

# BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the **July-August**  
**Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy** 2005

*The one thing American leadership seems completely unprepared and unwilling to do is admit that the game is over for the American Dream of suburbia. Our leaders will not take even the first baby steps toward admitting that the way we live is a problem, for instance making a serious effort to restore passenger railroad service.*

*The nation's sense of identity is now tragically linked to a living arrangement that has no future. It's especially tragic because before we embarked on this childish dream of a drive-in utopia, we were a better people, a more realistic, honest, and brave people. We have become a craven people now worthy only of being lied to and misled.*

---Jim Kunstler

## CHAPTER NEWS Continued on Page 8

### Chapter Calendar

\* \* **Summer Vacation** \* \*

BCA will meet again on **September 21<sup>st</sup>**.

Look for *Dispatch* in September.

Your cochair/editor is heading west for nearly a month with Brother Ignacio Castuera, the two of us playing like Young Che Guevara toodling around our continent. "Nacho" is a pastor and theologian, and to provoke each other we will likely read aloud from "Lolita in Tehran" and "Collapse" in the stretches between family in LA, conference in Berkeley, Positive Futures in Seattle, Sister Jean Maryborn in Idaho, Indian Country, family in Arizona, and anti-nuclear protest in Nevada.

*Hasta pronto!*

## Hydrogen Won't Save Us It Takes Too Much Energy to Produce

by Frank Kreith & Ron West, *Daily Camera* (Boulder), 19 June '05

**H**YDROGEN is widely viewed by environmentalists, as well as by many large corporations, as a panacea to air pollution, global warming and shrinking petroleum supplies. This view has been endorsed by President Bush who, in his 2003 State of the Union Address stated, "The first car driven by a child born today could be powered by hydrogen and pollution free."

Hydrogen-powered cars and trucks that use fuel cells to drive electric motors instead of internal-combustion engines could potentially eliminate tail-pipe pollution and dependence on foreign oil. But hydrogen is not an energy source. It is only an energy carrier that must be produced from a primary energy source, such as natural gas, coal, nuclear fuel, wind or solar radiation.

There are two main methods for making hydrogen. The dominant commercial method uses natural gas and steam to produce ultimately hydrogen and carbon dioxide. In this process, called steam reforming, less than 80 percent **(Continued on page 5 >)**



Mariah Carey performs at LIVE 8 London, July 2nd.

## Africa Relief? No, It's Mostly for IMF & World Bank, Stupid!

by Michel Chossudovsky, *GlobalResearch.ca*, 5 July 2005

*"No matter how cynical I get, I can't keep up." Lily Tomlin's now famous line applies in spades to the latest G8-Corporate ripoff. This world-wide megaconcert taps the bleeding-heart in all ordinary people concerned with the grinding poverty in Africa and half the world. The author, an always outspoken and thoroughly analytical professor of economics who understands the social context, almost understates "where will they get the money" to pay off the IMF and World Bank for their "forgiveness" of loans to desperately poor African countries. It will come not just from the hides of the poor Africans who will have to forgo the promised "foreign aid", but from the hopeful hearts of the citizens of G8 countries who will also be victimized by this "creative accounting". —Ed.*

**L**IVE 8, "the greatest concert" ever aired live, has been presented to World public opinion as an "awareness campaign" in solidarity with Africa. Its stated objective was to put pressure on the Group of Eight leaders (G8) to increase foreign aid flows and cancel the debt of the World's poorest countries. In the words of its promoter Bob Geldof, Live 8 has provided a "unique opportunity" to save a continent from a humanitarian disaster.

The Live 8 concerts organized in the eight major industrial countries (as well as in South Africa), however, were not intended to raise money for the World's poorest countries. In fact quite the opposite.

Live 8 is a multimillion dollar undertaking, which will result in huge profits for its corporate sponsors including AOL Time Warner—the US-based media giant—the Ford Motor company—through its Swedish affiliate Volvo—and Nokia, the cell phone company, not to mention Britain's EMI Music Group, which has entered into a highly lucrative arrangement with the Live 8 organizers.

AOLTime Warner controls the US broadcasting rights which it has licensed to the Walt Disney Company for broadcast TV on ABC and a myriad of affiliated TV and radio stations, including Premiere Radio Networks, **(Continued on Page 2 >)**

XM Satellite Radio and Viacom's MTV Networks (for cable TV). AOL also holds the exclusive online rights for the event on the internet.

TV air-time has been auctioned off around the world. Millions of dollars of advertising revenues are expected from the broadcasting of the event, not to mention the repeats, the video-clips, the internet broadcasting and the DVDs, which will be available commercially.

According to the producers, Live 8 will go down as "the biggest global broadcast in history". The organizers expect --through TV, radio and the internet-- to reach some 5.5 billion people, or 85 per cent of the world's population. The advertising industry places the number of potential viewers at a conservative two billion, approximately one third of the World's population.

By far this is largest media advertising operation in history, which will line the pockets of the promoters, producers, corporate sponsors, not to mention the royalties accruing to the performers and "celebrities". A small percentage of the proceeds might accrue to charitable organizations involved in developing countries but this is not the stated objective of Live 8.

