

BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the
Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy—April 2002

2nd Verse:

...We bring the world to order
Heil Hitler's new world order*
Everyone of foreign race will love der Fuehrer's face
When we bring to der world disorder

Chorus:

When der Fuehrer says, "We ist der master race"
We HEIL! [fart] HEIL! [fart] Right in der Fuehrer's face
Not to love Der Fuehrer is a great disgrace**
So we HEIL! [fart] HEIL! [fart] Right in der Fuehrer's face

—from Walt Disney's "Donald Duck in Nutziland", 1943

* Remember Daddy Bush's "New World Order"?

** Remember George W's "75% approval rating"?

BCA CHAPTER NEWS

Chapter Calendar (Continued on page 8)

The Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy's next meeting will be on **Wednesday, April 17**, from **7:00 to 9:15 p.m.** at **Cambridge Friends Meeting**, 5 Longfellow Park (9 min. walk from Harvard Square T station, west on Brattle St.)

- ① Special guest **Merrie Najimy**, Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, and teacher in Concord. Come and discuss "**Repressive Legislation before & after 9/11.**"
- ② **Ruth Weizenbaum**, New England rep to AfD national Council, on forming an Issues-Link program, and a Regional Alliance.
- ③ Report & discussion of **Truth Corps** and other BCA concerns.

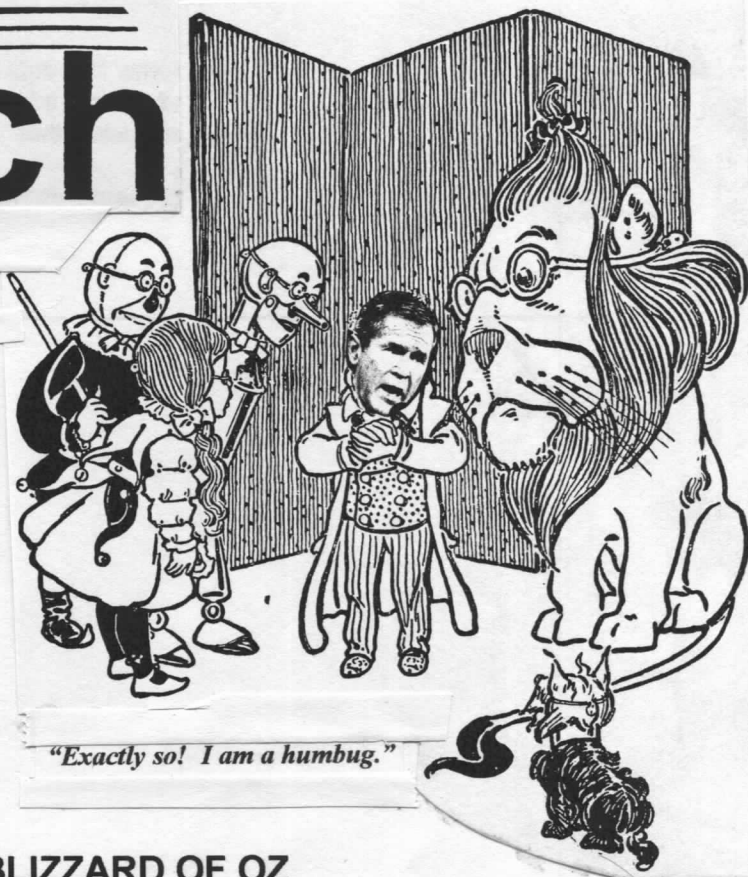
Looking ahead: We meet again on May 15.

Celebration and New Directions

Cake and high-spirited champagne toasts marked the sixth anniversary of our Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy on March 20th. The sociable assembled were only ten, compared with our 70 paid-up members. True, there was no special guest speaker that evening, but tell us, Dear Reader, why you think we're not attracting more members to a meeting. Is it that our chapter offers few concrete opportunities to help with projects? Is it that our projects, like passing our Globalization Impact Bill in the state legislature, involve too much telephoning—that organizing other people's action is too difficult, or the hours too inconvenient? Or that the project itself is not well enough organized? Or that no one called you personally to enlist your help? Or that you are a reader and listener, not an activist?

On business, we had oral proposals from **Jean Maryborn** and **Brian Moriarty** of the Mass Bay South chapter, who are floating materials to end the "war on terrorism" and stop the "Nuclear Posture Review" threat to nuke all of Bush & Co's enemies. Why not push for a Congressional hearing? Brian also wants us to promote education regarding Islam.

Ruth Weizenbaum voiced a plan to bring together all nearby chapters in a regional conclave, (continued, page 8 >>)



BLIZZARD OF OZ

Hey George—

Joe Sweetwater
Boston MA

Can you blame us for suspecting that your boys were in on the September 11th bombing? I mean **how else would the fighter planes not scramble** after the first hit on the South Tower? Or hey, after the first airliner veered off the controllers' radar screen?

You mean to tell us that there was no place to force a landing—or if worse comes to worst, push it into the ocean—er, New York harbor? Gimme a break, George. Us civvies ain't that dumb—or do you think we are? I would resent that George. After all, something like a quarter of the adult population of the U.S.A. voted for you George—right? And you want to tell me every one of them would excuse you for not scrambling those fighters? Hell, some of them had relatives on the plane or in the World Trade towers. And what the hell do you think they're grieving over, George?

