

BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the
Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy

April
2004

There was one kind of embarrassing moment when President Bush was asked if he ever went AWOL and he said, "No no no, we have Earthlink." —Jay Leno (NBC tv)

It was reported in the paper that President Bush received a "warm reception" from the Daytona 500 drivers. Well sure, the drivers had never met anyone who was sponsored by more oil companies than they were. —Jay Leno

ALLIANCE NEWS (Continued on page 8)

Chapter Calendar

RESCHEDULED: now April 14!

** Striking Back at the Empire **

Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy will meet on **Wednesday, April 14, from 7:00 to 9:15 p.m. at Cambridge Friends Meeting, 5 Longfellow Park (9-minute walk from Harvard Square T station, west on Brattle St.)**

— Agenda —

* Americans have experienced tides of greed and exploitation, of pioneering and immigration, of wars and unionization. Will the present air of fear get us down? Or will we regroup and realize our rights? **Professor Jim Green**, labor historian at UMass/Boston, will assess our situation in the light of history, and show us the role of **general strikes and other means of resisting the manipulation and repression of the rampaging frat boys in Washington.**

* Discuss this issue, **exit polling**, and other Alliance projects.

— Refreshments —

Can Strikes Win?

by Amy Carroll, "Savvy Troublemaking", *Solidarity* (Detroit), 1999

General strikes work in France, India, and elsewhere when government policies—siding with elite forces—create desperation. That could happen in the US if Republican policies become not merely arrogant, but more oppressive. Labor has largely been coopted due to the Cold War, but may revive in collaboration with communities and broad social movements. This pamphlet illustrates how a persistent, multifaceted local strike might inspire something bigger. **Discuss this and other nonviolent strategies at our chapter meeting on 14 April.** —Ed.

THIS IS PERHAPS the most hotly debated question these days in union halls and on picket lines. Countless defeats, and an all-time low in the number of strikes, seems to indicate no. And indeed that is the consensus, at least among business leaders, politicians, (Continued on page 4 >>)



Greek phalanx used in invading Italy and crushing the Romans. After two such victories, losses proved too great and the Greeks had to leave.

LESSONS OF HISTORY

Does Bush Have a Pyrrhic Victory? In the End, Woman Kills Pyrrhus with Tile

from Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, vol. 2, 1939

In 295 B.C.E. Pyrrhus, who traced his ancestry to Achilles, became king of the Molossians, the dominant Epirote tribe (NW Greece). He was handsome and brave, a despotic but popular ruler. His subjects thought that he could cure the spleen by pressing his right foot upon their prostrate backs; nor was anyone so poor as to be refused his ministrations. When the Tarentines appealed to him he saw an alluring opportunity: he would conquer Rome, the danger in the West, as Alexander had conquered Persia, the danger in the East; and he would prove his genealogy by his courage.

In 281 he crossed the Ionian (Adriatic) Sea with 25,000 infantry, 3,000 horse, and 20 elephants; the Greeks had taken elephants as well as mysticism from India. He met the Romans at Heracleia, and won a "Pyrrhic victory": his losses were so great, and his resources in men and materials were now so small, that when an aide complimented him on his success he created an historic phrase by replying that another such triumph would ruin him...

Impressed by the Romans, and despairing of adequate aid from the Greeks of Italy, Pyrrhus dispatched Cineas to Rome to negotiate peace. The Senate was about to agree when Appius Claudius, blind and dying, had himself carried into the senate house and protested against making peace with a foreign army on Italian soil. Frustrated, Pyrrhus fought again, won another suicidal victory at Asculum, and then, hopeless of success against Rome, sailed to Sicily with the generous resolve to free it from the Carthaginians. There he drove the Carthaginians back with reckless heroism; but whether it was that the Sicilian Greeks were too timid to rally to him, or that he governed them as willfully as any tyrant, he received so little support that he had to abandon the island after a three years' campaign, making the prophetic remark, "What a battlefield I am leaving to Carthage and Rome!"

Arriving with depleted forces (Continued on page 6 >>)

If Bush Wins — Then What? Brainstorming at Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy, 18 Feb 2004

(Apologies for not printing this in our March issue!)

Worry! So proclaims a button worn by a George W. Bush version of the idiot jester Alfred E. Neuman, on the cover of *The Nation* magazine four years ago. Yes, we humanists and progressives worried before and after his selection as president by the Republican-stacked Supreme Court.

