

BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the **Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy** February 2003

What has allowed so many psychopathic personalities (PPs) to rise so high in corporations, and now in government, is that they are so decisive. Unlike normal people, they are never filled with doubts, for the simple reason that they cannot care what happens next. Simply can't. *Do this! Do that! Mobilize the reserves! Privatize the public schools! Attack Iraq! Cut health care! Tap everybody's telephone! Cut taxes on the rich! Build a trillion-dollar missile shield! Fuck habeus corpus and the Sierra Club and In These Times, and kiss my ass!*

—Kurt Vonnegut, *In These Times*, 17 Feb 2003

ALLIANCE NEWS (Continued on page 8 >>)

Chapter Calendar

Mid-East Culture Party... Feb 19

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

— Program —

☘ **Sufi* Music, Food, Stories** ☘

- * **Oud & guitar music** by Hara Garacci and Dmitri Mikelis—instrumental and songs from Iran, Egypt, and elsewhere...
- * **Folk-tales** of Mulla Nasrudin, Rumi, 1001 Nights, Dervishes—**read a page aloud and pass it on!** How does it connect with you?
- * **Dinner & delicacies** from Iran, Lebanon, or Greece...

"We say NO to war, and BLESSINGS to our sisters and brothers everywhere!"

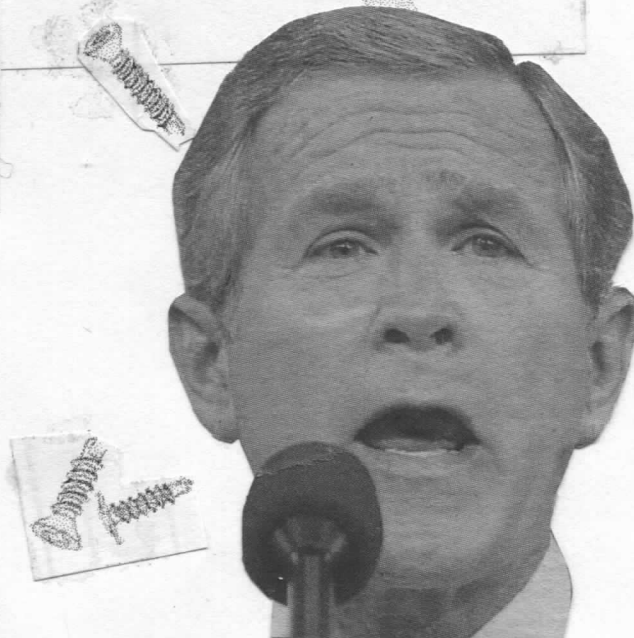
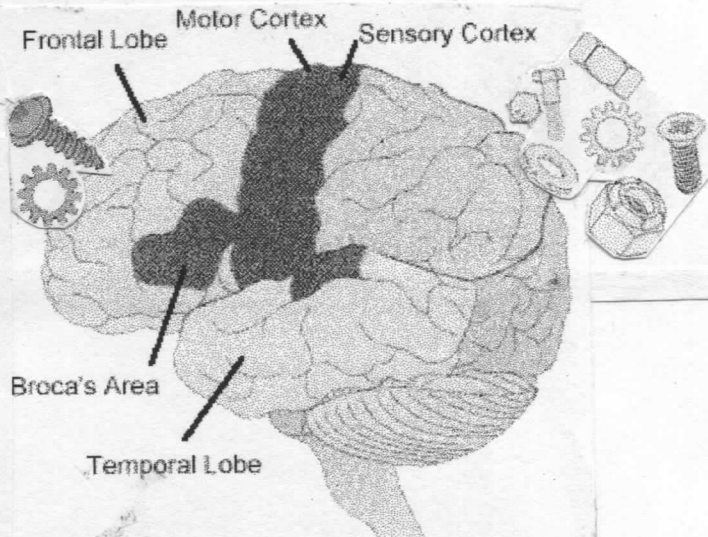
* Sufism: millennium-old Muslim mystical movement embracing Greek, Buddhist, and Christian ideas. Provocative and often amusing! —Ed.

How Does War Play in Peoria?

Folks Say "No!"—See Their Comments:

by Mike Bailey, *Peoria Journal Star*, 26 Jan 2003

In a brave if breathtakingly risky attempt to quantify the readership of this column, I... invit[ed] central Illinoisans to weigh in on war with Iraq... Not since tackling the digestively delicate subject of Krispy Kreme donuts have I had this much feedback... Among the 41 readers I can now officially call my own, the verdict was, incredibly, unanimous... *No* to a pre-emptive strike against Iraq, *no* to an attack without U.N. backing, *no* to trading one Saddam for 10 Osamas in this year's game of global Strat-o-matic. (Continued on page 3>>)



Psychopath in the White House

by David W. Lewit, Ph.D., Boston

Op-eds from Britain and elsewhere label George W. Bush a "madman". Many Americans, confusing the man and the office, are reluctant or indignant about such a term. At a recent Senator John Kerry forum I was seated next to a Democratic lecture junkie. She took issue with a sentence in a CPPAX flier which said—of Bush Jr's anger at Bush Sr's shorter term in office than Saddam Hussein's—that "it is a family matter that can be explained better by psychiatrists than by defense and security planners." She indignantly interpreted it as "Bush needs a psychiatrist" rather than "psychiatry might explain..." She expressed the view that Bush is under a lot of pressure, with concerns about the economy, and so on, and he is not the brightest president, and that after all Saddam is a nuclear madman who needs to be roughly dealt with. A grandmother, she was making excuses for the problematic George W like a son, partly out of her admittedly habitual exposure to TV.

