

BCA Dispatch

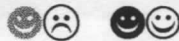
Newsletter of the **December**
Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy 2002

As nations cannot be rewarded or punished in the next world they must in this. By an inevitable chain of causes and effects, Providence punishes national sins by national calamities.

—George Mason, founding father, 1787

ALLIANCE NEWS

Chapter Calendar



Water Crisis in Lawrence, Mass.

The Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy's next meeting will be on **Wednesday, December 18**, 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.)

— Proposed Agenda —

★ Discuss “**Suez, Inc., vs. Lawrence Citizens: How Can We Protect the Public Water System?**” with **Tennis Lilly** of Lawrence Grassroots Initiative. Definite things you can do.

★ Report on the setback and victory strategy of **Nottingham NH** citizens in protecting their aquifer from USA Springs, Inc. How Alliance members are helping.

★ Discuss what's on your mind, and the strengths and weaknesses of our chapter. Join the **Steering Committee** and decide our next meeting.

★★ Happy Holiday with EGG NOG & GINGERBREAD! ★★

Jobs with Justice—Labor and Us

With the support of many middle-class groups, labor won big in Brazil with Lula as president-elect and regional Workers Party gains. But what about here in New England?

BCA's November guest speaker, **Russ Davis** of Jobs with Justice, sees the beginning of a turnaround, or a new force with labor and community organizations. Labor's post-WWII honeymoon with big business has been eroding for a quarter-century as jobs and factories have been moved to cheap labor areas abroad (the US severely limiting their immigration) and CEO compensation has been sucking up the savings. Even US military equipment is being “outsourced” abroad, with profits whipped back to US shareholders. But finally immigrant rights are surfacing as a public issue.

Russ, a former GE worker and now JwJ director, was proud of the recent Boston janitors' strike and the benefits its settlement gained for workers. Many community members—students, religious people, parts of the business community—marched shoulder to shoulder with SEIU union strikers. Adding fuel to the fire of layoffs and part-time-employment is the public disillusionment with selfish megacorporations like Enron which enjoy subsidies, provide unreliable service, and leave their employees in the lurch. NStar—the super-utility formed when Boston Edison bought up several suburban electric (Continued on page 3>>)



GEORGE MASON—No friend of George Bush.

EDITORIAL

America — Heading Off Calamity

George III—George Washington—George Mason—George W Bush. What's wrong with this picture? With the sword, George Washington ended George III's milking of the American colonies through crown corporations, governors, and his army and navy. George Washington sat quietly through the Constitutional Convention of 1787, while most of his fellow delegates established a consensual framework to protect privilege and property, including the ownership of slaves.

Only George Mason, a wealthy but historically literate landowner from Virginia, refused to sign the Constitution. The Convention had declined to include a bill of individual rights which would fly in the face of slavery as well as reinforcing the power of popular concerns such as free speech, worship and assembly, protection from arbitrary seizure and arrest, and government accountability to the voters or their representatives in Congress.

Eleven years earlier Mason had penned a Bill of Rights adopted by the newly-sovereign state of Virginia and adapted by most of the other colonies. Months after the Convention the first U.S. Congress adopted as constitutional amendments ten of Mason's twelve rights provisions, with the support of Washington and James Madison. Gouty, Mason declined to run for the Senate, and died quietly in 1792.

Mason was strongly principled. He saw slavery as a “national sin” which he believed would naturally (or divinely) lead

to national "calamity". That calamity came with the Civil War 69 years after his death. Now we are faced with another national sin as great as slavery—American fascism: the heady fusion of elected government and corporatism. Interestingly the Civil War gave birth to the giant corporation seeking monopoly, coming of age 21 years later with the legalistic coup of "corporate personhood"—a fatal perversion of the 14th Amendment giving corporations all of the rights and none of the responsibilities of U.S. citizens.

The late Bertram Gross—congressional aide, bureaucrat-adviser to President Harry Truman, and political science professor at Hunter College—detailed Friendly Fascism in his book of that name on the eve of Ronald Reagan's ascendance to the presidency in 1980. The best available description of the American corporate-government "system", this book describes with uncanny prescience the post-Reagan era now coming to a head with the Bush-Cheney-Ashcroft-Rumsfeld gang in the White House.

This gang, along with a supine Congress, has given us the USA-PATRIOT Act which has undermined our Constitutional shield as surely as Hitler's early enabling legislation, turning us into a police state and throwing into judicial limbo all our individual rights. The "friendly" character of the Act is reflected in its cute public-relations naming: "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT ACT) Act of 2001".

