

BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the **October**
Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy 2002

Noel Chikamba staggers across the red dust yard his wife swept only this morning; spittle forms at his lips as he raves loudly and incomprehensibly.

Aya, his wife, stops grinding corn and bites her lip watching him; he is skeletally thin, his eyes are glazed and protruding. The clothes that he refuses to allow her to wash are filthy. He is one of the 28 million people infected with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, and so is she. Noel's disease has progressed to AIDS-related dementia; she knows he will soon die.

"In my mind, he has already gone," she says. "I am now worried about the children—"she waves her hand at four children under the age of 12. Her daughter, the eldest, is staggering under the load of a container of water she walked three miles to collect. Her 10-year-old son is pulling weeds from spindly crops of butternut and wild spinach.

The family is among 15 million starving people in sub-Saharan Africa. They are luckier than most because they still have some food. It is not enough, but they have neighbors who have nothing...

—Charlene Smith, Johannesburg. *Continued in Red Pepper (UK), September 2002.* Note: Some say 3,000 (on 9/11) was preventable. Is 15,000,000 preventable? See article on Johannesburg Summit, page 4. —Ed.

ALLIANCE NEWS

Chapter Calendar (News Continued on page 8)

The Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy's next meeting will be on **Wednesday, October 16**, from **7:00 to 9:15 p.m.** at **Cambridge Friends Meeting**, 5 Longfellow Park (9 minute walk from Harvard Square T station, west on Brattle St.)

Agenda

★ Discuss **Threat of War on Iraq** with two Veterans for Peace recently returned from work in Iraq— **Tom Gale** and **George Capaccio**— and a **knowledgeable Muslim** (we're inviting a native of the Middle East).

★ Update on AFL-CIO endorsement of our Globalization Impact Bill, and on citizen/BCA response to corporate threats to public water.

→ **Steering Committee –Wed., Oct 23, 5:30.** 32 Fayette St., Cambridge 02139. *All members invited.* 617-864-3931 (Milt).

BCA's Globalization Impact Legislation Endorsed by Mass. AFL-CIO

BOSTON, October 4. This morning the Massachusetts AFL-CIO annual Convention passed a resolution giving its "full support for the passage of the Globalization Impact Bill by the Massachusetts state legislature and governor."

The unopposed voice vote came in the last minutes of the convention, following appearances by congress members, other major politicians and speakers, and a union leader from Colombia. Mass AFL-CIO's president Bobby Haines presided and facilitated the action. Copies of **(Continued on page 2 >>)**



Go ahead. Send me a new generation of recruits. Your bombs will fuel their hatred of America and their desire for revenge. Americans won't be safe anywhere. Please, attack Iraq. Distract yourself from fighting Al Qaeda. Divide the international community. Go ahead. Destabilize the region. Maybe Pakistan will fall – we want its nuclear weapons. Give Saddam a reason to strike first. He might draw Israel into a fight. Perfect! So please – invade Iraq. Make my day.

TomPaine.com sense

Osama says: 'I Want You to Invade Iraq.'
TomPaine.com features reasons
why we shouldn't.

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The Israel-Iraq Connection Yearning for "World War IV"

by Ali Abunimah, The Electronic Intifada, 3 October 2002

The irony of Israel's position between Iraq and the United States, is that the more Israel wants the US to attack Iraq, the quieter Israel will have to stay about it and the lower the profile it will have to keep. The paradox was most clear right after the September 11 attacks when Sharon was the first to volunteer to join the "war on terrorism," only to find himself coldly rebuffed by the Bush administration. Israel soon learned that sometimes discretion is the better than an open alliance, and by working on the US administration behind the scenes, Israel's lobby was able to convince the Americans that it would be hypocritical to condemn Israel's "war on terrorism" while conducting its own.

Much of the storm of criticism that Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon has faced for reimposing a siege on Yasser Arafat's compound in Ramallah has come from Israelis who would dearly like to see a U.S. war against Iraq, as Sharon certainly would. Leading the pack is Israel's foreign minister, Shimon Peres, whose pretensions of being a "dove" and international statesmen have worn out even **(Continued on page 7 >>)**

the resolution, over the signature of John Templeton, president of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 509, were distributed several hours earlier. A number of other union leaders including Ed Collins, Ed Dougherty, Joe Dart and Jeff Crosby offered their support.

Drawing from the Boston City Council's resolution (passed June 2002) endorsing the Globalization Impact Bill, and from a critical statement on globalization (issued 2001) by the national AFL-CIO's executive council, the current resolution was drafted by Dave Lewit and Karen O'Donnell of the Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy (BCA). O'Donnell is a member of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 103 and a former Massachusetts state representative. The City Council's principal drafters were councillors Chuck Turner and Charles Yancey.

The Globalization Impact Bill, H.2119, was drafted by Lewit and modified by Rep. Byron Rushing before he introduced it in the legislature in January 2001. By September 2001, with the help of Eric Weltman of Citizens for Participation in Political Action (CPPAX), the bill had about two dozen legislative co-sponsors. After 9/11, promotion of the bill was virtually suspended, but the bill will be re-introduced with a new number in January, with full promotion efforts. The AFL-CIO and Boston City Council endorsements will get the attention of many legislators.

