

# BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the

**Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy—June 2002**

*Leadership is an illusion. We choose leaders and hold them up as banners — reflecting our mutual aspirations. But it is not they; it is you and I who determine our future.*

*I once had a violist friend who took over a youth orchestra. One day at lunch I asked him how it was to be a conductor "It's wonderful," he answered. "It doesn't take long. When you lower your baton in a downbeat a wonderful sound comes at you. Very soon you begin to believe that it's you who's making that glorious sound."*

*It is you and I who have always made that glorious sound.*

—Petr Kropotkin, Russia, 1902

## ALLIANCE NEWS

### Chapter Calendar

(Continued on page 8)

The Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy's next meeting will be on **Wednesday, June 19, 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.)

#### Suggested Agenda

① **Ruth Weizenbaum, Paul Brailsford, and Dave Lewit** report on AfD's national convention in Gettysburg.

② **We have 70 members—would you know it?:** Proposals for BCA reorganization and development.

**Looking ahead:** We meet again on July 17. In August our meeting will be a fun outing! Make suggestions! Stay tuned!

→ **Steering Committee—June 26, 5:30. 271 Dartmouth St., Copley Sq., Boston. All members invited. 617-266-8687.**

### Gettysburg Convention Swims Ahead

The Alliance for Democracy's biennial convention, June 7-10, attracted not quite 100 members from all over the U.S. to the lush campus of Gettysburg College near the civil war battlegrounds of Pennsylvania. The convention was marked by good fellowship and consolidation, as well as good speakers, good conferences, and good food and music.

After brief debate, the convention nominated all uncontested officer candidates by acclamation. They interpreted the rules to mean that no national member ratification would be necessary. Thus AfD's formal leadership now includes Ted Dooley (MN) and Nancy Price (CA) as co-chairs of national council, and Garret Whitney as male vice co-chair, since these posts were uncontested. Female vice co-chair was the only contested office, with **Ruth Weizenbaum** (Concord MA) outpolling Jo Seidita (Northridge CA) by more than 2 to 1. Because both got at least 20 percent of the convention vote, both will appear on the national ballot as part of Alliance Alerts.

With **Jean Maryborn** retiring from council, **Brian Moriarty** (Duxbury MA) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Continued on page 8 >>> )



### Open-Source Unions

#### How to Embrace 85 Million Workers

by Richard B. Freeman and Joel Rogers, *Nation*, 24 June 2002

*When John Sweeney became president of the AFL-CIO seven years ago, he promised to reverse the decades-long downward trend in union membership in private business. Despite devotion to organizing, only 9 percent of private-sector workers belong to unions—a lower proportion than a century ago. In recent years Internet usage in America is approaching 80 percent of households or workplaces. Is there an opportunity here? The following are excerpts from Freeman and Rogers' seminal article.*

—Ed.

**A**pproximately 100 million private-sector American workers—including 91 percent of the total—have no collective representation at work. Our mid-1990s survey of worker attitudes found that most workers want some organization—ranging from unions to workplace committees of various forms—speaking to their everyday concerns at work: wages and benefits, statutory rights, technology and training, safety, work/family scheduling conflicts, etc. Applying our results to today's work force, about 42 million or so want an organization more focused on information, career assistance or consultation with management, but still operating independent of management. Together these roughly 85 million workers—a group 12 times the size of present private union membership—are the market for open-source unionism. Capturing even a small share of this market could massively expand the American labor movement and vastly extend its reach...

To clarify the direction we believe labor should go, let's contrast the proposed open-source model more explicitly with the existing one. Under the current model, workers typically become union members only when unions gain majority support at a particular workplace. This makes the union the exclusive representative of those workers for purposes of collective bargaining. Getting to majority status—in the trade "50 percent + 1"—is a struggle. The law barely punishes employers who violate it, and the success of the union drive is typically determined by the level of employer resistance. Unions usually abandon workers who are unsuccessful in their fight to achieve majority status, and they are uninterested in workers who have no plausible near-term chance of such success.

Under open-source unionism, by contrast, unions would welcome members even before they achieved majority status, and stick with them as they fought for it—maybe for a very long time. These "pre-majority" workers would presumably pay reduced dues in the absence of the benefits of collective bargaining, but would otherwise be normal union members. They would gain some of the bread-and-butter benefits of traditional unionism—advice and support on their legal rights, bargaining over wages and working conditions if feasible, protection of pension holdings, political representation, career guidance, access to training, and so on. And even in minority positions, they might gain a collective contract for union members, or grow to the point of being able to force a wall-to-wall agreement for all workers in the unit.