Far from uniting America, it encourages US agents, and for that matter local police, to divide us by labeling any of us "raghead collaborators" or "rotten pinko faggots" and holding us indefinitely, incognito, without specific charges, confiscating our property. This was the experience of Mike Maginnis, an IT worker and amateur photographer of Denver who was arrested while taking pictures of buildings in a Denver neighborhood including Vice-President Cheney's hotel. (*Archived by www.2600.com at "Off The Hook" for 4 Dec 2002.*) With Bush appointments sure to be confirmed by a Republican congress, the proto-fascists in courts, departments and agencies are bound to thrive and create anti-democratic, anti-rights norms of official behavior.

Before they implode from their inherent corruption—inherent in personalistic, authoritarian regimes—these Reagan-era agencies and armies may do a huge amount of damage. They are there, after all, to support the "military-industrial complex" which President Eisenhower warned us of, and the "Wall Street-industrial complex" identified by establishment economist Jagdish Bhagwati. Millions more will die in imperialistic "wars", and tens of millions will die of the environmental and public health disasters that follow.

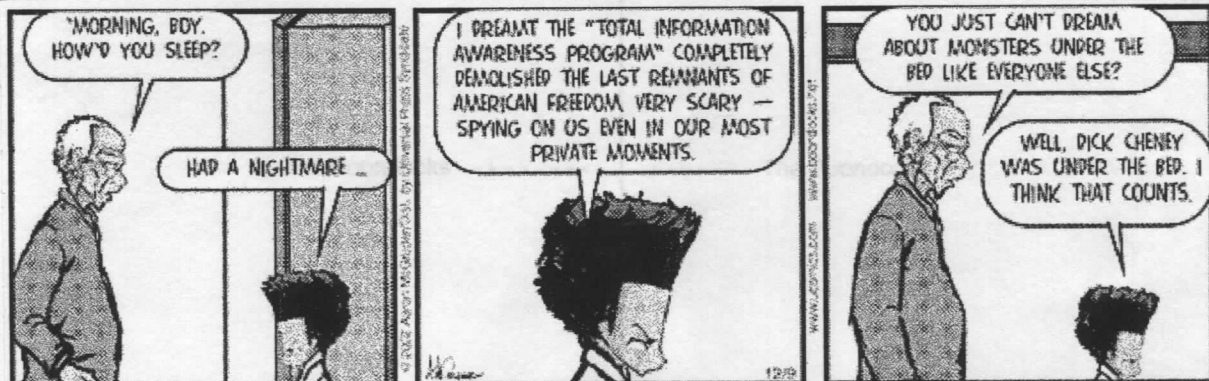
But the most heinous result of post-Reagan predations is and will be the dumbing-down and taming of Americans. No longer citizens in dynamic civil association, the White House/ Wall Street elite would have us be taxpayers, workers, and consumers with no other purpose or will. The means by which they may accomplish this are completing the domination of the media (1996 Telecommunications Act, corporate "free speech", defunding of libraries, privatization of the internet, etc.), completing the fundamentalization of public schools (uniform teacher and student testing, English-only, collective prayer, etc.), and blocking of citizen initiatives (anti-frivolous suing, unbearable legal costs vis a vis corporations, privatization of police, longer and longer working weeks, etc.). The costs to future generations may be similar to the costs of environmental predation.

The Bush regime is over-reaching itself. Its efforts to annex the nation to Texas rubs too many—including many conservatives—the wrong way, and will not succeed. World opinion demands its retreat, and says "Another World Is Possible." Not just the pain of the world, but the destruction of the world on which the Bush cheerleaders feed indicates the regime's non-sustainability. Soon the damage may be irreversible. Which brings us back to George Mason and individual rights.

It isn't good enough to restore the eroded rights of 1776. We may well study the U.N.'s 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights including rights to such "oddities" as rest and marriage, and tailor contemporary amendments to the U.S. Constitution. These must guarantee the preservation of our commons—clean and accessible water, air, earth, airwaves, historical sites, local communities, indigenous communities, scientific and technical knowledge, ecological habitat, natural formations, quiet, and so on. The means to good information, civic participation, population stabilization, society's needed work, and so on, need to be fostered, not defeated by corporatism. If this is "socialism" it is not because the well-to-do don't want these things, but because they would be available *gratis* to all. We can think of a more acceptable term, like "human support system".

Clearly formulating such rights and popularizing them would provide a beacon of hope for those who despair that democracy can ever heal and function. We also must formulate methods for making or allowing them to happen despite present conservative resistance—decision localization, participatory government, non-cooperation and other forms of nonviolent conflict. Most of this potential is in the experience and latent energy of ordinary people, including showing the way to key conservatives and yahoos. Special responsibilities fall to social scientists and journalists many of whom for too long, like politicians, have followed the corporate money. ■

The Boondocks



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companies—has provided such poor service and high rates in its quest for profits that several cities, notably Arlington, are formally considering taking over the power lines, forming a city-owned municipal power company, and selling electricity directly to residents. Municipalization—reverse privatization.