The Bill calls for the formation of a commission to examine all "free trade" agreements such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) for their impact on state laws and regulations, and report to the legislature concerning what not to support. The commission would consist of 2 state senators, 3 representatives, the attorney general, the treasurer, and two appointees of the governor. ■

Vice Co-Chair Election Results Jo Edges Ruth in Flawed Contest

Jo Sedita, AfD Council member from Northridge, California, reversed the 39-15 vote for Northeast Regional Representative Ruth Weizenbaum after introductions and candidate speeches at the Gettysburg AfD convention last June. A runoff was required because both candidates got more than 20 percent of the votes. On a clip-out-and-mail ballot distributed nationally in Alliance Alerts (AA) Jo got 60 votes to Ruth's 53. The turnout represents 9 percent of AfD's national membership.

Following complaints received before the September 16 ballot-return deadline, AfD's ombudsmen Bonnie Preston and Dave Lewit filed a memo on September 4 with the Council co-chairs citing a number of irregularities including

- ◆ AA's biographical pages carried 4 endorsements for Jo and none for Ruth.
- ◆ One of those endorsements was by AA's editor-- Alliance founder Ronnie Dugger.
- ◆ Jo did not resign from the elections committee during the contest.

While Ruth refrained, Jo campaigned actively, with endorsements e-mailed at Ronnie's behest.

The ombudsmen recommended a new election, with mailed materials specifying duties of the vice co-chair which include a seat on the executive committee of the Council, and endorsements for both candidates. The Council decided to go with the present results, but charged the Elections & Bylaws Committee with recommending rules changes. Ruth remains on the Council as female Northeast regional representative. Her male counterpart remains to be chosen by AfD members in the Northeast-New York and New England.

In its memo concerning irregularities, the ombudsmen requested that responses of the Elections & Bylaws Committee, the Publications Committee, and the Council itself be published in the next AA, due out this month.

Northeast Regional Alliance Starts Strong

War issues, water privatization, election reform, and regional solidarity were strongly demonstrated as major focuses in the first Northeast regional meeting since the earliest two years of the Alliance for Democracy. By all accounts the conference was a success--42 members from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, and New York (Albany) attended, many new to the Alliance.

Organized and moderated by AfD Northeast regional representative **Ruth Weizenbaum** and chapter friends (North Bridge and Boston-Cambridge), the conference began on Friday with mixing and dinner at the Espousal Center on the north side of Waltham MA and continued there all day Saturday, September 27-28.

Nick Biddle-- historian, community activist, and executive coordinator of the national AfD--spoke Friday after dinner about



Ruth Weizenbaum

Elisabeth Leonard

Photos: Paul Brailsford

the shift from Roosevelt & Churchill's "Atlantic Charter", stressing sovereignty and mutual help among nations, to Bush, Cheney & Bush's "New World Order" of U.S. domination. Nick noted that the change involved a shift in the U.S. from politics over economics & military, to economics & military over political considerations. **Doris "Granny D" Haddock** commented, and Nick read to us a rousing page of the keynote address she'd prepared for the CPPAX convention the following day.

Ruth and other organizers are proud that the conference was by and for Alliance people. The Saturday session began with small groups envisioning where we want to go with our concerns. They were facilitated by **Elisabeth Leonard** of East Boston, AfD member as well as co-chair of Boston Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF). Groups came up with, for example--international solidarity and cosmopolitan thinking, diversity of economic systems, youth involvement, corporation-free media, building local communities, building membership.

During the rest of the morning we heard from project leaders of various chapters. **Murv Moore** of Lincoln MA updated us on the Clean Elections campaign with a focus on Question 3 on the

November ballot (see Action Alerts, this issue). **Michael Bleiweiss** of Methuen MA and Elisabeth Leonard filled us in on local initiatives concerning FTAA and GATS—pre-emptive economic strikes against community rights. Their plan to blanket Congress with AfD booklets on this subject will be modified according to the experience of **Ruth Caplan** at AfD's Washington office.

John Blanchard of Natick MA described study groups which are dealing with "property—private and common", "corporate form", "supreme court", "community action against corporations", etc. **Mary Rossborough** of Marblehead MA teaches adults at Salem State College about globalization using British and American-made critical videos. She was urged to take her exciting course on the road.

Dave Lewit of Boston MA discussed "localization" strategy as a constructive response to corporate "globalization". Among the related projects are writing and promoting the Globalization Impact Bill to be re-introduced in the MA Legislature in January (see this issue for news of MA AFL-CIO endorsement following Boston City Council endorsement), and community linkage involving forums with business and other groups. **Bob Stubbs** of Framingham MA urged us to form groups to re-define "democracy".

Eugene Grace of Framingham MA was unable to come, but others sketched out his community cable project—a regular twice per month show entitled "Left is right" which has featured our own Nick Biddle on the surge in water issues, and Professor **Primo Vannicelli** of UMass-Boston discussing reasons to question U.S. plans to invade Iraq. Community cable has also been used in the South Shore area and plans are underway to further this largely untapped resource.

Fireball **Pat McSweeney** of Taunton MA together with **Tony Palomba** of AFSC Peace & Economic Security Committee/Cambridge MA discussed Washington's propaganda for pre-emptive war against Iraq, explaining, among other things, a poster showing "UNCLE OSAMA" pointing at us, saying "I want you to attack Iraq" (see today's cover). **Bill Haff** of South Easton MA outlined actions taken by MoveOn, founded during Bill Clinton's impeachment trial, and now doing in-your-face actions (like antiwar sheets hung from highway overpasses) to mobilize the public against war powers to Bush and war on Iraq. Bill also provided thought-provoking comments on more effective work in the AfD.