But under OSU, such an agreement, which is traditionally the singular goal of organizing, would not be the defining criterion for achieving or losing membership. Joining the labor movement would be something you did for a long time, not just an organizational relationship you entered into with a third party upon taking some particular job, to expire when that job expired or changed... Because OSU unions would typically have less clout inside firms or with particular employers, they would probably be more concerned than traditional unionism with the political and policy environment surrounding their employers and employment settings. They would be more open to alliance with nonlabor forces—community forces of various kinds, constituencies organized around interests not best expressed through work or even class (here think environmental, feminist, diversity or work/family concerns)—that might support them in this work. As a result, labor as a whole would likely have a more pronounced "social" face with OSU than it has today.

How realistic is this vision? Nobody knows for sure. But there is evidence to suggest that it is feasible—evidence of unmet demand for unionism among workers, evidence of legal support for minority unionism, and evidence that the Internet can be a vehicle for low-cost provision of information, communication, and work-related services...

**U**nions are gradually making fuller use of the Internet's capacities to improve communication with their own staffs or members. But increasingly they are also using the web to recruit new members or to establish "virtual communities" or union supporters in arenas not yet amenable to the standard collective-bargaining model.

Alliance@IBM ([www.allianceibm.org](http://www.allianceibm.org)) is an example of an effective Net-supported minority union, operating without a demonstrated pro-union majority and without a collective

bargaining contract at a traditional nonunion company. The alliance provides information and advice to workers at IBM through the web. A similar effort at a partially organized employer is WAGE ("Workers at GE, which draws on contributions from 14 cooperating international unions. The Microsoft-inflected WashTech ([www.washtech.org](http://www.washtech.org)) and the Australian IT Workers Alliance ([www.itworkers-alliance.org](http://www.itworkers-alliance.org)) are open-source unions that are closer to craft unions or occupational associations. Both are responsive to the distinctive professional needs of these workers, such as access to a variety of job experiences and additional formal education, and the portability of high-level benefits when changing jobs.

The National Writers Union ([www.nwu.org](http://www.nwu.org)), a UAW affiliate, is another example of a union virtually created off the Net. It provides information and advice—including extensive job postings—to members, and it lobbies on their behalf, most spectacularly in the recent Supreme Court decision it won on freelance workers' copyright rights. But most of its members work without a collectively bargained contract.

In Britain, UNISON (the largest union in the country) and the National Union of Students have a website that tells student workers their rights and gives them advice about how to deal with workplace problems ([www.troubleatwork.org.uk](http://www.troubleatwork.org.uk)). It is a particularly engaging and practical illustration of how concrete problems can be addressed through Net assistance.

Finally, for a more geographically defined labor community, take a look at the website of the King County AFL-CIO ([www.kclc.org](http://www.kclc.org)), the Seattle central labor council that uses the Net to coordinate its own business, bring community and labor groups together for discussion and common action, post messages and general information to the broader community, and otherwise create a "virtual" union hall with much of the spirit and dense activity that use to be common in actual union halls in major cities. ■

## DEMOCRATIZE THE GOVERNMENT

### Why Not Vote for Executive Branch Officers?

New England StopFTAA asks "Do you approve of the following nominations for a lawful Administration of the United States?"

If not, please explain your SPECIFIC OBJECTIONS and ALTERNATIVE SUGGESTIONS. \* If you aren't aware of the qualifications of these nominees, DO YOUR OWN HOMEWORK ON THE WEB. Educate yo'self!"

President or VP - Woody Harrelson	Agriculture - Jeremy Rifkin
Commerce - Joseph Stieglitz	Defense - Colin Powell
Education - Arianna Huffington	Energy - Denis Hayes
Health - Bernard Lietaer	Housing - Jimmy Carter
Labor - William Whyte	State - Barbara Lee
Interior - Winona LaDuke	Treasury - Ron Paul
Transportation - Paul Wellstone	Vet's Affairs - John McCain
Attorney General - Ralph Nader	FCC - Jim Hightower
FEC - Ronnie Dugger	DIA - Thomas Wilson
DEA - Brad Pitt	EPA - Amory Lovins
FBI - Mike Ruppert	FEMA - Jesse Ventura
NSA - James Bamford	NSC - Gary Sick

Press Secretary - Gore Vidal

\* Vote: <http://egroups.com/group/jpchance/surveys?id=10689107>  
Reply to: [newenglandstopftaa@yahoogroups.com](mailto:newenglandstopftaa@yahoogroups.com)



## THE GOOD NEWS

### World Trade Organization Will Disband, Refound Under New Charter

SYDNEY, May 23. After a protracted and detailed review of current trade policy and its effects on developing countries, the World Trade Organization has decided to effect a cessation of all operations, to be accomplished over a period of four months, culminating in September. The WTO will reintegrate as a new trade body whose charter will be to ensure that trade benefits the poor.