Solidarity with Latin Americans— There and Here

The big question, says Russ, is how to win over working people to this populist perspective. The GE union contract is expiring, a national health workers' strike is coming, 18,000 Verizon telephone workers will strike in August. These will

unfreeze conservative worker attitudes and help them to organize with underpaid workers in Latin America, for example. In June unions will join with other civil society organizations to defeat the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) at a Summit of the Americas in Miami. May 4, the day Martin Luther King was killed, will be a day of civil disobedience all over the US. Today even workers in China are taking risks and organizing.

Workers for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are facing salary cuts. Russ urged BCA and its members to join JwJ and participate in strikes. We are all fighting the "Washington Consensus" on corporate globalization. With BCA a long-time promoter of alternatives to so-called free trade, this sounds like an opportunity. (Call Jobs with Justice in Jamaica Plain at 617-524-8778 or www.massjwj.net.)

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Privateers In Lawrence "Hands Off Our Water!"

A big struggle for citizen control of our Commons is well under way in Lawrence, Mass. Suez, a giant French-based corporation which roves the world looking for faltering water systems to exploit, is threatening to privatize Lawrence's century-old municipal water department. The showdown will come in January, when Suez' contract offer will come before the Lawrence City Council for approval. But we the people will win this phase of the struggle if citizens—including friends in the Boston area—are active. If the City Council approves the privatization, which would commit Lawrence for 20 years, citizens will have 21 days to gather enough signatures to force a special election. Ninety-nine percent of Lawrence citizens oppose privatization of their water. So if we can get them to the polls, Suez will have to go away.

In the forefront of this struggle is **Tennis Lilly**, executive director of Lawrence Grassroots Initiative. **Carl Whitman**, **Jed Schwartz**, and **Dave Lewit** drove up route I-93 on November 14th to meet with Tennis at the Lawrence public library (see photo). How can BCA and its sister chapters in the New England region help? Well, spreading the word in the media (*BCA Dispatch* can be handed out, folks!) is important, or attending organizing meetings and collecting signatures for the referendum, if necessary. Before this, mobilizing Lawrence folks to pressure their city councillors to reject the privatization proposal is the main priority. A second citizen organizing meeting will be held on Saturday, December 14th, in Lawrence where Boston friends can volunteer for useful tasks. (Note, our

commuter rail serves Lawrence with 13 trains a day.)

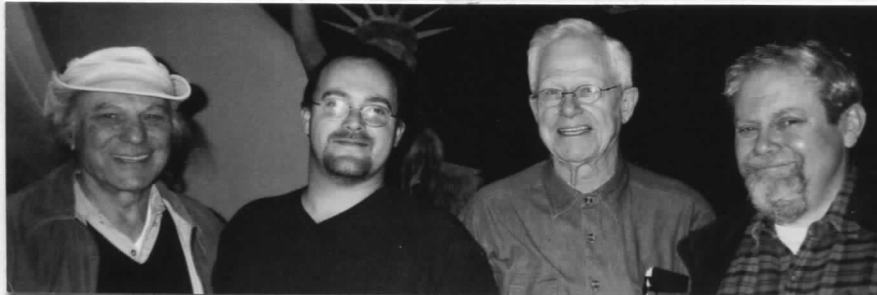
The Alliance Gets Involved

The first citizen organizing meeting, held on November 23rd at the visitor center of the Lawrence State Historical Park celebrating its 19th century textile mills, was snappily directed by **Jonathan Leavitt** of CPPAX, who ran last month as the Green Party's candidate for state representative from Lawrence. Several dozen citizens attended, as well as Alliance members **Cynthia Ritscher**, **Lynn Gargill**, **Nick Biddle**, **Mary White**, **Jed Schwartz**, **Carl Whitman**, and **Dave Lewit**. Tennis Lilly provided the background—the global corporate grab for water worth

hundreds of billions of dollars, or priceless if we maintain that water is our right.

The transnational corporations weasel their way in through "public-private partnerships" and the results are often disastrous—e.g., Cochabamba, Bolivia (see *Dispatch*, Feb 2001). These predators often target commun-

ities with lots of immigrant and poor people, like Lawrence, where they anticipate little organized resistance. Typically, they plan to buy repair-needy water systems at bargain prices, billing themselves as saviors capable of raising the necessary millions of dollars for repairs, with a dedication to efficiency. Efficiency turns out to mean cutting costs by wholesale firing of experienced workers, rehiring some at reduced pay and benefits while hours are extended, safety neglected, and union organizing blocked. After a year or two water and sewer rates are increased and service to poor areas curtailed. Maintenance is again reduced as profits are siphoned off. They may only spottily enforce water standards. They may sell the company, merge it, or break it up—abandoning the city and destabilizing service. A 20-year lease is tantamount to sale—it is virtually impossible to rehire the original work-force or its equivalent. However, some dissatisfied cities like Atlanta are suing to reclaim their systems after only a few, bad years.



