The Campus Antiwar Network recently held its second national conference. Attended by more than 120 people representing 34 different schools, campuses ranged all the way from Berkeley to New York.

The event was of critical importance, allowing activists from all over the country to share organizing experiences and debate the state and goals of the movement. This is especially vital as the antiwar movement begins to regroup and address pressing questions, about specific demands, about larger goals, and about immediate actions.

There were informative and organizational workshops, producing healthy debates and optimistic working groups. This newsletter is a product of one of those groups.

In addition to the working groups, which promise a host of new literary, financial, and organizational possibilities, there was a solidarity address by British activist Omar Waraich. His organizing materials were confiscated by Customs, but his message made it through: the movement abroad is growing, and we here in the U.S. have a critical role to play. A recording of his address is online at traprockpeace.org.

Some of the most concrete results of the conference included changes in CAN’s Points of Unity and adoption of several Days of Action.

After a vigorous debate, the delegates voted not to include a point of unity about the U.N. However, a point affirming the Iraqi right to self-determination passed overwhelmingly, as did a point calling for the US government to pay reparations and a point calling for the immediate withdrawal of all troops.

Following the election of national committee members and finance representatives, the assembly opted to call for a day of action on December 4th, encouraging schools everywhere to distribute black armbands and to do things on campus. CAN is also going to organize for a national protest art event, to occur in the spring semester. The delegates further voted to continue the extremely successful Speaking Truth to Empire tour and expand the collection of organizing pamphlets with 6 new booklets and discussion papers.

Photo courtesy of Traprock Peace Center
ALL ACTION

Reports from around the country

"27 people joined our coalition within a few hours!"

The Berkeley Stop the War Coalition hosted the opening night of the CAN speaking tour on October 8, 2003. Over 200 people (mostly students) came to see Norman Solomon, Michael Parenti, and Jim Bronke of Military Families Speak Out—all of whom received very warm receptions from the audience.

Parenti and Solomon both gave rousing speeches that touched on the propaganda role of the U.S. media, the history of U.S. military interventions around the world, and the nature of the antiwar movement and its impacts on U.S. foreign policy. Mr. Bronke, whose nephew returned home from Baghdad last week, was especially well-received—he is a former weapons developer for the United States Military, and he pledged never to make such weapons again.

After the speeches, there was a discussion period that included questions and comments about the United Nations, the Democratic Party, and how the movement can best act to end the occupation.

In addition, Michael Smith spoke on behalf of the Berkeley Stop the War Coalition and the Campus Antiwar Network about the importance of anti-occupation activism and the possibilities for our movement. Over 50 students signed up to get involved in the Coalition, and even more expressed interest in coming to the October 25

The UNCG Campus Antiwar Coalition started out the semester with a table at the yearly activities fair. 27 people joined our coalition within a few hours! It was a huge success for our coalition and a great way to jump into action during the semester with a whole batch of new people that are pissed off and ready to fight back. The Coalition also just had its first meeting called “Bring the Troops Home Now!” featuring Lou Plummer of MFSO and the Bring Them Home Now Campaign. The meeting drew over 20 people, mostly faces we’d never seen before, and the discussion was very energetic. Many questions were brought up about the occupation and whether or not the US has a responsibility to rebuild Iraq.

Repression at Berkeley!
by Jessie Brunner

On the very campus where the Free Speech Movement was born 40 years ago, university officials are now attempting to silence a voice which will only continue to grow in both volume and strength.

Three prominent activists and leaders at UC Berkeley—Rachel Odes, Snehal Shingavi and Michael Smith—have been convicted for failure to comply with an official and disturbing the peace at a peaceful sit-in of more than 4,000 students held on Day X, the day after the war officially began.

Not surprisingly, these three students were targeted out of almost 120 that were initially arrested, asserting the fact that outspoken political activists will be punished for their work.