As of September, agreements reached under the WTO will be suspended pending ratification by the new organization, tentatively referred to as the Trade Regulation Organization. Many existing agreements are likely to be re-ratified, but each will be subject to individual review for compliance with the TRO's charter, which is based upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The restructuring has come in response to numerous studies ([http://www.gatt.org/trastat\\_e/](http://www.gatt.org/trastat_e/)) indicating that current trade liberalisation rules and policies have led to increased poverty and inequality, and have eroded democratic principles, with a disproportionately large effect on the poorest countries.

Under the restructuring, the GATS agreement will be scrapped entirely, and a new agreement regulating services will be forged after an assessment of the effects of past services liberalisation, and when there has been adequate opportunity for governments and civil society to analyse and debate new proposals.

In addition, all aspects of TRIPS, TRIMS, AoA, and other agreements will be reviewed with humanitarian and other considerations in mind, and will be progressively replaced with corresponding versions under the TRO.

Proposals and resolutions for the foundation of the TRO will be evaluated beginning in June according to their likelihood of furthering the TRO charter. Specifically this will mean redressing the imbalances of existing trade agreements; providing access for developing countries to developed countries' markets; assessing the effects past trade liberalization and redressing problems where possible; and developing an enforceable framework for special and differential treatment guaranteeing that development policies are not undermined by trade agreements.

The immediate necessity, besides fixing core problems, will be to build a new regime of trust among members (notably between HIC and LDC members), with civil society organizations (NGOs), and with members of the public. The core goal is to establish rules whose priority is to benefit the poor, improve the environment, and strengthen democratic principles—in a pragmatic and immediate rather than theoretical and longterm sense.

In order to provide greater access to the Least Developed Countries who will most benefit from the existence of the TRO, the organisation's headquarters will be moved from their current location in Geneva to the capital of one of the LDCs. Proposals for final location are currently being solicited.



## THE BAD NEWS

### Australian Accountants See the Light, Tell It Like It Should Be

SYDNEY, May 28. On Tuesday, May 21, a representative of the World Trade Organization announced the dissolution of his organization to a shocked but supportive Sydney audience. He stated the WTO would reconstitute as a new organization dedicated to assisting the world's poor instead of the rich).

The bombshell announcement has had worldwide repercussions, sparking debate on the floor of the Canadian Parliament, where MP John Duncan took the floor to ask "what impact this will have on our appeals on lumber, agriculture and other ongoing trade disputes". At that point, WTO headquarters in Geneva denounced the "representative" as an impostor. "While we can appreciate [the impostors'] sense of humour, we would not wish for reputable news organizations like yours to be counted among those duped."

"It isn't humor this time," said Andy Bichlbaum, who "represented" the WTO in Sydney. "We really do want to dissolve the WTO and rewrite its charter so that the poor benefit rather than suffer from trade policy." The group he belongs to, The Yes Men, have previously represented the WTO at two international conferences and on mainstream TV. Each time, they have been invited by people who mistook a Yes Men parody website (<http://gatt.org/>) for the official WTO site (<http://www.wto.org/>). The WTO reacted to previous appearances with outrage and attempts to shut GATT.org down.

After overcoming their initial shock, the audience of Australian accountants expressed enthusiasm for the change, and offered many thoughtful suggestions for how world trade could benefit the poor—moving the headquarters from Switzerland to a Third World country, for example.

"I'm as right-wing as the next fellow," said one of the accountants, "but it's time we gave something back to the countries we've been doing so well from."

In past appearances, the Yes Men hoped to horrify audiences by taking free-trade ideas to their logical conclusions. They argued for selling votes to the highest corporate bidder, making the poor "recycle" hamburgers to cure endemic hunger, allowing countries to commit human rights abuses with a system of "justice vouchers" modeled after pollution vouchers, and even enabling managers to administer electric shocks to sweatshop workers from afar by using a futuristic telepresence technology embedded in a three-foot-long golden phallus.

The joke was on the Yes Men, however, when these proposals failed to shock audiences, who repeatedly found it credible that such ideas would come from the WTO. Finally, the Yes Men decided to say "no."

"We've already demonstrated that audiences of experts will accept anything whatsoever so long as it comes from the mouth of the WTO," said Mike Bonanno, a Yes Man who helped to prepare the lecture in Sydney. "This time, we decided to use the WTO's authority to lead people on a useful exercise that could actually produce something positive."

