

BCA Dispatch

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

"The lunatics are now in charge of the asylum."
—Financial Times (UK)

"...The people now running America aren't conservatives: they're radicals who want to do away with the social and economic system we have, and the fiscal crisis they are concocting may give them the excuse they need."
—Paul Krugman, NY Times, 27 May 2003

ALLIANCE NEWS (continued on page 8) Chapter Calendar

*** Yes To Local Media! ***

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

— Discussion Agenda —

Tired of being abused by corporate TV and FCC? Come meet two optimistic members of the Commonwealth Broadband Collaborative:

* **Rich Howley**, Somerville Community Access Television, and
* **Nettrice Gaskins**, Boston Neighborhood Network (multi-media) who will show how **Community Media Fight Back!** Learn about multi-use "broadband." Discuss funding and regulatory outlook. Video clips will illustrate local shows. In your home, on demand, see local heroes performing on "streaming video".

—Refreshments—

Empire and the Capitalists The Coming Bush \$Collapse

by *Immanuel Wallerstein, Sr. Research Scholar, Yale Univ.*
Director, Fernand Braudel Center, SUNY-Binghamton, 21May03

No doubt, George W. Bush thinks he is in the forefront of those sustaining the world capitalist system. No doubt, a large part of the world left thinks that too. But do the great capitalists think so? That is far less clear. A major warning signal has been launched by Morgan Stanley, one of the world's leading financial investor firms, in their Global Economic Forum. Stephen Roach writes there that a "US-centric world" is unsustainable for the world-economy and bad in particular for the United States. He specifically takes on Robert Kagan, a leading neo-conservative intellectual, who has been arguing that American hegemony can only increase, particularly vis-a-vis Europe. Roach could not agree less. He sees the present world situation as one of "profound asymmetries" in the world-system, one that cannot last.

What is Roach's argument? The world has been in a "great disinflation [marvelous euphemism] from 1982 to 2002"—a salutary appraisal so different from (continued on page 2 >>)



"This Man Wants to Control the News in America."
from an ad by MoveOn in the *NY Times*, 27 May 2003, 6 days before the Federal Communications Commission voted 3-2 to allow further media concentration. The man is Rupert Murdoch, owner, Fox TV. The ad shows his face on all 4 major channels.

3 Republicans Deregulate Media...but Sanders Vows to Rescind FCC Rule Changes

by *Bernie Sanders, Member of Congress*
(Independent, Vermont) 6 May 2003

Thomas Jefferson, Tom Payne, James Madison and some of the other founding fathers of our country understood the issue we're discussing today very well. They knew that a real democracy cannot exist unless there is a clash of ideas, unless different points of view can be heard and unless the people have the opportunity to be fully informed about the issues that affect their lives.

Today, in my view, that vision of democracy has been shattered by Monday's 3-2 vote of the FCC which will allow a tiny handful of huge media conglomerates to increase their ownership and control over what the American people see, hear and read. Viacom, AOL-Time-Warner, News Corporation, Disney, Clear Channel, General Electric and a few other large corporations already have too much control of the flow of information in this country. It will be a disaster, and a threat to American democracy, to give them even more power- which is exactly what the FCC decision will do. That is why I intend to introduce, next week, legislation which will rescind that FCC decision. The passage of that legislation will not only undo the damage that the FCC decision has caused, but it will give us the time to work on a long term approach as to how we can do a much better job that we're currently doing in protecting localism, diversity and competition in the media.

Let's be very clear. The American people, regardless of their political perspective, are outraged by this decision and what is going on with media today. During the last several months some 750,000 people contacted the FCC and said; "Don't do this. Don't deregulate the media even more and allow a few giants increased ownership." But (Continued on page 3 >>)

The Coming \$Collapse (Continued from page 1)

the usual crowing about the strength of the U.S. economic position in the world-economy. "And now the unwinding of a new disequilibrium is at hand—the rebalancing of a U.S.-centric world." Why? First of all because of the "ever-widening disparities in the world's external accounts." He says that "as the United States squanders its already depleted national saving" and "as the rest of the world remains on a subpar consumption path," the situation can only get worse.

Not A Global Economy

Finally, the conclusion: "Can a saving-short US economy continue to finance an ever-widening expansion of its military superiority? My answer is a resounding 'no.'" What will therefore happen? The "prices of dollar-denominated assets compared to those of non-dollar-denominated assets" must fall, and fall drastically soon. Roach estimates: "a 20% drop in real exchange rates and nearly double that in nominal terms, higher real interest rates, reduced growth in domestic demand, and faster growth overseas." He ends his piece by saying that "the world is not functioning as a global economy" (so much for the globalization theorists) and that "for a lopsided global economy, a weaker dollar may well be the only way out."

In short, Roach is arguing that the macho militarism swagger of the Bush regime, the dream of the U.S. hawks to remake the world in their image, is not merely undoable, but distinctly negative from the point of view of large U.S. investors, the audience for whom Roach writes, the customers of Morgan Stanley. Roach is of course absolutely right, and it is noteworthy that this is not being said by some left-wing academic, but by an insider of big capital.