The Ford Motor Company has used the event to promote its "up-market" Swedish car division Volvo, with advertising spots during the US broadcast. Volvo has also provided for artist transportation to and from the London and Philadelphia concerts as well as a VIP entertainment suite at the Philadelphia concert. (See <http://www.adage.com/news>, June 30, 2005).

"The event, said company spokesman Soren Johansson, "fits with the DNA of the company" and "appeals to peoples emotions." One of Volvo's TV spots features 'Volvo for Life' award-winner Rosamond Carr, "who operates an orphanage in Rwanda, and two others talking about Volvos values and their reasons for Live 8 involvement."

Moreover, Vonage, the US based phone company is said to have spent "'six figures' to become a primary sponsor of Premiere Radio Networkscoverage". And will also run a Live 8 schedule on MTV Networks.

#### **The EMI Deal**

In a multimillion-dollar agreement with the Live 8 organizers, Britain's EMI Music Group has secured the exclusive rights on the DVDs of the concerts in six of the G8 countries including the US, France, Britain, UK, Italy and Germany: "An EMI spokeswoman said that once sales had paid for the advance, Live 8 would pay a 'very generous royalty rate' to Live 8 on the rest of the sales." In the words, of Bob Geldof, "I hope this will be the biggest-selling DVD of all time."

Meanwhile, the event has contributed to boosting stock market values with EMI's share price triple its 2003 level.

#### **Distorting the Causes of Global Poverty**

The concerts are totally devoid of political content. They concentrate on simple and misleading clichés. They use poverty as a marketing tool and a consumer-advertising gimmick to increase the number of viewers and listeners worldwide.

Live 8 creates an aura of optimism. It conveys the impression that poverty can be vanquished with the stroke of the pen. All we need is good will. The message is that G8 leaders, together with the World Bank and the IMF, are ultimately committed to poverty alleviation. In this regard, the concerts are part of the broader process of media disinformation. They are used as a timely public

relations stunt for Prime Minister Tony Blair, who is hosting the G-8 Summit at Gleneagles, Scotland. Tony Blair is presented as stepping up his campaign to convince other G8 nations "to take action on poverty".

#### **The G8's Debt Forgiveness Proposal**

Live 8 fails to challenge or comprehend the G8 policy agenda which directly contributes to creating poverty, nor does it question the role of the World Bank, now under the helm of Paul Wolfowitz, the neo-conservative architect of the invasion of Iraq. In addressing the issue of debt forgiveness, Live 8 does not even acknowledge the impacts of IMF-World Bank "economic medicine" imposed on the World's poorest countries on behalf of Western creditors.

These deadly macro-economic reforms have contributed to the impoverishment of millions of people. They oblige countries to close down their schools and hospitals, privatize their public services and sell off the most profitable sectors of their national economy to foreign capital. In return, the G8 promises to increase foreign aid and provide token debt relief. These reforms kill and the G8 is not the solution but the cause. Actor Will Smith addressed the crowds at the concert venues "to snap their fingers" as a reminder that every three seconds a child dies in Africa. What he failed to mention is that the main cause of child mortality in Africa are the deadly macroeconomic reforms.

Bob Geldof sees an increase in foreign aid completely out of context, as a "unique opportunity" to eradicating poverty, when in fact the proposed increase in aid flows by the rich G8 countries will lead to exactly the opposite results.

A large percentage of the debt of these countries is owed to the World Bank, the IMF and the African Development Bank

To address this issue, G8 finance ministers had indeed put forth a proposal which consisted in "forgiving" the outstanding debt owed to these three international financial institutions by the 18 highly indebted countries. The debt forgiveness figure mentioned was of the order of 40 billion dollars. Concurrently, there was a vague commitment to eventually increasing foreign aid flows to the 0.7% of GDP target.

([http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/finance/fm050611\\_dev.htm](http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/finance/fm050611_dev.htm) )

Where is the hitch behind this seemingly reasonable "debt forgiveness" proposal?

*The IMF, the World Bank and the African Development Bank never cancel or forgive outstanding debts. Because they do not forgive debts, the G8 has committed itself to reimbursing the multilateral creditors acting on behalf of the World's poorest countries.*

#### **Where will they get the money?**

For each dollar of "debt cancellation" to the international financial institutions, the G8 will reduce the flow of foreign aid to these countries. In other words, *the foreign aid earmarked to finance much-needed social programs will now go directly into the coffers of the IMF and the World Bank.*

There is nothing new in this financial mechanism. It has been used time and again since the onslaught of the debt crisis.

#### **"Social Safety Net" for the IMF and the World Bank**

What we are dealing with is not a debt forgiveness program, but a "reimbursement" process which directly serves the interests of the creditors. The deal constitutes a much-needed "social

safety net" for the multilateral creditors. It ensures a cash flow towards these institutions, while maintaining the World's poorest countries in the stranglehold of the IMF and the World Bank. It also prevents these countries from declaring default on their external debt.