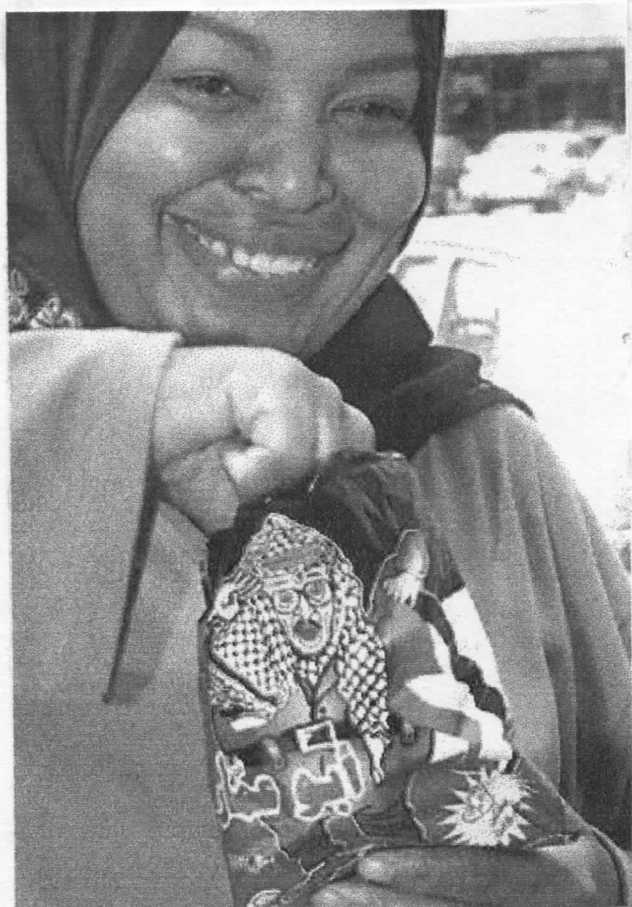
"It really is possible to dissolve and remake the WTO," said Bichlbaum. "The WTO, after all, was put together from a bunch of wishful thinking and previous agreements one day in 1994. It can just as quickly and easily be replaced by something much

better, based on other agreements—the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example."

After the events in Sydney, the Yes Men are even more optimistic. "The accountants offered us all kinds of useful suggestions on how to make sure the new version of the WTO benefits the poor," said Bonanno. "We feel kind of bad for misleading them, but they came up with much better plans for the future than we could. We hope they'll accept our apologies and keep working with us."

*The primary goal of RTMark (<http://rtmark.com/>) is to publicize corporate subversion of the democratic process. It has helped to sponsor three of the Yes Men's appearances. ☺*

## Globalization In Your Face



### Yasser Arafat Cheese Snack Is a Hit 3% of Profits To Help Intifada Wounded

CAIRO (Reuters) - Yasser Arafat cheese puffs are the new hit snack on the streets of Egypt's capital.

A cartoon of the Palestinian leader salutes consumers from each 25-piastre (\$0.05) bag of Abu Ammar chips, beckoning them to buy the snack and support a Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation. "Abu Ammar, hero of the struggle," the cover reads in bright red letters, referring to Arafat by his nom de guerre.

"The more you buy, the more you build," the bags say.

"Heartbeat by heartbeat, hand by hand, we'll build a new era." The bags feature a cartoon of an open-mouthed Arafat in khaki military dress and his trademark black-and-white checkered headscarf against the backdrop of a Palestinian flag. The cheese-flavored corn puffs lie at Arafat's feet.

One Cairo shopkeeper said demand was high for the snack, launched two weeks ago by Egyptian food group al-Jawhara. "They (Egyptians) buy it because they see Abu Ammar, and they are sympathetic with the Palestinian people," shopkeeper Mursi Mahmoud Mohammad told Reuters Monday. "They love this man. They love the people of Palestine," he said.

A company official said three percent of profits from sales of the snack would go to help pay for medical care of Palestinians wounded in the uprising that broke out more than a year and a half ago. Thousands of Egyptians have demonstrated in support of the Palestinians, demanding Egypt cut ties and expel Israel's ambassador.

They have also called for a boycott of U.S. goods and have urged consumers to buy Egyptian. Palestinian scarves have become a must-have accessory for many young Egyptians, and Palestinian flags have started appearing in shop windows in a country where public political protest is rare. ☽

## Take Longer Showers, Damn It!

### Resistance grows to privatization of water

by William Finnegan, *The New Yorker*, 8 April 2002

...Water privatizations have been backfiring all over Latin America. In Panama, popular anger about an attempted privatization helped cost the President his bid for reelection. Vivendi, the French multinational, had its thirty-year water contract with the Argentine province of Tucumán terminated after two years because of alleged poor performance. Major water privatizations in Lima and Rio de Janeiro have had to be canceled because of popular opposition. Trinidad recently allowed a management contract with a British water giant to expire. Protests against water privatization have also erupted in Indonesia, Pakistan, India, South Africa, Poland, and Hungary.