Seen in longer historical perspective, what we are seeing here is the 500-year-old tension in the modern world-system between those who wish to protect the interests of the capitalist strata by ensuring a well-functioning world-economy, with a hegemonic but non-imperial power to guarantee its political underpinnings, and those who wish to transform the world-system into a world-empire.

We had three major attempts in the history of the modern world-system to do this: Charles V/Ferdinand II in the sixteenth century, Napoleon in the beginning of the nineteenth century, and Hitler in the middle of the twentieth century. All were magnificently successful—until they fell flat on their faces, when faced by opposition organized by the powers that ultimately became hegemonic—the United Provinces, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

It Takes Efficiency, Not Force

Hegemony is not about macho militarism. Hegemony is about economic efficiency, making possible the creation of a world order on terms that will guarantee a smoothly-running world-system in which the hegemonic power becomes the locus of a disproportionate share of capital accumulation. The United States was in that situation from 1945 to circa 1970. But it's been losing that advantage ever since. And when the U.S. hawks and the Bush regime decided to try to reverse decline by going the world-imperial path, they shot the United States, and U.S.-based large capitalists, in the foot—if not immediately, in a very short future. This is what Roach is warning about, and complaining about.

But doesn't the Bush regime give these capitalists everything they want—for example, enormous tax rebates? But do they really want them? Not Warren Buffett, not George Soros, not Bill Gates (speaking through his father). They want a stable capitalist system, and Bush is not giving them that. Sooner or later, they will translate their discontent into action. They may already be doing this. This doesn't mean they will succeed. Bush may get reelected in 2004. He may push his political and

economic madness further. He may seek to make his changes irreversible.

Collapse, Then Austerity

But in a capitalist system, there is also the market. The market is not all-powerful, but it is not helpless either. When the dollar collapses, and it will collapse, everything will change geopolitically. For a collapsed dollar is far more significant than an Al-Qaeda attack on the Twin Towers. The U.S. has clearly survived the latter. But it will be a vastly different U.S. once the dollar collapses. The U.S. will no longer be able to live far beyond its means, to consume at the rest of the world's expense. Americans may begin to feel what countries in the Third World feel when faced by IMF-imposed structural readjustment—a sharp downward thrust of their standard of living.

The near bankruptcy of the state governments across the United States even today is a foreshadowing of what is to come. And history will note that, faced with a bad underlying economic situation in the United States, the Bush regime did everything possible to make it far worse. ■

“Ein Reich, Ein Volk, Ein Fuhrer”? One Institute, One Agency, One Department

Memo by Distinguished Prof. Richard M. Lerner, Tufts Univ.

...On June 6, I attended the semi-annual meeting of the Board of Scientific Counselors (BSC) of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). The meeting began with a presentation about the state of NICHD/National Institutes of Health (NIH) from Duane Alexander, the Director of NICHD. The members of the Board (who, other than me, are developmental biologists, molecular geneticists, and/or physicians) were shocked to learn what the current administration is doing to dismantle—in the name of management efficiency—the scientific infrastructure of the nation. President Bush (through the Office of Management & Budget) is introducing a management system wherein all government functions of NIH (and of the Department of Health & Human Services—HHS—more generally) are being contracted out to the private sector. In addition, this outsourcing mandate is being coupled with a consolidation mandate.

To illustrate, all non tenure or non-tenure-track scientist positions at NIH are being outsourced to private bidders, including staff from the level of secretaries, grant managers, personnel and human resources staff, and even technicians (who are often Ph.D. or M.D. level employees)! In addition, functions retained by NIH are going to be integrated with comparable functions across all of HHS in the name of a concept labeled "one institute, one agency, one department". For example, there will be one personnel component in HHS although it will be located at four sites across the nation—and therefore [only] one office to decide on hiring, promotion, and retention—and this will involve scientists as well. In addition, to the extent that there is a grant management function, or any other "non-government" function, retained in HHS, there will be one office to manage grants and contracts, one office to approve expenditures, space allocations, new buildings, etc.

Given the outsourcing and consolidation directives from the administration/OMB, an extramural grant recipient may, when he or she, calls his or her grant manager not be calling a NICHD person who is familiar with the nature of NICHD-supported research. Instead, the colleague will be talking to either a non-government person whose background may as likely (or more likely in my view) be in managing real estate, or to a government person who has managed pharmaceutical contracts for drug distribution, than to a person whose background is in health or human development. Across NIH and, in fact across the entire federal government, more than 850,000 jobs—more than 1/3 of the work force—will lose their jobs due to outsourcing...

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617-627-5558. Also see <http://www.dennisfox.net/politics/psychpeace.html>

Sanders on FCC Ruling (Continued from page 1)

the FCC ignored them, ignored hundreds of members of Congress, and went forward anyway. The opposition is not just coming from Progressives such as those of us here. It is coming from conservatives, from moderates from people all across the political spectrum. The National Rifle Association (NRA) has been very outspoken on this issue as has the conservative Parents' Television Council. William Safire, the conservative columnist for the New York was elegant in his opposition as were the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops. Some of the progressive organizations active on this issue have been the Consumers Union, MoveOn, Common Cause and others.