The worries confirmed in Florida and Washington grew by leaps and bounds. The first leaps were legislation cutting taxes for the rich and rolling back various social advances of recent decades. Then the Bush administration issued its neo-con plans to dominate the world. Then came the spectacular disaster of 9/11/01, and the immediate illegal, executive declaration of war on distant Afghanistan rather than police action toward the perpetrators and disciplining of military leaders who failed to react to four off-course deadly airliners. Then came the negation of UN arms inspectors and the bombing and invasion of Iraq.

By now, as the possibility of Bush's re-election looms, our worries are emerging as resolves to act to cut off further governmental disaster. What, exactly, do we want and expect?

Twenty-two people showed up at BCA's meeting on this subject, advertised on several progressive list-serves as well as in the *BCA Dispatch*. The notice said "If elected, Bush & Co could destroy our democracy and environment, and perhaps human life on earth (e.g., thru nuclear/star wars catastrophe). If Plan A is to elect 'any Democrat'—what is our Plan B? What mobilization will move us on the right course? Join our informal discussion, which could lead to a feature in July's Boston Social Forum. Sitting in with us as resource persons will be Prof. **Elaine Hagopian**, Near Eastern specialist of Simmons College; **Donovan Walker**, dynamic Boston activist; **Brian Corr**, Northeast Action organizer; and Prof. **Mark Solomon** historian of Simmons College."

Forming a large circle, participants took one-minute turns voicing their suggestions or demands for action—brainstorming. The essence of each comment was recorded on newsprint. Then came further comments and suggestions ad lib, in an orderly manner with new hands recognized first. The results were rich—a few were emotional ("kick ass", "mass migration", "suicide"), but most were instrumental and strong. Boiling down the dozens of comments, here is the Editor's summary:

1. ANALYZE. Monitor the government and disseminate such information. Differentiate the various types of Republican and Democratic Congress members; target some, reach out to some. Support Constitutional conservatives of both major parties. Understand differences in outlook between Massachusetts and Midwestern citizens. Split the ruling classes.

2. STOP VOTE FRAUD. Prepare now for vote-rigging and dirty tricks whether Republican or Democrat. Deal with electronic

vote manipulation. Encourage absentee voting (paper record). Ensure exit-polling to document suspicious official results.

3. REMOVE BUSH. Bush will not retire—prepare for a coup. Refuse another 4 years. Impeach. Break his ties with congressional right-wingers. Prepare now, with various scenarios.

4. MASS ACTION. March on March 20th, next month. Prepare a general strike for November. Mass marching in DC. Protest Bush inauguration.

5. SOLIDARITY. Make new friends at home and abroad. Emphasize third-world issues and connections. Fight Bush's main tool: racism, including anti-Moslem.

6. BUILD THE MOTHER OF ALL COALITIONS, very broad, against proto-fascism. Include Republicans. Build an anti-Bush majority; choose candidate(s) early.

7. STRATEGIC NONVIOLENCE. Prepare and exercise civil disobedience. Study successful popular overthrow of tyrannies, educate, and develop multifaceted strategies and training.

8. BUILD PROGRESSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE. Attend Boston Social Forum (July 23-25). Conceive and create "another world". Educate and act to end crony capitalism. Stop corporate profiteering in Iraq.

9. WIN KEY ISSUES: Bush's "BioShield"—locally stop the proposed BU Level-4 Bioterror Lab. Weapons in space. Displacement of domestic hi-tech workers by foreign. Globalization debate. Proportional Representation. Tax refusal. \$400 billion deficit.

10. MEDIA. Mainstream media showdown. Local media turnaround. Newspaper coverage and accountability; Globe ombudsman; TV.

But this discussion is only the beginning. Our discussion was so encouraging that the group decided to continue—not a month from now, but in two weeks—at 7 pm on March 3rd at Cambridge Friends Meeting (newcomers welcome). The same discussion will be extended and focused. In the meantime some of us will begin work on a consensus focal project—to create or ensure a credible organization to conduct EXIT POLLING on November 2nd, if compromised TV network exit polling is likely. "Sweden to monitor." Collaboration among Vets for Peace, Alliance for Democracy, United for Justice with Peace, E-vote working group, etc.