One large-scale Bolivian water privatization that the World Bank still points to with pride took place a few years ago in La Paz. The concession was awarded to Suez, which honored its commitment to expand the La Paz water network to several poor neighborhoods just outside the city. This area, known as El Alto, is home to nearly three quarters of a million people, virtually all of them Indians recently arrived from the countryside. But a problem emerged. It seemed that the people in El Alto weren't using enough water. Accustomed to Andean peasant life, they were extremely careful with water, never wasting a drop, and they continued to be so even after they had taps installed in their homes. This was good conservation, but it was bad for Suez's bottom line, and the corporation was disappointed in the return on its investment. After it appeared to raise its rates, which were pegged to the dollar, when the local currency was devalued the general happiness with the contract evaporated and residents began to complain about the service. When I was in La Paz, the people of El Alto were marching against Suez. When I asked a World Bank official about the situation, she agreed that there was a basic problem: "Those Indians needed to learn to use more water." ☹



## Israel-Palestine: Two Views

### Letter Home from an Israeli Soldier

Next week is Independence Day, Israel's 54th. We Jews have come so far in the last 60 years, literally from ashes to rebirth. I am in constant awe of the fact that we have the incredible privilege of living such a major chapter of our people's history, that we are part of something so great.

I know that Israel is still far from perfect, and I am sad when I think that there are millions of my fellow Jews out there who do not see what all of you do. You have been here and felt at home here in a way that Jews have not been able to feel at home anywhere in the world for two thousand years.

As I look around at my fellow Israelis, I see such an outstanding, moral people, and now, with our backs to the wall, united and strong.

I will be 44 next month, and was called up for reserve service the day after Pesach began and have been based on the outskirts of Bethlehem ever since (now out on a 48-hour leave). Let me tell you that morale is high, that we are all determined to win this war. The past month has been the worst since the violence began. 128 Israelis were killed in the month of March. They nearly didn't even open the schools nationwide yesterday, after the Pesach recess, out of concerns for security.

We have lost 14 soldiers, I think, since we went in after the Netanya seder eve bombing. But it is clear that this action has saved hundreds of other lives, so very few people here are interested in ending the campaign prematurely. Clearly, Arafat would rather die a martyr than go down in history as making any compromise that might bring his people statehood. Which means that there is no short-term hope of any peace agreement, and very little short-term hope at all. Our only choice is to meet terrorism head on, and stop dancing around it as we have been doing for years.

Unfortunately, things will eventually get bad again after we leave PA territory, again we will get the American administration's green light for a small-scale reprisal. The Palestinians will again opt for the honor and glory of being victims rather than opting for the Western notion of compromise and accepting a solution whereby both peoples can coexist.

Bush gave Israel the thumbs up to go in and do what had to be done in the West Bank. So we sent in ground troops and are rooting out the terrorists from house to house, at huge personal risk and loss of our boys' lives. But when America went to war against Afghanistan, it just bombed and bombed and bombed, not wanting to risk its soldiers' lives. I think the Americans themselves estimated that 3800 innocent Afghans died in the bombing, while about 3 American soldiers died in actual combat. Yet here in Israel, facing enemies that have resorted to the worst type of terrorism the world has ever known, with zero public safety for the citizens of a country that has never had a peaceful day throughout its existence, our army decided to take the moral high road, and avoid large-scale bombing and civilian deaths of Arabs.

I ask several things of you. Remember how important Israel is to the Jewish people. Keep the connection tight. When things calm down again, come visit, maybe even to live. Realize that the media is biased - Israel is the most moral country in the world; we haven't lost our respect for human life despite years and years of violent conflict. Attend demonstrations for Israel.

Organize local rallies. All of us owe Israel a great deal, personally and nationally. Israel is under fire now, and if your own political leaders see that the Jews don't give a crap about Israel, they won't either.

It is astounding that just a few months after September 11, Arabs are demonstrating in American cities on behalf of a Palestinian entity that supports the idea of suicide bombers against civilians. While a measly 10,000 Jews attended this Sunday's pro-Israel demonstration in New York. It is no wonder that Bush is now telling us to pull out of the West Bank immediately. We need you out on the streets.

Okay, enough preaching. On a personal note, we're fine here. The family is holding up nicely. Rena is strong, and the kids are aware of what's happening, but are thank God, doing fine. And we will triumph, I have no doubt of that.

Sorry about the preachiness, Love and kisses, Marty

---

---

### An Israeli Captain Is Disgusted

by Nir Eisikovits, in The Miami Herald, 10 April 2002

For the past 17 months, we Israelis have been fighting an aimless war with the Palestinians. Despite our overwhelming military strength, we cannot beat their national aspirations out of them. Despite their growingly suicidal determination, they cannot force their terms of independence on us.

There is no military solution to this conflict. The outline of the political solution is clear to everyone involved. Most settlements will have to be dismantled; Israel will have to return to some version of its 1967 borders; Jerusalem will have to be divided; the Palestinians will be granted no practical right of return. And yet we fight. Like blind, psychotic gladiators, we continue to circle each other, getting our bearings only from cries of pain and the taste of blood in our mouths.

