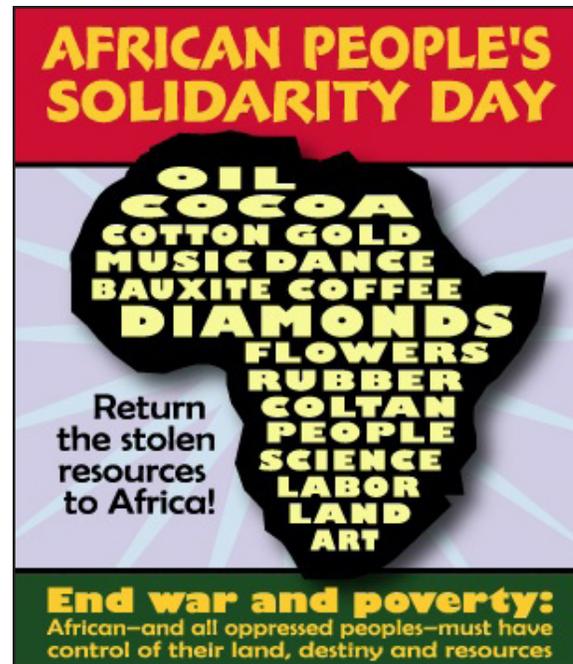
Chernoh Alpha M. Bah, former child soldier and Director of the Africanist Movement with over 100,000 members across West Africa, returned to the U.S. with news about corruption in the recent Sierra Leone elections and the failure of the regime change in Guinea-Conakry to affect change in that volatile country. The Africanist Movement is continuing its efforts to implement national democratic programs in Guinea and Sierra Leone.

The keynote speaker was Omali Yeshitela, Chairman of the African Socialist International and founder of the Uhuru Movement. Initiated into political activism during the Black Power Movement of the 1960s, Yeshitela has campaigned to complete the African liberation struggle for over 40 years.

Today, Yeshitela leads a growing international effort to unite African people throughout the world into a single nation, tearing down the colonially imposed borders in Africa and reclaiming her human and natural resources as the birthright of African people everywhere. His presentation can be downloaded from the archives of www.uhururadio.com.

Penny Hess, Chairwoman of the African People's Solidarity Committee and author of

Overturning the Culture of Violence spoke about the role and responsibility of white people in relation to the African liberation struggle. Hess said, "African People's Solidarity Day is a part of our work to rectify the reality that white wealth is founded on slavery and genocide. We seek a principled



relationship to African people — in the U.S., in Africa and around the world. We believe that an honest stand in support of the struggles of the African community — against poverty, war, police violence, and unjust imprisonment — is key to building a world of peace, justice and unity. We are about solidarity with the African struggle, not self-serving charity work. We support victory to African people!"

African People's Solidarity Day is part of a year-long campaign raising funds for African-led programs including sustainable electrification, water purification and independent media. You can donate online at www.solidarityforafrica.org. Penny Hess will be in Sarasota on Nov. 19 to speak after a film based on her book. Call (727) 824-5685 for more information.

Sarasota Should Continue to Fight to Protect Individuals' Rights

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National Roots

A nationwide grassroots movement emerged in response to the "PATRIOT" Act, spearheaded by the Bill of Rights Defense Committee (BORDC), American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and other groups.

In approving the resolution, the City of Sarasota joined approximately 180 communities that had gone on record as opposing the "PATRIOT" Act.

A Year-long Campaign

The local resolution passage was the fruit of a year-long effort that commenced in 2002, when members of the Sarasota Green Party and the Libertarian Party began discussing ways to respond to the curtailment of civil liberties. How could we best educate our community about the draconian overreach achieved in the "PATRIOT" Act? Inspired by the success and grassroots leadership of the Massachusetts-based BORDC, local organizers decided to try to get a resolution passed by the City of Sarasota, as it seemed to be the best vehicle behind which to conduct community education.