One of our participants, **Amy Hendrickson**, has constructed an e-mail list-serve. It is posted to all participants who listed their e-mail addresses. This report is its first item. We invite all interested persons to join: <http://lists.riseup.net/www/info/wewin>. People without home facilities for e-mail, please make arrangements with a friend, local library, or club. Our first task is to research exit polling technique and sponsorship. We may be able to encourage training/supervision labs in many state universities, and operate through community colleges. Or we may be able to get funding for Roper to do it. Share your information on this, our pro-democracy list-serve.

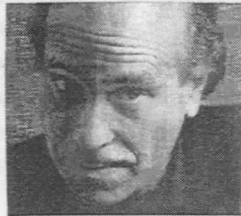
VOTING INTEGRITY

On Stealing the Election It's Not the Hacking, It's the Crashing

from Greg Palast, *In These Times*, 12 April 2004

Greg Palast: There is something called the Help America Vote Act that our president signed a year and a half ago. As soon as the Bush family tells us they're going to help us vote I get very nervous. And sure enough, it is filled with expanding the purge of voters they did in Florida. Instead of eliminating that racial vote pogrom, they're going to take it on the road nationwide.

The second thing they're going to do is provide billions of dollars to force states to computerize voting. They did a test run when Katherine Harris put touch screens in Broward County. In the black precincts the computers went down, and thousands and thousands of black votes were never counted. Here's the bottom line: In 2000—I'm working with Chris Edley of Harvard Law School on this—1 million black people cast votes nationwide and didn't have their votes counted. So the non-count of the black vote is a serious racial problem.



Q: How did you arrive at a million votes?

Palast: Actually, it's the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and the Harvard University Center for Civil Rights. We know 2.9 million votes were cast and not counted in 2000. In black-majority precincts you see that one in five votes will not be counted, whereas in the white counties one in 60, one in 70 won't get counted for some technical reason. Doing a simple regression analysis it's figured one in seven black votes is not counted in the United States. And that's about 10 times the rate of non-counts for white voters. If you proportion that against the actual numbers of non-counts, it comes out to one million seven thousand votes cast not counted in 2000.

People are over-focused on the ability to hack into the machines and change votes from Democratic to Republican. The biggest danger is the strategic breakdown of machines that will cause the non-vote in strategic precincts. That's what happened in Broward, where the machines were first tested. That's what will happen nationwide. Watch.

Law Students to Monitor Elections

by Jay Lindsay, *Associated Press*, 16 March 2004

BOSTON (AP) - A group founded by Harvard law students announced plans Tuesday to send observers to 49 states this November to help ensure voters in the fall election are not improperly turned away from the polls. The group, called Just Democracy, plans to dispatch at least 1,000 students from across the country to polls in every state with a law school, which includes all but Alaska.

>>>

Student leaders want to help ease the bureaucratic mistakes or ignorance of the law they say were to blame for much of the confusion in the disputed 2000 presidential election. They plan to enlist a mix of Republican, Democratic and independent volunteers to watch over polls on Nov. 2. "We're not in this for the presidential election," said group founder Becca O'Brien. "We're in this because we believe every vote should count."

The group says students may be able to catch common errors at the polls before a voter is sent away, including simple problems involving changes of address or identification requirements. Rules that govern observers' access to polls vary by state, so the group plans to work with election officials before November. For instance, observers in Massachusetts are permitted to take notes by the table where voters check in but cannot speak to them until they have left the polling area, said Brian McNiff, a spokesman for the secretary of state.

Ever-Reliable GOP Officials Aping W's "Decisiveness", Or What?

from *New York Times* Editorial, 14 March 2004

As Floridians went to the polls last Tuesday, Glenda Hood, Katherine Harris's successor as secretary of state, assured the nation that Florida's voting system would not break down this year the way it did in 2000. Florida now has "the very best" technology available, she declared on CNN. "And I do feel that it's a great disservice to create the feeling that there's a problem when there is not." Hours later, results in Bay County showed that with more than 60 percent of precincts reporting, Richard Gephardt, who long before had pulled out of the presidential race, was beating John Kerry by two to one. "I'm devastated," the county's top election official said, promising a recount of his county's 19,000 votes. The bar code on the optical scan's printed ballots was faulty...