Unfortunately, psychopathy is largely intractable to psychiatric treatment, short of doping a person out. Also, except for prisoners, psychopaths don't get to see psychiatrists because they have no sense that (Continued on page 2 >>)

anything is wrong with them—that they “need help”. But psychiatry, or better, the science of psychology, offers some insights into behavior like Bush’s.

What Is a Psychopath?

First of all, try matching up George W with the following descriptive characteristics of the garden-variety (1-4% of Americans) of “antisocial personality disorder” of which “psychopathic personality” is a variety. Does George score on 3 or more of these 7 diagnostic criteria? (www.mentalhealth.com):

- ___(1) Failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviors as indicated by repeatedly performing acts that are grounds for arrest
- ___(2) Deceitfulness, as indicated by repeated lying, use of aliases, or conning others for personal profit or pleasure
- ___(3) Impulsivity or failure to plan ahead
- ___(4) Irritability and aggressiveness, as indicated by repeated physical fights or assaults
- ___(5) Reckless disregard for safety of self or others
- ___(6) Consistent irresponsibility, as indicated by repeated failure to sustain consistent work behavior or honor financial obligations
- ___(7) Lack of remorse, as indicated by being indifferent to or rationalizing having hurt, mistreated, or stolen from another

If you’ve read a biography of W (for example, *Is Our Children Learning?* by Paul Begala, 2000), or just kept an eye open, you can probably provide examples of some of the above. Let me cite a few:

- ___(1) Bush was frequently drunk—some now call him a “dry drunk”; using family connections to skirt rules, as getting into the Texas Air National Guard to avoid going to Vietnam, and then disappearing after training.
- ___(2) Bush conned reporters about having an ordinary public education, which really ended after one year of junior high, and then an Eastern prep school, Yale, and Harvard Business School; cons crowds about his supposed fluency in Spanish.
- ___(3) Bush has changed his rationale weekly or monthly about why we have to smash Iraq (Al-Queda, Saddam, WMD, etc.), without first explaining why the earlier reason wasn’t so good, or the real reasons.
- ___(4) Bush is always running out of patience with weapons inspectors or the U.N.
- ___(5) Bush’s plan for Iraq would surely kill, maim, or displace millions of Iraqis, and cause widespread retaliation against neighboring and American targets—with no acknowledgment from Bush for any new threat.
- ___(6) Bush is a good (fearless) talker, but leaves the work of revising his stereotypes, goal-setting, and planning to Cheney and others; feels obligation to rich Americans and corporations, but not to the majority or to foreigners.
- ___(7) Rather than remorse about abrogating hard-won environmental treaties, Bush goes on to abrogate more treaties.

Well, you say, in a young man these traits would not be not all that uncommon—maybe even normal in places like Texas, at least among rich, white fraternity boys. But you have to admit that W is even more uncommon—as a corporate/senatorial scion, bailed out of his business ineptitude, getting to be governor albeit in Texas a sinecure, and then (p)resident.

Feeling No Pain

And how did he get to be (p)resident? The most shocking and decisive event in his road to the White House was, to my mind, the “white-collar riot” during the Florida vote recount. Karl Rove, Bush’s gubernatorial manager, flew several dozen Republican congressional aides down to Florida, organized as a gang to intimidate the vote-counters inside a government building. The cops did not stop them. They did such a good job of shouting, thumping, and fist waving that the counters had to quit—ending the challenge to Bush’s momentary “lead” (never mind the thousands of gratuitously disqualified Gore-leaning voters).

George W Bush had no problem with this. Others might have had some misgivings and even might have scolded Rove. But George felt nothing. OK, Bush comes across as (1) very friendly, and (2) fearless. Both these traits have gotten him far politically, and both are characteristic of psychopathic con men.

Research by Minnesota experimental psychologist David T. Lykken (*The Antisocial Personalities*, 1995) shows that there are two types of psychopathic personality. Secondary psychopaths tend to have neurotic (“nervous”) as well as antisocial traits. *Primary psychopaths* have a fear deficiency. With a nervous system in some ways sluggish, primary psychopaths tend to seek thrills—flying, violence. Neurologically, it appears they were blessed (or cursed) with brains which feel little or no pain when the person is shocked on the body. The result in the civilized world is that they don’t fear the instruments or signals of pain. They don’t fear the disconcerted looks of parents or others who see or know about their bad behavior. They don’t feel guilty when doing something bad, and they don’t feel ashamed when others discover their bad behavior.

Lykken’s laboratory studies of people who score high on psychopathy criteria (like the seven above) show that they don’t develop conditioned avoidance of things regularly followed by painful shock, because they don’t feel the pain. His work has been replicated with many variations. For example, those same psychopaths (this time in prison for ugly or exploitive crimes) who are impassive to shock, are quite responsive to cash, and become conditioned accordingly. Now George feels entitled to cash—or property—and he does continue to be very motivated to learn new ways of ensuring its accumulation for himself and his buddies.