Dave Lewit

Tennis Lilly

Carl Whitman

Jed Schwartz



Lawrence citizen Jed Schwartz Nick Biddle Councillor Marcos Devers

Fund-Finders and Accountants

The key problem for retaining ownership and control of a municipal water system is finance. How to borrow money to repair an aged system with leaky pipes and ancient machinery, supplied by dwindling water sources which have shifted, needing

extensions to different parts of the city? Bond issues?—maybe, if rates for a poor (risky) city aren't too high. Tax increases?—not where unemployment is high. State subsidy?—depends on how much Washington has drained state resources and on politics. National subsidy?—yes, if Senate bill S.1961 passes, though it contains a wide opening for privateers: a requirement that the city concretely "consider" privatizing offers, which has cost Lawrence about \$2 million in lawyer and consultant fees. In any event, giving in to a privateer is like making a pact with the devil—you get momentary relief, and lasting misery.

Our work is cut out for us. We must become the honest accountants, tallying not only the obvious revenues and costs, but estimating the costs to the city and state of social displacement, degradation of income, compromising of environment and public health, and so on. The city and state must know how much they will have to pay to fix or prevent these things. When public and private plans are then compared, with the involvement of our friends in the city council and state legislature, the public will win.

Nottingham NH—Water Resource War

Meanwhile, the Alliance has been allied with Save Our Groundwater and other folks fighting privatization of the aquifer in the Nottingham/Barrington region of SE New Hampshire for many months. Their problem is complementary to the Lawrence problem. The former, Nottingham, concerns a corporate attack by an apparently European-financed bottling company on the underground water which supplies wells in this rural area near Portsmouth. They would take water the way loggers clearcut mountainsides. The latter, Lawrence, concerns a transnational bid to take over distribution of water in an urban area. Extracting industry vs. service industry—all the same to the investor. Europe discovering America. Reconquest of the virgin land—only this time, we are the Indians.

As the *Dispatch* goes to press, we have heard that USA Springs, Inc. won the latest round of regulatory and legal battles in its effort to get started pumping water from the aquifer, but SOG has not yet examined the court records for details and offsetting judgments. Apparently the court sustained the company's claim that it may legally disregard flooding and other problems associated with test pumping, and matters of whether the town or the state has jurisdiction—the state seems less concerned except in environmental matters. Next Planning Board hearing, January 22nd. Call *Dispatch* for information.

Water Watch Councils—An Alliance Initiative

The Seacoast Alliance, covering members near the Atlantic in New Hampshire and southern Maine, has been closely involved with the Nottingham water war since USA Springs bought land over the aquifer and announced its intentions. The North Bridge, Boston-Cambridge, and Mass Bay South chapters came shortly after, but naturally are concerned with Lawrence and what may happen in other cities, towns and rural areas of the Commonwealth. Since our approach is more with changing the underlying system than with winning a local war with a single new local ordinance or waiver of state authority, the NE Regional Alliance with the leadership of AfD executive coordinator **Nick Biddle** has taken up a statewide or region-wide initiative—to foster Water Watch Councils all over Massachusetts to do the legal and ecological research in preparation for a water war with the corporations.

Water Watch Councils: An Introduction

by Nick Biddle, Alliance for Democracy executive coordinator*

The Alliance has been working on globalization issues since 1997 and is currently organizing around the World Trade Organization's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) within which water is being treated as an environmental service. In current negotiations, the European Union, home of Vivendi, Suez and RWE, (the world's largest water corporations), has requested that the U.S. open up all its water and sewer services to foreign competition.

Water is central to the public trust. Privatizing it is not just an abrogation of government duty, it is a crime against humanity and the environment. It must be stopped.

In order for citizens to set up an early warning system with regard to corporate proposals to withdraw water and/or take over municipal water and sewer services, the Alliance for Democracy proposes to organize a network of Water Watch Councils beginning in New England.