The bar code on optical scan printed ballots was faulty. But note, 15 Florida counties have already bought touch-screen voting machines, impossible to recount. —Ed.

"OCTOBER SURPRISE" CONTEST

WHAT surprise do you suppose the Bush campaign will spring on the American public to set up a rush to his side in the presidential election, to inhibit the opposition, or to cancel the elections? For example, another high-powered terrorist attack in an American city on October 12th? Explain why this would help Bush.

Write your guess and rationale in 100 words or less, and send by May 1st to Dave L, Editor, BCA Dispatch, 271 Dartmouth St. #2h, Boston MA 02116. Or e-mail it to dlewit@igc.org. Info at (617) 266-8687. The two best out of 5 or more entries, as judged by the BCA steering committee, will be published in the May issue. We will withhold your name if you wish.

and the media.

It's true that the odds are against workers these days: courts levy huge fines; injunctions outlaw most activity; the resources of companies allow them to wait out a strike. To many, the stakes are too high. Rather than have a union busted, some want to accept concessions and pin hopes on lobbying for changes to labor law. However, stories like Dayton, Local 599, and CAW prove that strikes can still win. The important question is not "can strikes win?" but "what does it take?"

If a strike is supposed to use the muscle of the members as leverage over management, they must be prepared and involved every step of the way. All too often, union leaders call members out on strike with no warning or education, and then seem honestly surprised when solidarity crumbles after the first retaliation from the boss. A well-run strike not only involves the ranks, but reaches out to build community support long before the picket line goes up.

Prior to striking or being locked out, unions have often used work-to-rule campaigns. What keeps production running smoothly is more often a worker's job knowledge than the talent of the boss. Working-to-rule means following the book to the letter, and waiting for instructions from management. The campaigns require rank-and-file discipline and only work if built with membership involvement and agreement. Production is drastically cut through such a campaign, which serves both to unite a union and demonstrate to management workers' power.

A tactic getting lots of attention these days is the "corporate campaign." By researching the many pies a single transnational firm can have its fingers in, unions can run extensive boycott campaigns, both to pressure management and to further galvanize community support. Unfortunately, unions often rely solely on boycotts, substituting corporate campaigns for a comprehensive strategy based on mobilizing members.

Of utmost importance is for a union to analyze the lean production system at its work site. A carefully planned work-to-rule campaign or a strike can exploit just-in-time production and turn the logic of lean against the company.

Labor's most traditional weapon—the strike—has also become the most controversial. Halting production is the ultimate strength of workers over management. However, the use of scabs these days means that simply walking out won't necessarily stop production. Unions are often wary of efforts to block production because of the threat of injunctions and fines. But labor should take a lesson from its own history and countless other protest movements. Commitment to the righteous battle means a willingness to break unjust laws. Direct action is indispensable in upping our power against that of capital.

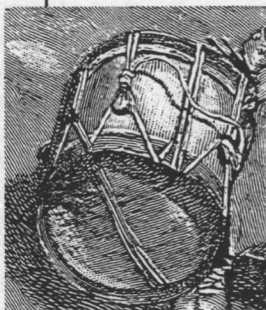
Perhaps the best example of what it takes to win these days is found in the battle by the Mine Workers against Pittston Coal in the late 1980s. Bent on destroying the master coal agreement and crippling the union, Pittston was demanding huge concessions from active workers and benefit cuts from retirees.

They wanted to stop paying into the industry-wide pension and health-care funds. For the year and a half that the miners worked without a contract, they prepared. They trained in non-violent civil disobedience; they built community support; even retirees, laid-off, and disabled workers were prepared to play roles in the strike.

When they did strike in 1989, the mineworkers varied their strategy and tactics to keep Pittston guessing. In order to build public support they waged a corporate campaign. Meanwhile mass demonstrations, roving pickets, and civil disobedience kept the company on its toes. Tens of thousands of unionists from throughout the country came to rally and join in civil disobedience. A makeshift campsite dubbed Camp Solidarity was their home, where political discussions and rallies made many compare Pittston to the 1937 Flint sit-down strike at GM.

Though fines and injunctions were levied against the union, the members decided that if they backed down, they were sure to lose. Instead, they broke the injunctions and ignored the fines.

The miners ran the president of UMW District 28 as an independent for a seat in the Virginia House of Delegates. The miners candidate beat the twenty-year incumbent two to one after a mere three weeks of a write-in campaign. Best of all, the incumbent was the father of the judge who had levied the injunctions and fines.