Ya know, George—I can't believe you. I mean, first some asshole of a colonel grounds the fighter planes, or whatever, and then instead of whippin' his ass, you tell Congress to give them—the Air Force and all that—all the more money they want. And by the way, George, that's taxpayer money—my money! So **you turn around and tell us taxpayers that we're gonna whip the asses of those Afganis.** That you're gonna get Osama bin Laden and kill the bastard. And meanwhile you're gonna take forty more thousand million dollars of our money and give it to them stupid colonels in the Air Force, or the CIA or whatever behind the colonel.

I mean there they are, the Israelis, whompin' the hell out of those people and houses in Palestine using 100 percent American planes and helicopters and stuff. Meantime, the Arab kids are going over there with their two-bit bombs and blowing the shit out of the Israelis. And those helicopters are knockin' off their grand-

mothers—I mean **there ain't no real soldiers**—Palestine soldiers.

I mean, come on, George, stop makin' fancy toys for the boys. Them colonels are gettin' a boot out of showing off their equipment—like in Iraq, the Patriot missiles. And your Daddy gets Colin Powell to give us all that crap about pinpoint accuracy, and actually it's just demolition—real expensive demolition. Why not just plain fire-bomb them like Tokyo? So a couple of million Iraqi civilians die, George. **Hey, that's not war. That's terrorism.** That's real terrorism, big-time. My mother was Armenian, George --you gotta know that's terrorism.

And lemme tell you what really aggravates me, George. You wanna give that money to the Army and the Navy and the Air Force and all so they can turn around and give it to McDonnell Douglass. Or Raytheon just out there in the 'burbs. And those guys out there working in those fancy factories and offices gettin' union scale—boy, that burns me—like, thirty, forty bucks an hour while I bust my ass scrapin' together twelve. **Where's all them jobs you're talking about from all that "relief" you're giving to the corporations?** And all those rich guys with their big tax breaks that's supposed to get them to invest in corporations to make a million jobs. Yeah, a million jobs for a million Mexicans or whatever.

Wait a minute—it's not just the money, **George, it's the bullshit you're telling us.** "War against terrorism". It's us, George, **we're the terrorists.** There's no war, George—they demolished the Trade Towers and shot their way into the Pentagon, and guess what, nothin's happened here since. This is "war"? I mean, Vietnam was a war, and Korea was a war, and Anzio and Iwo Jima and Stalingrad and all that. There was guys actually under fire. That was real war. And Iraq—that wasn't no war—that was a massacre. A slaughter. "Fourth Largest Army" my ass. And they at least had guns. These Afghanis have blunderbusses or whatever. And the Palestinians, they have rocks. Yeah, they have back-yard bombs—damn well, get even. And the Al Qaeda, who the hell are they? Like Al Capone—that's a war?

A war is where you call up the reserves, and then you draft young guys by the tens of thousands. A war is where you ration gas and get housewives to save bacon fat in tin cans. A war is where you see our boys coming back in boxes. **A war is where people make sacrifices for the war effort,** not just sacrifice our pensions and our health plans to make a bunch of corporations more "competitive" as usual.

And the speeches you give every day, George. First you wanna smoke out every last Al Qaeda and meantime the airline corporations are suckin' up thousands of millions more and the TV channels are suckin' up by giving all their time to Al Qaeda.. Then you wanna launch into the Philippines, and **guess what's happening behind the curtain**—your boys are making a deal with the big boys in South America to spread that disaster of NAFTA all over the hemisphere. I mean George, don't you think we hear that "awful sucking sound"?

George, we've got to come face to face with this. I mean, I'm going to pull this curtain aside. I mean it's real heavy but I'm going to pull it aside, gold trim and all. Yeah—pull! Pull! There—

George? Where are you George? Hey, there's nothin' here but piles of paper and videotape. George? George?...

ISRAELIS IN PALESTINE

*How odd
of God
to choose
the Jews*

—Ogden Nash

Israel Goes on Nuclear Strike Standby

by Gordon Thomas, Contributing Editor to Globe-Intel

Two Israeli fighter-bomber squadrons equipped with battlefield tactical nuclear weapons have been placed on "cock-pit standby." They are based at an airfield in Galilee - minutes only flying time from Syria. The Golan Heights which borders Syria has also been sown with neutron-type bombs. Designed at Israel's nuclear facility in the Negev desert, the bombs are designed to "kill soldiers and leave the infrastructure intact," was how one Israeli Defence Forces source described the weapons.

This escalation of military preparations follows an urgent report from Mossad chief Efraim Halevy to prime minister, Ariel Sharon, of "credible intelligence" that both Syria and Iraq - who have held lengthy private talks at the Beirut "summit" this weekend - may be preparing to intervene in the dangerously-out-of-control situation in the West Bank and Gaza.

At the summit both counties were the strongest voices to pledge all-out support for the PLO. Syria, with its massive army of 300,000 ground troops and state of the art aircraft supplied by both Russia and China, has always presented a credible threat to Israel. The hard-liners who run Syria make no secret it is only a matter of time before the day of reckoning will come between Israel and Syria. Of equal concern to Israel is Mossad's intelligence that Saddam has some 100 kamikaze pilots within a few minutes flying time from Israeli cities - and Dimona. The kamikazes are under the command of Saddam's son, Qusay. Mossad believe their aircraft are fitted with bio-chemical weapons.