President Bush has made it very clear. The money paid to the World Bank on behalf of the countries, will be "taken out of existing aid budgets." The "debt forgiveness" program, even if it is accompanied by an increase in foreign aid commitments, will result in a significant compression of real foreign aid flows to the highly indebted countries.

The proposed increases in foreign aid commitments are fictitious since the money is intended for the multilateral creditors. And the deal will only be implemented if the indebted countries promise to carry out the usual gamut of "free market" reforms, under IMF/World Bank supervision.

An added condition emanating directly from the Bush administration pertains to "governance". It requires these countries to "democratize" on the US model under Western supervision, as well as carry out "free elections" on the example of Iraq and Afghanistan.

#### **A Weapon of Mass Distraction**

The concerts serve to usefully distract public attention from the US-UK led war on Iraq and the broader relationship between war and global poverty. Not a word is mentioned in the concerts on the fact that George W. Bush and Tony Blair are considered "war criminals" under international law.

Moreover, Live 8 tends to undermine all forms of meaningful and articulate dissent to the G8 policy agenda. With the exception of the South African venue, which included the appearance of Nelson Mandela, the concerts are devoid of a broader understanding and commitment.

Live 8 undermines both the anti-globalization and anti-war movements. It diverts public opinion and distracts media attention from the G8 protest movement. It also serves to undermine the articulation of more radical voices against the New World Order.

More generally, the event instills an atmosphere of ignorance among the millions who listen to the music and who have the feeling of doing something positive and constructive. But none of the core elements needed to understand the causes of global poverty are presented.

To the Live 8 corporate sponsors, including Bob Geldof, the EMI Group, AOL Time Warner, The Ford Motor Company, Nokia, MTV, the Walt Disney Company, etc: "Put your money where your mouth is." *If you are really committed to poverty alleviation, give the entire proceeds of this multimillion-dollar media operation, including the revenues generated by the corporate sponsors, TV networks, advertising firms, royalties accruing to celebrities and performers, to the people of Africa.* Let them use this money as they see fit, without interference from donors and creditors.

To the people of Africa. Do not let yourself be deceived by a giant corporate media stunt where poverty is used as a logo to attract consumers and make money. Default on your debt to the IMF and the World Bank.

*Michel Chossudovsky is Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG). He is the author of The Globalization of Poverty and the New World, Second Edition, Global Research, 2003.*

## **Welcome to Dumbkluckistan Mom Sent Me This—Please Fact-check**

*by Anonymous, circulating on Web, July 2005*

*Dear Red States,*

*We're ticked off at the way you've treated California, and we've decided we're leaving. We intend to form our own country, and we're taking the other Blue States with us. In case you aren't aware, that includes Hawaii, Oregon, Washington, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois and all the Northeast. We believe this split will be beneficial to the nation, and especially to the people of the new country of New California. To sum up briefly: You get Texas, Oklahoma and all the slave states. We get stem cell research and the best beaches. We get Elliot Spitzer. You get Ken Lay. We get the Statue of Liberty. You get OpryLand.*

*We get Intel and Microsoft. You get WorldCom. We get Harvard, Yale and Columbia. You get Ole' Miss. We get 85 percent of America's venture capital and entrepreneurs. You get Alabama. We get two-thirds of the tax revenue, you get to make the red states pay their fair share. Since our aggregate divorce rate is 22 percent lower than the Christian Coalition's, we get a bunch of happy families. You get a bunch of single moms. Please be aware that Nuevo California will be pro-choice and anti-war, and we're going to want all our citizens back from Iraq at once. If you need people to fight, ask your evangelicals. They have kids they're apparently willing to send to their deaths for no purpose, and they don't care if you don't show pictures of their children's caskets coming home. We do wish you success in Iraq, and hope that the WMDs turn up, but we're not willing to spend our resources in Bush's Quagmire.*

*With the Blue States in hand, we will have firm control of 80 percent of the country's fresh water, more than 90 percent of the pineapple and lettuce, 92 percent of the nation's fresh fruit, 95 percent of America's quality wines (you can serve French wines at state dinners) 90 percent of all cheese, 90 percent of the high tech industry, most of the U.S. low-sulfur coal, all living redwoods, sequoias and condors, all the Ivy and Seven Sister schools, plus Stanford, Cal Tech and MIT.*

*With the Red States, on the other hand, you will have to cope with 88 percent of all obese Americans (and their projected health care costs), 92 percent of all U.S. mosquitoes, nearly 100 percent of the tornadoes, 90 percent of the hurricanes, 99 percent of all Southern Baptists, virtually 100 percent of all televangelists, Rush Limbaugh, Bob Jones University, Clemson and the University of Georgia. We get Hollywood and Yosemite, thank you.*

*Additionally, 38 percent of those in the Red states believe Jonah was actually swallowed by a whale. 62 percent believe life is sacred unless we're discussing the death penalty or gun laws. 44 percent say evolution is only a theory; 53 percent, that Saddam was involved in 9/11; and 61 percent of you crazy bastards believe you are people with higher morals than we lefties.*

*By the way, we're taking the good pot, too. You can have that dirt weed they grow in Mexico.*

*Aloha--- Your Secessionist Cousins*

## One Big Corporate Medium OK, So Who Sits on C-Span Board?

by Peter Phillips, [projectcensored.org](http://projectcensored.org), Sonoma St U, 24 June '05

**M**ainstream media no longer produce news for the mainstream population—nor should we consider the media as plural. Instead it is more accurate to speak of big media in the US today as the corporate media and to use the term in the singular form—as it refers to the singular, monolithic, top-down power structure of self-interested news giants.