Enough of Inevitability

It’s all well and good to classify W as a primary psychopath. So how can he be controlled? He has surrounded himself with men (and one woman—Condoleeza Rice) who feed him projects (see quotation from Kurt Vonnegut, page 1) and protect him from confusing information or suggestions from outside the government. Of course this is what presidents do, but usually not with such a uniformly ruthless, domination-obsessed gang. President Kennedy learned that such a gang (National Security Council) provided disastrously misleading judgments (invasion at Bay of Pigs, Cuba), and quickly restructured and diversified the Council.

Like Hitler, Bush attained the role of top commander by shock troops and fearless rhetoric rather than by climbing an established party ladder. After appalling damage to the world, Hitler was weakened and subdued by the determination of the Red Army and by the failure of his egocentric, corrupt, corporatist system. Bush is saddled with the corruption of Enron-WorldCom-America, Inc. He will probably not be weakened by

any military or terrorist force arrayed against him, but he and his gang may not know what to do with massive civil disobedience here and in the UK.

Like Hitler's police bureaucrats, Secretaries Ashcroft and Rumsfeld may be faced with both laxness and disobedience, partly by failure of equipment and strategies, accelerated by leaks in their propaganda walls. Bill Moyers' exposés are evidence that journalists may finally be getting ethical enough and creative enough to override their fears of being blacklisted by their corporate media employers. Without their façade, Bush's gang may become disordered, leaving the (p)resident without direction, and unlikely to be re-elected.

All this will be encouraged by large numbers of brave and persistent citizens willing to learn new ways of nonviolent assertion of basic, democratic patriotism. The gang may offer a substitute national hero, but are unlikely to find him or her controllable like Bush. They may even try a coup, for example, by postponing elections like some banana republic junta. But in the end, Americans are too well educated to accept that. Instead of making excuses, the new grandmas may assert our traditional rights and honor. ■

Peoria Folks on War (Continued from page 1)

No war, no way, no how.

Granted, this sampling of the locals probably wouldn't pass the exacting polling standards of CNN/USA Today/Gallup. But they're mine, dammit, and from where I sit, what they say goes and God bless 'em. One might describe these folks as "peaced off," except most don't strike me as the type who show at the federal courthouse humming John Lennon.

Indeed, there was the "retired Naval officer" and "member of the so-called Greatest Generation" from Washington who wrote, "Bush's obsession with Iraq makes no sense to me. . . . It will be the first time in history that we will have attacked a sovereign nation without provocation," not counting LBJ's Gulf of Tonkin lie. Allusions to Vietnam were common.

"Americans don't start wars; we finish them," declared **Dunlap***. "Morally and strategically indefensible," proclaimed a **Peoria attorney**. The emperor is naked, maintained **Morton***. "I am 49 years old, married, with two grown children. I wish I had been on one of those buses to Washington." Strange behavior for a pro-life president, proffered **another Peorian**. "I can think of nothing more anti-life . . . than a war."

"Is there some law in this country that says we have to have a war for every generation?" asked "Thank You for the Soapbox." Iraq is "not worth one ounce of blood spilled by our boys." "Dubya's folly," **Canton*** called it. "Where is the evidence? What happened to bin Laden?" asked a "55-year-old voting" Peorian who punches GOP "85 percent of the time." Maybe not, next time.

"Bush reminds me of a runaway train," moaned **Macomb***. "If this war kills thousands of innocent Iraqis, their blood will be on my hands," lamented another. "If I do not do enough, may God forgive me."

From **Goodfield***: Who's next? North Korea? How many more sacrifices must Americans make on behalf of Big Oil? How about the economy? "Our role in the world should not be that of the biggest bully but rather . . . the greatest benefactor, offering the hope of prosperity and peace rather than threats of war and annihilation," wrote a Princeton* **truck driver's wife**.

From the "83-year-old **veteran of World War II**": "The only way I could favor such a war would be for the warmongers - Rumsfeld, Cheney, Bush and Blair - to personally lead the ground forces against Baghdad."

"So Saddam shot at Bush's daddy," wrote a 77-year-old, now **former Republican stalwart**. "Well, tough. They missed, didn't they?" The Pekin "**wife of an Army Reserve captain on active duty**" has gone back and forth but concludes: "I say we get out and stay out and use all that money to make our country as safe as possible." A first strike "actually makes us terrorists," adds "Will of the American People." "I'd like to be prouder of my country again," remarked "Love Not War."

Pansies, pinkos, partisans? Each and every one? Doubt it. Virtually to a person they had the same gut reaction to what seems to be the president's - what's the word? - eagerness for armed confrontation. Dubya does himself no favors when he becomes "sick and tired" of those who won't shut up and take this war like a man or a patriot or a Texan. Yeah, democracy can be messy.

Frankly, I am flummoxed - not another word for gastrointestinal distress, I assure you - that nary a soul went to bat for war. Strange, because central Illinois has never suffered any shortage of "bomb 'em back to the Stone Age" testosterone. Surely someone feels it's Saddam or the Fall of Civilization, Baghdad or No More Bowling (i.e., the End of Life as We Know It), them or us. A columnist relies on conflict for his very sustenance, doggone it. Can't be messin' with a man's equilibrium like this. Or maybe there really is little support for Bush's war here in the heartland. If political mastermind Karl Rove isn't on a flight to Peoria pronto, is Dubya saying no more in '04?...