Finally, Ruth led a general discussion on "How will we reach our goals?" featuring various communication, pressure, and constructive tactics. Actions are underway to strengthen the numerous tools needed to enable us to act more effectively. Response forms from attendees reflected strong interest in participating in efforts described above. In addition responses urged two regional meetings per year. Ruth is further analyzing

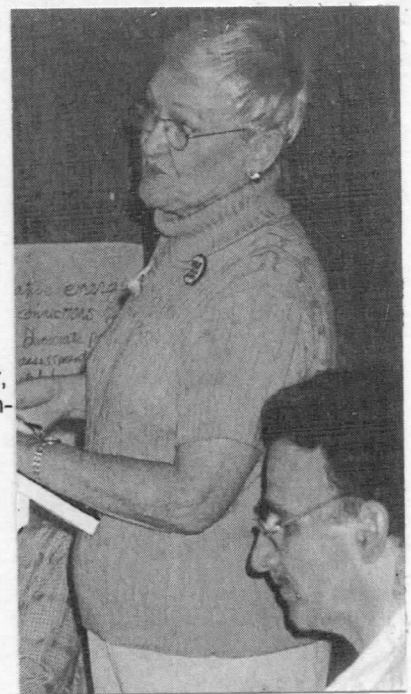


Jed Schwartz, Dave Lewit, Giuseppe Bisaccia, Alice C-Brown

feedback responses of participants to find action areas and next steps most likely to succeed on a regional level.

Moving to strategies, Nick updated us on the groundswell of local and regional response to the corporate threat to New Hampshire's groundwater (see BCA Dispatch for September). The focus of Regional Alliance activity in the coming many months may well be fighting USA Springs' (suspected European backers) license to withdraw without cost 500,000 gallons per day from the Nottingham-Barrington NH aquifer, and impending efforts by Vivendi (France) to take over water distribution in Lawrence MA. No doubt anti-war activity will continue—with hard-hitting features that strengthen hope.

Other projects include, for example, **Sue Perry's** promotion of *The Soul of a Citizen*, by the young Paul Loeb, who says don't be powerless—be active! You don't need to wait to be fully informed—that will happen as you go along. And Sue says "Sign Rep Barbara Lee's on-line antiwar petition. Sue and others feel we need more time together to discuss and develop action ideas. And let's recruit Vermonters!



Pat McSweeney - Tony Palomba

● *BCA Dispatch intends to carry **Regional news**. Encourage a Regional Page by sending in local/regional news & opinion.*

● *Unable to attend the Regional conference? You can **buy a packet** with the agenda, speakers' synopses, participant phones & emails, and issue information. Send \$5 to **Mary White**, 221 Munson Road, Concord MA 01742.*

ACTION ALERTS

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20, noon: "No War, No Way walk for Peace in Iraq." Interactive walk starting at B.U. Marsh Plaza. Speakers and stops at BU, MIT, the State House, Gov't Center, and Faniuel Hall. Info: call Boston Mobilization 617-782-2313.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, U.N. Day Walk for Peace, Sherborn to the State House in Boston. Begins 8:30 a.m. at The Peace Abbey (intersection of Routes 16 & 27), or join the march at S. Natick (9:30), Wellesley (10:30), Beacon St to Newton Ctr (12:30), Brookline (1:30), Comm Av Back Bay to ceremony on Grand Staircase of State House (3:30). Co-sponsors: Coalition for a Strong U.N., U.N. Assoc of Gtr Boston. Call 508-655-2143.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, Election Day. Vote "YES" for CLEAN ELECTIONS—Question 3. "Do you support taxpayer money being used to fund political campaigns for public office in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts?" —GREENS AND RAINBOW TO UNITE IN MASSACHUSETTS TO BECOME THE "GREEN-RAINBOW PARTY OF MASS." Consider
 ● Jill Stein for Governor—endorsed 781-674-2422 www.jillwill.org
 ● Tony Lorenzen for Lieutenant Governor 978-534-1373
 ● James O'Keefe for State Treasurer—endorsed 617-628-2922
 ● Paul Lachelier for State Rep (Somerville) 617-661-4628 #

Alliance at Johannesburg Summit Exposes Trojan Horse of Corp. Globalization

by Ruth Caplan and Dave Lewit

The August-September World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held under UN auspices in Johannesburg, South Africa, might have been a pushover for the free-traders if not for the voices of protest rising from representatives of citizens' organizations around the world. At its September 20 meeting, BCA heard perspectives on the summit from Ruth Caplan who attended as part of the Sierra Club's delegation, and also represented AfD at the civil society forum opposing the neoliberal global regime. Here are some highlights.

Billed as the 10-year review of the historic Earth Summit in Rio, the WSSD was supposed to reach agreement on policies "to promote sustainable development for all." The ostensible goal was to guide and support economic development in ways that would protect the environment and address social inequality.

Even in the face of the failure of countries over the last 10 years to carry out the vision of the first Earth Summit, and clear evidence that the environment has gotten worse not better, delegates turned a blind eye to the major responsibility corporations have for this outcome. Under the leadership of Maurice Strong, industrialist of Canada, the corporations got off scot-free at the 1992 Earth Summit.

