

BCA Dispatch

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

When an anti-slavery speaker came to Lowell in 1834, he drew an angry, stone-throwing mob. Mill owners and workers depended on Southern cotton, and anyone who threatened the system was unwelcome... Lowell not only bought Southern cotton, but it made "negro cloth" that was sold to plantations... Sen. Charles Sumner called it "an unholy union...between... the lords of the lash and the lords of the loom."

—National Park Service handbook Lowell

ALLIANCE NEWS

Chapter Calendar (News Continued on page 8)

☺☺ **A Chapter Outing!** ☺☺

The Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy's next event is **Saturday, August 17—Lowell, MA. Boat & museum tour of old mills & canals.** Plus **Cambodian/Laotian Water Festival** with exotic food! We entrain at **North Station, 10:00 a.m.** Bring friends! **Reservations:** phone Dave at 617 266 8687.

☞ We re-convene on September 18 in Cambridge.

→ **Steering Committee—Wed., Aug 21, 5:30.** 32 Fayette St., Cambridge 02138. *All members invited.* 617-864-3931.

TOMORROW'S HISTORY

**Goodbye Marxism, Goodbye Globalism
Thatcher's Turncoat: Variety—Like It Or Not**

by John Gray, London School of Economics

(Note—Five paragraphs of this article appeared in BCA Dispatch of October, 2001, with notice of continuation. Due to elapsed time, the entire article is printed here. —Ed.)

Communism failed, but market liberalism then tried to impose its own utopia. The atrocities should mark the end of that crusade.

Two Western Utopias

The dozen years between the fall of the Wall and the assault on the Twin Towers will be remembered as an era of delusion. The west greeted the collapse of communism—though it was itself a western utopian ideology—as the triumph of western values. The end of the most catastrophic utopian experiment in history was welcomed as a historic opportunity to launch yet another vast utopian project—a global free market. The world was to be made over in an image of western modernity—an image deformed by a market ideology that was as far removed from any human reality as Marxism had been. Now, after the attacks on New York and Washington, the conventional view of globalisation as an irresistible historical trend has been shattered. We are back on the classical (continued on page 4 >>)



Lowell MA, 1850, Waterpower. See "Outing", this page.

ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

**Brazil's "Lula" Likely Next President
Neoliberals--Corrupt--In Disarray**

by Roger Burbach, Red Pepper magazine (UK), August 2002

Luis Inacio da Silva, the left-leaning candidate of the

Workers Party has taken a commanding lead in the upcoming October presidential elections. A victory by da Silva, commonly known as "Lula", would have political repercussions that resonate throughout the Western Hemisphere. Brazil is the largest country with the biggest economy in Latin America. It borders on three nations in the throes of turmoil and political uncertainty — Argentina which is experiencing an economic implosion, Colombia, the scene of an expanding civil war, and Venezuela, where rightist and traditional political parties backed by the United States recently tried to overthrow President Hugo Chavez. Moreover, da Silva's reservations about the US-backed Free Trade Area of the Americas and his independence on

foreign policy issues like Cuba and the civil war in Colombia mark him as an adversary of the Bush administration.

Brazil's president Fernando Henrique Cardoso is constitutionally ineligible for reelection. His centre-right coalition has been unable to find a scandal-free candidate to confront da Silva, the result of government corruption linked to neo-liberalism and the privatisation of public enterprises. The ruling coalition's first choice, Roseana Sarney, was forced to step aside when police seized a half million dollars in cash in her residence that allegedly came from a bankrupt private enterprise she helped set up with state funds. Now her replacement, Jose Serra, is embroiled in scandal because his political fundraiser stands accused of taking \$15 million in bribes to help sell a multi-billion dollar state steel enterprise to a private consortium.

Da Silva has run unsuccessfully for president three times in the past as head of the Workers Party (PT), but today enjoys almost twice as much support as his nearest presidential contender in pre-election polls. Significantly, Lula's negative ratings have dropped, with only 38 per cent declaring they would not vote for him under any conditions, a number lower than any of the other major presidential aspirants. This figure bodes particularly well for Lula in the runoff election in late October between the two top contenders, assuming no one wins 50 per cent in the first round. Recent polls show Lula decisively beating any of the presidential candidates who may face him in the runoff.

Concerned by a possible Workers Party presidential victory, major investment banks including Morgan Stanley Dean Witter and Merrill Lynch started downgrading their ratings of Brazil in early May, touching off a financial crisis. The country's currency, the real, began to drop in value and the stock market plummeted.