The turning point in the strike came when, after weeks of planning, nearly 100 workers took over the Moss 3 processing plant. The strikers allowed daily inspection of the plant to defuse charges they were destroying machinery. Soon, the National Labor Relations Board slapped \$13.5 million in fines on the union; the courts and politicians threatened workers with arrest if they didn't leave the plant.

But the union ignored the deadlines, and a crowd 5,000 strong rallied at the Moss plant. When the strikers decided they had made their point, they ended the occupation.

The occupation had lasted only 77 hours, but its impact was huge. Within days, Pittston announced it would return to the table. The union staved off being busted, protecting its industry-wide pension and health funds. Perhaps most impressive is that under the settlement, all the millions of dollars worth of fines levied against the union were dropped. The Mine Workers drew a line in the sand and were willing to do what it took to see it respected.

These days, unions usually cannot simply throw up a picket line and wait for a corporation to come to its knees. However, strikes built on a comprehensive strategy, membership control, and community involvement—and carefully planned to exploit the weaknesses of the lean system—illustrate the benefits that can be won through "old-fashioned" confrontations with capital.

Protesters Block Bechtel SF Offices Favored Contractor Profits from Iraq's Ruin

by Direct Action to Stop the War, San Francisco CA

Over 500 Bay Area residents marked the anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq by taking direct action at the headquarters of the Bechtel corporation to protest their exploitation of the Iraqi people and misuse of U.S. tax dollars.

Two marches converged on Bechtel's offices, one led by teachers holding a banner reading "Education Not Occupation," and one led by healthcare workers marching with banners reading "Healthcare Not Warfare" and "Democracy Not Empire". The march was flanked by a marching band, yogis for peace, colorful puppets, cyclists, and banners protesting the US occupation of Iraq.

While the crowd occupied the street, several dozen people engaged in civil disobedience by blocking the entrances to the building. By noon over twenty-five people had been arrested. The actions were organized by local grassroots mobilization Direct Action to Stop the War (DASW) and will be among the first of hundreds of anti-war actions happening this weekend in 250 U.S. cities and over 50 countries.

Kate Raphael, a Bay area resident who recently returned from Iraq, explained why people were confronting Bechtel. "Bechtel has used its close ties to the Bush administration to get \$3 billion worth of contracts to repair water systems and schools but I was recently in Iraq and I saw children playing in sewage and schools with crumbling walls. Bechtel executives are getting rich while people in Iraq continue to suffer and die. What Bush calls reconstruction is really a corporate invasion that's auctioning off Iraq's resources to the highest bidder."

Affinity groups involved with DASW also occupied an abandoned building to highlight the impacts of the escalating military budgets on Bay Area communities. "Why are we spending billions to illegally occupy Iraq when there isn't even enough affordable housing in our communities? Teachers are getting pink slips and our hospitals are under funded while more and more money is directed to Bush's policies of permanent war and empire-building," said Victoria Welle a San Francisco hospital worker.

Last year, DASW coordinated the largest and most consistently visible direct actions against the war inside the U.S. On March 20th, 2003 an estimated 20,000 people engaged in civil disobe-



dience which shut down the San Francisco Financial District. In the following three days over 2,300 Bay area residents from all walks of life were arrested for protesting the invasion. Throughout the spring, DASW's direct action campaign continued with mass actions at the offices of war profiteering corporations like Stevedoring Services of America (SSA), APL [giant Singapore-based shipping company], Chevron-Texaco, Lockheed Martin, and Bechtel.

The anniversary of the invasion comes as the Bush administration struggles to answer difficult questions about their motivations for a costly and unjust foreign policy. The fact that no evidence of weapons of mass destruction, or links between Saddam Hussein's government and 9-11, has been found has led to a sharp drop in Bush's public approval. "The Bush Administration lied to the American public and took our country to war under false pretenses. A government that lies is not a democracy. We need grassroots action to show the world Americans stand with them in opposing Bush's lawless war-mongering," said Raeanne Young, a student at Mills College in Oakland.

HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?...