"Public sentiment is everything," **Lincoln** said at his 1858 Ottawa debate with Stephen A. Douglas. "With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed." Sixteen years earlier, Lincoln also noted that "a drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall." Bet my entire readership - at 41 and counting - is nodding its head to that.

* towns near Peoria

Malice



in Blunderland:

a variety revue against war

A Special Performance by



Granny D

Jill Stein

**Randall
Forsberg**

**Ronnie
Dugger**

An evening of political song and satire!

Tom Neilson, songwriter and guitarist

Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theatre, Excerpts from *A New War*
Boston MOBE Streetcraft

Saturday, March 1, 7:30 p.m. \$20; Students \$15.

Regent Theater, Arlington Center, 7 Medford St.

"Alliance for Democracy Benefit" Box Office: 781-646-4849

Washington Anti-War Demonstration A First-Hand Look

by Bonnie Preston, AfD, Baltimore

WASHINGTON D.C. 25°F is really cold for us Southerners, so I was not optimistic about the turn-out at the Jan. 18 anti-war demonstration. But driving down from Baltimore, I noticed that I passed at least five chartered buses—not tourists at this time of year. And I noticed the anti-war signs that had been hung on the overpasses. And I noticed how many cars were parked in the normally almost-empty (at least on a Saturday) garage by the subway station. And I noticed that almost everyone on the subway car with me was headed for the march. And I saw that the sidewalks between Union Station and the Mall were packed with demonstrators.

I didn't get there early enough to hook up with the AfD contingent, and I never found them. I've always found them at other demonstrations! I think the estimates of the turn-out have been vague because no one wants to acknowledge how many of us showed up. I overheard someone say that 17 buses had come from Wisconsin. I ran into two different groups from Maine. There were people on rooftops and leaning out of windows along the route, cheering us on. There was a large contingent of Veterans for Peace, chanting anti-war slogans to military cadence.

It was huge, and it was everyone. The black bloc [anarchist] was there, and so were people with little kids. There were significant numbers of African-Americans, and lots of us with gray hair. There were, of course, lots of high school and college students, but there was also a group of frisbee players (according to their sign) from Chicago.

As most are surely aware, the night before the march the organizers found out that while they had a permit to gather at the Navy Yard at the end of the march, they had not been given permission to lay cable for a sound system. Without that, it wasn't really possible to keep people together at the end, and people just drifted away.

But we had made our point. There were some great signs. My favorite this time was written like a newspaper headline:

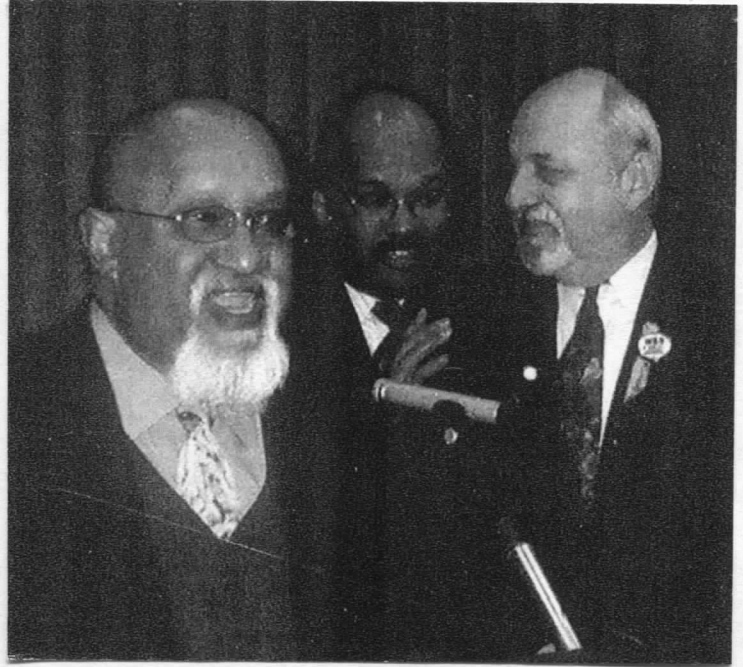
- ✓ "Drunk frat boy drives country into ditch. Starts war to cover up."
- ✓ "I asked for universal health care, and all I got was this lousy stealth bomber."
- ✓ "Empty war heads found in DC" over pictures of Bush and Rumsfeld.

AfD needs some creative slogans! Perhaps before the next march we could get some suggested slogans and basic sign-making instructions out to people and try to encourage more of our members to show up with signs. I don't know what the other AfDers did, since I never found them, but in the past we've marched with our name on a banner. That gets the name out,

but not our message.

Billionaires for Bush's War—the new incarnation of Billionaires for Bush—has written some great chants and done some creative street theatre. Very eye-catching. We need something similar. Jerry Polner [AfD activist, Brooklyn NY—giant inflatable Liberty Bell], where are you?