A research team at Sonoma State University has recently finished conducting a network analysis of the boards of directors of the ten big media organizations in the US. The team determined that only 118 people comprise the membership on the boards of director of the ten big media giants. This is a small enough group to fit in a moderate size university classroom. These 118 individuals in turn sit on the corporate boards of 288 national and international corporations. In fact, eight out of ten big media giants share common memberships on boards of directors with each other. NBC and the Washington Post both have board members who sit on Coca Cola and J. P. Morgan, while the Tribune Company, The New York Times and Gannett all have members who share a seat on Pepsi. It is kind of like one big happy family of interlocks and shared interests. The following are but a few of the corporate board interlocks for the big ten media giants in the US:

- \* *New York Times*: Caryle Group, Eli Lilly, Ford, Johnson and Johnson, Hallmark, Lehman Brothers, Staples, Pepsi
- \* *Washington Post*: Lockheed Martin, Coca-Cola, Dun & Bradstreet, Gillette, G.E. Investments, J.P. Morgan, Moody's
- \* *Knight-Ridder*: Adobe Systems, Echelon, H&R Block, Kimberly-Clark, Starwood Hotels
- \* *The Tribune* (Chicago & LA Times): 3M, Allstate, Caterpillar, Conoco Phillips, Kraft, McDonalds, Pepsi, Quaker Oats, Shering Plough, Wells Fargo
- \* *News Corp* (Fox): British Airways, Rothschild Investments
- \* *GE* (NBC): Anheuser-Busch, Avon, Bechtel, Chevron/Texaco, Coca-Cola, Dell, GM, Home Depot, Kellogg, J.P. Morgan, Microsoft, Motorola, Procter & Gamble
- \* *Disney* (ABC): Boeing, Northwest Airlines, Clorox, Estee Lauder, FedEx, Gillette, Halliburton, Kmart, McKesson, Staples, Yahoo
- \* *Viacom* (CBS): American Express, Consolidated Edison, Oracle, Lafarge North America
- \* *Gannett*: AP, Lockheed-Martin, Continental Airlines, Goldman Sachs, Prudential, Target, Pepsi
- \* *AOL-Time Warner* (CNN): Citigroup, Estee Lauder, Colgate-Palmolive, Hilton

Can we trust the news editors at the *Washington Post* to be fair and objective regarding news stories about Lockheed-Martin defense contract over-runs? Or can we assuredly believe that ABC will conduct critical investigative reporting on Halliburton's sole-source contracts in Iraq? If we believe the corporate media give us the full un-censored truth about key issues inside the special interests of American capitalism, then we might feel that they are meeting the democratic needs of mainstream America. However if we believe—as increasingly more Americans do—that

corporate media serves its own self-interests instead of those of the people, than we can no longer call it mainstream or refer to it as plural. Instead we need to say that corporate media is corporate America, and that we the mainstream people need to be looking at alternative independent sources for our news and information.

## Democrats Blew It on CAFTA Vote

by John Nichols, [Capital Times](http://CapitalTimes) (Madison, WI), 5 July 2005

**O**rganized labor is opposed to the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

\*Progressive farm groups are opposed to CAFTA.

\*Environmental groups are opposed to CAFTA.

\*Civil rights groups are opposed to CAFTA.

\*Human rights groups are opposed to CAFTA.

Virtually all of the organizations that are associated with what is loosely defined as the Democratic coalition are opposed to the trade deal that Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin says "will hurt American workers, hurt the workers of Central America and create instability in Central America that will force more immigration into the United States."

So, of course, Senate Democrats must have been united in opposition to the Bush administration's proposal to expand on the failed model of the North American Free Trade Agreement which has wreaked havoc with the economies of the U.S., Mexico and Canada to create a free trade zone that extends from the Panama Canal to the Arctic Circle. Right? Wrong!

When the Senate voted on CAFTA last week, a dozen Republicans abandoned the administration to vote "no." That meant that, if Democrats had been united in their opposition, the trade deal would have been easily defeated, and the president's plan to make it easier for multinational corporations to exploit workers, communities and the environment throughout the hemisphere would have been dealt a fatal blow.

Instead, 10 Democrats New Mexico's Jeff Bingaman, Washington's Maria Cantwell, Delaware's Tom Carper, California's Dianne Feinstein, Arkansas' Blanche Lincoln, Washington's Patty Murray, Florida's Bill Nelson, Nebraska's Ben Nelson, Arkansas' Mark Pryor and Oregon's Ron Wyden as well as Vermont independent Jim Jeffords, who caucuses with the Democrats, voted for the president's proposal.

As a result, CAFTA was approved on a 55-45 vote.