The meddling of the investment banks has provoked strong reactions. "These banks have led the neo-liberal sacking of our country and now they are trying to scare people into perpetuating a political order that serves only their narrow interests," fumed Reinaldo Gonzalvez of the Economic Institute of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

Even the *Financial Times* labeled the banks' reactions a "mistake", noting that should da Silva become president, his economic policies would likely be moderate. In several Brazilian cities Workers Party governments "have proven to be good administrators", said the *Financial Times*. In the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul where the Workers Party has been in power for a decade, the government has improved social services while helping stimulate agricultural and industrial production, making the state one of Brazil's most prosperous. Some thirteen per cent of the state's production is publicly or cooperatively owned.

Support for Lula breaches class lines. Even sectors of the economic elite are beginning to believe that his policies may offer the best hope for the country. Since the Asian economic crisis of 1997, Brazil's economic performance has been anaemic, with growth rates sometimes failing to keep pace with the population increase. The neo-liberal policies of Cardoso, such as the free flow of speculative "hot money" in and out of the country at the whim of investors, have favoured financial interests over Brazil's substantial industrial base, much of which is geared to production for the big internal market. "Even some foreign interests with investments in the country's industry look with favour on Lula's policies" says Gonzalvez. Lula first rose to

national prominence in the 1980's when he built the Workers Party from his base among the trade unions in Brazil's large metallurgic and automotive industries, which produce for domestic and international markets.

Domestic interest rates are at 18.5 per cent and rising as part of Cardoso's effort to keep finance and banking capital from fleeing the country. The international debt of Brazil now stands at about \$210 billion while the government has roughly another \$250 billion in domestic liabilities. Although Brazil sometimes



PT candidate "Lula" da Silva

runs a trade surplus due to its diversified exports of coffee, soy beans, beef, orange juice, sugar and manufactured goods like automobiles, its payments on its international debt and the outflow of profits to foreign investors means that there is consistently a deficit in Brazil's annual balance of payments. This has driven the country ever deeper into debt as it seeks new loans to service the debt and cover the deficit. To deal with this fiscal problem and to appease international financial interests, Cardoso during his rule has followed the neo-liberal agenda of slashing social expenditures

and services, thereby increasing social unrest, violence and crime throughout the country. Small wonder that George Soros, a prominent international investor with interests in Brazil, recently stated, "a crisis is brewing in Brazil which could be terminal."

When the international firms downgraded Brazil's credit rating, Da Silva, in a slap at Cardoso's economic policies, declared that the best response to the banks is to "combat speculation with production. Every investor will look to Brazil when there is an infrastructure that supports the flow of production, a highly trained workforce and a market that really consumes because there are strong wages.

There is a broad base of support for Lula among the social movements of Brazil, particularly within the ranks of the Landless Movement, or MST (Movimento Sem Terra). For a decade and a half, the MST has seized idle lands throughout Brazil, particularly large landed estates. The MST has a committed and skilled leadership that runs the organisation along democratic centralist principles similar to many of the older revolutionary and communist organisations of Latin America. However the MST's centralism has not prevented it from putting down deep roots in some of Brazil's most remote communities.

The MST and the PT were initially very close and even had cross militancies when the MST was founded in the late 1980s. But in recent years differences over tactics and strategy have evolved as the PT has concentrated on winning political office while the MST focuses on building a social movement among the country's poorest. At times Lula has publicly refrained from

endorsing some of the MST's land occupations.

But in spite of their differences, the MST rank and file remain clearly supportive of Lula and the PT in the upcoming elections. The two organisations face common and deadly adversaries. Three Workers Party mayors have been assassinated in recent years while MST militants have also been murdered and many others arrested and abused in prison. A Lula victory would clearly open up enormous space for the advance of agrarian reform in Brazil and an end to repression. The PT itself has internal differences that are often ardently debated. The most controversial decision in this election campaign has been the decision of the PT leadership to select Senator Jose Alencar of the Liberal Party as Lula's vice-presidential candidate. The Liberals are a centrist party that in the past has been aligned with the ruling coalition. Alencar himself is a textile manufacturer from the relatively prosperous state of Minas Gerais with a personal fortune estimated at close to a \$500 million. However, Alencar is viewed as a progressive entrepreneur whose employees organise independent unions and receive decent wages by Brazilian standards. In many ways Alencar epitomises the domestic manufacturing bourgeoisie that Lula is attempting to align himself with to buttress his government and Brazil against the speculative and international financial interests that will almost inevitably try to ruin his government if he takes office.