The FCC decision must be rescinded and the American people must be heard—and they want to be heard. Six weeks ago I held the first Congressional Town Meeting on this issue, and 600 Vermonters came out—600. I was in San Diego last



Cmr. Abernathy (R) Chr. Powell (R) Cmr. Martin (R)

week with Rep. Bob Filner and 400 people came out, and I was on a radio show in the San Francisco area with Rep. Barbara Lee and the phones were bouncing off the wall. Other members of Congress and organizations have had similar experience.

We must rescind the FCC decision, and that's what we intend to do. ☎

LETTER—Local Media Must Compete

...I have a position concerning the FCC ruling which I'm fairly certain is out of step with that of your organization and is probably anathema to many organizations on the left. You see, I consider the FCC decision completely appropriate in light of the media habits of Americans. The fact that the national fever over this issue is being fanned by the likes of the NRA and William Safire should demonstrate the fact that the "public interest" is determined by the media choices made by the majority of Americans, not by the FCC or Congress.

If progressives were serious about changing the political landscape, they would not rely on government regulation to help them. Such regulation is and always has been in place primarily to allow for the accumulation of capital.

The battle for broadcast media-television and radio must be approached from the point of view of COMPETITION. If you want America's attention, you have to consider yourselves as just another media option; same as Fox or Disney. For years I've listened to people say what great work I'm doing, then to opt for another media choice. I don't blame them in the least. If I was serious about getting listeners or viewers, I would have understood that it takes more than rhetoric.

If you want the media to help change the political culture of America, you have to amass capital, hire people to do the very hard work of gritty journalism, have professional facilities, advertise, synergize and use every tool which is used to sell soap and sneakers.

Is regulation completely unimportant? No. There is still a hard battle to keep spectrum from being completely commoditized. There are new technologies that should be fostered and implemented, and open spectrum reform is necessary for this to happen.

Steve Provizer <improviz@rcn.com>

Allston-Brighton Free Radio

Video Co-Host, "First Tuesday"

Available on demand at www.cbcmedia.net

Dem FCC Commissioners Dissent Detail Mish-mash of GOP Rules Changes

Excerpts from statement of Michael Copps, 2 June 2003

The more you dig into this Order, the worse things get. The Order finds:

- That further concentration in already highly-concentrated markets is acceptable.
- That in a town with only four TV stations, it is acceptable for the top-rated television station to buy the only daily newspaper.
- That consolidation going forward will enhance news programming, despite considerable record evidence showing that increased concentration more often than not reduces quality news...

We should begin by examining the law. The Communications Act tells us to use our rules to promote localism, diversity and competition. It reminds us that the airwaves belong to the American people, and that no broadcast station, no company, no single individual owns an airwave in America. The airwaves



Cmr. Adelstein (D) Cmr. Copps (D)

belong to all the people. And the Supreme Court has upheld media protections, stating that "it is the purpose of the First Amendment to preserve an uninhibited marketplace of ideas in which truth will ultimately prevail, rather than to countenance monopolization of that market, whether it be by the Government itself or a private licensee..."

This decision allows a corporation to control three television stations in a single city. Why does any company need to control three television stations anywhere? The decision allows the giant media companies to buy up the remaining local newspaper and exert massive influence over a community by wielding three TV stations, eight radio stations, the cable operator, plus the already monopolistic newspaper. The decision further allows the already massive television networks to buy up even more local TV stations, so that they could control up to an unbelievable 90 percent of the national television audience. Where are the blessings of localism, diversity and competition here? I see centralization, not localism; I see uniformity, not diversity; I see monopoly and oligopoly, not competition...

Why did the Commission get this so wrong? Good, sustainable rules are the result of an open administrative process and a serious attempt to gather all the relevant facts. Bad rules and legal vulnerability result from an opaque regulatory process and inadequate data. Unfortunately, today's rules fall into the latter camp. This proceeding has been run as a classic inside-the-Beltway process with too little outreach from the Commission and too little attention paid to the public. This is the way the Commission usually does business, we are told. Well, I submit this is too important to be treated on a business-as-usual basis. So Commissioner Adelstein and I traveled across the country to attend as many hearings and forums as we could.

I am also troubled that the Commission has refused to publicly disclose the rules we are voting on today. What possible harm can come from transparency? How can telling Congress and the public what we plan to do possibly be bad? Isn't the animating spirit of our "notice and comment" procedure to make sure our people know

(Continued on page 4 >>)

as much as possible about the specifics of what is being proposed?...

We've heard bipartisan concern from more than 150 Members of Congress, including the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, asking us to slow down and put these proposals out for public comment before we vote. Some of those Members of Congress are here today and I thank them for coming.

Dozens of organizations - from the National Rifle Association to the National Organization for Women have weighed in with their concerns about media concentration and the process by which we are dealing with it. City councils across this country in such places as Chicago, Seattle, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Atlanta, and Buffalo, as well as a whole state - Vermont - have gone on record against media concentration...