The fight is not done. Opposition to CAFTA is more widespread in the House of Representatives, which still must vote on the measure. As U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold, D-Wis., a steadfast foe of corporate-sponsored free trade deals, notes, opposition to CAFTA has grown as members of both chambers "who (once blindly accepted these agreements are now beginning to read the fine print." Feingold's right: the trend is against CAFTA.

The sad thing is that 10 Democrats and Jeffords are still blindly accepting the flawed arguments of the Bush administration just as they did the flawed arguments of the Clinton administration before it and supporting trade policies that harm the U.S. and other countries. Had those Bush Democrats bothered to read the fine print and to make a break with the corporate funders of so many of their campaigns the CAFTA fight would already be done. #

## HYDROGEN (Continued from Page 1)

of the input energy is left in the hydrogen; then another 15 percent or more is lost converting the hydrogen to liquid or compressed gas. Thus, at most only two-thirds of the original energy ends up as useful hydrogen. Moreover, natural gas is an expensive non-renewable fossil fuel that is in short supply. Furthermore, natural gas has many other important uses, such as heating our homes and serving as a feedstock for many chemicals.

The other main way of making hydrogen is by electrolysis. This process is straightforward, but costs three times as much as steam reforming to make the same amount of hydrogen. It uses an electrolyzer, in which a current is passed through water, to split the water into hydrogen and oxygen.

An electrolyzer is essentially a fuel cell operating in reverse. But the electricity must first be produced from a primary energy source. At the very best, only half as much electricity can be obtained from the hydrogen as is consumed to make it. If electricity from the grid were used to produce the hydrogen, over 50 percent of the electric energy would come from coal-fired power plants, which are the most polluting source. If hydrogen produced by electrolysis were used as fuel, the president's statement should be amended from a "pollution-free car" to a "pollute elsewhere car."

Environmentalists recommend using solar energy or wind to generate electricity for a "renewable hydrogen economy." We have been staunch supporters of renewable energy for half a century and recently some renewable options have achieved economic competitiveness in favorable locations. But the renewable hydrogen path to electricity would more than double the cost of electricity, and probably would set back deployment of renewable electric power for decades. Wind, solar and biomass should be used for heat and power generation, not for making hydrogen.

The nuclear industry argues that reactors are the preferred option to make hydrogen for fuel cells, because they do not generate greenhouse gases. If the public is willing to accept the risks associated with transport and storage of nuclear waste, nuclear power is an available option. But, using nuclear-generated electricity to make hydrogen, from which to make electricity, is a waste of energy and money.

Petroleum engineers predict that worldwide petroleum

production will peak in 10 to 30 years. Once production begins to decrease, it will be necessary to supplement oil with some other fuel or to reduce consumption by conservation measures, such as increased mileage of the vehicle fleet and using mass transport. Both of these changes will take time, and we must begin to plan now.

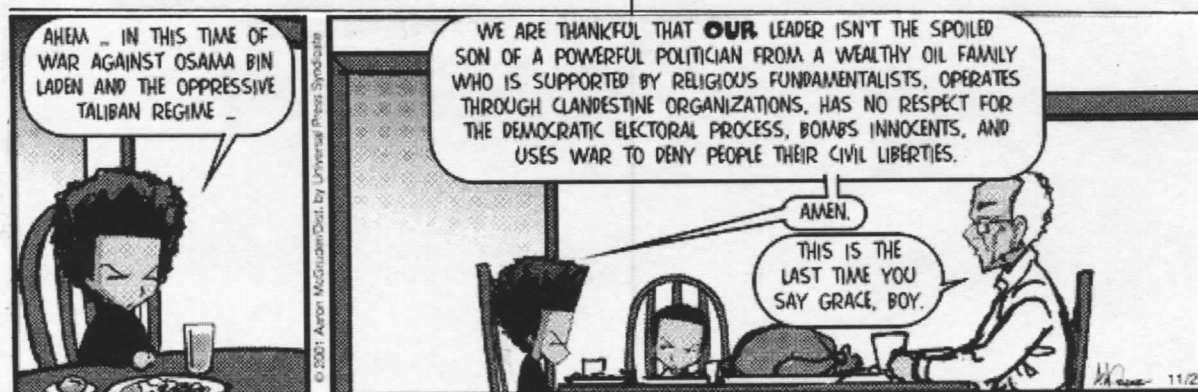
### Hybrids Make Sense

Fortunately, there are several technologies to reduce petroleum consumption. The most obvious is to increase the mileage of the auto and pickup fleet. This can be achieved by building smaller cars and hybrid vehicles, such as the Toyota Prius and Ford Escape. Hybrids use a small gasoline or diesel engine that always runs at maximum efficiency and charges on-board batteries when it produces excess power; when needed, the hybrid draws energy from the batteries to run an electric-drive motor.