The WSSD went further and embraced voluntary "public/private partnerships" for implementing the WSSD goals, giving corporations a huge opening to pursue their agenda of profiting from privatization of essential services like water and sewage. This is a formula for growth in corporate power, greater social inequality, and environmental degradation, rather than for creating a sustainable world grounded in environmental justice for all people.

Confronting Uncle Sam

Developing countries, sometimes supported by the European Union, were more outspoken in Johannesburg after having been steamrollered at the WTO summit in Doha, Qatar. Tensions were high at the summit as the U.S. was seen as blocking key provisions supported by the developing world, including

- language designed to hold corporations accountable;
- "common and differentiated responsibilities" which recognizes the special challenges faced by developing countries; and
- the "precautionary principle" which says corporations must prove a product safe being putting it on the market.

With the refrain "*What are we going to do about the United States?*" having gathered steam at the final preparatory meeting in Bali, the U.S. delegates found that they did not always get their way in Johannesburg.

The U.S. failed to kill the Precautionary Principle. Nor, despite heavy lobbying, could they prevent key language on corporate accountability from being included. The final text calls for promotion of corporate accountability "*through full development and effective implementation of intergovernmental agreements and national regulations.*" The next morning, the U.S. was booed by NGOs [nongovernmental or civil society organizations] as it unsuccessfully tried to reinterpret the corporate accountability language to refer only to existing agreements. The inclusion of this language was a major victory for NGOs who have been calling for a UN-sponsored corporate accountability convention.

But like most global initiatives of the last thirty years, the

best-prepared and most expensively-connected bureaucrats were working in droves for governments dedicated to free-trade and support of the World Trade Organization. Corporations like Suez, the French water privatizer, were even on some of the national delegations. (The U.S. refused to reveal the members of its delegation!) So it is no surprise that the language they drafted favored so-called public/private partnerships and rules of the WTO, giving the edge to market-driven ventures.

Yet here too the U.S. and its allies did not always prevail. Martin Khor, reporting for Third World Network, puts it this way. "Attempts during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to place WTO rules on a superior position vis-a-vis other international agencies and treaties was averted at almost the last hour when NGOs and a few countries fought what looked at one stage like a 'losing battle'... In the end, the phrase 'while ensuring WTO consistency' was deleted in an important sentence dealing with the need for mutual supportiveness between trade, environment and development. If it had not been eliminated, this would have become a disastrous outcome at WSSD. The deletion was agreed to (despite a general ruling that nothing in the text should be changed) after an impassioned plea by the Ethiopian delegation, and after a spirited and intense lobbying effort by many NGOs."

Charge of the Alliance Brigade

While attending a pre-summit global conference on corporate accountability under the banner of a *trojan horse* carrying the corporate profiteers into the WSSD, Ruth sparked a demonstration against the South African ISCOR corporation whose steel mills have polluted the drinking water and farms of Steel Valley, a small farming community south of Jo'burg. Joined by dozens of local residents, activists from around the world marched to the hotel where ISCOR was holding its stockholders meeting and held a lively demonstration. Although the company officials refused to meet with the protestors, the very next day they asked the court to lift the gag order against local plaintiffs which ISCOR had gotten the court to issue in the first place. One may guess they didn't like the publicity of having one of the plaintiffs at the demo stand silently with a red scarf over his mouth.

During the Summit, Ruth joined Maude Barlow and several other activists in embarrassing Vivendi with questions about their corporate malfeasance until they simply shut down their meeting which had been intended to launch a Vivendi Environmental Institute. From there they rushed across town to the corporate-dominated Water Dome where the European Union/Suez water partnership was being touted. Joined by 30 activists from around the world, they marched to the front of the room chanting WATER IS A HUMAN RIGHT—WATER IS NOT FOR SALE. They were given the microphone. Activists from many countries including Ghana, Bolivia, Canada, and the U.S. challenged the panelists who were partnering with Suez. Ruth challenged them to remove water from the GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services), knowing full well the EU has requested that countries put water under the GATS rules. She heard later that the rest of the discussion was devoted to GATS, not "partnerships".

Screwed by Neoliberals, the People March

As the Summit negotiations got underway, the people took to the streets. Led by the South African Anti-Privatization Network, 30,000 people gathered in Alexandra -- landless farmers, fisher people, unemployed workers, activists from around the world. Forming a sea of APN red shirts, they marched the 9 kilometers into Sandton. The contrast was stark between a poverty-stricken township where people live in jerry-rigged shacks without sewage and sparse water, and the glitter of wealth in Sandton. The cry of WATER IS A HUMAN RIGHT resonated in Alexandra.

(More >>>)

The African National Congress (ANC) has adopted a neo-liberal agenda of privatizing essential services. The tragedy is that this party of the anti-apartheid struggle saw the march as a threat to its sovereignty, and organized a poorly attended counter-march from Alexandra two hours later. Indeed, many anti-apartheid freedom fighters feel bitterly betrayed by the ANC.

In marching through Alexandra and visiting informal settlements still separated by color around Capetown, Ruth saw firsthand that economic apartheid abounds. While subsidized housing is being built to replace the shacks made of scraps, the corporate banks are charging outrageous interest rates on mortgages. When people miss payments they are downsized to very small houses with just a toilet and tiny sink. Private contractors scrimp on materials, building inside walls you can put your fist through, while professional bricklayers are without work and live in shacks when they could be provided with bricks to build sturdy homes.