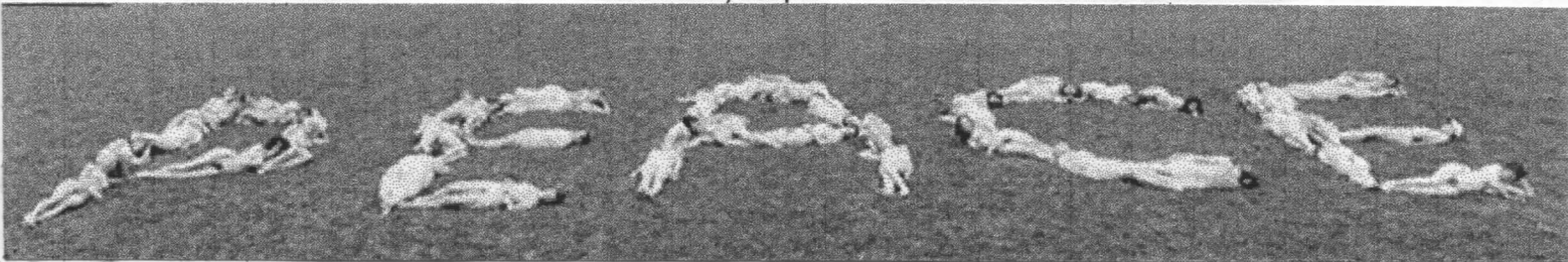
Bostonians Fast for Peace City Councilors Lead Daytime Sacrifice



Chuck Turner Charles Yancey Felix Arroyo

Boston City Councilor **Felix Arroyo**, together with Councilors **Chuck Turner**, and **Charles Yancey** introduced a peace resolution which Council President Michael Flaherty ruled to be outside the council's purview and not to be considered. This, despite the council's having supported other national/global resolutions relating to South Africa and more recently the razing of the World Trade Center buildings and part of the Pentagon by hijacked airliners. On 5 February Turner challenged Flaherty's authority to bar debate on any issue he chose, but lost, 7-5.

Meanwhile, at a press conference in City Hall on 30 January, Councilor Arroyo, together with Turner, Yancey, and various Boston religious and civic leaders, vowed to fast from sunup to sundown Friday, January 31st, and alternate Fridays until the threat of war in Iraq is ended. If it intensifies, fasting will be every Friday, or daily. Many attendees including several Alliance members also vowed to fast. ♥



On one day's notice, 50 Marin County (CA) women stripped and formed a PEACE display, to get Washington's attention.

Similar anti-war nude demonstrations occurred in FL, MT, TX, UT, NY, UK, S Africa, Australia, and (clothed) in Antarctica!

Playing into Saddam's Hands

Hidden Hardball Economics: Iraq-Iran-Russia...

from *La Jornada*, Mexico City, 8 Dec 2002

translated and reprinted in *World Press Review*, Feb 2003

The threats by the United States against Iraq have set off an intense diplomatic campaign by Saddam Hussein's government—one that, up 'til now, has continued to score successes.

It is apparent, for example, that if there is an invasion, after a brief spike in the price of oil which could be caused by the massive destruction of wells and pipelines, there would be a brutal plunge in price per barrel. The privatization of the Iraqi oil industry and the quadrupling of daily output—which Americans are studying as a means to ease the US and world economic crisis by lowering consumer energy prices—will cause this drop to occur. It will be disastrous for the producer nations, and above all, for the Arab countries and Iran.

The prospect of witnessing the death of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and seeing world conditions return to those before 1974, when oil prices were ridiculous and the major British-American companies controlled by the market, tends to unite the other oil-producing nations of the region behind Iraq. They realize they would be victims of the same plan and the same war that today threatens Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

That is why there have been important high-level meetings in the last two months between Iraqis and Iranians (despite the bloody war and eight years of confrontation between the two countries), between Iraqis and Russians, between Iraqis and European diplomats and business people, and between Iraqis and the royal courts of Saudi Arabia or the Emirates.

Now Saddam Hussein is telling Kuwait he is sorry for the invasion that ignited the Gulf War, hoping to gain the benevolence of the Kuwaitis to affirm Arab unity. This would be a part of a broader front of oil-producing nations that aims to counter George W. Bush's policies—his crusade that considers Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Libya, among other countries, to be members of what the American president considers the axis of evil.

If we add to this diplomatic and commercial campaign the bursts of bellicosity emerging from Washington and the European and international resistance to the aggression that Bush is preparing, we can see that Saddam Hussein is cultivating fertile soil. If we also take into account the repercussions among the Arab peoples of the brutal colonial occupation of Palestine by Israel, it is possible that the Baghdad regime will be strengthened—thanks to the United States' imperial clumsiness—by the reappearance of pan-Arabic and anti-imperialist sentiments of the kind that reigned in the 1950s through the 1970s.

And it will not be possible to return to this era in terms of colonial exploitation of oil resources without going back, at the same time, to the political identities that people possessed during those years of hatreds and hopes. At the same time, and as part of its campaign, Iraq has signed important trade agreements worth tens of billions of dollars of petroleum with oil companies from Russia, Europe, and China. These agreements permit the exploitation of its enormous oil reserves, the world's second-largest after Saudi Arabia. The contracts are aimed at countering the Americans' promises to corporations in other countries that would participate in the distribution of Iraq's oil booty once Saddam Hussein will have been overthrown and the US will have installed a client regime in power in Baghdad.

These agreements signed behind America's back have worked to create shared interests among Baghdad, Moscow, and

the European capitals. These interests not only oppose Bush's policy and war but also the blockade that bars Iraq from selling more oil than the United Nations permits. The blockade is preventing the companies that now have contracts to exploit Iraqi oil from making millions in profits.