Another major debate in the party is over whether or not to recognise the more than \$200 billion dollars in international debt that past Brazilian governments have incurred. The Jubilee 2000 organisation in Brazil – a broad based ecumenical movement that enjoys the support of the Brazilian National Bishops Conference—asserts that Brazil and other Third World countries cannot and should not pay the debt, especially those parts of it that were incurred under corrupt regimes in the past. However, Lula, in an effort to avoid scaring the financial markets even further, has stated in recent weeks that he will recognise the international debt.

In other arenas however, the PT envisions a fundamental transformation of the government and its relationship to society. Based on its experience in running state and municipal governments over the past decade, the Workers Party platform proposes two innovative breakthroughs for Brazil at the national level—"participatory management of the state" and "strategic management of the state". According to Marcos Arruda, an economic adviser to the Workers Party and the director of Policy Alternatives for the Southern Cone, a research organisation that works with trade unions and cooperatives, "participatory management would be achieved by setting up local and regional councils that would involve representatives of civil society and non-governmental organisations." They would discuss and make proposals for economic, social, political, cultural and environmental policies. They would oversee the implementation of public policy and directly relate to the appropriate agencies in the central government in Brasilia. Sectoral chambers, comprised of technical experts as well as productive and civic interests, would also be set up to discuss policies and priorities in specific economic arenas, such as agriculture, transportation, education, sanitation, etc.

The concept of the "strategic management of the state" means that the PT would abandon the neo-liberal approach of the "minimalist state" and instead move to use the state

apparatus to advance social and economic priorities that serve Brazilian society as a whole. A national development program would be enunciated that committed the state to implement public policies that extended even beyond the four-year presidential term.

For example in the area of education, the Workers Party government would establish specific programs and time frames for eliminating illiteracy among approximately 25 million adult Brazilians. For everyone over 18 who is illiterate or simply wants to advance their education at the secondary or university level, a work-study program will be set up so everyone has the opportunity to engage in schooling while continuing some form of productive activity. Another arm of the PT's educational approach calls for a School Scholarship program in which families would receive a minimum subsidy in exchange for keeping their children in school and off the streets. This policy was launched by former PT governor Cristovam Buarque in the Federal District. Cardoso has even tried to coopt it by extending it to other parts of the country. A Lula administration would zealously implement it throughout Brazil. On a broader level, the PT maintains that scientific research and higher education need to be closely linked to the national development policies that are established by the strategic participatory councils.

While focusing on the national development of Brazil's resources and peoples, a PT victory would bolster the party's ties to international civil society and organisations that are resisting corporate dominated globalisation. The PT government in the state of Rio Grande do Sul hosted the World Social Forums in Porto Alegre in 2001 and 2002 that brought together tens of thousands of activists from around the world. These forums provoked rich discussions and debates that have reverberated throughout the Workers Party and the social movements in Brazil, as well as among the diverse international organisations that participated in the forums. Brazil, the PT and the country's social organisations are now an important planning and experimental base for an emergent global alternative to neo-liberalism.

The World Social Forum in 2003 will also be hosted in Porto Alegre. It may be inaugurated by a President Lula and symbolise a new age of change and transformation in the world. The PT has proclaimed that its goals are another type of globalisation, one based on the values of cooperation, complementarity, reciprocity and solidarity. Throughout Brazil, the Workers Party is intent on unfurling the banner of the 2002 World Social Forum: "Another World is Possible".

Ironically, the real plummeted to its lowest level ever on July 2 just as the country's world champion football team returned home to the cheers of millions. That date also marked the eighth anniversary of the introduction of the "Plan Real" by Cardoso. This plan, which he introduced as finance minister just months before he assumed the presidency, represents the inception of orthodox neo-liberal policies in Brazil. As Cardoso met the soccer team, he was ebullient, apparently hoping that some of its success would rub off on him and his anointed successor. But Cardoso mentioned not a word about July 2 being the birth date of the "Plan Real". Both Cardoso and Jose Serra have attempted to blame the recent speculative crisis on Lula, arguing that Brazil cannot have "irresponsible leaders" who will lead the country to "economic disaster". The conservative

Brazilian press, lead by the *O Globo* media conglomerate, has joined in this attack, trying to turn the voters against Lula, just as it did in previous elections. But the anti-Lula orientation of the Brazilian media may be less effective than in previous elections. *O Globo* is suffering severe losses and is selling off its cable TV network. Even more importantly there is a sense at the grass roots among many who were duped in the past to vote for Cardoso that they are not going to be deceived this time by the lies and propaganda of the media and the ruling coalition.