Israeli Army Broadcasts Porn to Besieged Palestinians

From Australia's Sunday Mail, March 31 2002

RAMALLAH, West Bank. Porn movies and programs in Hebrew are being broadcast by Israeli troops who have taken over three Palestinian television stations of Ramallah, irate residents of the besieged West Bank town have told AFP.

The offices of three local television and radio stations were occupied by soldiers yesterday morning, a few hours after tanks and hundreds of troops stormed the town in Israel's biggest offensive against the Palestinian Authority and its leader Yasser Arafat.

The soldiers started broadcasting the porn clips -- considered extremely offensive by most Palestinians -- intermittently this afternoon from the Al-Watan, Ammwaj, and Al-Sharaq channels, the residents said.

"The pornographic movies started on Al-Watan television at around 330 pm," one 34-year-old Palestinian mother named

Reema told AFP. "I have six children at home, they have nowhere to go with what is going on here and can't even watch TV," she said angrily.

Anita, a 52-year-old mother of three children, complained about "the deliberate psychological damage caused by these broadcasts... I am furious, these are the people who are shooting at us that also play this disgusting trick on us," she said.

"We are desperate for news and constantly flipping channels and get these terrible pictures instead," adding that videos of the intifada were also shown backwards with "ideal terrorism" written in red across the screen.

"Luckily, there is no electricity in half of Ramallah," she said from her house in east Jerusalem where the channels are also available.

A fourth local station, whose premises were not seized by the army, ran a written message across its screen letting people know it was the Israelis who were behind the graphic scenes.

"Anything currently shown on Al-Watan and other local TV channels has nothing to do with Palestinian programs but is being broadcast by the Israeli occupation forces, we urge parents to take precautions," the message said.

Israelis Trash Educ. TV in Ramallah

From Amman, Jordan, Palestinian educational broadcaster Daoud Kuttab reports in the *NY Times* of 6 April that Israeli soldiers broke into the Ramallah offices and studios of the non-state alternative Institute of Modern Media. Without orders—no law having been broken—they arrested and held for several hours the two remaining staff members manning the broadcast. "While being held, they saw television cameras and invaluable video archives thrown from the fourth floor, where our equipment and studio are located."

With support of the Palestinian Welfare Association, George Soros' Open Society Foundation, and the Ford Foundation, the station had broadcast public service programming like that on PBS and C-Span. "We have tackled issues like the environment, public health and family planning," said Kuttab. "As part of the vision of the president of Al Quds University, Sari Nuseibeh, we embarked in 1997 on a groundbreaking partnership with Israeli educational television to produce a Palestinian-Israeli version of 'Sesame Street.' The program was produced with the aim of teaching both Israel and Palestinian children mutual respect and tolerance..."

"What happened was not just property damage, but an attempt to destroy our dream of building a useful educational TV station and helping build a viable state with healthy civic institutions... It will not be easy to pick up the pieces after experiencing such brutality. I have no doubt that we will rebuild our television station and reclaim the hope that we had five years ago. At the same time I am confident that our people, with the support of the international community, will rise from the pain and build the foundation of a society that can live in peace with its neighbors."

Playground of State Terrorism

Afghanistan and the CIA, ISI, and KGB

by Marc Pilisuk and A. Wong**

Secret military aid by the CIA to Afghan militants drew the Soviets into an invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Then the CIA and Pakistan's ISI (Inter Services Intelligence) launched the largest covert operation in CIA history. Their purpose was to magnify Afghan resistance to the Soviets and expand it into an Islamic jihad, a holy war that would turn Muslim countries within the Soviet borders, against the communist regime with hope of eventually destabilizing it. When the covert assistance began, it was meant to make Afghanistan the Soviet Union's version of America's Vietnam. That was not, however, the only outcome. Over the years of that war, the CIA, through the ISI funded and recruited close to 100,000 radical Mojahedin from 40 Islamic countries as soldiers for a US proxy war. Few if any of the Mojahedin soldiers were unaware that their jihad was being fought on behalf of the US (Arundhati, 2001).*

The Russians withdrew in 1989, after ten years of brutal conflict. They left behind a civilization reduced to rubble. Civil war in Afghanistan continued. The effects of the jihad were seen in Chechnya, Kosovo and eventually in Kashmir. The CIA continued to provide money and military equipment throughout the war. But the cost of maintaining continuous warfare in a poor country was great. In order to raise more money the Mojahedin ordered farmers to plant opium and taxed the sales. The ISI set up hundreds of heroin laboratories in Afghanistan. Within two years of the CIA's action, the Pakistan-Afghanistan borderland had become the world's largest producer of heroin. It has remained the primary source of heroin sold on American streets. The training and arming of militants has been supported by annual profits, said to be between \$100 and \$200 billion (Levine and Levine, 1993). The Soviet withdrawal left behind its supporters in the Kabul regime with stocks of scud missiles, heavy arms, jet bombers, tanks, as well as advisers and KGB agents. The American support of the Mujahedin left heavy arms and Iranian, Pakistani and CIA agents working with conflicting tribal groups. The country was strung with landmines. For other than self-interested purposes the world walked away from the plight of Afghanistan (Lohbeck, 1993). The US and Afghan neighboring countries continued to pressure for an Afghan government that was favorable for their own interests, but there was no effective international relief. The US essentially deserted Afghanistan after it was no longer fighting the Soviet Union.