1 Good news from Maryland. After intense lobbying by citizens led by www.TrueVoteMD.org critical committees in the state senate and house yielded unanimous endorsement of bills requiring **voter-verified paper trails and funding** throughout the state. If these bills pass floor votes in both houses, Maryland's \$55 million in touch-screen voting machines will have to be retrofitted with auditable paper, for use in the November elections. Or who knows, maybe they'll return the lot and use optical scan or old-fashioned paper and pencil!

2 Today China has 20 **nuclear missiles** capable of hitting the continental U.S. and fears that the Aegis deployments are really intended to negate their missiles. China has said that if the U.S. goes forward with the Aegis deployments in the Sea of Japan they will have to build more nuclear missiles in response. The U.S. intends to base the Aegis in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Australia, essentially surrounding the **coast of China**. The **Aegis guided-missile destroyer** is built at Bath Ironworks in Maine.

3 It seems George W Bush and Pakistan dictator Gen. Pervez Musharraf are playing footsie for horrendous stakes. Rumor has it that **Bush will wink at Pakistan's free trade in nuclear weapon secrets** with North Korea, Libya, and Iran giving all of them complementary parts of long-range nuke technology—in order for Musharraf to put **Osama bin Laden** in GOP shackles before the November US elections. Look for US troops in Pakistan. The top nuclear deal maker is the narcissistic A Q Khan, who should be tried for aiding nuclear proliferation, possibly also sharing secrets with bin Laden, but Bush allowed Khan to be celebrated instead. Don't blame it all on Bush and Musharraf—Clinton, Bush the Elder, and Reagan also cozied with Pakistan's dictators. ##

Nero: Villain or Hero? A Ronald Reagan of Ancient Rome

by David Marcus, *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, 10 March 2004

To modern readers, the first-century Roman emperor Nero is the archetype of a terrible ruler. According to legend, Nero murdered many of his own family members; he fiddled while Rome burned in the great fire of 64 C.E., which he authorized; and his delusions of artistic greatness extended to his dying words: "What an artist dies in me."

But Nero had a much more positive posthumous reputation in the ancient world, Princeton classics professor **Edward Champlin** writes in *Nero* (Harvard U Press), his biography of the man who ruled the Roman empire from 54 to 68 C.E. For much of the ancient world, Nero was a folk hero; Augustine wrote in 400 C.E. that many people hoped and believed he would return.

Champlin stumbled upon his topic when Princeton history professor Peter Brown asked him to prepare a paper for a seminar on Trajan, Rome's emperor from 98 to 117 C.E. While writing the paper, Champlin pondered which Roman leader had a legendary status closest to that of Alexander the Great, Aristotle's most famous student, the conquerer of much of the Middle East in the 4th Century B.C.E., and a man whose return was confidently expected for centuries after his death. The answer: Nero, whose awful reputation today "is based on the writings of two groups he offended: the Roman elite and the Christians, who he persecuted by chance, probably not knowing who they were," Champlin says.

The resulting book isn't an attempt to rehabilitate Nero's reputation, but to understand why he became such a hero in Roman culture. "Much of what Nero did, distorted by later reports, looks very different when set in the context of [Nero's] contemporary norms... One result of this, and the most fun, is that I get to look at all the stories that make Nero so notorious."

Nero's love of performance reflected a deep understanding of the importance of spectacle for the Romans. Tacitus and Suetonius, first century Roman historians who treat Nero harshly, didn't like his flamboyance, but ordinary Romans probably loved it, says Champlin.

Many of Nero's actions—or claimed actions—were aimed at a public whose lives were permeated by mythology, which "provided simple, universal codes that everyone could comprehend," writes Champlin. When Nero claimed (falsely, Champlin believes), that he slept with his mother, Agrippina, before he killed her, he wasn't staking a claim as a pervert; instead, he was making an analogy between himself and Oedipus, the legendary king of Thebes who unwittingly married his mother and killed his father, and with Orestes, who murdered his mother to avenge her killing of his father.

Champlin, who has written about Roman wills and Marcus Aurelius's tutor, Fronto, hopes to reach a broader audience with his, his third book. "I was tired of writing books read by about eight people, including my mother. I wanted to do something on a subject ordinary people might actually have heard of." ##

PYRRHIC VICTORY (Continued from page 1)

in Italy, he was defeated at Beneventum (275), where for

the first time the light-armed and mobile cohorts proved their superiority to the unwieldy phalanxes, and thereby wrote a chapter in military history. Pyrrhus returned to Epirus, says the philosophical Plutarch, "after he had consumed six years in these wars; and though unsuccessful in his affairs, yet preserved his courage unquerable among all these misfortunes, and was held—for military experience and personal valor and enterprise—above all the other princes of his time; but what he got by brave actions he lost again by vain hopes, and by new desires of what he had not, kept nothing of what he had."