Marcos Arruda of the Workers Party puts a positive spin on the financial crisis and the upcoming elections. He believes the crisis will lead to the defeat of the ruling coalition and that a Lula victory will be a "turning point", not only for Brazil but other countries in Latin America. "The government finds itself foisted on a neo-liberal petard of its own making," said Arruda. "A Brazil headed by President Lula could lead the country out of its economic quagmire, mobilise a broad popular base allied with sectors of the progressive middle class, and galvanise international allies. Brazil would serve as a productive and exemplary pole for other Third World countries caught in the trap of neo-liberalism and corporate-dominated globalisation." ☛

NONVIOLENCE

Nigerian Women Pin ChevronTexaco

Nudity Threat Wins Fair Exchange Benefits

by Ruth Rosen, San Francisco Chronicle, July 25, 2002

"Our weapon is our nakedness," Helen Odeworitse, a leader of 600 women who peacefully seized control of an oil terminal in Escravos, Nigeria, told the Associated Press. Odeworitse and other women held 700 western oil workers hostage and shut down a facility that exports half a million barrels of oil a day.

The unarmed women villagers, who ranged in age from 30 to 90, threatened to remove their clothes – a traditional shaming gesture that would have humiliated and damned ChevronTexaco throughout the region.

Takeovers of oil sites are common in the oil-rich Niger Delta. Armed with machetes and guns, men routinely threaten corporate executives with kidnapping and sabotage. But the all-women protest stunned the corporation and, in the end, the women's threat worked. Rather than removing or harming the protesters, the oil company engaged in a 10-day marathon negotiation with them.

Desperation, the women later explained, is what led to their protest. Escravos is the Portuguese word for slaves and that's how these women view themselves. Despite its great oil wealth, the Niger Delta is among the poorest places in West Africa. While oil workers enjoy comfortable homes, a modern hospital and satellite television, villagers live in rusty tin-roofed shacks, without running water or electricity.

The women's demands reflected their determination to escape such grinding poverty. ChevronTexaco, they insisted, should help fund the development of the region. So they demanded that the oil company employ 25 of their sons; install electricity and water systems in their communities; build schools, clinics and town halls; and help them build fish and chicken farms so that they can sell food to the corporation's cafeteria.

To their surprise and delight, ChevronTexaco agreed to their demands. As soon as the agreement was announced,

the women – many with babies bound to their backs – celebrated by singing and dancing on the docks. Without harming a soul, they had forced a multinational corporation to help them transform impoverished villages into modern towns.

Dick Fligate, a ChevronTexaco executive, reportedly conceded that the protest was a wake-up call and that the corporation would have to pay greater attention to the needs of local communities. But he may change his mind. As soon as these protesters left the Escravos oil terminal, women from other villages seized four more ChevronTexaco oil facilities in south-eastern Nigeria.

What is taking place in Nigeria is nothing like the anti-globalization protests westerners have watched on television. These women are local villagers who, by engaging in nonviolent civil disobedience, are demanding that the wealth that lies beneath their land be shared with them.

Whether their peaceful protests will succeed is hardly assured. Nigeria, let us not forget, is what the American government calls a "strategic interest": It is the fifth-largest oil supplier to the United States.

Still, their peaceful protest proved successful and has already inspired copycat occupations. As she left the Escravos oil terminal, Anunu Uwawah, a leader of the 10-day action, reportedly exulted, "I give one piece of advice to all women in all countries: They shouldn't let any company cheat them." Clearly, some women were listening. [AlterNet] ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Goodbye Marxism, Goodbye Globalism (cont'd from p. 1)

terrain of history, where war is waged not over ideologies, but over religion, ethnicity, territory and the control of natural resources.

We are in for a long period—not months but years, perhaps decades—of acutely dangerous conflict, from which it will be impossible, as well as wholly wrong, for Britain to stand aside. It will be a type of conflict with which many regions of the world are all too familiar, but which overturns many of our preconceptions about war and peace. Its protagonists are not the agents of states, but organisations whose relationships with governments are oblique, ambiguous and sometimes indecipherable. The men who struck the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, using penknives and passenger jets as weapons, were soldiers in a new kind of war.

A monopoly of organised violence is one of the defining powers of the modern state, achieved slowly and with difficulty. Now war, like so much else in the age of globalisation, has slipped out from the control of governments—and it has done so, moreover, with astonishing speed over the past decade. The world is littered with collapsed states. In much of Africa, in Afghanistan, in the Balkans and a good deal of Russia, there is nothing that resembles a modern state. In these zones of anarchy, wars are fought by irregular armies commanded by political and religious organisations, often clan-based, and prone to savage internecine conflicts. No power is strong enough to enforce peace.