This Sarasota campaign coalesced under the umbrella of Sarasota Alliance for Voter Education (SAVE), a coalition of community organizations formed after the 2000 and 2002 voting debacles to promote informed participation in politics. Under the capable leadership of Viola Bernstein, SAVE included many local organizations.

Using as a template other resolutions that had already gained passage elsewhere, SAVE drafted its own resolution. The local ACLU's attorney carefully researched the "PATRIOT" Act and prepared a comprehensive resolution, which contained a concise summary of the most dangerous provisions of the "PATRIOT" Act.

SAVE organizers held several meetings with City Commissioners to gauge support, gain sponsors, and plan the timing of the campaign.

Letter writing, editorial campaigns and public fora were all part of the local effort to gain support for, and win approval of, the resolution.

The Power of Performance Art

Local organizers also used the powerful tools of political satire and live theatre to organize opposition to the "PATRIOT" Act. The "Carnival of Democracy Players," a spin-off of the then-thriving Sarasota County Green Party, wrote and performed in a satirical comedy called "Cafe America". Featuring a "stoically-outraged" Benjamin Franklin, who

The successful Sarasota effort [...] showed that common sense arguments in defense of civil liberties could win the day, even in an era of 15-second sound-bytes, political hysteria, and inflated fear of terrorism.

"got the last word," the play was performed before 300 people prior to an educational forum at New College, which included a legal presentation and Q & A. Both the play and the forum received standing ovations.

The Hearing at City Hall

All the hard-work, organizing, and more than a year's worth of community education by dedicated volunteers eventually paid off. On October 20, 2003, in a dramatic, standing-room-only public hearing inside City Hall, Sarasota City Commissioners approved, by a three-to-two vote, Resolution No. 04R-1667, which asked the Florida legislative and congressional delegations to "work to repeal certain provisions of the USA Patriot Act and to oppose the adoption of any new laws which

may limit or violate fundamental rights and liberties."

Looking Back

The successful Sarasota effort surprised many in that it showed that common sense arguments in defense of civil liberties could win the day.

Unfortunately, however, the Sarasota resolution was largely symbolic, and did not have the force of law that an ordinance does. Yet the resolution remains on the books, and it should be cited and publicized more frequently. It would be instructive, for example, to send a copy of the resolution to every City employee and police officer!

Looking Ahead

In the four years since the Sarasota resolution, daily outrages against the most basic of civil liberties have been perpetrated by the Bush Regime, often aided by a complicit congress. Ironically, virtually all of the infringements of liberty predicted in the Resolution's "Attachment A" have come to life in gruesome detail in virtually every news cycle.

Community organizers need to redouble our efforts to somehow recapture the attention of our friends and neighbors, with the simple message that "absolute power corrupts absolutely!" There's a reason why our nation's founders enshrined a separation of powers and checks and balances, and why their "sons" insisted upon the Bill of Rights; to prevent tyranny, that maims and kills democracies!

It will take a mass movement, and much more passion and sacrifice, to restore the Bill of Rights. We must prevent the dark shadow of fascism from fully descending upon this land, leaving only the residual, laughable pretense of American "freedom." Long live Habeus Corpus!

For More Info: www.bordc.org

Thousands Gather for Peace and Justice

By ADAM ROCA

In an attempt to de-centralize but simultaneously unite various elements of the growing anti-war community, United Front for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) and several other organizations sponsored actions in a dozen different cities on October 27.

As national polls indicate opposition to the war is at an all-time high (68%), the demonstrations brought more than 100,000 people to the streets in a dozen different cities across the United States. Locally, almost 3,000 people from all over the Southeastern part of the country gathered in Lake Eola Park in Orlando, FL to speak out and march for peace and justice.

According to Host Committee member, Matt De Vlieger who MC'ed the event, UFPJ decided several months ago to have regional demonstrations rather than national actions. The Host Committee chose Orlando "for its central location" on September 9, giving the group only six weeks to plan.



Photo by Ray Khan

The Speakers

Despite the limited time to plan, the event brought together a diverse crowd of speakers (including Presidential hopeful and Senator Mike Gravel), organizations with tables set up, and newcomers to the peace movement. Many focused on ending the war in Iraq for a variety of political, economic, moral, and personal reasons.