Under the UHF Discount, UHF TV stations are considered to reach only 50 percent of the households that Very High Frequency (VHF) TV stations reach for purposes of determining whether a company has exceeded the national cap... With 85 percent of Americans experiencing no difference between UHF and VHF stations, the discount no longer makes sense. Eliminating the entire discount may be warranted, but at a minimum it requires replacement with a number that reflects the reality of today's technology and marketplace...

Over the past decade, we have witnessed a substantial increase in the amount of programming owned by the networks. In addition to the obvious loss of diversity, this has also entailed the loss of thousands of jobs, including creative artists, technicians and many, many others. Years ago, we had protections against this kind of program ownership... Unless there is a major complaint pending against a station, its license is almost automatically renewed. A real, honest-to-goodness license renewal process, predicated on advancing the public interest, might do more for broadcasting than all these our other rules put together.

The Order could have analyzed the impact of media concentration on indecent and excessively violent programming. Some have suggested that there may be a link between increasing consolidation and increasing indecency on our airwaves. The Commission fails to address this issue in its analysis...

The National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters tells us that the number of minority owners of broadcast facilities has dropped by 14 percent since 1997. We have not even attempted to understand what further consolidation means in terms of providing Hispanic Americans and African Americans and Asian-Pacific Americans and Native Americans and women and other groups the kinds of programs and access and viewpoint diversity and career opportunities and even advertising information about products and services that they need. America's strength is, after all, its diversity. And our media need to reflect this diversity and to nourish it.

Today's Order puts most such questions off into the future, with the exception of a curious plan to allow a small business, perhaps a minority firm, to buy a consolidated block of outlets from an incumbent who exceeds the limits. That would require deeper pockets than most such firms could afford. I would prefer to look for real opportunities for small entrepreneurs instead of encouraging them to buy large consolidated properties... ■

Mr Justice Demonstrates Free Speech

US Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia banned broadcast media from attending a 19 March ceremony during which he received an award...for supporting free speech. "That was one of the criteria he had for acceptance," said James Foster, executive director of Cleveland's City Club, which gave Scalia its "Citadel of Free Speech Award".

CA Towns Buy Back Waterworks Corporation Milked Residents for 60 Years

Patrick Hoge, San Francisco Chronicle, May 31, 2003

The San Mateo County coastal communities of Montara and Moss Beach have agreed to pay almost \$11.1 million to purchase their dilapidated water delivery system from a private company. The price was reached through a court-supervised settlement conference and was unanimously accepted this week by the directors of the Montara Sanitary District.

The district had earlier moved to acquire the system through eminent domain from its owner, the California-American Water Company. Officials of the company, which has headquarters in the San Diego County town of Chula Vista, are expected to sign the deal early next week, with a transfer of ownership on Aug. 1. "We have agreed to the price, and we are in the process of final review of the agreement," said company president Paul Townsley.

Cal-Am is the California subsidiary of the 20 million customer American Water of New Jersey, which was recently purchased for \$7.6 billion by a German firm called RWE. As a condition of that sale, the state Public Utilities Commission ordered the company last December to sell its Montara and Moss Beach service areas just north of Half Moon Bay to a public entity. The region has about 1,650 connections, mostly residential, serving some 5,500 people. Montara Sanitary District manager George Irving said the sale will open the way for the district to do between \$2 million and \$5 million in needed capital improvements. Money for the projects will come from a \$19 million bond issue for the sale that local voters overwhelmingly approved in 2002.

According to Irving, the system fell into disrepair particularly during the more than 60 years that it was owned by Citizens Utilities of Minneapolis, which sold the company to Cal-Am in January 2002. "They just kind of used it as a cash cow, so the system was kind of neglected. There's a lack of storage, a lack of supply, and there's a fairly high leakage rate in the pipes" — a serious concern for firefighters, Irving said.

Because of such problems, Montara and Moss Beach have had a moratorium on new connections since 1976. The result is numerous homes on 5,000-square-foot lots that rely on wells, said Scott Boyd, a sanitary district director. Homes are also pricey, easily costing \$500,000 for a three-bedroom, two-bath model, Irving said.

The moratorium will remain in effect after the sale, but the Montara Sanitary District has already started looking for increased supplies. Last year, the district submitted a coastal development permit to the county for drilling test wells at 11 sites. Irving said he hopes the county considers the matter in June.

Boyd said buying the water company will mean "local control" and accountability, and limit vulnerability to rate increases. "Instead of running it for corporate profits and shareholders, now it will be run by a local board for the community we live in," he said. Boyd said he was glad the community mobilized to wrest control of the water company when it did because the rapid sale and resale of the company in 2002 pumped the price up. "We could see the price going up," he said.

THREE from *IN THESE TIMES*

Neocon Formula for Iraq: First Pulverize, Then Privatize

by Eric Laursen, In These Times, 23 June 2003 (conclusion)

The World Bank has a close relationship with the Adam Smith Institute, a London-based, free-market think tank that recently published a paper advocating the privatization of Iraqi industry and the replacement of Iraq's state-guaranteed retirement system with private pension funds.