“Clearly the administration is trying to single us out, hoping that by doing so they can silence dissent on campus,” Smith said.

Shingavi and Odes each face 20 hours of community service as well as a warning letter in their student conduct file while Smith faces an even more severe punishment, including 30 hours of service and a possible semester suspension if he does not complete anger management classes.

But the Berkeley 3’s supporters are numerous. A highly-circulated petition defending the three students and the right to free speech has garnered approximately 2,000 signatures, including those of Howard Zinn, Noam Chomsky and Tariq Ali.

“It’s been really heartening to see how many people across the country and internationally have come to our defense,” Smith said, “we’re not facing this alone.”

Amy Goodman, the award-winning host of Democracy Now!, also lent her support at the Mario Savio Memorial Lecture last month.

She said that in her mind, the students didn’t need to do any community service as they had already served their community in the best way possible—by protesting Bush’s unjust war.

The students are currently appealing the university’s sentencing.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Email Genaro Padilla, Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Affairs, at uga@uclink.berkeley.edu

Demand that Berkeley recognize the students’ appeal and stop their repression of free speech on campus!
Report from the

European Social Forum

by Timothy Kaldas and Monique Dols

The Campus Antiwar Network sent Timothy Kaldas from George Washington University’s Students for Peace and Justice in Washington D.C. and Monique Dols from the Columbia University Antiwar Coalition in New York City to attend the second annual European Social Forum (ESF) November 12-15 in Paris, France. The ESF was inspired by the World Social Forum, which has been held for the past three years Porto Alegre, Brazil. Here, Tim and Monique report about their experience in France. The European Social Forum attracted more than 50,000 activists from all over Europe and the world who attended over 300 workshops and rallies. People came for 4 days of political debate and discussion addressing a wide range of issues of importance to the global justice and peace movements. Seminars discussed alternatives to corporate globalization, the war and occupation of Iraq, the struggle for Palestine, immigrant rights, and tactics for the alternative globalization movement (as the Global Justice movement is called in French) along with many more topics. Most strikingly, the ESF was able to bring activists from so many diverse struggles together for a common cause of debating and discussing ways forward for the movement for a Europe of rights and a world without war. CAN was represented on a seminar organized by the Center for Economic Research and Social Change about the US antiwar movement with Lou Plummer from Military Families Speak Out and Rahul Mahajan from United for Peace and Justice. Monique and Tim discussed the issues facing the antiwar movement in the United States, as well as particular campaigns that CAN is taking up such as the speaking tours, the April 5th day of action, and the upcoming student delegation to Iraq. About 200 came to the panel and were eager to meet the American panelists and hear first hand about the movement in the US. Many people in the audience expressed their appreciation for the work we are doing in the United States and were impressed that we are working to build a movement in the belly of the beast. Debates included the role of Americans in the international antiwar movement as well as whether or not the American public stands to benefit from the war and occupation of Iraq. Many audience members were eager to hear about the connections between the global justice movement and antiwar movements in the US and were encouraged to hear about the demonstrations being planned for Miami against the planning meeting for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). On Saturday 100,000 demonstrated in Paris to mark the conclusion of the forum. The demonstration was attended by masses of people filling the streets for as far as the eye could see. The energy of the crowd was overwhelming with contingents from unions, antiwar groups, social movements, political groups, NGO’s, immigrant rights groups and costriking university students from Rennes, Brittany marched in the parade to link up their strike against budget cuts with the larger movement for global justice. The march was punctuated by the rhythms of marching bands and melodic chants and songs from Europe’s radical history. One particular march strategy stood out: When the energy of the march was low, demonstrators would stop and kneel down and wait until the crowd behind built up. Then in unison they would jump up and charge forward to catch up with the march. Monique and Tim were able to establish contact with a number of organizations and individuals who attended the forum including the French antiwar group, Agir Contre la Guerre (ACG) who had a large and spirited contingent of 1,000 at the final demonstration on Saturday. Overall, the forum was an overwhelming success that has provided CAN with an excellent opportunity to network with activists across the globe. It provides an inspiration for our movement in the US and a model for organizing that brings together many different political movements together to discuss the crucial issues for our movement for a different world. A world without war is possible.