Thus Baghdad has created a front opposing the war and the blockade that is strangling it. George W. Bush has already succeeded in ending Saddam Hussein's isolation and in [Bush's] getting a rebuff from the U.N. inspectors, in addition to increasing disagreements with his former European and Russian allies. If Bush continues to move with such arrogance and clumsiness, he may even convert his despised enemy into a nationalist leader or a martyr. ■

The Economics of Oil Dependence

by Anita Dancs, Center for Popular Economics, Amherst, and
Research Director at the National Priorities Project

Oil dependence is incredibly costly to the U.S. economy, amounting to trillions of wasted dollars. A study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy, estimated that the cost of oil dependency over the last three decades has been anywhere from \$4 trillion to almost \$15 trillion (in today's dollars). To make the numbers a little more real, that means that on average, the U.S. economy is losing at least \$135 billion a year because of its oil addiction. Even in an economy of over \$10 trillion a year, that's a lot of money.

Oil price hikes and fluctuations decrease the economy's ability to produce because the cost of a major input to production—oil—has risen. In some cases, price hikes can have such a severe impact on the economy that there is a recession. The three major price hikes in the last 30 years (1973-74, 1979-80 and 1990-91) were all followed by economic recessions.

Studies of oil dependence do not typically include the military, strategic, or political costs. Yet, these costs are tremendous. For example, around \$70 billion is spent every year on the military in order to protect access to Middle East oil. The Bush Administration is also threatening to invade Iraq, the second largest proven oil reserve in the world. While occupying Iraq could guarantee U.S. oil companies access to this enormous oil supply, these actions would cost the federal budget at least \$100 billion, not to mention the human, moral, and economic costs.

Nonetheless, the rise in imports, particularly from the Middle East, has not been stemmed. Last year, the U.S. imported 11.6 million barrels of petroleum per day, a 50% increase over ten years ago. And the Persian Gulf nations' share of U.S. total imports has been increasing over the past several years.

Yet, reducing oil dependency on the Middle East is not enough to protect the U.S. economy. Since U.S. energy suppliers participate in world markets, price shocks abroad will still translate into increased oil prices at home.

The U.S. has improved its energy efficiency - the nation can produce more with less. However, these improvements have not gone far enough. We could be more efficient. For example, over half of all new vehicles sold today are light trucks. These light trucks (most of which are SUVs) are not required to have the same fuel efficiency as cars, even though most people's transportation needs could be met by a standard car. Also, the required fuel efficiency of cars has not been brought into line with what is technologically possible.

In 2003, one of the issues that Congress will take up is our energy policy. The one put forth by the Bush Administration in 2002 will not do the job. The real task is to increase efficiency, reduce overall energy usage, and promote renewable energy sources. ■

Why Americans Vote for the Rich

A Triumph of Hope Over Self-Interest

by David Brooks, *New York Times*, 12 Jan 2003

Why don't people vote their own self-interest? Every few years the Republicans propose a tax cut, and every few years the Democrats pull out their income distribution charts to show that much of the benefits of the Republican plan go to the richest 1 percent of Americans or thereabouts. And yet every few years a Republican plan wends its way through the legislative process and, with some trims and amendments, passes.

The Democrats couldn't even persuade people to oppose the repeal of the estate tax, which is explicitly for the mega-upper class. Al Gore, who ran a populist campaign, couldn't even win the votes of white males who didn't go to college, whose incomes have stagnated over the past decades and who were the explicit targets of his campaign. Why don't more Americans want to distribute more wealth down to people like themselves? Well, as the academics would say, it's overdetermined. There are several reasons.

People vote their aspirations.

The most telling polling result from the 2000 election was from a *Time* magazine survey that asked people if they are in the top 1 percent of earners. Nineteen percent of Americans say they are in the richest 1 percent and a further 20 percent expect to be someday. So right away you have 39 percent of Americans who thought that when Mr. Gore savaged a plan that favored the top 1 percent, he was taking a direct shot at them.

It's not hard to see why they think this way. Americans live in a culture of abundance. They have always had a sense that great opportunities lie just over the horizon, in the next valley, with the next job or the next big thing. None of us is really poor; we're just pre-rich.

Americans read magazines for people more affluent than they are (*W*, *Cigar Aficionado*, *The New Yorker*, *Robb Report*, *Town and Country*) because they think that someday they could be that guy with the tastefully appointed horse farm. Democratic politicians proposing to take from the rich are just bashing the dreams of our imminent selves.

Income resentment is not a strong emotion in much of America.

If you earn \$125,000 a year and live in Manhattan, certainly, you are surrounded by things you cannot afford. You have to walk by those buildings on Central Park West with the 2,500-square-foot apartments that are empty three-quarters of the year because their evil owners are mostly living at their other houses in L.A.

But if you are a middle-class person in most of America, you are not brought into incessant contact with things you can't afford. There aren't Lexus dealerships on every corner. There are no snooty restaurants with water sommeliers to help you sort through the bottled eau selections. You can afford most of the things at Wal-Mart or Kohl's and the occasional meal at the Macaroni Grill. Moreover, it would be socially unacceptable for you to pull up to church in a Jaguar or to hire a caterer for your dinner party anyway. So you are not plagued by a nagging feeling of doing without.

Many Americans admire the rich.