"Our own government is out of control and it's our duty to do something about it. [...] Right now we have domestic threats to our constitution. Our government is subverting the constitution", Veterans for Peace activist Scott Camil told the crowd. "We see the incredible financial burden that this illegal and immoral war has placed on current

and future tax payers." 97 year-old Peg McIntire, founder of

Grandmothers for Peace informed the rally participants, "This year alone, Florida tax payers will have paid 12 million dollars for the cost of that war."

As rain began to fall so did tears in the audience as Clifton Hicks, a member of Iraq Veteran Against the War (IVAW), took the microphone and delivered an emotional account of his experience on the battlefield. "They told me that if I wanted to survive, I would turn myself into a machine. I shut my mouth and I shut my ears and my heart. And I didn't hear the screaming of people that died, and I didn't hear the pleading of the women whose husbands we took in the night, or the motherless children who begged for food and water."

Hicks went on to say how constant fear and the mounting casualties of American troops led to atrocities against the Iraqi people, including extreme abuse, secret prisons, and indiscriminate killings. "I speak not of rumors or hearsay, or things that I have read about. I speak of things I have seen with my own two eyes and I have done with my own two hands." Finally, Hicks questioned the logic that Americans must fight enemies abroad to avoid fighting at home: "What they've never told is that the enemy is already here. And that they never came from places like Iraq, or Vietnam, or Afghanistan or Russia or any place like that. They were all born and raised right here in the US. And they all call themselves presidents and congressmen and they all live in a shitty shit hole called Washington D.C."

Going beyond a focus on the war in Iraq, some speakers chose to speak heavily on domestic issues that many feel are being made worse because of America's military involvement overseas. "We have



Clifton Hicks of the IVAW leads a group of veterans and others through downtown Orlando.

Photo by Ray Khan

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IMF/World Bank Protest in Washington D.C. Challenges Corporate Dominance Over People's Lives

By ISABEL MAIORIELLO-GALLUS

Corporate media refused to explain the reason behind this year's annual IMF/World Bank protest, barely mentioning the IMF and WB. Here is what I remember about the PURPOSE of the protest that was not aimless rioting.

The protest against the IMF/World Bank was held on October 19th-21st, 2007. The protest was organized by October Rebellion and related organizations, such as SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) and the ISO (International Socialist Organization). Media persons were present from mainstream as well as independent media sources.



Photo by Zachary Presson

The permitted march was held on Saturday beginning at 12:30. They convened at Franklin Square in downtown Washington, DC.

The protest attracted radicals from all over, including students from the New College of Florida. A group of women from Texas arrived dressed as "Diablo Bush" and another as VP Dick Cheney with a massive paper mache head. There were a few artists present. A political guitarist and a rapper were the main attractions. A group of radical cheerleaders were also present. They cheered a feminist approach to the policies of neo-liberalism that have endangered and indebted destitute women all over the world.

The protest marched to Murrow Park located in front of

the World Bank and diagonal to the IMF. A barricade of hundreds of police was present at this peaceful demonstration.

After much dancing, singing, and chanting a people's tribunal was held in the park. The speakers were from various organizations from the Global South. They came to explain

the real effects of the policies implemented by the IMF and World Bank. They spoke on behalf of the people of their countries who have not benefited from liberal trade. Their speeches are

captured below in brief, and show the other side of the neo-liberal coin. The mainstream media declined acknowledgment of these speakers and the purpose of this protest. Most

media outlets commented solely on the disruptive actions that took place Friday night in Georgetown, as well as the violent response of police to protestors who crossed the barricade in front of the World Bank. The violence of the police was resisted

with chants of "Whose Streets? Our Streets!" by the demonstrators.



Photo by Zachary Presson

Here is an attempt to accurately cover what happened at the People's Tribunal, organized by the October Rebellion during the Saturday march.