The widespread tapping of electric wires from exposed feeder lines is becoming a cottage industry where there is no electric service. Where there is power, pre-paid electricity meters are becoming standard. Now Suez with government approval is following with pre-paid water meters. This, despite the South African Constitution guaranteeing everyone access to water.

Steeped in the recent anti-apartheid struggle, organizers are working in the townships to protest the housing evictions and pre-paid water meters. One organizer with whom Ruth visited was recently arrested by the government on bogus charges. The struggle for environmental justice and human rights means we must join hands across the oceans to stand in solidarity with those who suffer for speaking out.

Ruth endorsed Dave Lewit's suggestion that the provisions of AfD's Common Agreement on Investment and Society (CAIS) be further developed to ensure that the systems it promotes provide space and support for all on-the-ground struggles for social and environmental justice. ❖

Brazil

"Lula" Faces Serra in Runoff

Workers Party candidate Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva topped the four presidential candidates in October 6th's election with a plurality of 46%. Without a clear majority, Lula will face neoliberal current Health Minister Jose Serra in a runoff on October 27. Serra, former World Bank economist, former Finance Minister and "darling of investors", polled 23%. Both candidates are looking for political allies who can produce votes.

Lula may court leaders of the Brazilian Socialist Party and Peoples Socialist Party which sponsored the other opposition candidates. More importantly he is courting voters who did not favor him Sunday. With Latin America's biggest economy, Lula says he will honor Brazil's huge debt to the World Bank and IMF, while assuring democratic social progress and stability. The giant city of Sao Paulo, now with a Workers Party mayor and participatory budgeting, will be key to the election.



"Lula"

Serra

Brazilians Act Out New Realities with "Theater of the Oppressed"

by Matt Moffett, Wall Street Journal, 13 September 2002

SANTO ANDRE, Brazil -- The setting was a municipal-hall lobby in this gritty industrial town. The actors were a troupe of senior citizens. The plot involved an old man who is forced to stand on a bus while a young lady sprawls out on a seat reserved for the elderly.

It may not seem like the stuff of great theater, but this particular performance, by the group known as "It's Never Too Late," provoked an intense reaction from its audience: A young woman leapt out of her chair and sent the villainess flying off her seat.

Welcome to Theater of the Oppressed, a Brazilian-born, grassroots form of drama whose goal is political change. Its most characteristic feature is its "interventions," in which spectators step into a scene and take the part of the underdog.

With the Left on the rise again in Latin America's most populous nation, so is an old populist idea -- using theater as a vehicle for social reform. Ahead of the October elections, the Workers Party's presidential candidate, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, is leading in the Brazilian polls. While that has spooked many investors, it's given many actors, or people who think they can act, hopes of a more receptive audience.

In fact, some skeptics fret that if the Left wins the presidency, state-sponsored thespianism will run amok. "On each street corner there will be an improvised actor declaiming his monologue," wrote Diogo Mainardi, a columnist for the weekly news magazine *Veja*. "Brazil will be transformed into a giant stage for millions of bad actors."

Some of the most creative uses of political theater are emerging from local administrations, such as Santo Andre's, run by the leftist Workers Party. After a series of local political victories in recent years, the party now governs about a quarter of Brazil's population. One prominent Workers Party leader has also embraced "psychodrama," a therapy that encourages people to dramatize the conflicts in their lives rather than just talk about them.

For one day in March of last year, the city of Sao Paulo became the Broadway of psychodrama, when Workers Party Mayor Marta Suplicy, a trained psychologist, encouraged ordinary citizens to turn their daily struggles and grievances into theater. Ms. Suplicy conceived this epic exercise in civic therapy in the hopes of purging her polluted, crime-ridden city of what she diagnosed as "low self-esteem." The mayor, a former TV sex therapist, dispatched 700 psychodrama coaches to dozens of parks, plazas and public halls to organize impromptu amateur dramas.

In these many venues, street people pretended to be lawyers, while doctors portrayed laborers. One student, striving for authenticity in his role as a government bureaucrat, pretended to solicit a bribe. Ms. Suplicy also took part, playing an overdressed robbery victim seeking help from an unsympathetic security guard. Carried away by the sketch, the make-believe guard called Her Honor a "pain-in-the-neck peacock."

Psychodrama was developed in Vienna in the 1920s. Today, Brazil has 5,000 specially trained psychodrama practitioners, who work in private practices, education and other fields. Psychodrama's popularity here stems in part from Brazilians' "tendency toward expressiveness and exuberance," says Sao Paulo psychodrama specialist Carlos Borba.

In Sao Paulo, psychodramatists are following up last year's

massive act-in with smaller-scale role-playing workshops based on themes such as "Geopolitics and Mental Geography" and "The Virtual, the Possible and the Real."

Some of this political theater produces actual results. That's especially true of Theater of the Oppressed, which has spread to more than 60 countries. A few years ago, 26-year-old Adriano Carvalho and some friends in Rio de Janeiro wrote a play about low-income youths like themselves whose poverty was a road-block in their pursuit of higher education.