They don't see society as a conflict zone between the rich and poor. It's taboo to say in a democratic culture, but do you think a nation that watches Katie Couric in the morning, Tom Hanks in the evening and Michael Jordan on weekends harbors deep animosity toward the affluent?

On the contrary. I'm writing this from Nashville, where one of the richest families, the Frists, is hugely admired for its entrepreneurial skill and community service. People don't want to tax the Frists—they want to elect them to the Senate. And they did.

Nor are Americans suffering from false consciousness. You go to a town where the factories have closed and people who once earned \$14 an hour now work for \$8 an hour. They've taken their hits. But odds are you will find their faith in hard work and self-reliance undiminished, and their suspicion of Washington unchanged.

Americans resent social inequality more than income inequality.

As the sociologist Jennifer Lopez has observed: "Don't be fooled by the rocks that I got, I'm just, I'm just Jenny from the block." As long as rich people "stay real," in Ms. Lopez's formulation, they are admired.

Meanwhile, middle-class journalists and academics who seem to look down on megachurches, suburbia and hunters are resented. If Americans see the tax debate as being waged between the economic elite, led by President Bush, and the cultural elite, led by Barbra Streisand, they are going to side with Mr. Bush, who could come to any suburban barbershop and fit right in.

Most Americans do not have Marxian categories in their heads.

This is the most important reason Americans resist wealth redistribution, the reason that subsumes all others. Americans do not see society as a layer cake, with the rich on top, the middle class beneath them and the working class and underclass at the bottom. They see society as a high school cafeteria, with their community at one table and other communities at other tables. They are pretty sure that their community is the nicest, and filled with the best people, and they have a vague pity for all those poor souls who live in New York City or California and have a lot of money but no true neighbors and no free time.

All of this adds up to a terrain incredibly inhospitable to class-based politics. Every few years a group of millionaire Democratic presidential aspirants pretends to be the people's warriors against the overclass. They look inauthentic, combative rather than unifying. Worst of all, their basic message is not optimistic.

They haven't learned what Franklin and Teddy Roosevelt and even Bill Clinton knew: that you can run against rich people, but only those who have betrayed the ideal of fair competition. You have to be more hopeful and growth-oriented than your opponent, and you cannot imply that we are a nation tragically and permanently divided by income. In the gospel of America, there are no permanent conflicts.

David Brooks, a senior editor at the conservative Weekly Standard, is author of "Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There."

RAP LYRICS

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

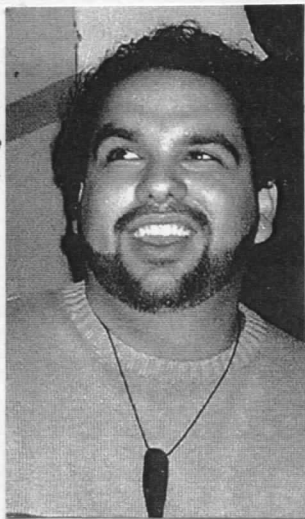
**Why you actin'? We demand Direct action!
Its civil disobedience—don't get caught nappin'
It's not hard to defy when they're asking me why
It's cause I refuse to turn my back on the street when the
cry**

**"No Justice, No Peace"—it's Important that we try
It's obvious they conquer when we fall for their divide
For my people in the struggle, those dead and alive
"Whose streets? Our streets!" we move ahead with each
stride**

**The people united will never be defeated
Stand proud, raise your fist and repeat it
Mobilize—open eyes
Organize—expose their lies
I'm praying and I'm hoping I can see Change is near and
they fear it
Throw 2 up for peace and they try to break your spirit
Refuse to spend their money removing landmines
Rather take freedom of speech and attempt to ban lines
I'm screaming "Free Palestine!" and Puerto Rico while
you're at it
Your world wide Imperialism is just tragic**

—Ernesto Arroyo, "The Foundation", Boston

Ernesto performed this rap for 500 people packed into the Resurrection Lutheran Church in Roxbury to hear anti-war speakers Rep. Barbara Lee (CA), his father Boston City Councilor Felix Arroyo, Councilor Chuck Turner, Mel King and others on 25 January. His 3-member "The Foundation" will release a rap music CD at "The Western Front", Cambridge, on 27 Feb. Ernesto is Resident Organizer at Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation, Boston. www.FoundationHipHop.com.



Opinion Delayed Is Opinion Denied

Anthrax? --- Fax and Relax

During a visit last week to Washington, D.C. a Sierra Club chapter lobbyist spoke to an aide of one of our senators. He learned that although personalized letters still sit at the top of the food chain for grassroots input, it is now critical that they be faxed before being mailed. Why? All mail going to Congress is now sent to Ohio for irradiation to address any anthrax issues. A letter to your Congressman will now arrive weeks after an issue has been decided. —Drusha Mayhew, AfD, Montana

POEM

THE WINNER

Hey George
It's OK to stand with a poet
and listen to him, to
think about this word or that.
Let that long-ago cap gun
or that sucker of a classmate
rise from those words
like a genie from a bottle
of gin. George, you're dry now
Demon Gin can't touch
The Commander-In-Chief

Poppy couldn't touch Granddad
No way could you be senator—
a queen over all the chessboard.
But now as pretender to the throne
you can. It's OK not to plan
three moves ahead—you can make
three moves at once! Hey,
the king makes the rules, right?