Chad

A speaker from Chad spoke out against the oil programs in his country. He stated outright that IMF/World Bank development does not work in Chad.

Structural adjustment programs are the policies IMF and World Bank use to make oil a factor of growth in Chad. However, Chevron, Exxon and other foreign companies own Chad's oil exports. He said that, "oil has never been a tool for development in Africa".



Photo by Zachary Presson

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Immigrant Rights Rally

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Inside the church, Dobbs expounded on his views. “If we cannot preserve ourselves as a nation of laws, we’re lost,” he said. “We’ve got to start thinking about Americans.” The chants of “No human is illegal!” echoed from the street.



Word of the rally brought several dozen counter-protestors/Lou Dobbs supporters.

Andrew Foley, owner of Sarasota News and Books, booked Dobbs to appear through the Sarasota Reading Festival and Forum Truth. “We don’t editorialize as a bookstore and we don’t editorialize as a festival,” Foley said. “Lou is a top-ticket name.” Dobbs is currently on national tour for a new book, *Independents Day*.

Organizers of the protest said they wanted to use Lou Dobbs’ presence in Sarasota to bring attention to broader issues surrounding immigrants’ rights.

Jose Godinez-Samperio, a protest organizer, pointed out that immigrants from Canada and Europe do not receive the level of hostility that those from Latin America do. “I think it sends a very clear message—what border we want the fence on,” Godinez-Samperio said.

“The word ‘immigration’ distracts from other things like

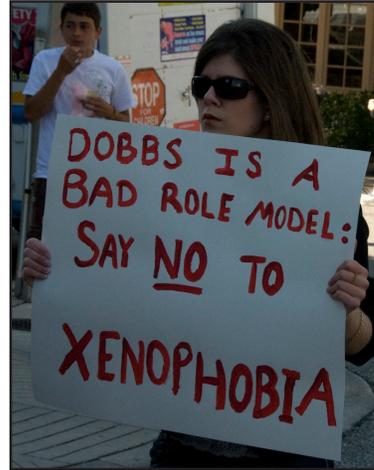


Photo by Zachary Presson

colonialism, labor issues and race issues,” said Adam Roca, another protest organizer.

They prepared with a bilingual approach, appearing on local radio station WSLR and area Spanish-language stations. They spoke to churches with predominately Spanish-speaking congregations, and alerted the Sarasota Herald-Tribune.

“Any kind of political action I feel raises political awareness,” Roca said. “One thing I want to see come out of the rally is creating a network for immigration issues. We’re trying to make it easier for people interested in this to connect with each other.”

For more info on the coalition for immigrant rights, contact Jose Godinez: 813-600-0004

Iraqi Genocide

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Other than the Israel Lobby, the greatest supporters of Bush’s wars are Christian evangelicals, specifically the “rapture evangelicals” and the “Christian Zionists.”

I remember when Christianity was about saving one’s soul. Today it is about bringing on Armageddon. While the various evangelical Christians preach war in the Middle East, they condemn Islam for being a “warlike religion.”

Americans are so full of themselves that they are blind to their extraordinary hypocrisy.

The US government has broken every agreement with Russia by withdrawing from the anti-ballistic missile treaty, pushing

NATO to Russia’s borders, conniving to place missiles in Poland and the Czech Republic, and buying governments in former Soviet republics and installing US military bases therein.

When Russian President Putin finally has enough and

terrorism that worries everyone else. The rest of the world knows that the wars are about US and Israeli hegemony and that the US and Israel are prepared to engage in whatever acts of terror are necessary to achieve hegemony.

That is the bare fact.

Americans claim that they are fighting wars against terrorism, but it is US and Israeli terrorism that worries everyone else.

protests, the US Secretary of State blames Putin for being difficult and restarting the cold war.

Few Americans realize it, but they take the cake.

International polls show that the rest of the world regard the US and Israel as the greatest dangers to world peace. Americans claim that they are fighting wars against terrorism, but it is US and Israeli

When the US dollar loses its reserve currency status, the US empire will come to an abrupt end. Sooner or later the rest of the world will realize this and, in an act of self-protection, dethrone the dollar.