He said it first:

“Are more people going to die?
You bet.”

Donald Rumsfeld
July 13
What has CAN accomplished?
Looking back on 6 months of action
by Emily Goldstein

At the beginning of the summer, CAN was invited to hold a retreat at Blue Mountain Lake, which was attended by 12 people, and provided an opportunity to sit down and talk out things like fundraising and working groups for the summer. Everyone who went found it to be a very productive weekend, and we plan to apply again for this summer.

Over the rest of the summer, the national working groups that came out of the regional conferences in the spring worked to get things ready for the next semester. The literature group produced 6 pamphlets, the web team completely re-did the CAN website, and the speaking tour group got a lot of speakers lined up and started on publicity. Over the summer, CAN also did some outreach, including tabling at local events and at other organizations’ conferences, and developing better working relationships with national groups including NION, NYSPC, ANSWER. We also began the process of applying for fiscal sponsorship from the Traprock Peace Center, which will enable CAN to have a bank account and get donations.

This fall CAN organized a national speaking tour titled “Speaking Truth to Empire.” The tour, which was co-sponsored by the Muslim Students’ Association, brought speakers including Rania Masri, Howard Zinn, and Tariq Ali to over 30 schools across the country. Many campus groups found the speaking tour extremely helpful for building interest in their group on campus and connecting with other organizations at their schools. The tour also brought a number of new campuses into CAN, and, as one of the biggest events of the antiwar movement in the country this fall, the speaking tour did a great deal to publicize CAN and build momentum in the larger national movement.

Also this fall, CAN mobilized for the anti-occupation demonstrations in DC and San Francisco on October 25. About 200-300 students marched in the CAN contingent in DC, and the San Francisco contingent drew over 100. CAN also had speakers at the rallies in both cities. One of the areas in which CAN has made the most progress has been in networking with other national and international groups. We worked extensively with the Muslim Students’ Association and Military Families Speak Out during the course of the speaking tour, and have also developed working relationships with UFPJ, ANSWER, NION, NYSPC, Vets for Peace, and the Institute for Southern Studies. We also have contacts at many other progressive organizations and publications, including War Times, Democracy Now!, South End Press, and the Institute for Policy Studies. Internationally, CAN has exchanged greetings and messages of solidarity with antiwar organizations in Japan, Sydney, Australia, and Britain. A representative from the British Student Stop the War Coalition attended CAN’s national conference, and we are looking forward to working more closely with them in the future to plan international days of action, and try to send a joint student delegation to Iraq over the summer. CAN was also invited to European Social Forum to speak on a panel about the US antiwar movement at the European Social Forum, and in addition to representing CAN on that panel, the two students we sent forged connections with other international student organizations.

And finally, CAN held its second national conference in Chicago Nov 1-2. About 120 students from 34 schools attended, and debated key issues in the movement today, voted on new points of unity and future actions, and elected a new Coordinating Committee and Financial Committee.

CAN has come a long way in a very short amount of time, and has accomplished a great deal even in just the past few months. We should all look back on the hard work we’ve done and be proud of what it’s yielded — a strong and growing national network that has become the national voice of the student antiwar movement in this country.

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**CAN’s POINTS OF UNITY**

- We stand opposed to all US wars of aggression.
- We stand opposed to the occupation of Iraq.
- We support the right of the Iraqi people to self-determination.
- We demand the immediate withdrawal of all troops from Iraq.
- We demand the US government to pay reparations to the Iraqi people.
- We stand opposed to the oppression of the Palestinian people and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- We stand opposed to racist scapegoating and all attacks on civil liberties.
- We demand money for education, jobs and healthcare, not war and occupation!