Well, not king really, but Prince
With Duke of Cheney
Earl of Ashcroft
and Sir Don the Rummy
calling the shots
you blast at the break,
stride 'round the table
and knock those colored balls
to hell. Pool—solo—is swell!

Time is short, George
It's the third quarter
and time to use every trick
to own the field—
What a quarterback!
You call all the linemen from the bench
Forty-nine men on the field—
Sure as hell can't beat that!
The pressbox is cheering—
Pipe it to the stands—
The New World Order!
With all the pros looking grim
you can't lose!

—Joe Sweetwater
dlewit@iqc.org

DUBYA ROCKS !

Reporter: "What proof do you have that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction?"

G. W. Bush: "We keep the receipts."

BCA's January 15th meeting aired a number of topics—short- and long-term—of concern to members around the Boston area. **Jed Schwartz** presented an analysis of the USA PATRIOT Act, while **Jean Maryborn** and **Brian Moriarty** brought a Peace Resolution which the Mass Bay South chapter had developed. Most of those present signed the resolution, which opposed a first strike on Iraq and urged diplomatic and UN-mediated solutions. Dave Lewit subsequently sent copies to Mayor Menino of Boston and several Boston city councilors, several state representatives and the governor, the entire Massachusetts delegation in Congress, and President Fox of Mexico, assuming that White House assistants would be more likely to forward it to the FBI than to the (p)resident. A Veterans for Peace initiative calling for non-cooperation by US military persons was offered for AfD member action.

Brit Eckhart discussed the new Democratic caucus in the State House from her vantage point as Rep. Byron Rushing's aide, who was their maverick nominee for Speaker (see January Dispatch). Their challenge to Speaker Tom Finneran's dictatorial rules failed, with no clue as to what changes, if any, will be made in the recognition of progressive bills.

Bill Haff, our new Northeast regional representative to AfD Council, discussed a media initiative, urging members to promote cable TV use of Alliance videotapes, and to participate in local programming.

Finally, **Dave Lewit** introduced a budding "New England Conversation" aiming to involve people in all six states and perhaps Canadian provinces to develop regional self-reliance, in view of the unreasonable permanent emergency being foisted on all states by the Bush administration. The project would dovetail with the developing New England or Northeast Alliance.

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GLASGOW
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BRUSSELS
LONDON
ATHENS
DUBLIN
VIENNA
SKOPJE
BERLIN
TOKYO
PARIS
BERNE
CAIRO
CULO
ROME

COME TO THE NEW YORK RALLY!

For bus seats leaving Boston at sunup Saturday, returning that night, call 617-661-6130 x450. \$30 rnd trip.

However you travel, Alliance people meet in NYC at New York Public Library, Fifth Ave and 41st St. by 11:30 a.m. Saturday 15 Feb. Bring your own flag or poster, or "Working Assets" phone corp will have free signs, for the march.

AFTER THE MARCH all Alliance people meet 5-9 p.m. at All Souls Unitarian Church, 1157 Lexington Av & 80th St. -- eat and drink with Ronnie

Dugger, Granny D (just up from Wash DC Valentine's bash for her), Ruth Weizenbaum, Bill Haff, and AfD members from everywhere. **STAYING OVER?** For floor space or bed, please e-mail rweiz@world.std.com or call 978-369-1684.

COLOPHON

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**Are We Only Anti-War Firemen?
BCA Projects Can't Wait for Normal Times**

Bush, Cheney & Co. have promised us a permanent war. They want us to be fearful forever of terrorist sneak attacks, focused on military and civil preparedness, and willing to divert our time and money for their dream of a Security State.

Meanwhile our dream of a socially secure, egalitarian, culture-rich nation/world languishes. BCA's 1996-2001 priorities have been shouldered aside by The 9-11 Phantom. It's hard to get even Alliance members to ignore yet another antiwar petition, and return to the basics of transforming the world.

So it's timely to take stock of our languishing projects and decide the what, who, and how of doing the system-change work to which the Alliance for Democracy is dedicated.

For starters, here is a list of projects which come to mind. We need three or four good people, who haven't been active enough, to step forward, call the chapter co-chair (Dave Lewit, 617-266-8687), and discuss priorities.

- ___ **Globalization Impact Bill** – promoting its passage on Beacon Hill.
- ___ **Protecting Our Water** – helping Lawrence and N.H., and promoting Water Watch Councils statewide. What about other parts of The Common?
- ___ **Building Our Web Site** – as a workplace for the whole New England Alliance. Webmaster, anybody?
- ___ **Nonviolence** – educate and localize this essential strategy for taking back our communities.
- ___ **Promoting Local System Organization** – as part of CAIS, listening to corporation people, small business people, officials; designing local systems.
- ___ **Cooperating with AfD and Other Chapters** – on other Alliance priorities such as Transforming the Corporation, Election Reform, and Universal Health.
- ___ **Small pieces** of the above, step by step.
- ___ **Running the Chapter**

Call Dave, or Nick Biddle, or any Alliance activist. Share thoughts on the phone, over coffee, and at meetings. Commit to certain actions, and tell us about it.

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. #2H, 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: _____
 Street, No./Box/Apt: _____
 Town and Zip: _____
 Phone: Day _____ Night: _____
 E-mail: _____