Pyrrhus went out now to fresh wars, and was killed with a tile by an old woman in Argos...

TED RALL



* Eib = "Excelece in Broadcasting": Rush Limbaugh's show

The Indy Page

This issue's Indy Page writer is **Andréas Daniel Fogg**, author of numerous web columns on economics and politics, and active member of Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy, currently involved in voting and globalization issues. Contact him at davskischw@aol.com or call 617.776.6645.

Offshoring, Outsourcing, and Localization

March 13, 2004

The general problem or danger, since 1973 approximately, according to Joseph Stiglitz in *The Roaring Nineties* and Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello in *Global Village or Global Pillage*, is a shrinking global gross domestic product (GDP). This shrinkage of overall effective global real wealth is alleged to be due to both increased oil prices and an excessive emphasis upon the engineering of short-term corporate profits at the expense of local or national economic development.

Two basic methods have been advanced about nurturing local economic development, i.e., protecting it from subsidized corporate infringements. Both methods are protectionist in intent. The first is the utilization of protective tariffs. The second is the use of selective economic quotas. It is my impression that the quota method is not in wide use. However, it is also my impression that quota protections are preferable to tariffs. This is the case because tariffs tend to raise the prices of imports and hence also of indigenous products, to the same or slightly lower levels. Quotas in contrast, can be imposed either on all imports of a given category or bilaterally between nations.

For example, US agri-corporate corn currently is under-selling and driving many Mexican small farmers off their land. A tariff on corn imports into Mexico would have the effect of raising the price of imported corn and of raising the amount of the Mexican consumer Peso devoted to consuming corn, thereby reducing amounts available for other more complicated purposes. A quota between the US and Mexico or between Mexico and all exporters into Mexico, which allowed a given percentage of last year's consumed product and no more to be shipped into Mexico, would have no effect on the percentage of the economic pie devoted to corn. (If there were an effect it would be to shrink the proportion of the Peso devoted to corn because any excess supply would tend to reduce the price per ear of corn.) Yet it would allow a given percentage of last year's crop to continue to be produced profitably. Granted, a proportion of Mexican corn farmers would be likely to seek alternative employment, but the proportion would be limited by the size of the quota and would not involve the entire corn farming industry as at present, with neither tariffs nor quotas but instead no protection from subsidized imports whatsoever.

So what does this have to do with outsourcing? Everything and nothing. One of the consequences of driving large numbers of Mexican and third-world farmers off their lands is

that former farmers now landless tend to move to cities where they become available as cheap sources of labor available for employment in jobs which had been offshored or outsourced from what has been called the developed world, i.e. Europe, Japan, North America, and Australia. The more third-world farmers are driven off their land, the greater the supply of surplus labor in third-world cities, the greater the downward pressure on wages in those outsourcing centers. The greater the downward pressure on wages, the cheaper the wages will remain and the more first-world jobs will be outsourced to the third-world.

Further outsourcing has a general effect of lowering wages in the first world as well. And when wages shrink, the demand pool or the demand pool associated with the middle and working classes, shrinks and weakens as well. A shrinking demand pool effectively reduces the profitability of the vast range of products which depend upon middle and working class mass consumption in order to achieve profitability.

Some think that unemployment is caused more by electronic labor-reducing innovations than by outsourcing. This may well be true. However, the threat of outsourcing can have no other effect than to depress wages at home, which effect when combined with machine-generated layoffs, lays the groundwork for structurally new economic problems. These problems may call for the generation of relatively new neo-capitalistic if not socialistic or neoliberal justifications for wage or welfare-like related state-sponsored expenditures.

In other words we may need to rethink our reasons for investing in portions of the population which previously had found employment. In this regard we may have to confront the question, "to bring back the draft and/or to subsidize more readily and generously, adult continuing education by paying students as well as teachers."