The Taliban was a marginal sect of hard-line fundamentalists. By 1995, with the help of funding from the ISI, they had fought their way to power in Afghanistan. It was supported by several political parties in Pakistan. The Taliban, still not in control of all of Afghanistan, unleashed a reign of terror that followed from its cult-like ideology. Its first victims were women in the areas of their control. It removed women from government jobs and shut down schools for girls. It then enforced the oppressive *sharia* laws. Under these edicts, women said to be "immoral" are stoned to death, and widows guilty of being adulterous are buried alive (Arundhati, 2001). None of these facts were sufficient to prevent the US from cutting a further deal with the Taliban. Six months before the suicide bombings of the World Trade Center, the Bush administration provided assistance to the Taliban as part of its

own crusade, the militarization of the war on drugs (Scheer, 2001). The legacy includes a country with a 64% illiteracy rate, a reported 48% of its children suffering from malnutrition and a life expectancy of 46 years (*The 2001 World Development Indicators*).

****from Pilisuk, M and Wong, A. (2002) "State Terrorism: When the perpetrator is a government" in Staut, C. (Ed.) *Psychology of Terrorism Praeger/Greenwood (in press)*. *References on request from BCA Dispatch. This is one many cases of state terrorism described, with a social psychological perspective concluding the chapter.**

The Global Monoculture

'Free Trade' Versus Culture and Democracy

by Maude Barlow, Council of Canadians
from Earth Island Journal, Autumn 2001

Global cultural homogenization is sweeping the world. Indian physicist and activist Vandana Shiva calls it "monoculture of the mind." Dominated by US and Western values and lifestyles, driven by a consumer-based, free-market ideology and carried through the massive US entertainment-industrial complex, the global monoculture has infiltrated every corner of the Earth.

In China, Latin America, the Pacific Region, South America, Africa and the industrialized world, young people want Nike sneakers, Gap clothes, Michael Jordan T-shirts, the latest CDs, Hollywood blockbuster movies, American television and mass-market books. Around the world, North American corporate culture is destroying local tradition, knowledge, skills, artisans and values.

Artisans groups trying to sell their products locally have been wiped out by global fashions. Much more than an economic problem, the decline of artisanship may be consuming some of the world's older traditions and finer crafts and eroding the world's cultural diversity, with little notice.

There are no clear estimates of the number of artisans in the world, although some crafts groups believe it is the largest employer outside agriculture. Says the Toronto Globe and Mail's John Stackhouse, "With each endangered craft are centuries of songs, expressions and lifestyles that are part of an artisan's creative environment." Nawal Hassan, an Egyptian artisan-activist, adds, "This is an issue of identity. All our civilization has ceased to be spiritual. Our civilization has become commercial."

Combined with the destruction of the habitat of aboriginal citizens in many parts of the world, this assault on local cultures

is having a profound impact. Hundreds of languages spoken today are lost each decade and it is estimated that one-half of the world's 6,000 languages will no longer be spoken or read by the end of the 21st century.

Technology is also advancing one culture and one language. The US has more computers than the rest of the world combined. English is used in 80 percent of websites, yet fewer than one in ten people worldwide speak the language. Every-where, Internet access divides educated from illiterate, rich from poor, young from old and urban from rural. For many countries feeling the deadening and harmonizing impacts of economic globalization, protecting cultural diversity has become as important a fight as preserving biodiversity.

Many societies, particularly indigenous peoples, view culture as their richest heritage, without which they have no roots, history or soul. Its value is other than monetary. To commodify it is to destroy it.

There is a growing sentiment in many parts of the world that culture is not just another product like steel or computer parts. Through funding programs, content regulations and other public policies, countries have encouraged their own artists and cultures and tried to maintain some space for their own intellectual creations.

Culture as Business

The entertainment-industrial complex, on the other hand, sees culture as a business - a very big business that should be fiercely advanced through international trade agreements like the World Trade Organization (WTO).

This industry combines giant telecommunications companies, cable companies and the Internet, working together in a complex web. The productions issuing from this superweb include publishing, films, broadcasting, video, television, cable and satellite systems, mega-theater productions, music recording and distribution, and theme parks.

Mass-produced products of popular culture are the biggest US export, according to the United Nations 1999 Human Development Report. A huge, well-organized coalition links the US entertainment, media and information technology sectors in a "common front" to oppose cultural protectionism. Companies such as AOL Time-Warner and Disney have powerful friends on Capitol Hill and in the White House. They work closely with the government, which in turn has taken a very aggressive stand in protecting their interests.

The pending admission of China into the WTO has the US motion picture industry salivating. Already, the 10 US films allowed in every year totally dominate the Chinese market. Zhang Hui

Suit alleges Ashcroft wrongdoing

Attorney General accused of campaign finance violations in 2000 elections

Three nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy groups are accusing Attorney General John Ashcroft of allegedly violating campaign finance laws in his unsuccessful bid for the U.S. Senate two years ago, according to court records.