Paul Craig Roberts can be reached at: PaulCraigRoberts@yahoo.com

COMMENTARY**On Illegal Immigration****By JOSE GODINEZ**

Since the 1980s, institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have imposed an economic model on countries, such as Mexico, that has completely failed. Since the U. S. provides much of the funding for these institutions, it has a strong influence on the policy of those institutions. Many farmers and small businesses in Mexico have been displaced by foreign multinational companies. In turn, this hurt the people that the farmers and businesses employed, because they had to look for jobs elsewhere which often weren't there. In northern Mexico, foreign companies established manufacturing plants; but when the workers became unionized and demanded better wages, the companies looked where labor was even cheaper (i.e., China).

The result was that many people have had to emigrate from Mexico to the U. S. Mexico is just one of numerous examples in Latin America where the U. S. has imposed free trade and displaced sectors within those countries' economies.

The hypocrisy of politicians who advocate enforcement of our current immigration laws cannot be overstated. Regardless of how one feels about the controversial issue, enforcing our current immigration laws would lead to disaster. For example, there would be a huge vacuum of workers to pick the harvest. Opponents might argue

To join the struggle for Immigrant Rights, join the local list serve by emailing ManasotaImmigrantRights-subscribe@yahoo.com and/or come to the Coalition of Immigrant Rights meetings.

For More Info Call: 813-600-0004

legal U. S. workers would easily be able to fill those gaps. If that assertion is true, then companies without a labor-force would have to increase wages dramatically to induce legal U. S. workers to work for them. Those companies would no longer be able to make as much of a profit from sales because they would have to pay their workers so much. To continue making the the profits that they used to make, they would have to raise the prices on fruits, vegetables, and countless other items. Food would no longer be affordable for many people, and smaller companies would go bankrupt.

I think politicians are aware of these consequences. When Alan Greenspan was chair of the Federal Reserve, he repeatedly pushed for a comprehensive immigration reform that would legalize millions of undocumented workers. If undocumented workers are such an important sector of our economic infrastructure, then what do politicians gain by advocating enforcement of laws to disastrous effect? They gain popularity and clout. Meanwhile, undocumented workers undergo constant harassment by U. S. authorities and lead lives full of fear.

Undocumented immigrants contribute more than their cheap labor. The New York Times says they also contribute \$6-7 billion per year in Social Security, without being eligible for tax returns or being able to claim them in any way. In Florida, state taxes come from what people buy. Illegal or legal, everyone pays the Florida state tax. What would happen if undocumented immigrants no longer paid that tax because we happen to have

deported them, enforcing our current immigration laws?

What about the niche markets that companies such as Wal-Mart, Publix, and countless others have been tapping into for years by providing Latin American products in their store? What would happen if the estimated 12-20 million undocumented immigrants (most of whom are Latin American) were no longer there to buy those products? Products directed at Latin Americans are just an example of the things that they buy. Stores would surely lose a significant portion of their markets if undocumented immigrants were not there.

In Florida, the legislature has recently been having problems because the state tax comes from the things people buy, and recently, people have not been buying as much. One of the reasons is that

Undocumented immigrants contribute more than their cheap labor. The New York Times says they also contribute \$6-7 billion per year in Social Security, without being eligible for tax returns or being able to claim them in any way

undocumented immigrants do not have access to driver's permits, and they are afraid of immigration raids. Since undocumented immigrants do not have access to driver's permits, they are afraid to come out to businesses and buy things, because they are subject to police harassment and subject to being taken to jail and deported if they do not have a valid driver's permit. They are also afraid to come out because of immigration raids. Mexican businesses are taking the hardest hit. They are losing 40%-60% profit and some have even gone bankrupt.

In conclusion, it would help our economy to legalize undocumented immigrants and to change our international policy so that people are not forced to emigrate.