The Heritage Foundation, and influential American neoconservative think tank, is calling for Washington to administer a "comprehensive economic reform" of Iraq that includes preparing "state assets, including industries, utilities, transportation, ports and airports, pipelines, and the energy sector, for privatization." That recommendation is closely echoed in the Treasury-USAID blueprint document, which schedules the next year for a propaganda offensive to persuade the Iraqi people that privatization is in their best interest, then the following three years for shifting the assets. The blueprint calls for all this to begin in July.

The short timetable has some longtime observers worrying that Iraq will suffer from another problem that has plagued privatization projects in developing countries: a headlong rush to get it all done fast. "There's a political imperative to dismantle the centrally planned state, and they're more concerned with that than with setting up proper regulatory structures," says Bea Edwards of Public Services International, the international trade union federation. "Regulation takes a long time. You have to make sure the people you put in charge are credible and ethical. But there just isn't time to vet them, and it's not the priority."

With tensions rising in the Middle East and the Bush administration eager to furnish Iraq as a shining new example of the "Washington consensus," the race is on.

Private Jessica Lynch Sylvester Stallone to the Rescue?

by Joel Bleifuss, Editor, In These Times, 23 June 2003 (extract)

Who could forget the daring helicopter rescue of Private Jessica Lynch?

"It was a classic joint operation, done by some of our nation's finest warriors who are dedicated to never leaving a comrade behind," said Gen. Vincent Brooks. It was also a classic Hollywood script "made by the Pentagon," according to a May 18 BBC television documentary, *War Spin*.

The BBC presents a convincing case that the rescue of Lynch was a staged propaganda stunt "timed for breakfast shows in America just when the news was bad and the talk was of a long, hard campaign." Dr. Harith Al-Houssona tells the BBC that he admitted Lynch to Saddam Hospital in Nasiriya when the Iraqi security department brought her there. Contrary to U.S. military reports that she was stabbed and shot, Al-Houssona says that when he examined her, she had a broken arm, thigh and ankle, but no other injuries.

The BBC also interviewed a man who, prior to Lynch's "rescue," was questioned by the American military about the location of the hospital and whether it was occupied by Fedayeen irregulars. He told the BBC, "I said, 'No, there aren't any. There is no forces in there or anything.'"

Al-Houssona related what he saw when U.S. soldiers stormed the hospital: "Like a film of Hollywood, they cry, 'Go, go, go!'...with guns and blanks, without bullets. Blanks and the

sound of explosions, and break down the door. We are very scared. They make a show for the American attack for the hospital. Action movies like Sylvester Stallone or Jackie Chan ... with jumping and shouting, breaking the door ... with the photos, with the photos."

The BBC reports that it asked the Pentagon to release the full videotape of the rescue "to clear up any discrepancies," but it declined.

Understanding Modern Times

Adapted from "The Long Detour" (2003)

by James Weinstein, Founding Editor & Publisher, ITT (extract)

By equating opposition to corporate domination of public life with disloyalty, our country's rulers disoriented the left, stifled public discussion of the most basic public policy issues, and transformed the left into a plethora of single-issue movements. The removed the progressive dialectic of opposing principles from our political culture and steadily narrowed the difference between the major parties. Without vigorous debate over alternative values and principles the left receded from view, and our political system has been converted to one focused on personality, appearance, and the ability to raise money for trivial, brain-numbing television and radio commercials.

It short, it has become more and more difficult for working people, or associations who represent their interests, to participate meaningfully in national affairs. And as working people are excluded from this process, fewer and fewer bother to vote.

With differences between the major parties and their candidates disappearing, and with the left—and the socialist ideas that shaped it—absent from popular discourse, more and more citizens retreat into private life, ignorant of the impact of public policies on their lives.

During the heyday of American socialism, capitalists epitomized the principle of market-driven rapacious individualism, while socialists were the most consistent—and insistent—advocates of reforms that moved society toward greater equality and democracy. To those steeped in its principles, socialism was more than the movement's specific policy proposals at any given time. The old Socialist Party's "immediate demands" were an expression of its principles as they applied to the stage of capitalist development in the early 20th century; but there reforms were not its ultimate goal or driving force. In fact, as American capitalism reached industrial maturity it accepted and internalized many socialist principles. But as capitalism transformed itself into a post-industrial, consumer-driven society, socialists have not moved beyond their earlier ideas and have had little new to say.

To me socialism means the fulfillment of the promise of American democracy. As an historian, I have studied the ways in which socialist principles of associational democracy gained meaningful expression in our society and helped to democratize our nation's advance from the laissez faire individualism of the late 19th century to the corporate liberalism of the 20th century. That process ended with the Russian Revolution, but now that the Soviet Union is gone, a new beginning is possible—if not for a movement that calls itself socialist, then for one embodying the underlying principles that gave the old American movement its impetus. [Info on this book: www.thelongdetour.com]

New England Wisdom

Three Indian Contributions to Western Civilization

by John C. Mohawk, Indian Country Today, 2 May 2003

When Roger Williams first arrived in New England, he set about the task of converting the heathen Indians to Christianity. He, one of the authors of the American tradition of freedom of religion and founder of Rhode Island; his life is instructive of what "freedom of religion" really means. Williams had ideas about freedom of religion before he left England, and his views about the rights of the Indians to their property were not popular among the English. He also was strongly against forced conversion of the Indians to Christianity. Williams is thought to be the first Euro-American to advocate complete freedom of conscience, and complete separation of church and state. This latter advocacy resulted in his banishment from the Massachusetts Bay Colony and that, in turn, led to the foundation of Providence, which welcomed the first Jewish synagogue.