Battery technology has improved enormously in the past decade, and state-of-the-art batteries in hybrids increase mileage. But even greater reductions in fuel consumption and pollution can be achieved with "plug-in," electric-gasoline or diesel hybrids, by charging their batteries overnight when excess electrical capacity is available. Demonstration-model plug-in hybrids are on the road and need no new technology for their large-scale deployment. It has been estimated that plug-in hybrids could approach and perhaps even exceed 100 miles per gallon of fuel used. It is also possible to replace petroleum-based fuels with liquid fuels made from coal or biomass, further reducing our dependence on imported petroleum.

There are no huge technical obstacles to making hydrogen and using it as a fuel. But a hydrogen economy would be more expensive and use more primary energy than other options. Moreover, it would require many hundreds of billions of dollars to build a storage and transport infrastructure. We should not accept President Bush's statement that hydrogen will replace oil without examining other options that are more economical and for which the technology and infrastructure already exist.

*Frank Kreith and Ron West are retired engineering professors from the University of Colorado, Boulder, and both live in Boulder. Kreith also served as Branch Chief at the Solar Energy Research Institute for 10 years.*



Aaron McGruder

## Kansas Farmer for Direct Democracy What If We Voted on NAFTA, GATS & CAFTA?

by Dan Nagengast, *Counterpunch*, 22 June 2005

**T**he word "populist" has popped up in the recent European Union referendums as a dirty word, a stand-in for xenophobia and bigotry, the mark of a far right fearful of immigration.

That message comes from the elite. It implies that the powerful could never be xenophobic or racist or nationalist, or sexist or classist. And that governments and their leaders are invariably the counter to the forces of darkness.

But populism is really a belief in the sense and virtue of common people. And we need more of it.

French and EU leaders called France's 55 percent "no" vote on the new EU constitution an unholy alliance of the left and right. Indeed, the extreme right did oppose the charter. But so did 70 percent of farmers and 55 percent of people ages 18 to 25. And workers voted against it overwhelmingly.

Dutch opposition was even higher, 62 percent. For the BBC World News, Michiel van Hulten of the Better Europe Foundation identified the reasons: "The message from France and the Netherlands is that they are unhappy with the way Europe is being built. People are unhappy with the fact that Europe is a project of the elite, not the ordinary people."

Great Britain quickly shelved its own EU referendum following the French and Dutch votes.

Do you wonder what would happen if the United States had the courage to chance a popular vote on the North American Free Trade Agreement, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade or now the Central American Free Trade Agreement?

Our leaders, both Republican and Democratic, push all these pacts. They talk of modernization and removing archaic trade barriers. They have an almost religious faith that this kind of free-market economics floats all boats, that there is unlimited potential for wealth creation, and that world trade, if freed from regulation, will somehow overcome the problem of finite natural resources.

Truth is, these deals painted as win-win are big wins for a few, small wins for a few more and big losses for many people, rural communities and to the natural resource base on which our wealth is built. They aim to lower the cost of those resources and the cost of labor. They are a way to override conservationist restraint, and to push the environmental and social costs of business onto society and the natural world.

Before the French and Dutch elections, I had hoped the EU, along with India and China, would challenge US-led ordering of the world's political economy to suit our own elites. Granted, international financial interests are hardly attached to countries anymore. They're equal opportunity exploiters. Still, I hoped that another big economy—a united Europe—and more competition might give a marginally better deal to the farmers, laborers, and rural communities of the world.

Middle-class French and Dutch voters saw through this. They understood that the reordering was not based on their interests.

U.S. leaders might take this as a lesson to never allow such a vote on how the world will be structured—much better to incite a

choice of politicians based on their views of gay marriage and what to do about a dying woman. By focusing our political debate on issues like these, our leaders divert voters from matters of greater import, such as the war in Iraq.

There was a referendum of sorts in the Clinton administration's final days. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman let hog producers decide whether to keep the checkoff for hog promotion. The checkoff is a toll on every hog sold and helps fund hog producer associations. Many felt the money was being misused to promote big operations and run family farms out of business. So they voted to discontinue the checkoff, and Glickman obeyed.

But a new agriculture secretary, Ann Veneman, came with the Bush administration and reinstated the checkoff. No discussion. No embarrassment. No sense of right or wrong. No symbolic bow to democracy. Just exercise of power.

I think we need more referendums, and ones that stick. I think voters need a more direct voice. I think our democracy is becoming farcical, skewed by money, lobbyists and a fuzziness that lets politicians hide behind inflammatory issues to get elected, and then screw their constituents. I think we need a change.

*Dan Nagengast is a Lawrence, Kan., farmer and executive director of the Kansas Rural Center.*

## Government 9-11 Story "Bogus" Bush Economist Suspects Insider Demolition

by John Daly, *UPI Correspondent*, notes for 8 June 2005

**A** former Bush team member during his first administration is now voicing serious doubts about the collapse of the World Trade Center on 9-11. Former chief economist for the Department of Labor during President George W. Bush's first term Morgan Reynolds comments that the official story about the collapse of the WTC is "bogus" and that it is more likely that a controlled demolition destroyed the Twin Towers and adjacent Building No. 7.