The Alliance for Democracy filed suit in federal court yesterday against the Federal Elections Commission, alleging that Ashcroft's

campaign failed to report an in-kind contribution that came in the form of a fundraising list of about 100,000 names.

The suit accuses the FEC of failing to act on a complaint filed last March and asks the court to require the commission to address the complaint within a month. The suit alleges that the Spirit of America political action committee, created by Ashcroft in 1996,

contributed the list to Ashcroft 2000, his campaign committee. The contribution was not reported to the FEC by the PAC or the campaign, according to the suit.

The list was worth at least \$100,000, according to a release put out by the Institute. The group did not specify how they arrived at that figure. "Ashcroft 2000 made a significant amount of money by renting the list to other

entities," the suit said.

Federal campaign finance laws prohibit PACS from contributing more than \$10,000 to a candidate in each two-year election cycle and require that donations be disclosed by both the recipient and the contributor.

Lawyers for Massachusetts-based National Voting Rights Institute are serving as lead counsel in the suit. Glen Justice/Bloomberg

Jun of the prestigious Beijing Film Academy fears that the US invasion will induce Chinese producers to slavishly follow Hollywood's formulas at the expense of innovative Chinese productions.

For many years, the US State Department has used a variety of trade remedies to strike down nation, state and local rules aimed at protecting indigenous cultures. In recent years, the battle has heated up as more countries adopt measures to support their own artists and cultural producers.

While it is true that these fights have shaped up more over film and TV than the live performing arts, the pressure to cut back on government funding for any cultural sector that does not totally pay its own way is growing in all countries. The messages are loud and clear: "Get big or die," and "Get a corporate sponsor or fold."

Canadians live next door to the world's biggest candy store. While we still have a vibrant, live performing arts community, government funding has been severely cut. Local theater productions have a hard time competing against imported US mega-productions and many theater halls across the country have been renamed for corporations that now sponsor the shows they fancy.

Culture and the WTO

Current WTO trade law subjects culture to all the disciplines of the agreement. There have been seven complaints concerning culture lodged at the WTO since its inception. Of those resolved, all effectively limited the right of a state to protect its cultural industries.

The most significant was a 1997 ruling in which the US successfully forced Canada to abandon protections for its magazine industry (even though US magazines make up 85 percent of all magazines available on Canadian newsstands). The US is taking a hard line because any exemption for Canada will set a precedent for other countries, especially in the developing world where cultural protection is just emerging as an issue.

Former US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky triumphantly declared that the decision would serve as a useful weapon against other countries' attempts to protect their film, books and broadcasting industries.

The US State Department remains furious about the role that Canadian cultural activists played in defeating the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) several years ago.

According to Christopher Sands of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, "What further startled US policymakers was to hear these Canadian arguments echoed in Europe and even Asia. In an increasingly small world, ideas travel fast, and the Canadian concern that the MAI would lead to greater American cultural hegemony touched a chord around the world." The lesson for US trade negotiators was clear: "Canada's example matters."

The failure of the 1999 WTO talks in Seattle doesn't mean the problems for the cultural community are over. Ongoing talks related to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and Trade-Related Intellectual Property rights (TRIPS) have placed the entire telecommunications sector - including the Internet, broadcasting, patents, trademarks and copyright law - on the table.

Speaking before a House committee in early 2000, Barshefsky vowed to use the WTO to promote US corporate-entertainment interests around the world. "We are developing proposals for a wide range of sectors where our companies have strong

commercial interests," she said. "Our companies are poised to be among the primary beneficiaries from stronger commitments at the WTO."

Toward Cultural Diversity

Trade is as old as humanity. Fair trade rules can be a positive development if done with respect for other aspects of life. But in recent years, the WTO has overtaken every other sphere of life, enforcing free trade rules on behalf of powerful transnational corporations. This, in turn, profoundly affects every culture in the world, basically enforcing a for-profit model on every aspect of society and denigrating any activity that is not, at its core, commercial.

What can be done? How can we maintain the free flow of intellectual creations and art, while promoting diversity in the face of a giant, centralized, monolithic corporate/cultural juggernaut backed by international trade regimes?

The debate is about finding ways to provide choice, so that in the deluge of cultural products available, citizens can choose to watch, listen to, or enjoy a book, magazine, film or sound recording that reflects their own local reality. More than anything else, the debate is about cultural diversity.

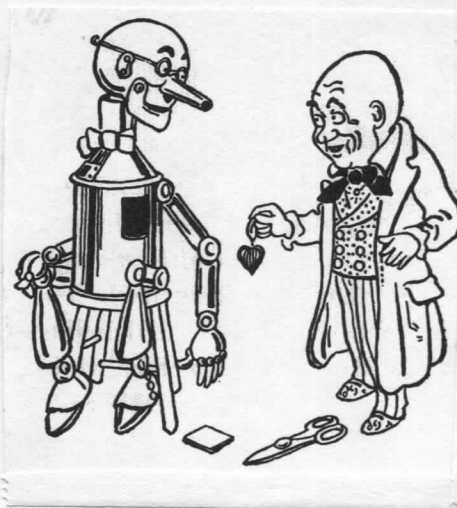
I have four strong recommendations. First, our governments must fund a vibrant cultural sector in all of our countries, one that reflects the diverse, local and indigenous societies in which they, and we, thrive.