Water Watch Councils combine research and organizing to identify threatened water resources and prevent their loss to corporate control. They require the activism of citizens who will research local water systems, watersheds, regulations and laws on the one hand, and, on the other hand, present findings to their communities in order to lead the resistance to water corporatization. Specific steps are likely to include:

- ★ mapping aquifers
- ★ monitoring potential and actual land sales to commercial entities over aquifers and along rivers
- ★ checking local and state regulations to see if they require a permit to withdraw water for commercial purposes; assessing local water needs and the impact large withdrawals will have on present and future needs; assessing environmental impacts, requirements for public hearings, and regulatory limits on the amounts of water that may be withdrawn under varied circumstances
- ★ advocating for stronger regulations where necessary
- ★ educating the larger community regarding local water resources and experiences of other communities with privatization of water and water/sewer services
- ★ working with local and state officials to ensure that public policy protects access to affordable drinking water as a right of all residents
- ★ mobilizing the community and other communities within the water watch zone when there is a threat of large commercial withdrawals or of water and/or sewer services privatization

This is a movement whose time, unfortunately, has come. Nevertheless, it presents an opportunity for democratic activism that transcends standard politics. Water is life. People respond to the threat of its loss. Water Watch Councils are vital safeguards of the public trust. ★

*Contact Nick at 781-894-1179 or e-mail: nickatafd@aol.com.

Constructing a Nation: The Brazilian Election

by *Mônica Dias Martins*, *BCA Dispatch correspondent in Brazil*

Imagine a country of 8.5 million sq. km, 170 million inhabitants—the large majority young, almost 80 per cent of the population living in urban areas, 53 million poor, 15 million workers earning less than the minimum wage, 12 million unemployed, and 4 million landless families...

Imagine a history with thousands of indigenous people and African slaves who resisted, sometimes by arms, exploitation by the Portuguese Crown, the Netherlands Company, the French Kingdom, the British Empire...

Imagine an "independent" state ruled by Portuguese emperors for 67 years, and which since then went through different political regimes and systems: monarchy and republic, military and civilian, democracy and dictatorship...

Imagine a nation in which income distribution and land concentration are among the worst in the world, a legacy of centuries of colonialism, slavery, and *latifundium* [system of large estates farmed by indentured laborers]...

Now imagine that a peasant, immigrant, metal-trades union leader, socialist militant is the new Brazilian president. Who is this man? Why was he elected? How was his victory possible?

Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, the Workers' Party (PT) candidate, was born in 1945. With seven brothers he and his parents raised subsistence crops on a small farm in Pernambuco province, northeastern [equatorial] Brazil. The family migrated to São Paulo, and at the age of 14 years Lula started working as a lathe operator in a metal factory. Thirteen years later he was elected director of his union and promoted mass mobilizations and strikes. After being arrested during the military dictatorship days, Lula declared to the press that the workers should have their own political party. The PT was born in the '80s, and Lula was its first president. During the 1988 [post-dictatorship] Constitutional Assembly, he defended the proposals of the working classes and was considered an exemplary congressman. Determined to govern Brazil, after each of three electoral defeats, he promoted meetings all over the country, helped the trade union and the popular movements, and created The Citizenship Institute.

Bruna, my daughter, is 20 years old. Since she was seven she has followed Lula, a man she admires, in his struggle. "He is a Brazilian citizen that has respect for the Nation," she says. I am 53 years old but I feel like a teenager, proud of being Brazilian. It's just like I was starting my political militancy now—full of energy, hope, and happiness. Let me share some of my first impressions on the 2002 elections, or better, on Lula's victory. Still better, on Brazilian people-power.

Lula won the 2002 presidential election with the largest number of votes ever seen in Brazil—more than 52 million! The PT became influential nationwide, and for the first

time in our history it seems we have a true change in power. Government and civil society appear to have the same dream: poverty alleviation, social equity, and political participation. Journalists, sociologists, historians, economists, and political scientists analyze this phenomenon differently. Some believe that PT benefitted from disillusionment with Cardoso's administration; others evaluate the victory as a revival of populism, and still others see it as a result of the influence of the progressive church.

For me, two main reasons could explain this electoral success: Brazilians' rejection of the suffering brought about by the neoliberal development model, and a collective willingness to change. Relevant to the present situation is not only the unique fact that a leftist worker was democratically elected, but also the opportunity to implement a popular project—a political



Carrying the Workers Party flag at Copacabana Beach, Rio

perspective that challenges powerful class interests. But what comes next? How to do it? Who is to be responsible?

The time is right for concrete and innovative actions that change our ways of being, thinking and performing, as well as state administrative practices and policies. A great hope has emerged in the social imagination and defeated the specter of "market fear." PT's victory, said the bourgeoisie, would cause "a social convulsion." "Lula is not prepared to rule," echoed his opponents. The feeling of the majority of the voters, however, is that the social structure of the country can and will be different. The personal history of Lula and the PT tend strongly to value social themes: employment, land reform, education, healthcare, income, housing, and so on. Affirmation of civil rights is a priority to the new government. Brazilian people have shown a sincere nationalism.

