

October 5, 2001

Dear Friends:

As we immersed ourselves in the fightback to Bush's war against terrorism, we felt the need to get our political bearings as leftists. So we organized a discussion attended by 27 diverse left activists in the Bay Area on Sept. 30, the main points of which we share here.

Below are the main points and the presentations by Max Elbaum and Bob Wing which kicked off a wide-ranging and open-ended discussion. We are interested to hear your comments and to find ways to move this discussion forward together.

Ad Hoc Committee: Elizabeth (Betita) Martinez, Cindy Wiesner, Max Elbaum, Edget Betru, Harmony Goldberg, Clarissa Rojas, John Trinkl, Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, Hany Khalil, Bob Wing

Main Hypotheses

1. September 11, and the Bush administration's reaction to it, is a defining historical moment, ushering in a new and dangerous period in international politics.

Washington's agenda is to entrench the national security state and a new level of international dominance on the basis of a permanent war on terrorism--bringing the "new world order" to fruition.

2. The defining political axis of this new period is Washington's international war on terrorism--and the fight against it. This is similar to the central political role the Cold War played in earlier times. Other struggles will certainly continue, even taking center stage from time to time, but they will be reshaped and connected by the war danger. The political and ideological balance of forces, demands, and outcomes of all struggles will be affected by this central issue, to one degree or another.

3. Given this, the fight for peace should be the central demand for the people's movements. The fight for peace can unite very broad and diverse layers of the population. However, peace is not a centrist, liberal demand, but in fact is central to an anti-imperialist agenda. Its main content is that of staying the hand of imperialist war and fighting US militarism in all its forms.

4. War and racism are the sharpest expressions of Washington's agenda in this period. They are the principal features of the Bush program of permanent war against terrorism at home and abroad, and the key particularities of U.S. capitalism and American politics. The intersection or relationship between war and racism, and between war and racism and all other issues needs to be clarified in order to strategically guide ongoing political work on all issues in the new period, and to link them together into a powerful opposition to Bush's war drive.

5. The pressing need is for broad coalitions of everyone who is for peace and freedom, against the racist war drive, the attacks on civil liberties, democracy and social programs. To be most effective and lasting, these broad fronts should be anchored by fighting organizations based in communities of color, labor, women, lesbians/gays, and other oppressed sectors. Movements among students, youth, seniors, and religious folk will also be critical in this period, and may even run ahead of some of the oppressed sectors.

6. The U.S. left is politically endangered and ill-prepared for this new situation, but has a critical role to play. We are challenged to reorient ourselves to the mass politics of the current political situation, break out of narrow strongholds and historically outdated fights, and build left unity in the course of working in the broader fronts.

Presentation 1:

War and Peace as the New Axis of Politics

By Max Elbaum

Max is a longtime activist and author of *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che*, forthcoming from Verso.

1. A Historical Turning Point

The attacks of September 11 and the Bush administration's reaction to them mark a historical turning point. Washington's agenda is to entrench a national security state and a new level of international dominance on the basis of a long-term, open-ended "war against terrorism."

The "international war on terrorism" will be the axis that defines politics and shapes all social struggles for many years to come. The contours and demands of all struggles, the balance of forces waging them, and their outcomes will be intertwined with this central confrontation between the "war on terrorism" and the fight to end it.

In reality, this is not a "war on terrorism" at all. It is a war on whomever Washington considers an enemy. Some designated enemies truly are terrorists and reactionaries. But many on the US hit list will be progressive movements for national liberation and/or social justice. And many terrorists - both states that practice terrorism (Israel) and non-governmental terrorist organizations - are already enlisted on Washington's side.

2. A Long-Term, Across-the-Board Program

The September 11 attacks were criminal terrorist acts of mass murder. Those who perpetrated them should be brought to justice under international law.

Politically, the attacks handed Washington an opportunity to seize the initiative. The administration is moving to set the "war on terrorism" in place institutionally and in every aspect of economic, social, political and cultural life. The Bush team and the ruling elite in general have been up-front about this goal from day one, and they have conducted an all-out propaganda campaign to imprint the "war on terrorism" framework in everyone's mind.

But this ideological offensive is only one part of a multi-leveled program. Other key features of which include: another leap in money and resources going to the military; a largely successful campaign to integrate the military and intelligence services of more and more countries into a US-led global apparatus; a "homeland security office" and new repressive legislation that pose a tremendous threat to democratic rights and civil liberties; a complete turnaround on encouraging trends that had been underway on immigration policy; massive regression on racial profiling; and much more.