"We had a script, but we wanted more," says Mr. Carvalho. Guided by a drama coach, he and his friends took the show on tour from university auditoriums to public parks, and then shared audience suggestions for new legislation with a sympathetic Workers Party state congressman. The result: a bill waiving college-entrance-exam fees for poor students and offering incentives to tutors in working-class areas.

This kind of political theater reminds people "they can imagine and create a different ending for their life stories," says Augusto Boal, the Brazilian dramatist who founded Theater of the Oppressed.

In the 1960s and 1970s, when Brazil was ruled by a military dictatorship, the Left used theater as a means of protest. Mr. Boal, a playwright and director, was arrested, tortured and exiled by the military for his pioneering theatrical work. In 1992, after Brazil's return to democracy, Mr. Boal was elected as a city councilman in Rio de Janeiro on the Workers Party ticket. He used public theater as a kind of brainstorming tool to help formulate several pieces of legislation, including Brazil's first witness-protection law. Now a private citizen, Mr. Boal directs a Theater of the Oppressed center in Rio de Janeiro that works with a range of government and civic groups.

Here in Santo Andre, a Workers Party stronghold near Sao Paulo, even discussions about filling potholes turn into political dramas. At budget time, a municipal theater troupe does the rounds of neighborhood meetings. At each gathering the troupe leads role-playing exercises designed to determine, for example, whether locals want the city's funds used for improving streets or improving preschools.

Tell Me A Story

Sometimes hard truths have emerged from the city's theatrical exercises. A sketch on teen pregnancy prompted some young girls to come forward and tell their parents that they themselves might be expecting.

Critics claim that the Workers Party's embrace of Theater of the Oppressed has turned civics into a kind of soap opera. "They are just tiny groups of exhibitionists," says Odon Oliveira, president of Santo Andre's chapter of the rival Brazilian Progressive Party, referring to the actor-activists.

Santo Andre is hardly a floodlit fantasyland, he says. Crime is rampant. Earlier this year, the Workers Party mayor was kidnapped and murdered. Authorities also have been investigating alleged irregularities in municipal finances.

But Neide Perreira de Almeida, a member of one of the Santo Andre troupes, argues that theater helps keep a lid on civic corruption. If you stole in Santo Andre, she says, "the crowd would let you hear about it the next time you went on stage." ☞

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Try editing the **Indy Page** (submit page or contact editor).

Visit the Alliance web site: www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org

Lessons from History

Athens—The Hegemon

That Overreached Itself

by Lewis H. Lapham, excerpt from Harper's Magazine, Oct 2002

Athens in the winter of 415 B.C. stands alone as the

preeminent hegemon of Greece. Sparta for the moment has lost its appetite for war, and the Athenians wish to extend their sovereignty over what was then the whole of the known world, not only as far as Sicily but also beyond Carthage to the Pillars of Hercules. Sophists sit around in the wrestling schools sketching with sticks in the sand the map of the Libyan coastline; old men in wine shops babble of victories promised by Egyptian oracles. Ambassadors arrive from Sicily in late March with news of trouble and a request for military assistance. The city of Syracuse threatens to seize the Athenian colony of Segesta, and how can the heirs of noble Pericles stomach so brazen an insult to their pride? What if the Syracusans took it into their heads to attack the glory of Athens?

Uproar and loud shouts of defiance. The impetuous Alcibiades presents the case for "forward deterrence" and "anticipatory self-defense," saying that it is in the nature of Athens to do great deeds. As certain as Lieutenant General McInerney of the city's military power, he assures the assembly that Syracuse is easy prey, weak and badly governed: "One does not only defend oneself against a superior power when one is attacked; one takes measures in advance to prevent the attack materializing. And it is not possible for us to calculate, like housekeepers, exactly how much empire we want to have."

More uproar. Louder shouts of defiance. The Athenians know as little about Sicily as Senator Biden knows about Iraq ("For the most part ignorant of the size of the island and of the numbers of its inhabitants," says Thucydides, "they did not realize that they were taking on a war of almost the same magnitude as their war against the Peloponnesians"), but they are not the kind of men who stoop to count a crowd of mere barbarians.

Prudent Nicias thinks the Athenians too reckless in their enthusiasm. Like Alcibiades a general, but older and not as eager in his ambition, Nicias raises doubts similar to the ones released in the newspapers during the third week of August by several senior Republican statesmen (among them House Majority Leader Dick Armey and Brent Scowcroft, a former national security adviser) clearly worried both by President Bush's simplistic notions of geopolitics and by the absence of allies, either Arab or European, willing to join the American march on Baghdad. They employed a modern vocabulary, but the substance of their advice they could have borrowed from the speech that Thucydides assigns to Nicias:

"In going to Sicily you are leaving many enemies behind you, and you apparently want to make new ones there and have them also on your hands... Even if we did conquer the Sicilians, there are so many of them and they live so far off that it would be very difficult to govern them. It is senseless to go against people who, even if conquered, could not be controlled, while

failure would leave us much worse off than we were before we made the attempt.... The next best thing is to make a demonstration of our power and then, after a short time, go away again. We all know that what is most admired is what is farthest off and least liable to have its reputation put to the test.... The right thing is that we should spend our new gains at home and on ourselves instead of on these exiles who are begging for assistance and whose interest it is to tell lies and make us believe them, who have nothing to contribute themselves except speeches, who leave all the danger to others and, if they are successful, will not be properly grateful, while if they fail in any way they will involve their friends in their own ruin."