Good-Faith Negotiating, Israel & Palestine

March 18, 2004

In the context of water, are the Israelis recently following the biblical model of Abraham affirming his right to a well, or rather to the conquest model of Joshua? That is, the Israelis admit to not granting drilling permits to Palestinians in occupied territories. The Israeli Consul General speaking at MIT on March 16th had no figures for Palestinian consumption of water per day. Yet he admitted repeated Israeli refusals to grant occupied Palestinians drilling rights. The question is, how is this Israeli position likely to induce good faith bargaining on the part of the Palestinians? I mean, don't the Israelis have a responsibility to bargain in good faith if they are to expect the Palestinians to do the same?

LETTERS

Dear Ronnie & council,

...If we can't protest government policies as a 501c3 [new IRS proposal **banning criticism by nonprofits** of political candidates] then we have no collective rights as an organization, including the Constitutional rights to assembly & freedom of speech which courts grant to corporations. I doubt Ted or Cliff [AfD lawyers] would object to our participation in this worldwide coalition's peace protests. We should add the Boston Dem Convention protests to the list of July events that included our AfD Boston national convention. All have the objective of trying to empower people & democracy over corporations & government. It's the Republicans that politicized the NYC peace movement by having their convention in NY near the Trade Towers site & close to the attack anniversary.

—Progressive Solidarity, Rick [LaMonica, MO]

CHAPTER AND REGIONAL NEWS

Over forty Alliance for Democracy members from three chapters in the Greater Boston area managed to keep SECRET a surprise farewell gathering at an attractive and homey retreat to bid a most reluctant farewell to our long-time stalwart, **Jean Maryborn**. Jean will be moving from her home of over 44 years in Norwell, MA to live in Sandpoint, Idaho, near two of her three daughters and 7 grandchildren. In addition to many previous years with peace and justice causes, Jean has played a significant role in the Alliance for Democracy since its founding, both as co-chair with Dave Lewit of the Boston/Cambridge chapter, as a National Council member, and more recently as founder of the Mass. Bay South Chapter. We will miss your warm-hearted, deep commitment to causes for justice, Jean. But we look forward to hearing of a new AfD chapter in Idaho. In addition to honoring her contributions and enjoying a delicious, hearty meal, the group also heard briefly of many exciting initiatives of members and chapters in the Northeast.



—Ruth Weizenbaum, Northeast rep to AfD's council, and principal organizer of Jean's party.



L to R: Jean Maryborn, Tom Gale, Pat Garrity, Carl Whitman

Snow forced rescheduling of BCA's March meeting, along with a planning meeting of our **Exit Polling Working Group** intended to ensure evidence for recounts in case of vote fraud in November.

BCA gave \$200 and AfD \$300 to July's **Boston Social Forum**. Planning for *Democracy*, *Localization*, and *Nonviolence* tracks has already engaged Alex Keyssar, Jack DuVall, Bruce Gagnon, and Charlie Derber. Many more coming—Stay tuned, and register! >>

ACTION ALERTS

Tue, 20 Apr. 4-6pm. Boston. City Council Hearing on Councilor **Chuck Turner's** proposed ordinance **prohibiting Level 4 Bio-terror lab** in Boston. Show your support! Show up at City Hall, Council Chambers!

Thu, 22 Apr. 11:30am-1. Boston. Argentina's Grandmothers of the Disappeared Children (Plaza de Mayo). Estela Barnes de Carlotto, 2 other key grandmothers, and one granddaughter. They have restored the identity of 77 living grandchildren kidnapped by junta officers. Provost's Conference Room, 8th Floor, Healey Library at UMass/Boston, 100 Morrissey Blvd. Info: Elisabeth Leonard: 617.561.9139.

Tu-Thu, 20-22 July, Boston. Alliance for Democracy Convention at Simmons College. Mark your calendar. Stay tuned for details.

Th eve-Sun, 22-25 July, Boston. Veterans for Peace Convention at Emerson College. Mark your calendar. Some events w BSF, including rally on Boston Commons, Sunday.

Fri-Sun, 23-25 July, Boston. Boston Social Forum at Umass/ Boston Harbor Campus. 5000 participants expected. Mark your calendar. Register at www.BostonSocialForum.org.

Mon-Thu, 26-29 July, Boston. Democratic National Convention mainly at FleetCenter. 6000 delegates expected, + 29,000 others. You may want to join demonstrations outside and on Commons.

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: _____

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