There is nothing short term about the new arrangements being put in place. This is a long-term program, which will reshape politics and also transform what is considered "normal" day to day life in the US.

It is also no surprise that in this new institutional/policy constellation, the questions of war and racism come to the fore and stand at the cutting edge of international and domestic polarization. This happens in every crisis because it is built into the structure of the system we are up against.

3. Similarities to the Cold War/End of a Transitional Period

With Bush's program taking center-stage, the coming period will resemble the Cold War years more than it will resemble the last decade. During the Cold War all struggles were waged in the context of - were affected and shaped by - the deep, nuclear-war-threatening conflict of imperialism vs. the Soviet-led bloc and the national liberation movements allied with or supported by it. Since that period ended, things have been fluid, in transition, with no single prism through which everything was filtered.

The new "war on terrorism" package builds on tendencies from the transitional years since the end of the Cold War. But September 11 marks one of those instances when "quantity goes to quality" and something new comes into being. In that sense, September 11 will go down as the symbolic end of a transition period that began, symbolically, with the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall.

Since 1989 Washington has been trying to set the terms of the post-Cold War world.

Beginning with the Gulf War Washington proclaimed its "New World Order" and sought to legitimize US use of military force anywhere; consolidate US economic hegemony via corporate-led globalization, the IMF, World Bank, WTO and other institutions. It generally tried to create a "fortress America," a "gated country", where at least the well-off and white section of the populace is shielded by economic policies, resegregation, military force and the "prison-industrial complex" from all the problems of poverty, disease, misery and violence. These were foisted on "the other" - the peoples of the Third World and the dispossessed inside the US, overwhelming people of color.

But in the last decade the total agenda of the right - full-scale militarization, unilateral bullying, repression and racial regression - was not adopted by the entire ruling elite, and the majority of the US population was opposed to the right's program. Now, in the wake of September 11, the main debates within the elite have been settled in favor of the right (at least for the time being) and large sectors of the masses have been rallied around the reactionary agenda. For sure the differences that existed in the past period will resurface. But they will do so in this new context.

4. Unfavorable Balance of Forces

As the "war on terrorism" begins, the balance of forces is extremely unfavorable. A comparison with the Cold War period puts this into focus. The Cold War was a straitjacket on social progress and revolutionary change, but in that time there were powerful socialist countries, a strong constellation of national liberation movements and, especially from the 1960s, relatively large workers and progressive movements in the imperialist heartlands. Despite many tensions, conflicts, structural defects and policy blunders, these mainly operated in tandem and acted as a counterweight to imperialist freedom of action. But the main power centers opposed to imperialism are now much weaker or altogether gone.

Further complicating the situation, in the prime region under imperialist gunsights the main forces opposing US policy right now are regressive, authoritarian groups, so-called "Islamic Fundamentalists." The region's left has been shattered, much of it physically destroyed by some combination of imperialism and these reactionary local organizations. The left is not quite as weak in most other parts of the world, but almost nowhere does it hold the initiative it held a few decades ago.

5. A New Kind of War - and What It Will Take to End It

Adding further danger, this "war on terrorism" will be a new kind of war - "ongoing but not continuous" and, as Washington has already proclaimed, fought largely "in the shadows." This war will see a new mix of military force - air and missile attacks, commando raids, likely ground troops and possibly tactical nuclear weapons - and it is not likely to be one continuous campaign but a series of spurts. And military action per se will only be one part. The war will also be fought by diplomats, financial institutions, domestic police and intelligence agencies, and the

media, all of which will be brought under tighter government control in the process. Arrests and assassinations will take place in secret, from New York to Hamburg as well as in Cairo and Islamabad.

What will it take to bring this “war on terrorism” to an end? History shows that when an across-the-board program like this is implemented, it is stopped only when it results in undisguisable failure. In Vietnam, it took military defeat on the ground, massive protest and the danger of even greater disaffection at home, international isolation and economic decline to force the US out.

What events might lead to US failure today? Washington getting bogged down in a long, bloody ground war in Afghanistan? Inability to stop continuous terrorist attacks inside the US? A massive economic downturn? Pakistan falling apart with nuclear weapons spreading all over the place?