Second, culture must be carved out of free trade agreements, particularly the WTO. Although citizens and their governments are still very likely to want to promote the export of their cultural products, they must always retain the right to set fair-trade conditions in order to protect and promote their own stories, history and unique culture.

Third, it is time for a new international instrument to deal with this emerging issue. To succeed, such an instrument must have a status equivalent to that of trade agreements. It cannot be subservient. It must recognize the importance of maintaining cultural diversity and set out rules that, over time, can be changed, since we cannot know today what form cultural expression may take in the future.

Finally, artists, writers, filmmakers and musicians from around the world must form an international civil society force to stand up to the corporate colossus now dominating global culture.

This process already has begun. [27-28/ sept/2000] Last year, a global network of nongovernmental organizations concerned about cultural issues met in Santorini, Greece, to form the International Network for Cultural Diversity. More than 160 organizations from more than 30 countries have committed themselves to becoming a powerful voice in the coming decades. ■



What is "culture"?

Culture is . . .

- * pride (vs. Fear) in what makes us distinctive
- * what symbolizes our relation to nature, to violence, to the old country, to peace vs. war or vice versa, the way we do things (care vs. bravado, etc), anything
- * the range of language we use to describe or insite
- * jokes, humor, what tickles us
- * Nasty: racism in Kipling, but also in L Frank Baum? Lincoln?
- * the way we deal with neighbors and strangers on the street
- * US movies are like candy or crack cocaine
- * technology has changed the parameters: 3D movies, mega-amplification of music, TV presentation, behind the scenes manipulation (media illiteracy), instant access (library catalog in the home) via internet
- * ethics – e.g., army doctor or medic continuing to work for the likes of DU bombs which suck the air out of underground hiding places. ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

ACTION ALERTS

Fly to Jerusalem, Serve in Palestine

Aid Civilians, Protest, Help Document Facts

Dear Everybody:

Due to the current situation of the attacks led by the war criminal Sharon and his government against the Palestinian people, many peace activists in many countries have expressed their willingness to join the **International Solidarity Movement (ISM)** and the **Grassroots International Protection for the Palestinian People (GIPP)** in Palestine in the coming weeks. Moreover, many of our activists who are at this moment joining the campaign are under house arrest because of the curfew in the Palestinian Refugees' Camps, we have decided that Jerusalem will be the location and the starting point of all the actions. We will try to get the international activists from Jerusalem into one of the Palestinian cities in order to help with the activism there. The **Guest House of the YWCA** will be the location where all will be based. The cost is \$15 per person per night on bed and breakfast basis. As for other kinds of costs, it will be hard to estimate.

Tasks Needed in Palestine

- 1- Provide protection for civilians by staying with families in refugee camps, villages, and towns.
- 2- Accompany ambulances.
- 3- Send food and aid to families if needed.
- 4- Join nonviolent protests if organized.
- 5- Help documenting the facts, either through cameras or video or writing diaries to be published through e-mail and internet.

Things that can be useful to bring with you

- 1- Camera or video camera (digital will be the best)
- 2- Laptops
- 3- Warm sweater (for nighttime mainly)
- 4- Advil or Tylenol or Motrin
- 5- Bandana or a veil and perfume (to resist tear gas)

This is the time where we need everybody here. If you know about medic teams who are available to come, please let us know because there is a great need for internationals to act as medic teams in Palestinian ambulances.

Please contact us at the following addresses pcr@p-ol.com and please make sure to make a CC to georgesq@yahoo.com

and include the following heading in the subject line "Register April". For more info phone *BCA Dispatch*, Boston 617-266-8687. To cross-check call Souad Dajani, Grassroots Int'l, 617-+524-1400 Call direct George S. Rishmawi +972-52-502079 or 972-52-299310. Looking forward for having you in Palestine. George S. Rishmawi, ISM registration coordinator, Beit Sahour, P.O.Box 48 Palestine.

Huge Anti-War Protest – Be There!

April 20 in Washington DC

GATHER AT THE WHITE HOUSE @ 11 AM--

Come to the Ellipse, on the south side of the White House. You will hear dozens of movement speakers including many from Latin America, Middle East, Indigenous Peoples, oppressed minorities, theater & arts, academe, etc. You will run into old friends from around the country. The press will be there. You will be glad that you represent the hundreds of people you know who consider this "war" a monstrous fraud. Your presence will encourage millions afterward to refuse to cooperate with the unprincipled "patriots" who act in our names. You will be part of the nonviolent Resistance against the "new world order."

*** THE MARCH ***

- After the rally at the White House, we will MARCH east on Pennsylvania Ave. directly in front of the White House, and across Pennsylvania Ave. to the Justice Department
- At the Justice Department—directly across the street from the J. Edgar Hoover FBI building—we will rally in defense of civil rights and civil liberties and to demand the repeal of Ashcroft's USA Patriot Act.
- After the rally at the Justice Department, we will march on to a concluding rally!