The construction of nationality is a long and difficult process, historically related to a political domination that has denied citizenship to the working classes. In Brazilian society it is also associated with persistent land concentration; unequal economic development and wealth distribution; extreme poverty of the huge mass; massacres, death treats and illegal arrests in rural areas and in slums; growing migration to the cities; permanent insecurity and violation of human rights; environmental problems. Despite President Cardoso's enthusiastic declarations about the modern face of the country, after 8 years of his

administration the rates of unemployment, hunger, external debt, and violence have increased. The intervention of multinational corporations and international financial agencies in the Brazilian process shows that they are aware of the risks involved in Lula's election.

PT governance may consolidate a different kind of political participation that challenges the so-called Washington Consensus. In a certain way, the victory of a mass workers' party expresses a growing resistance to globalization, and this has an historical importance not only for Latin America but for the world as well. ♥

Organizing Against the FTAA

by Catherine Benedict and David Amdur, Boston Global Action

How does a group of citizens confront a pending trade agreement—something that is nearly invisible in the media, complicated to explain, and sounds good at face value? Something that is going to irreversibly change everyone's life if it comes to pass? How do we confront the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)?

The FTAA is a proposed trade agreement that would extend the disastrous North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to the entire Western Hemisphere with the exception of Cuba. It would also include a devastating new section on trade in services, which would open up all public services to privatization and give corporations new powers to overturn labor, environmental and public health laws which cut into their profits. The FTAA is being negotiated in secret, with input from approximately 500 corporate heads, but almost no input from civil society or legislators.

There is a growing hemispheric movement against the FTAA and the economic model of corporate globalization (or neoliberalism) that supports the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In Brazil in September, over 10 million people voted in a popular referendum against the FTAA. The recent election of Lula as president shows Brazilians¹¹ support for an alternative economic model and their discontent with the neoliberal that devastates their country.

In Ecuador in late October and early November tens of thousands of small farmers and indigenous activists mobilized against the Summit of the Americas held in Quito. At this meeting, trade ministers from the 34 countries involved in the FTAA met in near secrecy to move ahead the negotiation process of the trade agreement.

On October 12th (Día de la Raza in Latin America and the 510th anniversary of the 1st colonization of the Americas by Columbus) over 40,000 people mobilized in southern Mexico and Central America against the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), a regional free trade agreement between the U.S. and 5 Central American countries and the accompanying regional megadevelopment project, Plan Puebla Panama.

Recently in El Salvador, over 200,000 people marched against the privatization of the health care system by the central government and forced the president to sign a law declaring the privatization of health care illegal. Coordinated mass protests also forced the Salvadoran government to postpone the construction of a mega super beltway project encircling San Salvador.

It was part of the infrastructure accompanying FTAA.

In the Boston area, we are focusing our energies in two directions: political/legislative pressure and popular education. Our political pressure group is seeking activists who have experience with congressional and legislative work to help educate the Massachusetts Congressional delegation about FTAA and related free trade agreements and call on them to vote against them. We will also work in coordination with our education working group on organizing a base of support in a cities or towns in eastern Mass to have them pass a resolution opposing the FTAA.

In terms of popular education, we have started making presentations to local community groups, religious institutions, and others groups, and asking them to pass institutional resolutions against the FTAA. We will be working with Jobs with Justice to get the word out to labor unions as well.

We are educating ourselves and other activists on how to give presentations about the FTAA to local area groups. We continue to organize tables at events and festivals to gather political pressure cards to Congress against FTAA and to educate the public about these free trade agreements.

We are looking for people to join our work. Here is how you can get involved our campaign to stop the FTAA:

- 1- Come to the monthly meetings of the FTAA Task Force.
- 2- Get involved with our political pressure/legislative or popular education working groups.
- 3- Contact us to give an FTAA presentation to your community organization, religious institution, etc. We can offer presentations in English, Spanish, and to a limited extent, in French, Hindi and Tamil.

For more information, please contact us at: 617-576-1790, ftaa@bostonglobalaction.net, www.bostonglobalaction.net

Globalization Impact Bill Reintroduced

Shortly after the November elections BCA suggested revisions to the Globalization Impact Bill which had not been actively promoted after 9/11. The bill would set up a commission to evaluate the impact on state laws and regulations of the WTO, NAFTA, FTAA, GATS, and similar international trade agreements, and recommend support or non-support.

Rep. Byron Rushing, the bill's principal sponsor, trimmed the suggestions and reintroduced the bill, which now specifies in more detail the composition of the commission. It has been expanded to 13 members as follows:

- ___ 3 members of the senate,
- ___ 3 members of the house of representatives,
- ___ the attorney general or his designee,
- ___ the treasurer of the commonwealth or his designee,
- ___ the governor (or his designee), who chooses:
 - ___ a representative of organized labor,
 - ___ a representative of the Mass. Municipal Association,
 - ___ a member of a graduate faculty of economics of a private university in the commonwealth,
 - ___ a member of a graduate faculty of economics of the University of Massachusetts.