The administration is aware of these dangers and anxious to avoid them. That’s why it is being so deliberate before launching military assaults. Washington wants to fight a focused and controllable war. But the rub is in the law of unintended consequences, and especially the way that law operates when imperialism goes to war. The point is, even beyond the death, repression and heightened racism that will come from a "controlled" offensive, the “war on terrorism” - like the Cold War - has the potential of spinning totally out of control and leading to catastrophic human disaster.

To summarize so far: We've entered a new period, in which the "war on terrorism" will be the centerpiece of an all-round, longterm program of the US government to subordinate every force in the world to its will and to beat back every struggle for democracy, equality and liberation. This program threatens to bring worldwide catastrophe in the process. This war and opposition to it will be the central axis of politics for years to come.

6. The Fight for Peace Is Central

To meet the threats of this new "war on terrorism" world, the fight for peace - that is, opposing, limiting and ultimately stopping this war - must be at the center of the left's agenda.

Effectively functioning in a period where the over-riding axis of politics is war vs. peace is going to be hard for many of us to learn to do. For the last ten years we've functioned in a very different kind of period. Activists radicalized during the Gulf War or after don't have experience with anything else, and the older veterans have gotten use to the absence of one over-riding focus.

Further, many of us older folks who were activists during the Cold War didn't understand the real nature of that period and the centrality of the fight for peace during it. A big section of the '60s radical generation, for instance, tended to see

international solidarity with armed struggle movements as what leftists were really supposed to do, and saw the fight for peace as distraction from that: demanding peace was for liberals, demanding revolution was for radicals. It's very common that leftists of all generations who have been through numerous study groups or workshops on racism, sexism, homophobia, imperialism, the state, and maybe even the revolutionary party have participated in few if any theoretical discussions on war and peace.

7. Why Peace Is Integral to the Left's Outlook and Program

The fight for peace has always been an integral part of the socialist movement's aims. First, for the basic reason that we fight for a better life for people, and war is always a humanitarian disaster, involving tremendous suffering and death. It is always the laboring classes and the oppressed peoples who supply the casualties - both military and civilian - and who pay the heaviest human and economic consequences.

There is another level as well: the left is on the side of the majority, and military force, violence and war are essentially weapons wielded by ruling elites to keep the majority under their thumb. The more we can restrict the use of violence and military force, the better prospects the majority have to advance all our struggles, from struggles for democratic rights to battles for national liberation to the fight to replace capitalism with socialism.

For most of the left this basic framework hasn't translated into complete pacifism. In many situations most anti-capitalists have seen the need to resort to armed rebellion or war in order to combat the use of force by imperialist, capitalist or fascist states or their contra armies. But the traditional position of Marxist and socialist forces has been that the more struggle can be moved out of the realm of military force and violence into the realm of peaceful and political struggle, the better. The fundamental radical posture is against war and for peace.

In different periods, this posture has translated into different practical policies. The history of the left's concrete policies regarding war and peace is too long to go into here. But because the Cold War period and the "war on terrorism" period have significant similarities, it is helpful to examine a few features from that time.

8. The Fight for Peace in the Cold War Era

The Cold War era was also the nuclear era, and the main thrust of the fight for peace was to check and reverse the imperialist-driven arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race, stave off nuclear war, and generally fight for the settlement of all conflicts between states by peaceful means. This fight for peace could potentially enlist all those interested in human survival, since in Cold War/nuclear conditions, all wars had the potential to escalate into a species-threatening conflagration.

Peace also set the best conditions for the victory of national liberation movements, for economic development in Third World and socialist countries, and for advancing democratic and working class struggles everywhere. The reason is that militarization, military interventionism and the threat of massive war was one of imperialism's main weapons, if not its main weapon, against these struggles. Thus, the mainstream of the revolutionary movement held that there was a close and essential link between the fight for peace and the fight for social progress and revolution.

In the US and other imperialist countries, this stance translated into efforts to build the broadest possible fronts for peace, anti-militarism and anti-intervention. The "independent revolutionary line" focused on solidarity with the revolutionary forces whom imperialism was intervening against. At periods when escalation and world war threatened imminently - which were latent at every point during the Cold War - the centrality of the fight for peace was very clear, for example during the Cuban Missile Crisis or Reagan's deployment of Euromissiles in the early 1980s.