Reynolds, who also served as director of the Criminal Justice Center at the National Center for Policy Analysis in Dallas and is now professor emeritus at Texas A&M University said, "If demolition destroyed three steel skyscrapers at the World Trade Center on 9/11, then the case for an 'inside job' and a government attack on America would be compelling." Reynolds commented from his Texas A&M office, "It is hard to exaggerate the importance of a scientific debate over the cause of the collapse of the twin towers and building 7. If the official wisdom on the collapses is wrong, as I believe it is, then policy based on such erroneous engineering analysis is not likely to be correct either. The government's collapse theory is highly vulnerable on its own terms. Only professional demolition appears to account for the full range of facts associated with the collapse of the three buildings."

*So, Mr. Reynolds, are you only now reading BCA Dispatch for May 2002? Or did NY labor sources tell you something we didn't know? Or is this just a good time to come out? —Ed.*

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## No, This Isn't the Mafia Iraq Contractors Get Billions in \$100 Bills

By Sue Fleming, Reuters, 22 June 2005

**T**he United States handed out nearly \$20 billion of Iraq's funds, with a rush to spend billions in the final days before transferring power to the Iraqis nearly a year ago, a report said on Tuesday.

A report by Democratic Rep. Henry Waxman of California, said in the week before the hand-over on June 28, 2004, the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority ordered the urgent delivery of more than \$4 billion in Iraqi funds from the U.S. Federal Reserve in New York. One single shipment amounted to \$2.4 billion—the largest movement of cash in the bank's history, said Waxman.

Most of these funds came from frozen and seized assets and from the Development Fund for Iraq, which succeeded the U.N.'s oil-for-food program. After the U.S. invasion, the U.N. directed this money should be used by the CPA for the benefit of the Iraqi people. Cash was loaded onto giant pallets for shipment by plane to Iraq, and paid out to contractors who carried it away in duffel bags.

The report, released at a House of Representatives committee hearing, said despite the huge amount of money, there was little U.S. scrutiny in how these assets were managed. "The disbursement of these funds was characterized by significant waste, fraud and abuse," said Waxman.

### Billions in US Bills from Iraqi Accounts Given Blindly

An audit by the U.S. Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction said U.S. auditors could not account for nearly \$8.8 billion in Iraqi funds and the United States had not provided adequate controls for this money. "The CPA's management of Iraqi money was an important responsibility that, in my view, required more diligent accountability, pursuant to its assigned mandate, than we found," said chief inspector Stuart Bowen in testimony.

Auditors found problems safeguarding funds including one instance where a CPA comptroller did not have access to a field safe as the key was located in an unsecured backpack.

Bowen's office has referred three criminal cases to the U.S. Attorney's Office in the past two weeks for misuse of funds. Bowen declined to provide details at the hearing.

In one e-mail released in Waxman's report with the subject line "Pocket Change," a CPA official stressed the need to get money flowing fast before the handover. Rep. Stephen Lynch of Massachusetts, a Democrat, questioned why so much money had to be transferred so fast.

Senior defense official Joseph Benkert said an infusion of funds was needed to address a wide variety of needs before the new Iraqi government took over.

Part of the challenge in tracking how money was spent was the cash environment and lack of electronic transfers.

Contractors were told to turn up with big duffel bags to pick up their payments and some were paid from the back of pick-up trucks. One picture shows grinning CPA officials standing in front of a pile of cash said to be worth \$2 million to be paid to a security

contractor. Rep. Christopher Shays of Connecticut, a Republican, said the photograph disturbed him. "It looks a little loose to me," he said, of the smiling officials. "I share your concern," said Bowen.

Citing documents from the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank in New York, Waxman said the United States flew in nearly \$12 billion overall in U.S. currency to Iraq from the United States between May 2003 and June 2004. This money was used to pay for Iraqi salaries, fund Iraqi ministries and also to pay some U.S. contractors.

In total, more than 281 million individual bills, including more than 107 million \$100 bills, were shipped to Iraq on giant pallets loaded onto C-130 planes, the report said.

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## The End of Oil US DoE Foolish About Saudi Reserves

by Michael T. Klare, Hampshire College, 26 June 2005  
(excerpt)

**...It** would be the height of folly to assume that the Saudis are capable of doubling their petroleum output in the years ahead, as projected by the Department of Energy. Indeed, it will be a minor miracle if they raise their output by a million or two barrels per day and sustain that level for more than a year or so. Eventually, in the not-too-distant future, Saudi production will begin a sharp decline from which there is no escape. And when that happens, the world will face an energy crisis of unprecedented scale.

The moment that Saudi production goes into permanent decline, the Petroleum Age as we know it will draw to a close. Oil will still be available on international markets, but not in the abundance to which we have become accustomed and not at a price that many of us will be able to afford. Transportation, and everything it effects -- which is to say, virtually the entire world economy -- will be much, much more costly. The cost of food will also rise, as modern agriculture relies to an extraordinary extent on petroleum products for tilling, harvesting, pest protection, processing, and delivery. Many other products made with petroleum -- paints, plastics, lubricants, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and so forth -- will also prove far more costly. Under these circumstances, a global economic contraction -- with all the individual pain and hardship that would surely produce -- appears nearly inevitable.