Unlike 1800s, Labor Is Confined

The results expose the weaknesses and contradictions of the global free market constructed after the cold war. Rich societies cannot be insulated from the collapsed states and new forms of

war. Asylum-seekers and economic refugees press on the borders of every advanced country. But while trade and capital move freely across the globe, the movement of labour is strictly limited—a very different state of affairs from the late 19th century, a period of comparable globalisation in which barriers to immigration hardly existed. This is a contradiction rarely noted by tub-thumpers for the global market, but it will become more acute as travel is monitored and controlled ever more stringently by governments.

With the assaults on New York and Washington, the anarchy that has been one of the by-products of globalisation in much of the world can no longer be ignored. The ragged, irregular armies of the world's most collapsed zones have proved that they can reach to the heart of its richest and most powerful state. Their brutal coup is an example of what military analysts call "asymmetric threat"—in other words, the power of the weak against the strong. What it has shown is that the strong are weaker than anyone imagined.

No Investor Guarantees

The powerlessness of the strong is not new. It has long been revealed in the futile "war" on drugs. The trade in illegal drugs is, along with oil and armaments, one of the three largest components of world trade. Like other branches of organised crime, it has thrived in the free-for-all created by financial deregulation. The world's richest states have squandered billions on a vain crusade against a highly globalised and fabulously well-funded industry. Rooting out terrorism will be even more difficult. After all, most of the worst effects of the drug trade can be eradicated simply by legalising it. There is no parallel remedy for terrorism.

The atrocities in Washington and New York did more than reveal the laxity of America's airport security and the limitations of its intelligence agencies. It inflicted a grievous blow to the beliefs that underpin the global market. In the past, it was taken for granted that the world will always be a dangerous place. Investors knew that war and revolution could wipe out their profits at any time. Over the past decade, under the influence of ludicrous theories about new paradigms and the end of history, they came to believe that the worldwide advance of commercial liberalism was irresistible. Financial markets came to price assets accordingly. The effect of the attack on the World Trade Center may be to do what none of the crises of the past few years—the Asian crisis, the Russian default of 1998 and the collapse of Long Term Capital Management, an over-leveraged hedge fund—was able to do. It may shatter the markets' own faith in globalisation.

Some people say that this was the purpose of the attack, and that we would be craven to give in to it. Instead, we are told, we must reassert the verities of the global free market and seek to rebuild it. And, with luck, it may not be too late to stave off worldwide recession. But the name of the game has changed for ever. The entire view of the world that supported the markets' faith in globalisation has melted down. Whatever anyone tells you, it cannot be reconstituted. The wiser course is to ask what was wrong with it.

It is worth reminding ourselves how grandiose were the dreams of the globalisers. The entire world was to be remade as a universal free market. No matter how different their histories and values, however deep their differences or bitter their conflicts, all cultures everywhere were to be corralled into a universal civilisation.

Enlightened Christianities

What is striking is how closely the market liberal philosophy that underpins globalisation resembles Marxism. Both are essentially secular religions, in which the eschatological hopes and fantasies of Christianity are given an Enlightenment twist. In both, history is understood as the progress of the species, powered by growing knowledge and wealth, and culminating in a universal civilisation. Human beings are viewed primarily in economic terms, as producers or consumers, with—at bottom—the same values and needs. Religion of the old-fashioned sort is seen as peripheral, destined soon to disappear, or to shrink into the private sphere, where it can no longer convulse politics or inflame war.

History's crimes and tragedies are not thought to have their roots in human nature—they are errors, mistakes that can be corrected by more education, better political institutions, higher living standards. Marxists and market liberals may differ as to what is the best economic system—but, for both, vested interests and human irrationality alone stand between humankind and a radiant future. In holding to this primitive Enlightenment creed, they are at one.

And both have their dogmatic, missionary side. For market liberals, there is only one way to become modern. All societies must adopt free markets. If their religious beliefs or their patterns of family life make this difficult for them, too bad—that is their problem. If the individualist values that free markets require and propagate go with high levels of inequality and crime, and if some sections of society go to the wall, tough—that is the price of progress. If entire countries are ruined, as happened in Russia during the time of neoliberal shock therapy, well—as an earlier generation of radicals nonchalantly put it—you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.

During the 1990s, this crudely rationalistic philosophy was hugely influential. It had a stronghold in the International Monetary Fund, as it blundered and bungled its way across the world exercising its power to impose identical policies on countries with vastly different histories, problems and circumstances. There was only one route to modernity—and the seers who ruled the IMF were resolved that it be followed everywhere.