But a lot of the time the danger of world war seemed very much in the background, especially to US youth radicalized beginning after 1963 and who were focused on the civil rights/anti-racist struggle and then the war in Vietnam. This was a key reason many of us from the '60s generation ignored or downplayed the fight for peace and focused only on solidarity with armed national liberation movements and advocacy of revolution, even though many revolutionary parties - the Vietnamese in particular - told us this was one-sided and wrong.

This legacy must be overcome because now the fight for peace comes to the fore perhaps even more than during the Cold War. Even the mainstream press has reported on the dreadful consequences likely to flow from even "limited" use of military force in the Middle East: millions of refugees, starvation on a massive scale and environmental catastrophe. And the conflict may spread, involving military action in a host of countries, small-group terrorism everywhere that is capable of mass murder, and the use of nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction.

The other side of this tremendous danger is that the demand for peace can attract extremely broad support. Millions from all over the world, of all classes and strata, are sympathetic to the idea that in today's "global village," "there will be security for all or security for none." That in an era where a handful of individuals can wreak mass destruction. Where we have "war without borders," no one is safe unless there is global peace.

9. The Fight for Peace and the Overall Anti-Imperialist Agenda

In and of itself, then, raising the demand for peace is integral to the anti-imperialist agenda and a key aspect of defending the interests - and very lives - of the majority. But it is also the left's entryway to explain that the way to achieve global peace is to ensure global justice, to eliminate the exploitation and misery that leads to conflict,

war - and terrorism. Further, as long as the "war on terrorism" locks down struggles all over the planet, no struggle for social progress, against racism, or for national liberation is likely to get very far. And the odds that any revolution anywhere could succeed while Washington has a "war on terrorism" blank check to use military force are virtually zero.

A knottier issue is how to formulate the left's "independent" anti-imperialist perspective. In the past a key focus has been concrete solidarity with revolutionaries in other countries and advocacy of revolutionary change at home. But this is extremely hard to do when there are few strong revolutionary forces out there to be in solidarity with. Of course we are in solidarity with the peoples of the rest of the world, but this is largely abstract in the absence of strong left movements actually leading the peoples' struggles.

Another complexity is that many of the worst instances of killing and oppression in today's world, such as so-called "ethnic conflicts" - while having roots in the relations forged by imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism - are not directly carried out by imperialist or even pro-imperialist forces. Many feature several varieties of "bad guys" and few if any "good guys," And we are nowhere near revolution here; indeed, we have been set back further and face the protracted task of weakening and then defeating an aggressive right wing that has just gained new confidence and initiative.

Under these circumstances, we need to be as creative and skilled as possible at taking advantage of the openings that exist on the "why is America so hated" question, and the "why is there so much conflict in the Middle East" question. We need to draw out the links between US foreign policy, Israeli apartheid, and the underlying structures of imperialism, white supremacy, sexism and all forms of oppression. The special challenge is to make such arguments as concrete as possible, link them to ongoing struggles abroad and at home, and steadily widen the base for the left as we widen the broader front for peace.

To summarize: the fight for peace - the fight to check, limit and end the "war on terrorism" - is now thrust central to the agenda of every left, progressive and democratic force. That fight is an anti-imperialist, revolutionary task in itself, and being in the forefront of the fight for peace is crucial for step-by-step advancing the entire democratic and anti-imperialist agenda.

Presentation 2:

A Talk about War, Racism, United Fronts, and the Left

By Bob Wing

Bob is a longtime activist and the former editor of *ColorLines* magazine.

1. Of War and Racism

In our other paper, we argued that the struggle for peace--to stop Bush's war on terrorism--will be the overarching political issue of this new period. That struggle will reshape and be connected to all other ongoing fights for economic and social progress. However, it is crucial to recognize that the war program cannot be effectively combated without identifying the intimate connection between war and racism. Bush's program is a racist war against terrorism.

It is racist in at least the following ways.

The brunt of attack is aimed at and will be borne by innocent people of color, especially in the Arab world and South Asia. They are being demonized as "terrorists" and "fundamentalist Muslims" whose lives are dispensable. Bush's New World Order is clearly based on supremacy of the white west, led by the U.S., against colored enemies, even though the alliance includes some third world governments as junior partners. Had the U.S. been attacked by the Irish Republican Army or the Italian Red Brigades, it would never have declared war against Ireland or Italy. The war on terrorism is "justified" by the government and in public opinion because its targets are countries and peoples of color.