Shortly after his arrival, Williams found some Indians, learned their language, and taught them his version of Christianity. The Indians were receptive and proceeded to embrace the new teachings. Shortly after this triumph, however, Williams discovered that while his new converts were practicing Christianity, they were also practicing their ancient religion as well. Williams hastened to explain to them that they had to choose one or the other, that Christianity was to be the religion to the exclusion of all others.

Outcome-Oriented Thinking

America is the birthplace of a single contribution to world philosophy: pragmatism. Its roots extend into the Indian cultures of the Americas. Pragmatism relies not on an ideology about how the world ought to be but rather on thinking about what the outcome should be. It is characterized by Sitting Bull's admonition about putting minds together to create a world for our children, an admonition to work for a desirable outcome. Those who know of the Iroquois Great Law will recognize this impulse in the admonition that the chiefs should weigh their actions against the impact it will have on seven generations into the future. Williams had wandered into a set of cultures which embraced outcome-oriented thinking.

When Williams insisted that the Indians set aside all their beliefs and follow the one true religion, some Indians would have summoned him to a sidebar conversation. "Mr. Williams," one would have said, "we do not insist that people believe this or that. We are relatively small in number, and it is very important that we maintain peace and harmony in our world. If we told people what to believe, there would be nothing but discord and disharmony. People would spend all their time arguing about religion. The more insistent we became, the more discord and disharmony. In the end, we would be a society which did nothing but argue about things that no one knows for sure. And we don't do that, like some people we have heard about.

Freedom of Thought

"Among us, some people believe things that other people do not believe. Some people believe that the otter, for example, has the power to cure disease. They have called upon the otter spirit when they were sick, they were administered medicine, and they became well. Now they believe in the otter spirit's power to cure. Surely, it cured them. But there are others who would be very skeptical. So we have a custom. The people who believe in the otter form a "secret society." Those who seek cures from the otter, if they live, join that society. But it has rules. It is a secret society. People can't tell what they know about it. You cannot

proselytize. When it comes to religion, we leave people to their own conscience."

Williams seems to have gotten the message. He also understood the nature of the European government, and he felt it was important to protect religion from the corrosive force of the state. Williams spent years living with the Naragansett Indians and wrote the first book about their language and customs. He seems to have had an inclination to defend the rights of individuals against the coercive powers of the state and this was reinforced by his time with Indians whose society lacked even a notion of the coercive state. This was but the first of three areas of impact of Native American culture on relationships within Western Civilization.

Women Shall Be Influential

Other Europeans, especially members of the British military, noted that women were often present at peace negotiations. This was considered men's affairs, and Indian men did do most of the talking, but there was a definite female presence. As they came to know each other better, Europeans realized that women had a far greater role in Indian society than in white society. In European society of the early contact years, a woman had no right to property, divorce, or even personal safety from her husband. Indian women of the Northeast woodlands enjoyed all of these. When young English women were captured or otherwise came to join Indian societies, they were treated with respect. Quite often, when offered repatriation with English society, they declined and chose to stay instead with their adopted Indian families. Although the English found Indian customs of women's rights peculiar, the Indians might have pointed out that European practices excluding women were in fact impractical and rendered half of the society as marginally productive and deprived society of the wisdom of half its people.

Spare the Rod

A third area involved treatment of children. Early Jesuit missionaries were exasperated that their new converts did not beat or otherwise force their children to their will. A book on the subject, "Chain her by One Foot," recounts how Jesuits browbeat their charges to do something because a young woman insisted on seeing a young pagan male. English customs of the time favored using the rod as an instrument of discipline. It was not a practice based on class. Even children at exclusive boarding schools such as Eaton were beaten with such force that were a headmaster to do so today, he or she would be arrested and charged with felony child battering.

These were three ideas from the Americas which must be forever vigilantly guarded. *Freedom of religion* encompasses ideas of freedom of speech and freedom of association. *Women's rights* are the key to solving problems of the world's poor and dispossessed. And *children's rights* involve those of the most powerless in society. On reflection, Western Civilization has adopted ideas from the Americas which render the common thinking in most western societies around these three issues much more like the thinking of the Indians than like the thinking of seventeenth century Europeans. Good thing.