In fact, there are many ways of being modern, and many of failing to be so. It is simply not true that liberal capitalism is the only way of organising a modern economy. Bismarck's Prussia embodied a different model, as did tsarist Russia, and each of them might well have been with us still in some form had the First World War ended differently. The Japanese and German forms of capitalism have never conformed to the free market model and—despite orthodox opinion everywhere telling us the contrary—it is a safe bet that they never will. We cannot know in advance what modernity means for any given society, or what it takes to achieve it. All we know for sure is that different countries have modernised successfully in a variety of ways.

Doesn't Everybody Want To Live As We Do?

The atrocities of 11 September have planted a question mark over the very idea of modernity. Is it really the case that all societies are bound, sooner or later, to converge on the same values and views of the world? Not only in America but also, to some degree, in most western countries, the belief that modernisation is a historical imperative that no society can ignore for long made it harder to perceive the growing risk of an anti-western backlash. Led by the US, the world's richest states

have acted on the assumption that people everywhere want to live as they do. As a result, they failed to recognise the deadly mixture of emotions—cultural resentment, the sense of injustice and a genuine rejection of western modernity—that lies behind the attacks on New York and Washington.

In my view, it is reasonable to regard the struggle against the groups that mounted those attacks as a defence of civilised values. As their destruction of ancient Buddhist relics demonstrated, the Taliban are hostile to the very ideas of toleration and pluralism. But these ideas are not the property of any one civilisation—and they are not even peculiarly modern. In western countries, the practice of toleration owes much to the Reformation and, indeed, to the Enlightenment, which has always contained a sceptical tradition alongside its more dogmatic schools. Beyond Europe, toleration flourished long before the modern era in the Muslim kingdoms of Moorish Spain and Buddhist India, to name only two examples. It would be a fatal error to interpret the conflict that is now under way in terms of poisonous theories about clashing civilisations.

Effective action against terrorism must have the support of a broad coalition of states, of which Britain should certainly be part. Crucially, these must include Muslim countries (which is one reason why American military action must entail new attempts to seek peace in Israel). Not only Russia and China—each of which has serious problems with Islamic fundamentalism—but even Iran could conceivably join in a US-led coalition.

An Intractably Disordered World

Constructing such a far-reaching alliance will be an exercise in realpolitik in which ideas of global governance of the kind that have lately been fashionable on the left become largely irrelevant. The US will find itself supping with former enemies and courting states that are in no sense committed to liberal values. In waging war against the Taliban, it will do battle against a force it backed only a few years ago to resist the Soviet invasion. Such ironies can no more be conjured away by international courts than by global markets. They are built into an intractably disordered world. Bodies such as the United Nations can play a useful role in the labyrinthine diplomacy that will inevitably surround military action. But anyone who thinks that this crisis is an opportunity to rebuild world order on a liberal universalist model has not understood it. The ideal of a universal civilisation is a recipe for unending conflict, and it is time it was given up. What is urgently needed is an attempt to work out terms of civilised coexistence among cultures and regimes that will always remain different.

Over the coming years, the transnational institutions that have built the global free market will have to accept a more modest role, or else they will find themselves among the casualties of this great upheaval. The notion that trade and wealth creation require global laissez-faire has no basis in history. The cold war—a time of controls on capital and extensive intervention in the economy by national governments—was, in western countries, a time of unprecedented prosperity. Contrary to the cranky orthodoxies of market liberals, capitalism does not need a worldwide free market to thrive. It needs a reasonably secure environment, safe from the threat of major war, and reliable rules about the conduct of business. These things cannot be provided by the brittle structures of the global free market.

Tolerate Difference

On the contrary, the attempt to force life everywhere into a single mould is bound to fuel conflict and insecurity. As far as possible, rules on trade and the movement of capital should be left to multilateral agreements between sovereign states. If countries opt to stay out of global markets, they should be left in peace. They should be free to find their own version of modernity, or not to modernise at all. So long as they pose no threat to others, even intolerable regimes should be tolerated. A looser, more fragmented, partly de-globalised world would be a less tidy world. It would also be a safer world.

It will be objected that de-globalisation defies the dominant trend of the age. But while it is true that technology will continue to shrink time and distance, and in that sense link the world more closely, it is only a bankrupt philosophy of history that leads people to think that it will produce convergence on values, let alone a worldwide civilisation.