The argument fails to make an impression. So excessive is the enthusiasm of the majority, says Thucydides, "that the few who actually were opposed to the expedition were afraid of being thought unpatriotic if they voted against it, and therefore kept quiet." The assembly declares for war, and over the next several months Athens musters an invasion fleet conforming to the current Pentagon doctrine of "overwhelming force" (134 triremes, expensively gilded; impressive numbers of archers, slingers, and javelin throwers; merchant vessels stocked with soothsayers and cavalry horses), and on a sunny day in July 415 B.C., trumpets blow, priests pour wine into golden bowls, and "by far the most costly and splendid" expedition "ever sent out by a single city" sails to its appointment with destruction.

Note: Lapham introduces these paragraphs with the comment: "...Athens corrupted its democracy and brought about the ruin of its empire by foolishly attempting the conquest of Sicily..."

Israel-Iraq Connection (continued from page 1)

in the European chanceries that once fawned over him during the Good Old Days of Oslo. According to Ha'aretz, "Peres criticized the IDF [Israel Defense Force] operation in Ramallah saying that it harmed the cause of reform in the Palestinian Authority and that it focused attention in the wrong place. According to the foreign minister, the main issue currently at hand is the planned U.S. attack on Iraq, and that Israel should not do anything to frustrate this plan." ("Peres blasts gov't policies, says PM has no clear objective," *Ha'aretz*, 29 Sept '02).

Iraq Is Little Threat to Israel

If Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction programs represent an immediate threat to Israel and other countries in the region, as US and British officials have been constantly asserting, one might expect to see more caution in Israel, which unable to suppress the uprising against its military occupation ought to be more sanguine about the prospect of yet another war front opening up. But over the past years, Israeli military assessments have consistently concluded that Iraq represents no real military threat to Israel at the present time, and certainly Iraq would not launch an unprovoked aggression against it.

Still, there is always the chance that if the United States invades Iraq, that country might try to lob a few of its remaining missiles at Israel, as it did in 1991. Citing foreign sources, the Israeli press this week reported that Israeli special forces are already operating in Iraq, searching for Scud launchers which are believed to exist in small numbers, and probably in poor shape.

Overall, therefore, it seems Israel views any possible threat

from Iraq as a manageable risk, easily outweighed by the benefits of a US attack on that country. Indeed, it is one of the few things for which many Israelis are prepared to tolerate a temporary pause in the "complicating" persecution of the Palestinian people and what's left of their leadership.

Israeli Interests in War on Iraq

What could Israel hope to gain from such a war? First, Israel has for decades viewed Iraq, with its highly educated population and enormous natural wealth, as a potential military rival in the Middle East. Therefore anything that sets back Iraqi development is to be welcomed.

Second, this Israeli government, like many of its predecessors, views bad relations between the Arab world and the United States as, by definition, good for Israel. Since it is certain that an American war against Iraq would considerably increase the already deep alienation between Arab and American societies, such a war is, in their minds, good for Israel.

Thirdly, among a significant and growing minority of Israelis, the idea of "transfer"—the ethnic cleansing of all Palestinians from Israel and/or the Occupied Territories—is gaining ground (see "The Growing Clamor for Ethnic Cleansing", *Electronic Intifada*, 28 August 2002). This gives rise to the legitimate fear that some in Israel's military leadership and government might see a war with Iraq, especially if it produces an Iraqi attack on Israel, as a golden opportunity to push a few hundred thousand Palestinians into neighboring countries.

For some of Israel's supporters both within the US administration and the think tanks that feed it ideas, catastrophic developments even short of ethnic cleansing and the instability, chaos and violence that would ensue fit into a broader plan to completely remake an unruly Middle East with Israel as the dominant local power, under overall US hegemony.

Podhoretz' Mania for World War IV

The most comprehensive vision is that of neoconservative godfather Norman Podhoretz, who writes in the September 2002 issue of his journal *Commentary* that "changes in regime are the sine qua non throughout the region." The regimes "that richly deserve to be overthrown and replaced," Podhoretz affirms, "are not confined to the three singled-out members of the axis of evil. At a minimum, the axis should extend to Syria and Lebanon and Libya, as well as "friends" of America like the Saudi royal family and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, along with the Palestinian Authority, whether headed by Arafat or one of his henchmen." Podhoretz makes it clear that it is the United States that should do the overthrowing and replacing.

Not content with merely changing nearly every government in the region by force, Podhoretz also hopes to bring about through this scheme "the long-overdue internal reform and modernization of Islam." In other words, what Podhoretz wants is truly a war of civilizations. For Islam to be purged of the elements to which neoconservatives like him object, the increased hatred and fanaticism and possibly September-11-style terror that the Iraq war might provoke some to commit are not undesirable side effects but the necessary pretext for aggressive American intervention which will succeed, "provided that the United States has the will to fight World War IV, 'the war against militant Islam' to a successful conclusion, and provided too, that we then have the stomach to impose a new political culture on the defeated parties." (According to Podhoretz, "World War III" was the "war" against communism.)

It is amazing that anyone would publish such ideas, and while there is no evidence that in this form they have caught on very far, there is evidence that ideas at least as dangerous have been brought from the cold of Washington's neoconservative think tanks into the heart of the Bush administration and are now directly informing US policy.