BUS & LOGISTICAL INFORMATION

Check out www.internationalAnswer.org or AFSC at www.AFSC.org/nero/pesp/events.htm. Phone 617-661-6130 or Boston Mobilization at 617-782-2313.

Boston April 20 -22 Solidarity Events

For those not traveling to Washington, D.C., solidarity events are being organized in Boston--

Saturday - April 20 Day of National and International Solidarity for a Safe Future has been planned in Boston

12:00 noon rally at Copley Square. **1 pm** March to Blackstone Park
1:30-5 pm Celebration of world culture and of our power to fight for peace, security, social and economic justice, freedom, and democracy. With music, art, and education. Organized by United for Justice with Peace.

Sunday - April 21 Crisis in Colombia Teach-In and Cultural Program. A day devoted to Colombia and resistance to the escalation of its war.

1-5:30 pm BU College of Arts and Sciences, 725 Commonwealth Avenue, Room TBA

Monday April 22 The Global Role of the IMF/World Bank. March and Rally from Harvard Square to Cambridge City Hall starts at 4 pm. Organized by Bank Busters.

April 25. Harvard Weatherhead Center for International Affairs Ometz le-Sarev, **The Israeli [Army] Refusal Movement**, 4:00-6:00 p.m., Coolidge Hall, Room 3 at 1727 Cambridge St., Cambridge.

The Indy Page

All material on this page is the responsibility of a citizen editor, independent of the BCA Dispatch editorial staff. This issue's editor is David Wylie, Boston lawyer and former City Councillor in Cambridge MA, where he founded the Cambridge Peace Commission. Contact him at dwylie@socialaw.com or call him at 617-720-2324.

The Art of the Possible

by David Wylie

Twenty years ago the aerospace industry paid \$500,000 to rig a Cambridge, Massachusetts election. MIT's Stark Draper Laboratories organized a fund-raising PAC and hired a California political "consultant" to front the effort. Sperry kicked in \$25,000 and Northrop \$20,000. G.E., Singer, Grumman, and many others were on the list filed with the City Clerk. The Presidents of MIT and Harvard made public statements they had to have known were false. Draper Lab's employee union carted in hecklers for the public debates. The *Boston Globe* parroted the party line.

This power amalgam shared a mortal fear of hazarding to voter scrutiny President Reagan's acceleration of the nuclear arms race. Citizens were going to receive a referendum along with their school committee and city council ballots, asking whether nuclear arms research and manufacture should be banned in Cambridge. The military/industrial/academic complex derided the idea of one city's choosing not to participate in species extinction as nutty, unpatriotic, and illegal. Yet they took no chance of having it proved feasible to form policy independently of money's power over Congress and the media.

In the spring of 1982, polls showed two-thirds of voters supporting the ban. In the fall, two-thirds voted against it. The impact of \$500,000 of false advertising manipulated the reasoning ability of thousands of Harvard and MIT graduates, faculty members, and students who held Cambridge's balance of power. No one had ever spent more than \$25,000 on a Cambridge election.

Suppose that missile defense, Alaskan oil drilling, urban sprawl, and health insurance were scrutinized in a thousand municipal elections? Suppose that such issues were addressed in hearings before local governing bodies and in resolutions that identified the impact of government and corporate actions on local communities? Suppose American cities formed partnerships with foreign cities?

The protective shell around television, newspaper and radio resources would crumble. Honest candidates could win elections based on real issues, at the level where big money still is not determinative. Aerospace, oil, etc., could never keep up.

Most of what we value hangs on how governmental power gets exercised—the power to pass and enforce laws, tax, hire and fire public employees, balance the power of wealth, conduct foreign policy, and deploy the military. Two avenues access that power: money and elections. Special interests cannot be outspent, so if you can't win elections you can't determine policy. "Grassroots" lobbying and demonstrating do not compare in effectiveness because they cannot deliver the power to decide and carry out policy.

Consider other presumed sources of power. Ideas? Today, ideas can be stifled by anyone who can outspend you. Membership organiza-

tions? They can communicate ideas among members, but trying to reach the public they get outspent and outshouted.

American Democracy is founded upon the hard-headed assumption that everyone wants power to run things his and her own way, and the optimistic convictions, first that society can be organized to check and balance the contenders in this contest, and second, that if no one gets ultimate power, sound policies will win out.

When those with constructive instincts leave the pursuit to those with selfish instincts, democracy doesn't work. Checking and balancing doesn't occur just by virtue of differences of opinion, or even through elections when all the contestants are selfishly motivated. To compete for power is the only way to make better instincts prevail. That is the plan, those are the rules. To wait for sweet reason to prevail is to abdicate moral responsibility.

If you are an advocate for global law enforcement, arms control, environmental conservation, and social and economic justice, chances are that the last thing you would consider is to run for public office. The more of an activist you are, the less likely you are to seek personal power.

Progressive activists don't seek elective office for several reasons. For one thing, Viet-Nam destroyed a generation's belief in elective politics. The myth spread that there really is another sort of politics, in which the "grassroots" action generates an overpowering consensus that sweeps all before it. That millions continue to die in wars that ought not to occur, that the wealth/poverty gap expands, and that the planet's habitability is traded for private gain, all disprove the effectiveness of activism that does not pursue power.