We are losing more than our lives. Wars of attrition exact their most unbearable costs on the living. Militarily, intellectually and morally, we are eroding. Militarily, the Israeli Defense Forces practically has relinquished its training schedule. One of the world's most efficient and celebrated armies is becoming fat and sluggish. The results are beginning to show.

To give just one recent example, a lone Palestinian sniper equipped with an ancient rifle killed eight soldiers a month ago and got away unharmed. This is a state of affairs we cannot afford. We live in a pretty volatile neighborhood. Iran is developing nuclear capabilities; Iraq is stockpiling on weapons of mass destruction; Libya and Yemen are unequivocally calling for Israel's destruction. We need an army, not a trigger-happy riot police.

Intellectually, we seem to have thrown our capacity for critical thinking into the wind. We are so busy digging into our foxholes, trying to block out the carnage around us, that we buy almost anything we are told.

Take the Karin A episode. For months, government and military officials have been claiming that the seizure of this shipload of heavy weaponry intended for the Palestinian Authority proves that the PA is a breeding ground for terrorists. Incredibly, no one has ever suggested the obvious counterargument: We are at war with the Palestinians. We have been bombing them with everything we have: F16s, Apache attack helicopters, Merkava 3 tanks. Wars are a two-sided affair.

If you bomb someone, you get bombed back. It has nothing to do with terrorism.

Morally, we are going blind. A few weeks ago, a suicide attack occurred in Jerusalem while a soccer match was being broadcast on television. The program editors decided to split the screen in two, exhibiting the neat green turf side by side with the chaotic red human imbroglia.

Some time later, the IDF invaded several refugee camps in Gaza and the West Bank, looking for militants and munitions plants. The forces advanced from house to house by means of cutting holes in the adjacent walls rather than through the streets, which were deemed too dangerous. At around the same time, a member of parliament scolded soldiers for crying at the funerals of their dead comrades, claiming that the practice was demoralizing.

What exactly have we become, if we can no longer separate soccer from dead bodies, walls from doorways? What kind of person doesn't cry at funerals? Would we want anything to do with that person?

"No one chooses to wage war or foment war for the sake of war," writes Aristotle. An aimless conflict cannot make sense. Anyone engaging in one becomes weak, stupid, opaque. It's time to declare victory, defeat or something. We can't take much more of this.

*Nir Eisikovits, an Israeli attorney getting a Ph.D. in philosophy at Boston University, is a captain in the Israeli reserves.*

## Minnesota AfD Cosponsors a Dynamite 3-day Forum -- Can we do it here?

by Jean Maryborn

With family just across the river in Minneapolis, I was lucky enough to be able to attend the ReVisioning conference in St. Paul, put on by AfD Minnesota, with some 50 endorsers and co-sponsors. The three day event was "for all who see the need for a transformed society, a thriving ecosystem and a viable planet." For me it felt like a watershed, reminiscent of Seattle, to be focusing on what we envision. Not every speaker got beyond the now tiresome tirade of what we don't like, but the majority of speakers were visionaries, and the conference format itself took us another step towards participation by all.

Featured speakers included our own Ronnie Dugger, just back from India where he visited the worst of slums, who called on us to be world citizens aware of those mountains of human misery. Ronnie is hoping to increase the US-India NGO [civil society organization] connections which were one focus of Alliance work in Seattle. Marjorie Kelly, author of *The Divine Right of Capital: Dethroning the corporate aristocracy*, invited activists to join her in a campaign to change the conditions of corporate charter in Minnesota, which now require benefitting stockholders only. Michael Albert of South End Press and Z magazine looked ahead to significant participatory economics.

David Korten, Saturday night's speaker, was at first skeptical of the Question Circles process, but left saying he'd suggest it everywhere he speaks. Here's how it worked: After a main speaker we turned our chairs to form small groups of 3-6 to share our reactions and together fashion a question or

statement for the speaker. It was satisfying, revelatory, and engaging.

There were many workshops and panels. Sunday morning's speaker, long-time peace activist Mel Duncan, pointed out how often the speakers had referred to some form of spiritual grounding. Mel is active in Nonviolent Peace Force, which would send paid volunteers into conflict areas when requested by local peace activists. Another reason for hope. See [www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org](http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org)

*The ReVisioning process continues in Minneapolis/ St.Paul, as it does here and elsewhere. Jean asks: How about a conference here next year?*



**INFORMATION**  
**Security Begins With You!**

The success of America's campaign against terrorism depends on you. Don't let terrorist spies and saboteurs

**U.S. Mimics WWII Patriotic Warnings**  
**Don't Terrorist Spies Lurk Everywhere ??? ?**

**Gabriela Arrieta, 13, from Bolivia, addressed** the U.N. Special Session on Children on May 8 in New York. Arrieta was the first speaker who addressed the numerous plights of children around the world. An estimated 150 million of the more than 2 billion children around the world are malnourished; nearly 11 million die before their 5th birthday; more than 120 million do not attend school; 10 million die each year from preventable causes, and 300,000 are fighting in wars.