Several recent articles have highlighted this phenomenon. Writing in *The Nation*, Jason Vest documented the growing influence of two once marginal groups, the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA) and the Center for Security Policy (CSP). According to Vest, "dozens of their members have ascended to powerful government posts," in the present US Administration, where, "Industrious and persistent, they've managed to weave a number of issues—support for national missile defense, opposition to arms control treaties, championing of wasteful weapons systems, arms aid to Turkey and American unilateralism in general—into a hard line, with support for the Israeli right at its core." For this group, Vest states, "total war," and "regime change by any means necessary in Iraq,

Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian Authority is an urgent imperative." (The Men From JINSA and CSP, *The Nation*, 2 September 2002.) Among the prominent former advisers and board members of JINSA are current Bush Administration officials Vice President Dick Cheney, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control John Bolton and Douglas Feith, currently the third-highest ranking official in the Pentagon. Richard Perle, chairman of the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board is according to Vest currently a JINSA/CSP adviser.

From Dominoes to Skittles

The Guardian's Brian Whitaker recently shed light on a 1996 paper entitled "A clean break: a new strategy for securing the realm," written to advise then incoming Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Whitaker traces to this paper the roots of the "skittles theory" of the Middle East — that one blow aimed at Iraq can knock down several regimes. The lead author of the paper, published by an Israeli think tank called the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies, was Richard Perle and another author was Douglas Feith. (Playing skittles with Saddam, *The Guardian*, 3 September '02).

In addition to bringing about "regime change" in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, Ha'aretz's Akiva Eldar summarizes the other part of the plan like this: "Palestine is Israel, Jordan is Palestine, and Iraq is the Hashemite Kingdom." It is from these circles that fantastic plots to re-install the Hashemite monarchy in Iraq have recently emerged — this fits in nicely with the Israeli right's long-held belief that the true Palestinian state is Jordan.

Eldar points out how the document's writers proposed that Netanyahu press for cooperation with the United States on anti-ballistic missile defense, because "it would broaden Israel's base of support among many in the United States Congress who may know little about Israel, but care very much about missile defense." (Perles of wisdom for the Faithful, *Ha'aretz*, 1 October 2002)

Israel—Tool Worms Its Way

This was perhaps the beginning of what has become a fruitful alliance between those, like the JINSA crowd whose main motivation is fanatical support for an expansionist Israel, and those, of whom Cheney and Rumsfeld are the embodiment, who have no emotional or ideological attachment to Israel, but who see Israel as a useful example or tool to achieve their aim of forcefully extending and asserting US power and sovereignty in pursuit of a narrowly and unilaterally defined national interest. By working to seamlessly merge Israeli interests with those of American power, the pro-Israeli neoconservatives have helped shape a Republican Administration unlike any other, and unlike even the first Bush Administration, which was far less inclined to let Israel alone set the terms for its dealings with the Palestinians and the Arab states.

If the threatened war against Iraq, the US decision to de-recognize Yasser Arafat, and the Washington whispering campaign against Saudi Arabia represent the beginning of the implementation of a frightening blueprint for the Middle East, the international community, and particularly the Arab states, need to understand that playing along with American plans in Iraq and hoping to get by will not save them or spare millions of their people untold suffering. ■

LETTER

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CANTON JOURNAL:

I have never been so aware of how slanted our propaganda press has become as now— arguably the most objective TV news show, CBS' "Sunday Morning," is right now beating the drums of war for the illegal Bush administration. A corrupt and ignorant Supreme Court majority aiding and abetting, we have an administration in place who stole the election and now proceeds to lead our sons to slaughter. Why? So Bush can go back into the presidency, despite his backers' Big Business blatant fraud and his own implication in the murky waters of fraudulent business dealings. If the business of government IS (monkey) business, as has certainly become the case for OUR government, then we are all implicitly indicted....since we the people are allowing it to continue.

You as the Fourth Estate are supposed to be the guardians of our democracy, reporting on the (failure of) the three branches of government to work to safeguard and promote liberty. Instead, you by your silence are rewarding the hypocritical perverters now at the helm of our government. When this shameful page of our history is written, as the very foundations of our Constitutional government are destroyed as surely as we watched the twin towers crumble, you will be named as one of the worst malefactors.

Your reporters make no pretense at objectivity: I was recently interviewed by the Patriot Ledger here, since I have a son in the active military, recently returned from our disgraceful action in Afghanistan. His questions were leading—trying to force me to say something I don't believe—to extract words of vengeance from me—of rage against the bugger-bear "terrorist." It was SO phony that I finally called him on it. He either pretended or had no knowledge of his lack of objectivity.

The same thing happens when I am polled. The questions take on the form, "Who is nicer, Hitler or Bush?" to give this distant cousin of mine a positive approval rating. When I protest to the pollster, she admits the slanted nature of the poll, giggling apologetically.

Of course, knowing your bent, this letter will never see the light of publishing, since you have LOST the light you are supposed to use. [For] we the people of these sadly misled United States of America "Give the people the light and they will find the way" has been replaced by "All the news you NEED to know," CNN's cynical motto.

A dissident Patriot and Mayflower descendant,
Alice Copeland-Brown, Canton MA. Published in Canton Journal, 27 Sept 2002.

Welcome, Alice, as a new BCA member. —Ed.

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