Orlando Peace Rally reveals a Growing Movement, Focus on Issues Going Beyond Iraq

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enough problems over here that we need to solve”, said Lucas Benitez, member of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. Denise Diaz, part of Central Florida Jobs with Justice raised awareness on issues such as the underfunded school systems, people fighting for their pensions, and affordable housing. She told the crowd, “A war over there is a war over here. The war is breaking up working families.”

The final speaker of the day was Michael Albert, activist since the 60’s and founder of Z magazine. He spelled out the importance of the connection between the war and other issues most succinctly: “Some of you might not like the idea that at an anti-war demonstration that people talk about other things: about racism, about sexism, about wage slavery, about power and control over our lives. But that’s the way to end the war because that’s what they are trying to advance by pursuing the war: their control over our lives”.

The March

After hours of listening to speakers on stage, the crowd finally took to the streets, marching down a three-mile loop in downtown Orlando. As the demonstrators walked past curious onlookers, they chanted “Peace Now!”, “9/11 was chanted “Peace Now!”, “9/11 was an inside job!”, “Whose Streets? Our Streets!” and others to express their views.

During a brief stretch of the march, peace activists were met with about 100 angry counter-protestors. Most of the people were from from the Gathering of Eagles, a group that regularly shows up to oppose peace rallies and whose mission statement includes “We will accept nothing less than total, unqualified victory in the current conflict. Surrender is not an option, nor is defeat”. Many Eagles screamed profanities at the marchers and shot them the middle finger. Mounted police stood in between the two groups to prevent any kind of confrontation.

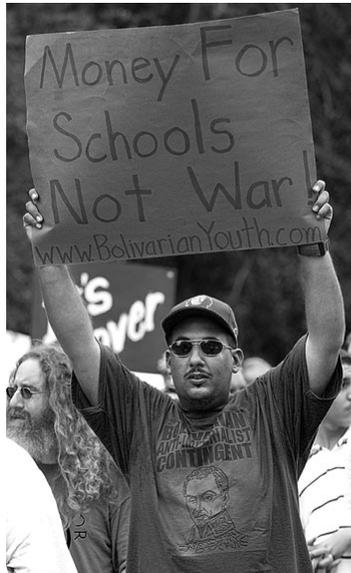


Photo by Danny Hammondtree

What started as a drizzle eventually turned to a torrential downpour and soaked the marchers as they neared the park. There, some people danced to music, played in the mud and delivered spoken word while others cleaned up the area and broke down tents.

Finally, what had shortly before been a space filled with lively peace and justice advocates of all ages, colors, and creeds was now pools of water and overflowing trashcans. I was left wondering what significance the event had.

The Movement

In a way, October 27 can be seen as merely a single day where for a few brief hours, people gathered from all over the Southeast United States to listen to each other talk and walk down the street chanting slogans and holding signs. However, for many the day also represented a deepening of a commitment to end the war and fight for justice. After four years of billions of dollars spent, more than a million people

dead, and war drums beating in the direction of Iran, demonstrators saw the event as an integral part in a continuous struggle for change.

“Every little thing adds up”, said Marco Bell, Code Pink Sarasota activist. “It seems insignificant at times the efforts we put forth. It seems like maybe it won’t matter. But, I believe on a collective whole the total sum of all the parts will make a difference.”

Julia Aires, Sarasota Green Party member also noted how the event helped people come together: “I’ve seen people that I haven’t seen in years.” Mauricio, of St. Pete for Peace pointed out that the event attracted new faces as well as old: “it seems like the peace and justice movement is growing. It seems like a lot of people who haven’t done anything before have joined us”. But Mauricio wanted continued movement in that direction: “I would like to see more people because we all get affected.”

Getting more people involved was exactly what UFPJ had in mind when planning the event. “Another big thing, as organizers, is to bring people involved who aren’t traditionally involved in the anti-war movement. [...] One of the groups that were involved was Jobs with justice, part of the AFL-CIO, so we got the endorsement of labor. We also wanted to reach out to groups of faith”, said De Vlieger. He added, “A good core of our group is very radical”, including members of the Orlando chapter of the New Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), a national organization that De Vlieger helped to form in recent years. “More than half of the organizing committee was made up of students and most of them were SDS folks”.