*Go figure: That's 27,000 who died on 9/11 of preventable causes. -Ed.*



# 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 Carly Rogers of Manhattan, board member of TOES/USA (The Other Economic Summit) who has had twenty years cultural and educational exchange experience with the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Contact her at [carlyrogers@igc.org](mailto:carlyrogers@igc.org) or call 212-662-3410.

## Some Reflections After September 11th by Carly Rogers

**T**here is a human tendency in times of disaster to want to find some person, thing or group to blame. However, if one examines the history of any major event, one finds an intricate web of interlocking and interacting causes. While the attacks of September 11 undoubtedly involved at least one conspiracy, on a deeper level they were the result of many historical and political forces.

In physics the definition of inertia is that bodies at rest tend to remain at rest and bodies in motion tend to remain in motion. As applied to political, historical and economic processes, the analogy of inertia can help to explain how trends and events develop over long periods of time.

The Haudenosaunee (Six Nations Iroquois) frequently speak of the need to make decisions in the light of their probable impact on the seventh generation to come. For Americans caught up in the short-term thinking intrinsic to two-, four- and six-year electoral cycles, and by the mystique of corporations' obsession with the immediate bottom line, the relevance of present-day planning to outcomes seven generations from now can appear farfetched.

However, if one considers that in the transmission of social memory three generations can encompass a century, seven such generations take us back to the time of the American Revolution. By simultaneously looking forward three generations and back three generations one finds the seven generations timespan more accessible—one sees that not only families, but all human institutions are influenced in similar ways by preceding generations.

Inertia in human events is particularly obvious in the tendency of human beings (and especially of those who are in charge) to go on doing as they have always done until confronted by a crisis which they cannot handle in the usual way. At such points there may be a violent political or economic spasm giving rise to periods of civil unrest or war, which in their turn tend to continue until they burn themselves out.

Such a spasm in response to the shock of September 11 has led to the current war against terrorism, which is officially justified in the name of protecting the American Way of Life and its "freedoms". But what is that way of life? Surely not just the freedom to continue consuming the largest part of the planet's petroleum and other resources in the name of a consumer economy where multiple brands of similar items are barely distinguishable one from another?

The demagogues of the new right have argued for

decades that an unfettered market solves all economic (and perhaps all) problems and anything that limits this market is bad for America and the rest of the world. The incredible global momentum of American consumer and media culture over the past century, compounded by the revolution in electronic communications and air travel, has eclipsed the importance of other elements of American culture which are far more valuable for human and planetary survival.

If we go back to the time of the Founding Fathers, we find another legacy—that of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. These documents envision a society under the rule of law, and assert the equal right of all people to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Belief in full freedom is central here—freedom from evils that threaten life and livelihood, freedom of speech, religion and assembly, and freedom to seek individual and community fulfilment. The political system envisioned by the Constitution also incorporates a precious legacy from Britain—the principle of loyal opposition.

Millions of immigrants have come to this country in pursuit of the American dream. However, the realization of this dream has been distorted by violent contradictions to the country's founding ideals—the wealth of the United States was built on military conquest involving genocide of the original populace, on the slave trade and slave labor, on waves of low-paid immigrants, and on ruthless exploitation of natural resources in the New World and elsewhere. Cultural, economic and environmental colonization continues to be a part of the global expansion of corporate power engendered by the American experiment.

**W**here do we go from here? Is our concept of democracy one that can benefit all the Earth's people? Can the United Nations (in itself a first, partially successful application of Western European and American democratic principles to the relations between nation states) provide a basis for the creation of new global institutions that will establish and enforce standards of accountability for global corporate entities? Can we re-examine our assumptions and learn enough from and about other cultures to meet the challenges we face?

In the words of a spokesman for the Lakota nation "The Creator gave each people the right to live as they choose as long as by so doing they do not prevent another people from doing the same." Perhaps we can now begin to build appropriate new institutions and relationships. This could lay the foundations for a viable global community of local communities, in which political and economic practices will be socially and ecologically accountable and will ensure the well-being of the seventh generation from now.