Another reason for the reticence of activists is elitism, instilled in universities that justify their standing by defining intelligence for narrow purposes that serve greed and consumption. They persuade entering classes that they are Chosen Ones. Chosen Ones don't hazard their mantles at the ballot box. Afflicted by pride, the activist elite think that only presidential politics is worthy of their attention. Yet presidential politics is so dysfunctional that our president is appointed.

Local politics is where democracy can in fact be made to work because the elements of power can be accessed there. Authentic communication can be achieved, citizens reached, parties contested (or alternative parties organized), and leadership launched.

Then there is impatience, the insistence on fast results and early praise, the incapacity for measured self-evaluation against true worth.

Finally, there is laziness. For the economically secure, there is so much living to experience that little time is left for the humanity's business. In their natural environments, animals that do not devote requisite time to hunting perish. The natural environment of humans is political. We are social animals, evolved to occupy a complex habitat. We neglect our hunting.

Chapter News (continued from page 1)

with possibilities for permanent collaboration. Even more urgently she wants help in forming an Issue-Links program to unite many advocacies under one overall system-view.

Brit Eckhart proposed our sponsoring Greg Palast, the out-front US journalist shunned by US newspapers, who finds British newspapers more eager to publish his hard-hitting reports. He may be available in June. Brit views this as an opportunity to mount a major event, with the possibility of raising funds which would enable BCA to engage in projects beyond the means of participating volunteers. At the 3 Apr dinner (below) we enthused about a BCA award for brave US journalists.

Dave Lewit outlined a "Truth Corps" project, whereby citizens would survey local opinions to confront the survey results touting Bush and his policies as strongly approved by Americans. **Joanna Herlihy** and others believe that Bostonians would qualify their approval, and we want to know and publicize their concerns. **Bill King** phoned Dave with an idea— to take advantage of the Boston Tea Party idea by widely distributing tea bags tagged with anti-war and anti-Bush slogans. There would also be a phone number for tying in with a continuing campaign. Bill noted that Dick Cheney "would rather reign in Hell than serve in Heaven."

We decided to continue the meeting with a **special dinner meeting on April 3rd**. Seven of us, including **Anwar Kazmi** and his UMassBoston-student daughter **Ayesha**, showed up at the Café Jaffa in Back Bay, where we enjoyed Middle Eastern food, conversation, and ideas. Anwar and Ayesha recently returned from their *hajj* to Mecca! Anwar has been monitoring the internet and shared many articles about strife in the Middle East and related US policy. We further discussed the Truth Corps, which Joanna and Dave have been working on.

At the 20 March meeting we voted to sign a letter to UN Under-Secretary General N. Desai urging him to abandon involvement with the **International Chamber of Commerce**— a leader of the "sustainable development" notion which is trashing the world environment. We also collected \$64 to support an **anti-FTAA** ad in El Salvador newspapers during W. Bush's recent visit.

MA 1774— The People Take Over!

Members of Boston/Cambridge, North Bridge and Mass. Bay South met with Ray Raphael last Monday. He was in Boston to launch his exciting new book, The First American Revolution. Members discussed how we could use the inspiring story of citizens' initiatives to inform and energize our educational efforts on clean elections, restructuring the legislature, new visions, etc. Here is the little known story Ray tells:

Towns across Massachusetts responded spontaneously to a British attempt to hamstring their democracy as King George III fumed over the 1773 Boston Tea Party. The British issued several orders, among them the one closing the port of Boston. Another, less known, limited town meetings to once a year at the pleasure of the British appointees, rescinding citizens' right to approve such appointees. These citizens were men with 150+ years experience of direct democracy in their town meetings and their Congregational churches, and they said no. Farmers were alerted in each county, and gunpowder shared, but their muskets were never used.

When in one county seat after another the people massed to demand the resignation of British appointed town officials, judges etc., the officials were brought outside to speak their resignations so all could hear. At more than one site that meant repeating the resignation 30 times! Gen. Gage wanted to stop them in Worcester, but changed his mind when thousands showed up. Immediately each county set up its own democratic County Convention to carry out governmental functions. A revolution was accomplished, with no leaders, no fanfare, before fighting began. Not a shot was fired.

Ray informed us that his 2001 book, A People's History of the American Revolution, will be out in paperback in June. See pp.38-46 for a summary of this 1774 revolution-before-the-Revolution.

—Jean Maryborn

JOIN THE BCA

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE IN BOSTON TO LOVE BCA!

Please help us as we fight to make a better future for ourselves and our children — Join the Boston/Cambridge Alliance for Democracy. (Cut out this form and send it to Dave Lewit, 271 Dartmouth St., Boston, MA 02116.)

BOSTON-CAMBRIDGE ALLIANCE for DEMOCRACY PLEDGE

___ \$26/Year - "Count me in!"

___ \$52/Year - "Sustainer" (We need to average this amount.)

___ \$104/Year - "Contributor" (Helping us thrive.)

___ \$208/year - "Community Steward"—"I Tithe"

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BCAD's address is <DLewit@igc.org> c/o Dave Lewit, 271 Dartmouth St. 2H, Boston MA 02116. Phone 617 266 8687