When asked about future plans and actions, De Vlieger responded, “This is endless [...] its radicalizing for a lot of people.” He points out that, “there’s a poll online to ask people what they want to do next [...] a lot of people want to some sort of civil disobedience”.

IMF/World Bank Policies Have Devastated Countries' Economies

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Before the World Bank and IMF got involved they decided that "oil revenue should help the poor in Chad". That is why structural adjustment programs by the World Bank began to liberalize the exportation of oil in a supposed attempt to help the poor of Chad. In 2005, the law was changed to use oil resources without the IMF and World Bank involved. Eventually, NGO's looked into what happened and found that the "completion report" by the IMF and World Bank was false. Both a Cameroonian NGO and an American NGO published their own "non-completion" report what kind of development really occurred in Chad. They stated that the structural adjustments programs did not help development in Africa, rather they stole natural resources.

The speaker said, "development needs to be driven by the people, not the top".

Cambodia Women's Agenda for Change:

A Cambodian woman spoke out about the poverty of sex workers and rural working women in Cambodia. She said their poverty has been the result of privatization, not the result of natural disasters. It is the privatization promoted by the

free market conditions of the WB/IMF that cause the poverty of the women in Cambodia.

She said, "The music's same, but the songs' change", while describing the kinds of programs and policies her government practices under the auspices of the IMF/WB. She also said, "We are human beings', we know how to survive, we don't need the IMF/WB telling us how to do that".

India

A man working with indigenous forest people in India spoke on their behalf. Indigenous people are 8% of the Indian population. They work and live in the forest. Since the 1980's onward, the World Bank and IMF have been implementing programs in the forest. One program, the social forest program created monoculture plantations which was not beneficial to the workers or even to the market, leaving the products more vulnerable to depressions in prices. Another program, the joint forest management program was also detrimental to the indigenous workers in the forest.

Finally, another program, having to do with offsetting carbon emissions, resulted in the buying of

carbon credit by foreign investors and not having any real benefit to the forest dwellers in India where the program was implemented.

El Salvador:

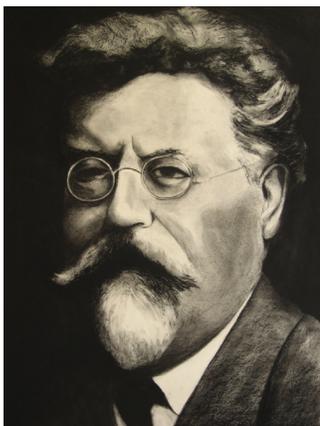
In 2001, "dollarization" was forced on the El Salvadorian economy. In the process, the national currency, the colon, was ousted and in 2007, this resulted in massive inflation that caused extreme poverty in much of the country.

Consequently, agriculture is too expensive to pursue as a mean of making a living. The cost of fertilizer and the machinery needed to work the farms has become too expensive due to dollarization. Today, five hundred people per day flee El Salvador.

So, what is the purpose of all this? There is so much information available on the disruptiveness and ineffectiveness of the IMF and World Bank. The lack of alternative nominations, regressive tax policies, structural adjustment programs, and scandalous business practices are the least. The effect these policies have had on individuals around the world is unacceptable and immoral. As one protestor chalked on the sidewalk in front of the police barricade, "The beatings will continue until morale improves".

For More info: www.50years.org

Anarchist Portraits by GUSTAVO ROCA



Rudolf Rocker
Theorist & Historian



Emiliano Zapata
Mexican Revolutionary



Emma Goldman
Russian-American Feminist

Despite popular belief, anarchism is not about violence and chaos. Rather, its about people peacefully coexisting and having control over their own lives.

To learn more about the theory of anarchism and how it can inform our struggle for a more equitable, just and fulfilling world, come to the Theory of Anarchism Reading Group every Monday @ 6 pm at the Four Winds Cafe on New College Campus. Call Empire for more info: 941-536-5085