## Alliance News (continued from page 1)

were chosen by the caucus of conventioners from the Northeast (New England + NY) to represent the region, subject to mail confirmation by the general membership of those states (petition candidates accepted in the next week or so) \_\_\_\_\_. The convention acclaimed Vikki Savee as treasurer (her work was critical in last year's financial recovery), while Sue Wheaton was acclaimed as secretary. Clif Arnebeck (OH), **Mary White (MA)**, **Peter Mott (NY)**, **Gene Nichol (NC)**, and **Ronnie Dugger (MA)** were nominated for representatives-at-large, and Ronnie remains editor-in-chief, since that office is not elective. **Dave Lewit (MA)** and **Bonnie Preston (MD)** were acclaimed as male and female ombudsmen respectively.

Ted, Nancy, and Ruth affirmed their focus on chapter and regional development—auspicious for BCA's relationship with national and with nearby chapters and unaffiliated members.

A number of resolutions were considered and voted—on such topics as war, nuclear weapons, impeachment, Earth Charter, sustainable development, media truth, alliances, council/committee structure, and honors. Implementation, however, is up for grabs, given AfD's limited budget. See *Alliance Alerts* (forthcoming) for details on these and other convention features.

At various points in the 3-day weekend Gettysburg attendees heard a set of excellent plenary speakers and participated in exciting workshops and roundtables.

Greg Palast, American investigative reporter working for BBC and writing in the Guardian and the Observer, beat any standup comedian with amazing real-life stories about officials and CEOs on the run, along with grisly war stories. He also autographed his new book *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*. **Marjorie Kelly**, author of *The Divine Right of Capital*, opened new insights into corporate power. BCA members **Brit Eckhart** and **Brian Moriarty** plan to lead discussions on Kelly's topics in the fall. In a forum on "the military crisis" Adm. Eugene Carroll discussed nuclear dangers while Ruth Caplan detailed corporate stakes in an imperial military program. Ninety-two-year-old Doris Haddock (Granny D) delivered a spirited call on faithfulness to the cause, while Alliance member Michael Morrill spoke vigorously as Green Party candidate for governor of Pennsylvania. All received standing ovations.

Workshops were too numerous to detail here, but **Dave Lewit** led one on "participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, with applications in the USA" yielding ideas from four small groups:

- \* elect critical thinkers to lead participation
- \* participatory budgeting in AfD, with open accounts
- \* PB in community organizations, with double bottom lines
- \* informal pilot PB in a selected municipality.

Dave also co-led, with Ruth Caplan, a workshop on "corporate influence in the United Nations." The workshop produced a resolution adopted by the convention, to endorse an alternative framework drafted by civil society organizations, to keep big corporations from co-opting the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in August.

The nine at-meal roundtables included one on globalization moderated by **Richard Sides** of the North Bridge chapter, one on "issue links" moderated by **Ruth Weizenbaum**, and one on "alternative media" moderated by **Dave Lewit**. Discussion was exciting, with possibilities for coordinated local campaigning with novel ideas.

Getting there was half the fun. Dave drove **Paul Brailsford** and **Brian** in **Brian's** new car—nine hours each way, but it seemed like three! A great way to get to know folks!

## 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"

\_\_\_ \$500/Year - "Realize the vision"

\_\_\_ What's fair for YOU? \_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Street, No./Box/Apt: \_\_\_\_\_

Town and Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Night: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## GUIDELINES for INDY PAGE editors

*BCA Dispatch* is experimenting with an Indy Page (page 7)—a page of 800-840 words edited independently by and for *Dispatch* readers. It may consist of one article or several, with or without graphics. To be an Indy Page editor you don't need editorial experience, but you must get feedback from other readers before submission. Call the *Dispatch* for names

The easiest way to prepare material is to select it as you wish from the internet or retype or scan it from book(s) or periodical(s), with or without your own accompanying remarks. Your remarks might be crafted to make it easier for the reader to think about the material, to discuss it, or to take action on it. For easy writing of your own material: Write your "testimony." Or write a letter to "Aunt Jane," perhaps with "clippings."

Whether the material is yours or borrowed, the ideas expressed should be clearly laid out, should stick to a few essential points, and be put into clear language. If the material is deliberately poetic or surrealistic, the same criteria may not apply, but it will be harder to produce a good piece with good results for readers.

The space limitation is strict—if your material is over 840 words it may be necessary to print it in reduced-size type, making it difficult for older people, or people with visual problems, or who lack patience, to read it. You should submit the material electronically (by e-mail or floppy disk) with suggestions for layout, or negotiate with *Dispatch* editor. It will be inserted within the page border and under The Indy Page headline (with brief identifying information on the editor—please submit such information).

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

## COLOPHON

Editorial Board:

Dave Lewit	Brit Eckhart	Bill King
Editor	Associate Editor	Ed. Board
dlewit@igc.org	juniper@greenet.net	617 244 3557
271 Dartmouth St #2H,		
Boston MA 02116. 617-266-8687		

—We need more editorial board members and reporters!—

Or try editing the **Indy Page** (guidelines on page 6).

Visit the Alliance web site: [www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org](http://www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org)