BCA requests that you contact your state rep and senator, and urge them to co-sponsor the bill. ★★★

The Indy Page

This issue's Indy Page editor is Jean Maryborn, former AfD council member and founder of the Mass Bay South chapter, former Just Peace Coordinator in SE Mass. for United Church of Christ, now working with the Norwell church to highlight Christian premises. Contact her at maryborn@aol.com or call 781-826-2482.

Nonviolence—Sword of Light, Gift of Peace

by Jean Maryborn

"...And peace to all on earth". Holiday music is full of the age-long dream. Are we any closer to realizing it? Just now, no, but take a longer view of this evolutionary transformation of power. The first century brought us a carpenter/itinerant preacher/social revolutionary/mystic who, despite fear and confusion, when the chips were down chose nonviolence. His death changed the world. The 20th century brought us visionary strategists he inspired who changed their societies through non-violent action. They applied power in conflicts without recourse to violence. Power! How can nonviolence be powerful, much less a sword?

Nonviolence conflict shifts the very premise of power. For millennia society has been structured by hierarchies, imposed by Roman legions, the divine right of kings, or shareholders. The shift is from power-over to power-with, from top-down orders to cooperative decision making, with respect for all sides. Democracy is a model. More than a power shift, it is a mind shift, the change of paradigms our survival depends on.

Deeper and more complex than brute force this power is transformative because it calls upon the opposition's best instincts and challenges their worst. Gandhi taught his followers satyagraha, "soul, or truth force", and King in his stirring tones exhorted his people to love those that scorned them. This is the dream of shalom, well-being for all, King's "beloved community."

"The People United"...sometimes defeated, but capable of wielding extraordinary power. The old paradigm equates power with military force, so without it we have none. Yet that is antithetical to our own beginnings. Before the "shot heard round the world" was fired, farmers without email or cell phones gathered by the thousands in defense of their long established right to self-governance. Though armed, they did not fight, but dramatically reclaimed their accustomed town meetings. (See Ray Raphael's inspiring *The First American Revolution*.)

Those of us who saw any of *A Force More Powerful*, the PBS documentary *B/CA* showed last year about nonviolent conflicts in the last century, have a glimmer of the courage and discipline required. For of course, nonviolent action has nothing to do with passivity, submissiveness or cowardliness. We're impressed at the courage of young men volunteering to

fight, knowing it may cost their lives. Yet we're incredulous about what people would risk to build peace?

War is a failure of imagination. In nonviolent strategy imagination creates new tactics to undermine the prevailing power. Gandhi marched to the sea to extract salt and spun cotton to challenge English monopolies, striking a blow to the economic base of colonialism—extract raw materials and the added value of manufacture. Resourceful people bang pots and pans to alert neighbors, or drown out a dictatorship's newscasts. In our South, well-trained, attractive college students paired—black with white—to sit at lunch counters, knowing they would be arrested and probably beaten. In Tabasco, Mexico, people took a different tactic from Chiapas. After some intimidating arrests, the indigenous who had

gathered for more arrests lined up behind the police buses. When the police said "We haven't come for you" the people replied "Well, we're ready when you want us." New negotiations were called immediately (*Fellowship Of Reconciliation*, Summer 1996). They were ready to sacrifice. Jesus' death is honored by Christendom as a sacrifice. "Sacra facio"—to make holy. Hmmm.

"Well," say skeptical friends, "it would never have worked against the Nazis." Yet German women insisted their Jewish husbands be released from concentration camps. And they were. In Denmark resistance was widespread and effective, led by the King, they say, wearing a star of David in solidarity with his Jewish subjects. Marcos was known as "the Hitler of Southeast Asia," yet he was toppled by "People Power." This inspired Chileans to overthrow their own brutal dictator, Pinochet. All over South America dictatorships fell like dominos in the late 80's, through determined and carefully trained opposition by quite ordinary folks. How might we in the US be called to use this tool?

Nonviolent action is successful in varying degrees depending on many factors. In our society, with "action" films, games and rap glorifying violence, we don't think much of other tactics. But costs are mushrooming. To those we know well add these: radioactive contamination from depleted uranium munitions and tanks for our veterans, and the war zone contaminated forever. Plus the psychological costs of turning an idealistic 18- or 20-year-old into a killer. (see Nov. Dispatch pg. 4.)