New weapons of mass destruction can—and quite possibly will—be used to prosecute old-style wars of religion. The Enlightenment thinking that found expression in the era of globalisation will not be much use in its dangerous aftermath. Even Hobbes cannot tell us how to deal with fundamentalist warriors who choose certain death in order to humble their enemies. The lesson of 11 September is that the go-go years of globalisation were an interregnum, a time of transition between two epochs of conflict. The task in front of us is to forge terms of peace among peoples separated by unalterably divergent histories, beliefs and values. In the perilous years to come, this more-than-Hobbesian labour will be quite enough to keep us occupied.

John Gray, professor of European thought at the London School of Economics, is the author of False Dawn: the delusions of global capitalism (Granta) This article appeared in The New Statesman (UK), 24 Sept 2001, as "The era of globalisation is over".

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

The Indy Page

All material on this page except the cartoon at the bottom is the responsibility of a citizen editor, independent of the BCA Dispatch editorial staff. This issue's editor is William R. Nugent of Eastham, Cape Cod, MA. Bill is a licensed Professional Engineer (P.E.) and retired computer scientist, currently vice-chair of the Eastham Democratic Town Committee. He may be reached at bnugent@capecod.net or 508-255-6616.

The Democrats' Gift to the Green Party

by William R. Nugent

During the recent Senate vote that approved Fast Track authority for President Bush, four unacceptable presidential contenders showed their hands and revealed what many Democrats feared—that all four Democratic senators who are would-be candidates for president—John Kerry, Joseph Lieberman, John Edwards, and Tom Daschle—are unfit for presidential office. They all voted for Fast Track, repudiating their duty under Article 1 Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution "to regulate foreign trade," and ceded their authority to President Bush and to the Executive Office of the President and its unelected U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, who most often seems to think he works for the World Trade Organization and the multinational corporations that control it rather than for the citizens of the United States. Zoellick has already implied that he might bargain away our laws providing sanctions on illegal "dumping" of foreign goods.

The votes of the four for Fast Track are votes to enable the forthcoming Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) treaty, which would expand corporate control—not "free trade"—over all of North America, Central America, and South America. Under Fast Track, treaties brought before Congress must be taken as is for an "up or down" vote, with no amendments allowed to offensive sections. The treaty may run from 10,000 to 20,000 pages and Congress has but 15 legislative days to analyze the trade bill and its incorporated treaty prior to voting, and the House and the Senate are each given but 20 hours to debate it. The elements combine to give "plausible deniability" to the legislators who vote for it: "I didn't know that part was in it" and "I had to support the entire package" will be part of their post-vote apologia.

"Increased U.S. exports" will be the mantra of supporters when FTAA comes up. Sadly, the major U.S. export resulting from FTAA would be more U.S. jobs and U.S. factories. NAFTA lost us nearly a million jobs since 1984 and the loss from FTAA would be multiple millions more.

Three of the would-be presidential Democrats—Kerry, Lieberman, and Edwards—are "New Democrats,"

a coalition that votes with the Republicans and favors "free trade" globalism at the expense of U.S. workers and U.S. farmers. Of 20 "New Democrats" in the senate, 16 voted for Fast Track.

One cannot say which of the four Democratic wannabes is best or worst; U.S. voters are sick of having to choose "least worse." Senator Daschle, as Majority Leader is in a position to do the most damage to the country. This mild-mannered gentleman has seemingly turned into a compliant wuss who entered into an agreement with Republican Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott to expunge the helpful and bipartisan Craig-Dayton amendment in the forthcoming House-Senate conference committee. The committee must reconcile the differing Fast Track bills of the two chambers of Congress. The Craig-Dayton amendment would remove from Fast Track protection any weakening of our anti-dumping laws. These laws are some of our few remaining tools against illegal industry-destructive imports. Why a Democratic U.S. senator would agree to this gutting of the bill is unclear, but Daschle's unacceptability as a Democratic presidential candidate is crystal-clear.

The Democratic Party should have learned their lesson in the 2000 election. When that party ceases to be an effective opposition party to the Republican Party and instead, like the New Democrats, follows the Republican lead; when there is no Democratic candidate who will stand up for American workers; when the candidates presented by both major parties would rather vote for maximizing the profits of multinational corporations permitting them under "investor protection" provisions of the FTAA similar to NAFTA's Chapter 11 to sue the U.S. through the secret tribunals of the WTO when our democratic laws on public health, labor standards and safety or clean air and clean water get in their way—then as in 2000, disaffected Democrats in the absence of a "None of the Above" option will vote for the Green Party, and will do so in far greater numbers in 2004.

Of course there is still time for the Democratic Party

to field a real Democrat as candidate, but failing this the Green Party, in courtesy, should send thank-you notes to the New Democrats coalition and to Senator Daschle.