Bush is also waging his war inside the U.S. It is already marked by curbs on civil liberties, democratic rights, and social programs in order to build and finance the national security state. However, it is politically critical to see that the sharpest attacks are purposefully targeted at people of color--that it, too, is thoroughly racist. Already, racial profiling is being openly justified. Immigration policy is being rolled back. Police, military, security, and intelligence agencies are being expanded and given new authority, resources, and freedom of action to detain, spy upon, and act against "enemies." And many people of color, especially those who appear to be Arab, Muslim or South Asian, are being attacked verbally and physically by citizens.

Bush's redesigned military industrial complex is giving fresh impulse to the already out-of-control prison industrial complex. Just as the War on Drugs was finally being slowed, the war on terrorism is taking its place. Bush's anti-people program is being justified and disguised by targeting people of color first and foremost, gating the affluent white communities, and appealing to racist patriotism.

Finally, Bush's program rests on the politics of racism. To keep political and ideological momentum for his program, Bush must effect a decisive shift rightwards in the electorate and public opinion, a task that his father failed to accomplish. He must strengthen the Republican right, win a significant section of the "middle ground" of white suburban voters, and split off at least 5-10% of people of color, labor, and women--his strongest opponents. His main card to do is racist patriotism. Bush lost the popular vote and his approval rating was languishing prior to September 11. Now the Administration is riding high by whipping up a paroxysm of

fear and patriotism, centered among but not limited to white people, to support its program. Those who oppose the Bush program will be labeled un-American and anti-patriotic, if not outright enemies. That ideological campaign, combined with coercion and bribes, will be used to try to split communities of color and will present a formidable challenge to progressives of color and all anti-war forces.

At times of political lull, politics tend to flatten out and all issues start to look equal. But almost invariably the sharpening of political struggle in the U.S. focuses on war and racism. This is because war and racism are the sharpest expressions of the historical contradictions of U.S. capitalism: it was founded on war against Native peoples, expanded by war against Mexico, and built on racist slavery and coerced labor. Moreover, a cross-class white consensus, legalized until the 1960s but still powerful thereafter, has been the political basis of capitalist rule in this country from its origins. War and racism are twin pillars of U.S. capitalism, historically and today.

2. New Links, New Intersections

This does not mean that other struggles and issues will somehow disappear. At times, issues of the economy, gender, health care, or the environment may regain center stage. But they will all now be inextricably connected to the fight over the racist war on terrorism. The war issue will affect the ideological fights, political balance of forces, and tactical terrain of all social and political struggles, to one degree or another.

This challenges all progressive fighters to understand the concrete intersections, links, and relationships between war and racism, and between war and racism on the one hand, and all other issues. Issues like how gender violence is linked to war and racism, how war and racism destroy the environment, the effect of war and racism on the economy, etc. will become crucial. We need to re-strategize the ongoing struggles so that they become part of the fight against Bush's program, and also so that the fight against Bush's program strengthens the fights on all the various issues. For example, pundits are already setting about trying to blame the end of the unprecedented eight years of economic prosperity on the September 11 attacks and to link an economic recovery to funding the war on terrorism.

3. Broad Coalitions Anchored by the Oppressed: Strategic Challenges

Above all, we urgently need to build broad coalitions of all who desire peace and freedom and against the attacks on civil liberties, social programs, women, immigrants, economic and social security, that can check and ultimately defeat the Bush program. These coalitions will be strongest and most lasting to the extent they are anchored by communities of color, labor, women, lesbians/gays and other oppressed sectors. Building the unity and fighting capacity of these sectors is critical. However, students, youth, religious folk, and intellectuals also have key roles to play and their movements may sometimes be more advanced than others, as

we saw especially during the early phases of the anti-Vietnam War movement.

One of the key strategic challenges we face will be to re-strategize/politicize the fights in each sector and issue around their intersections (back and forth) with war & racism. This will be incredibly challenging, as up to now the fightbacks in different sectors and issues are narrowly focused on their unique angle and isolated from one another. The struggles for peace and those for racial justice, for example, tend to be completely separate--domestic and international/foreign policy issues are virtually "foreign" to each other.