If Matt Simmons ["Twilight In the Desert"] is right, it is only a matter of time before this scenario comes to pass. If we act now to limit our consumption of oil and develop non-petroleum energy alternatives, we can face the "twilight" of the Petroleum Age with some degree of hope; if we fail to do so, we are in for a very grim time indeed. And the longer we cling to the belief that Saudi Arabia will save us, the more painful will be our inevitable fall...

*Michael T. Klare is a professor of peace and world security studies at Hampshire College and the author of Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Petroleum Dependency (Metropolitan Books).*

## LETTERS

### Granny D Is Indefatigable, and an Avid Reader

...I read your Dispatch cover to cover. I especially liked the February issue with your quote from Macbeth with Bush head back in laughter. Good stuff. I like the little love notes from the editor to Granny D, too!

I left the Dartmouth/Hitchcock hospital, with them saying I had a benign growth in the throat, and in an inoperable place too dangerous to operate. My son, Jim, sought us a second opinion at Lahey Clinic where they said there is no growth...

I discovered at Hampshire commencement where I did the keynote, a speech over the mic, with a tracheotomy is not a pleasant thing to hear, and so I will not speak again until I am free of this dreadful contraption. I'm in hibernation like an old bear!

Hugs. —grannyd [Haddock], Dublin NH

### A Faith-Informed Reader

...One question my father and I had was with the "Soldier of Christ" article. it wasn't quite clear what your purpose was in including it (though very interesting)—perhaps because the National Association of Evangelicals is one of the (real or perceived or mediatized) political components of the US?

...The Quakers have done a good job of explicitly applying their beliefs to real-life US political activities through their Friends Committee on National Legislation, FCNL. So, I put weight on their conclusions and suggestions—I guess that makes me a faith-informed voter!

[Dan recommends <http://www.sgi-usa.org/> for Buddhist concerns; <http://emes.quaker.eu.org/documents/files/meeting-the-spirit.html> for Quaker inspiration; and <http://www.fcnl.org/> for Quaker political activity.]

...I wonder if the AfD has any particular views/biases/assumptions around religious organizations, groups, people and their role in democratic life?

—Dan Dewey, S. Deerfield MA

### Editor's Response:

*Regarding the piece about Commander Tom and Pastor Ted, I included it for three reasons: The Harper's article from which it is taken is outstanding and gives readers a detailed view of this somewhat mixed philosophy/policy. Commander Tom illustrates that individual followers have to some extent idiosyncratic variations that might allow us to find something in common. And I wanted to encourage readers not to stereotype "Christians" but to converse with them—in Tom's case it might be conversing with people who are also "less advantaged" though not totally "disadvantaged". (Maybe you remember Dispatch articles about talking with Republicans?)*

*Maybe the key is "personal insecurity". People with money and education can be more confident of making it, in the system or alone. But people with little money and little education need to tie in with an affluent and powerful support group, which gives a consistent image of the future. And education may be the key to change—not just technical education, but "liberal" education—history, geography/geology, sociology, literature, art, philosophy/psychology, languages. The hallmark of change is a sense of democracy/brother(sister)hood. Can we community-school each other, including our "fundamentalist" brothers/sisters or their children? By the time this happens, Bush*

*will be out of office one way or another, but his associates will still be around, perhaps running for president. That's one reason I'm hopeful for regionalization and regional autonomy. That's my view. AfD has no official view.*

## CHAPTER NEWS

BCA's guest speaker on June 15<sup>th</sup> was Ari Lipman, an organizer for the **Greater Boston Interfaith Organization**, along with involved volunteer and BCA/AfD member **Lee Ann Hoff**. GBIO's primary goal is to develop local leadership and organized power to fight for social justice. Its substantial achievements in housing, zoning, public schools, and janitor pay are reviewed on [www.GBIO.org](http://www.GBIO.org) along with current health care projects.

Founded in 1996 by a group of 45 clergy and community leaders, and affiliated with the national Industrial Areas Foundation (founded by Saul Alinsky), GBIO boasts a 50,000-person base in 65 churches and other institutions. Working principally with volunteers, they democratically decide priorities and train others in Greater Boston's communities across religious, racial, ethnic, class and neighborhood lines for the public good. Each member organization commits to providing 1% of its operating budget to GBIO's work.

--- Edited from notes by

Ruth Weizenbaum, North East Regional Rep., AfD

## ACTION ALERTS

Chuck Turner's "Fund the Dream" rally scheduled for July 14 has been replaced with a series of bottom-up continuing workshops—More Than A Paycheck—for unemployed persons. Call Councillor Turner's office for more info. 617-635-3510.

## 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 fr DEMOCRACY PLEDGE  
\_\_\_\$26/Year - "Count me in!"

\_\_\_\$52/Year - "Contributor" (We need to average this amount.)

\_\_\_\$104/Year - "Sustainer" (Helping us thrive.)

\_\_\_\$208/Year - "Community Steward"

\_\_\_\$500/Year - "Realize the vision!"

\_\_\_ What's fair for YOU? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Street, No./Box/Apt: \_\_\_\_\_

Town and Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Night: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## COLOPHON

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