ALLIANCE NEWS

► **WHAT'S HOT OUT THERE...** Congress narrowly gave Bush fast track "presidential negotiating authority." Ugh! Congress has tied its own hands for five years on modifying neoliberal trade/ investment pacts. This will add fuel to Latin American and other melt-downs. So we will have to watch closely and press them to reject specific corporatist agreements like FTAA. And draft fair alternative agreements!

...The Senate Foreign Relations committee, with MA Senator Kerry absent, heard a set of testimonies evidently selected so as to avoid any criticism of going to war against Iraq, like Scott Ritter's. But check Phyllis Bennis' (IPS) testimony in the printed *Congressional Record*, or on the web (*Google*— Bennis + Iraq).

► **NORTHEAST REGIONAL ALLIANCE** In September or later this Fall BCA members will meet with North Bridge, MassBay South, Portsmouth NH, and other regional chapter members to develop a regional alliance. Contact **Ruth Weizenbaum** (978-369-1684) for details, and attend the convention in order to decide what it will do. Possibilities include a Congress of Chapters largely independent of national AfD, and campaign opportunities like saving Nottingham, New Hampshire's underground water, slated for export to Europe. *BCA Dispatch* will probably offer one page for Regional Alliance News.

► **AT BCA MEETING, JULY 17TH** We're making progress on clear new directions. We considered a number of issues and a number of ways to work on them. Highlighted **issues** included:

- * Globalization (local gov. resolutions, water, fast track)
- * Localization (energy, "local system organizations")
- * War (9/11 response, nonviolence, nuclear buildup)

Highlighted **action modes** included:

- * Lecture-discussion (at regular meetings and forums)
- * Study groups (e.g., **Brit & Brian's** on corporatism)
- * Modeling (e.g., promoting CAIS)
- * City and State interventions (global impact bills, resolutions)
- * Teaching (already **Mary Rossborough, Milt Raymond**)

Chapter **organization**:

- * Phoning (for recruiting)
 - * Internet web site (for info and team communication)
- ...Two-Track Action by BCA: (1) Issue of the month (e.g. Iraq), and (2) Longer-Range (e.g., localization projects)

► **NEW BCA WEB SITE** **Dave Lewit** and **Cartha Vickers** have put www.bostonalliance.org "in the sky" and are molding and outfitting it, thanks to **Jesse Burkhardt** and **Bob Doyle** (principal) of Skybuilders.com (a nonprofit) in Cambridge.

Among the features of this interactive site are planned:

- * e-edition of *BCA Dispatch*, with archives
- * BCA action team bulletins and project email system
- * links with AfD, regional, and sister organizations
- * sections for independent business allies, unions, local gov. officials, church, unemployed, academics, etc.

Thus BCA may organize committees or teams for

- * Short-term issues (issue of the month)
- * Long-term issue (localization projects)
- * Computer literacy (for members to use this web site)
- * Coordinating

EDITORIAL

Why I'm an Optimist

A couple of months ago I did my callers and myself a favor by subscribing to broadband (DSL) telephone service. First, this lets folks call me while I'm "on line" working on the internet—I don't want to pay for two telephone lines. Second, I don't have to wait for seconds before seeing a web site I just called for. So when I ask *Google*, my favorite search engine, to show me the sites I pick from its listings, I see many more and enjoy new depth in research. This helps me develop concepts, but it also helps me know people and places for social action telephoning.

So I'm optimistic about what I can do. But what about the world? The biggest American institutions like big corporations which buy officials, and media which bias and impoverish public opinion for profit, put cowboy criminals like G W Bush in the White House and John Ashcroft at the levers of Justice. Americans fail in droves to vote because their votes can't reach "electable" good candidates.

One of our faithful, **Jean Maryborn**, urged me to read an op-ed which centered on a participatory democracy process used to get local citizen input into the redesign of downtown Manhattan after 9/11 (see www.americaspeaks.org). It's high tech, expensive, and short-term, but it brings thousands of people into discussion face-to-face. Brazil's participatory budgeting process (see *Dispatch* 6/01 and "**Lula**" da Silva in this issue) goes much further—all we need is a few populist local governments! **John Gray** (this issue) forsees the end of global capitalism. The rest is up to us aware locals!

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? _\$_____

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COLOPHON

Dave Lewit

Editor

dlewit@igc.org

271 Dartmouth St #2H, Boston MA 02116.

617-266-8687

Bill King

Ed. Board

617-244-3557

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Visit the Alliance web site: www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org