Few racial justice groups deal with "foreign policy," and most are ill-prepared to do so. Careful and protracted educational work and reorientation of work is urgently needed. Moreover, many racial justice groups, as well as many other progressive formations, are dependent on funders who may not be so progressive and who will undoubtedly come under political pressure to defund "non-patriotic" groups. That tangle must be negotiated according to the conditions of each group, but negotiated with political courage and conviction. Fighting pro-war patriotism, a trend that has always existed in the communities of color, will not be easy. Racial justice activists will also be challenged to take on the task of organizing in churches which are perhaps the largest organizations in the black and Latino communities.

One of the most powerful movements, the labor movement, has moved leftward over the past decade (even though the percentage of workers it represents has declined), but can it sustain that motion in the face of Bush's war? The issues of war and racism have always been the Achilles heels of the labor movement. Although this is not the same backwards labor movement whose mainstream supported the Vietnam War almost to the end, the left and progressives in labor will face a bitter fight on these issues. Undoubtedly the Administration and its corporate allies will be major factors in that fight. Even before Sept. 11, Bush and his allies had taken dead aim at labor, understanding the key role it plays in the popular opposition, especially in politics. An anti-war labor movement is critical to defeating the Bush program.

Some other strategic challenges are:

How do we simultaneously massify ongoing fights on particular issues at the same time that we build a united movement for peace and freedom? We must continue to work on all fronts and take advantage of the new circumstances to broaden and enlarge those fronts. At the same time, we want to link into a united movement against Bush's program. However, some who support our ongoing issues may not be ready to take on war and/or racism. How do we handle the political problems that come up?

How do we continue our ongoing fights yet prepare for lightning, emergency anti-war mobilizations? Bush has promised a constant but not continuous war. We must learn to move back and forth as needed, and to prepare our supporters to do so as

well.

How do we become a force in actual (electoral) politics? We cannot check, let alone defeat, the war drive unless we can become a real factor in the political equation, just as we did during the Vietnam War. Moreover, if the powers that be remain united behind Bush, they cannot be stopped. We must learn to encourage splits among our opponents, to win allies, and to bring an anti-war base into politics.

4. Of United and Popular Fronts

Historically, much of the left has relied on the concepts united front and popular front to strategically orient their work. In Marxist lexicon, the united front means the uniting of different political forces within the working class on a common program. The popular front has meant organizing a multi-class front. Traditionally the united front has politics to the left of the popular front. In my opinion, these concepts have limited use today in the U.S.

Since the 1950s progressive politics in the U.S. have no longer been concentrated in the trade union movement. Instead, multi-class movements like the movements of peoples of color, the women's movement, the anti-war movement and others have come into being and generally had more progressive politics than the trade union movement. In this situation, the concepts united front and popular front, as traditionally understood, do not help.

On the other hand, a different understanding of united front has come into being since the 1960s, one which simply means to unite all who can be united to fight the enemy. This is still an important concept and is not unlike the traditional concept of popular front. At the same time, perhaps a concept of uniting the oppressed, which includes lesbian/gays, women, people of color, workers, etc., might be more useful than the old united front concept.

5. Can We Rebuild a Viable Left?

The left needs to reorient itself to the current political situation if it is to break out of isolation, contribute significantly to the fightback, and build any unity as a left. If it can do this, it has a vital role to play in undertaking many of the tasks outlined above.

There are many times more self-identified leftists working full time in political work than ever before, mostly in non-profit organizations and the labor movement, some in academia. Many more work unpaid in the social movements. Many make important contributions, but their ability to move a left agenda is limited by the fact that they usually act as individuals. There are a much smaller number of leftists organized in Marxist groups, anarchist formations, the Green Party, or in groups like the Black Radical Congress. Some of these make important contributions (though some are downright destructive), but most retain strong sectarian tendencies

(in politics and organization) and few have any real operative strength.

Hopefully the new context can help reorient the left to mass politics, out of narrow strongholds, to play some of the critical roles outlined above. Indeed, the strength of the left is its multi-issue, holistic approach, its internationalism, its ability to grapple with intersectionality, its wide ties, and its strategic political sense. We absolutely have an important role to play in reorienting ongoing struggles and of linking different struggles to the anti-war movement. But we can do so only if we can get ourselves reoriented to the current, very pressing political tasks at hand and deal with the questions that are actually on peoples' minds and in language that they can relate to. It will in fact be downright dangerous for us if we remain as isolated as we now are. In fact, a much broader sense of who the left is and a creative sense of how to work together should be one of the outcomes of this process. We hope these presentations are a contribution to that process.