John C. Mohawk, Ph.D., is a professor in the Center for the Americas at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Progressives Hold Officials Accountable

MA state Democrats convened on June 7. Besides the candidate hoopla, some progressive resolutions were passed—no first strikes, end PATRIOT Act (Greater Lowell for P & J, Merrimack Valley People for Peace), single-payer health insurance (MASS-CARE). Importantly, the Platform gained a requirement holding elected officials accountable to Platform provisions (Progressive Democrats of Somerville; CPPAX). —Eric Weltman, CPPAX

LETTER—Beyond Pickets, Our Own Media

BCA member **Alice Little Copeland** (a.k.a. *Alice Copeland Brown*) is the lovely lady who moves around among demonstrators in costume (often dating to colonial times, or with bunting-like scarves) and a flag (usually the 13-star original Stars & Stripes). Last Saturday, June 7th, she attended the off-year convention of the Massachusetts state Democratic organization, at the Tsongas Arena in Lowell, MA. It was dominated by boosters and banners of US Senator John Kerry, a leading contender for the presidential nomination, whose speech evidently had little to say about the war or trade, but much about Bush's terminally "radical" domestic agenda... Here's her Alice-eye view:

...I Pilgrimed my way around with my "Kucinich" "Stop Perpetual War" sign; also "Give Me Back My government". Didn't get arrested. Looks like we dissidents who have kept our skirts clean of politics may have to hold our noses and jump in, despite the smell. I was appalled at the dead-eyed types who seem to be attracted to politics... [However,] I saw my old boss from Lexington, delegate to the convention. And a delightful woman playwright from Orange, MA (out by Amherst) wearing a peace sign—Genevieve Fraser. So, interspersed amongst the masses of dunces—I have no other appraisal for them—were these jewels of awareness.

But even the slick candidate for sheriff had his own street smarts: "You got to get out here for name recognition." I had asked two young men what his platform was: "I have no idea, I'm just here cause my uncle made me." DeMauro told me, "I'm going to run on educating the inmates. We don't need any more officers." He's a Lowell police captain. I didn't think sheriffs did anything, but could be wrong.

No media to speak of, except NECN [New England Cable News]; and that smarty kid who took the only off-hand statement I made at the Stonehill College protest [against graduation honoree, former General Motors lobbyist and now White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card] and edited out the substance to show as our interview. A politically savvy candidate: "No media are here because only issues would be discussed." I thought issues were the most important part of the election, and said so. The hundred or so marching for Kerry with identical signs reminded me of *Hitlerjugend*. Again, blank eyes. Neither Dean nor Kucinich were invited.

Another lesson learned in protesting: Time after time, I have been threatened with arrest for my signs, not my flag (the 13 star one). I stood at the entrance to the Tsongas Convention Center for about 30 minutes, Pilgrim with flag and sign: "Stop Perpetual War", "Give Me Back My Government" and "Kucinich for President" co-existing peacefully. When the security guard booted me (and threatened again to call the police if I didn't leave), I asked him "What do I have to get rid of to be able to stand here, where everyone else is standing, unharassed?" "Get rid of the 'stick', (he meant the sign, as he shooed a "Graham for President" sign-holder away with no stick) "the flag is fine." So we need to carry the flag, and wear large buttons proclaiming whatever the message is we have on our sign. That may not work either, but I'm going to try it.

As smelly as politics are, I guess we're going to have to jump in and try to make a difference. Start our own radio stations (Hurray for Al Franken) and publish our own newspapers. Maybe even get a TV station, if the FCC will allow for such, since the Republicans own that access now. (Why do I think my letters to Congress, begging them to veto the FCC decision, are futile?)

So, I'll be working for Kucinich, then Dean, then whomever the Democratic Convention nominates. What other choices do we have?
—Write Alice: <alicebrown@yahoo.com>

YOU WRITE WHAT YOU'RE TOLD!



THANKS, CORPORATE NEWS! We Couldn't Control The People Without You

A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTRY OF HOMELAND SECURITY

More Terrorism, Please US Secret Agency to Provoke Terror

adapted from Chris Floyd, *The Ecologist* (UK), June 2003

Buried deep in the LA Times late last year, in an article by military analyst William Arkin, came a most startling revelation. US secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld is developing a swcret new agency whose explicit purpose is to ensure that there will be more terrorist attacks against the US people and civilization at large.

According to a classified document prepared for Rumsfeld by his Defense Science Board, the new organization—the Proactive, Preemptive Operations Group (P2OG)—will carry out secret missions designed to "stimulate reactions" among terrorist groups, provoking them into committing violent acts that would then expose them to "counterattack" by US forces...

P2OG is not designed solely to flush out terrorists and bring them to justice... Once they have sparked terrorists into action, they can then take measures against the "states/sub-state actors accountable" for "harboring" the Rumsfeld-roused gangs. What kind of measures exactly? The Pentagon program makes it clear: "Their sovereignty will be at risk."