The movement grows. Witnesses from *Voices in the Wilderness* arrive in Baghdad Dec. 8. A Nonviolent Peace Force is forming. Only nonviolence can transform the conflict it engages. We have been given a great gift. ☺

NE Alliance to Broadcast on TV Would Distribute Nationally— Invites Program Suggestions

by Bill Haff and Jane Lynn

On November 25th nine Alliance members met in Framingham with progressive filmmaker **Martin Voelker** of Medford to discuss plans for a proposed "AfD People's Network". It would utilize local-access cable television. Discussion focused on recent local-access airings of a Scott Ritter antiwar video, made possible by a small distribution network on the South Shore.

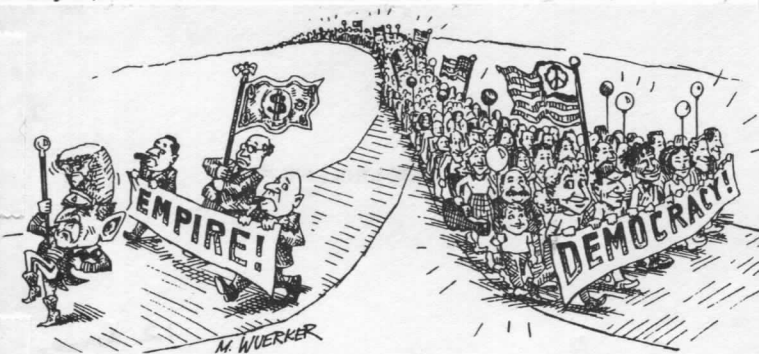
On Channel 17 community cable in the Framingham area, North Bridge member **Eugene Grace** twice a week hosts a show called "Left is Right". His most recent guests were **Ronnie Dugger** and **Pat McSweeney** discussing the Gulf War. These programs are then shown four or more times during the ensuing month. Subsequently **Jane Lynn** managed without difficulty to show a copy of that program on cable TV in her town of Marlborough.

Alliance members now plan a larger, more organized effort facilitated by cable guidelines which require local access channels to air programs hosted by community members.

The proposed regional distribution network presents exciting possibilities. Besides the existing store of progressive videos, the Alliance could produce and distribute videos that specifically promote Alliance ideas, using interview or public appearance formats. For example, a test distribution will use a video recording of Thom Hartmann's recent talk in Lincoln, MA on corporatism. Newspaper advertising will provide additional exposure.

Members of the local community could be invited to discuss the ideas presented—on air, or in the press. Such interactions will create publicity and establish community relationships that will aid future political actions.

Alliance members are invited to submit comments and consider whether they are interested in participating. Email is welcome at rweiz@world.std.com (Ruth Weizenbaum) or bhaff@horizonhouse.com (Bill Haff). Attending the meeting were Ruth Weizenbaum, Bill Haff, Michael Paine, Dave Lewit, Elisabeth Leonard, Bob Stubbs, Carl Whitman (host), Eugene Grace, Jane Lynn, and Martin Voelker.



ACTION ALERT!

Protest Bush's plans for WAR! TILT your postage stamp to send a not-so-secret message to MAIL HANDLERS as well as your ADDRESSEE! "NO WAR!" (Thanks, Carl Whitman, for the tip!)

3-9 Jan 2003. "**FIDEL: The Untold Story**", a new documentary by award winning filmmaker, Estela Bravo, about Fidel Castro, and the Cuban Revolution. Coolidge Corner Theater, video screening room, 290 Harvard St, Brookline. With Nelson Mandela, Harry Belafonte, Alice Walker, Angela Davis, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and exclusive footage from Cuban archives. Recorded info: 617-734-2500.

9 Jan 2003. **Save Our Goundwater** info and planning on citizen action against water privatization by USA Springs, Inc. 7:30-9:30 pm, Barrington NH Elementary School (Rtes 125 & 9). Info and rides: 781-259-8104.

10-11 Jan 2003. **AFL-CIO Summit on Union Organizing**. Washington, DC. Featuring Stewart Acuff, AFL's new national director for organizing. Info: Lou Mandarini, Mass AFL-CIO, 617-227-8260 x18.

18 Jan 2003. Martin Luther King Day, **National anti-war march** Washington DC. Info: A.N.S.W.E.R. 212-633-6646 or dc@internationalanswer.org.

22 Jan 2003. **Nottingham Planning Board**. Info and official action on citizen complaints about exporting large amounts of water from local aquifer. 7-9 pm, Nottingham NH Town Hall. Info and rides: 781-259-8104.

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 - "Contributor" (We need to average this amount.)
 \$104/Year - "Sustainer" (Helping us thrive.)
 \$208/Year - "Community Steward"
 \$500/Year - "Realize the vision"
 What's fair for YOU? \$ _____

Name : _____ Date: _____
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