The Rumsfeld-Bush plan to employ murder and terrorism for political, financial and ideological gain does have historical roots. In 1963, the US's top military brass presented JFK with plans for Operation Northwoods, calling for a phoney terrorist campaign—complete with bombings, hijackings, plane crashes and dead Americans—to provide "justification" for an invasion of Cuba, the Mafia-corporate fiefdom which had recently been lost to Castro. Kennedy rejected the plan, and was killed a few months later. ●

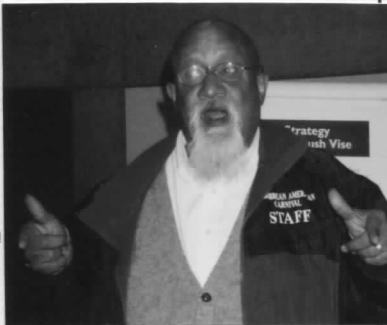
BCA and New England Alliance News

Clark University **Professor Dick Peet** riveted a circle of 27 Alliancers and friends at BCA's May 21st meeting with his analysis of current and past "free trade" beliefs. Reared in a working class district near Liverpool, he will never forget that he owes his advanced education and academic creativity to British taxpayers, whose brand of democratic socialism went farther than any other—Swedish included—than any other in boosting the potential of the less fortunate, promoting social equity. Early on, he was interrupted with volleys of questions, reserving only one for later—"What would it take for a dozen or so member nations to bolt the WTO and agree to their own trade arrangements?" We all look forward to the July appearance of his latest book *Unholy Trinity: the IMF, World Bank, and WTO*.

Meanwhile, the **Mass Bay South Alliance** has linked with Citizens for Peaceful Solutions, a local group evolving from an Iraq war protest. With CPS, MBS cosponsored the Duxbury appearance of **Randy Forsberg**, whom they supported for US Senate last November when Sen. John Kerry failed to take a stand on the Iraq war. MBS continues to stand vigil each Saturday, collecting sign-ups for Forsberg's Urgent Call campaign to prevent wars. Next meeting, June 25, in Norwell MA. Call **Jean Maryborn** at 781-826-2482.

MassBaySouth is concerned about vote tampering—election-stealing—and supports Rep. Rush Holt's (D, NJ) bill to require a voter-verifiable paper trail. Failing that, MBS is much interested in strategic nonviolent action, recommending Gene Sharp's booklet *There Are Realistic Alternatives* (www.aeinsteinstory.org).

Remember one-time BCA co-chair and loyal *Dispatch* fan **Adrian Jones**? He and **Dave Lewit** attended Boston City Councillor **Chuck Turner's** 24 May forum at the public library's Dudley branch. United for a Fair Economy's **Mike Prokosch** coached the group which led a globalization-impact workshop, followed by Chuck's 15-minute extemporaneous discourse on war and racism.



Councillor Chuck Turner

Brit Eckhart and **Dave** traveled to Burlington VT, Congressman Bernie Sanders' mayoral city, to see if *participatory city budgeting* (Porto Alegre, Brazil) might be transplanted to the US there, because they have a progressive government. They interviewed four leaders/officials and found that Burlington already has substantial citizen participation, including city priorities. Burlington may be a model...

Bill Haff, **Pat McSweeney**, **Nancy Lee Wood**, and **Alice Little Copeland** (see page 7) sent a letter to the president of Stonehill College in N. Easton protesting Andrew Card, a former trustee, as a graduation speaker. Card is White House chief of staff. As a Catholic college, Stonehill is dishonoring the Pope's condemnation of the Iraq war, sponsored in part by Card. The group demonstrated at the graduation.

Jed Schwartz and **Dave Lewit** restarted BCA's lobbying for the MA WTO-Impact Bill H1055, our new Globalization Impact bill, by visiting **Sen. Steven Tolman's** aide, **Michael Costa**.

ACTION ALERTS!!

♦ **Sat & Sun, 21-22 June.** Worcester MA. **Green-Rainbow Party of Massachusetts, convention.** \$25 for 1 day or \$40 for 2 days, including meals. WHERE: Clark University. INFO: for details call Patrick Keaney at 617-738-4394 <www.green-rainbow.org> <pkeaney@netway.com>

MORE ACTION ALERTS !!

♦ **Wed, 25 June, 5:30 pm.** **BCA Steering Committee.** Discuss current and future BCA concerns. All members welcome. 32 Fayette St, Cambridge. Info: call Dave at 617-266-8687.

♦ **June 26-30.** Boston. **Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly 2003.** Among other things, culmination of two years' national and local study of corporate power and globalization. Keynote speaker: Julian Bond, NAACP chair. WHERE: Hynes Convention Center. INFO: www.uua.org/ga or call Bob Stubbs 508-872-6137 or David Olson 617-266-6710. To participate in **street theater** on Sunday in view of delegates, contact John Gilmore, UUJEC, <jwGil@aol.com>

♦ **June 2003.** Lawrence MA. City council to act on water privatization. Mayor Sullivan has still not delivered United Water's contract to the council, but it should happen soon. You can **help Lawrence keep its waterworks**, even in the comfort of your living room (phone project)! Stay tuned for Jonathan Leavitt's call! To get involved email gonzalezrose@earthlink.net or phone 978-975-2421 or 617-266-8687.

♦ **Sun, 13 July, 12:30-4pm.** **Roundtable on Future of the UN.** With US ignoring the UN Security Council and more neoliberalism looming at the WTO ministers' meeting in Cancun this September, the United Nations is more challenged than ever. Join discussion to meet these challenges, with Elise Boulding, Lois Barber, members of the CSUN board, and many others. SPONSOR: Coalition for a Strong United Nations (CSUN) www.strongUN.org. WHERE: Cambridge Friends Meeting (see BCA box, page 1). INFO: Phone Nancy Wrenn 617-969-2758.

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? \$_____

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