

BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the **Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy** **June 2006**

*There is a river flowing now very fast.
It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid.
They will try to hold on to the shore.
They are being torn apart and will suffer greatly.
Know that the river has its destination.
We must let go of the shore, push off into the river, keep our heads above water.*

At this time in our history we are to take nothing personally, least of all ourselves, for the moment that we do, our spiritual growth and journey come to a halt.

The time of the lone wolf is over.

Gather yourselves. Banish the word struggle from your attitude and vocabulary.

All that we do now must be done in a sacred manner and in celebration.

We are the ones we have been waiting for.

—attributed to Hopi Elders

ALLIANCE NEWS (Continued on Back Pages)

?Are we ready to remake this country? OK, what is our vision—the what and the how—for the coming years? Read a challenge and suggestions for Alliance change on pages 12-15.

Chapter Calendar

*** Get On Board a BCA Action Project ***

Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy's next meeting will be on **Wednesday, June 21**, at **7:00 p.m.** at **Cambridge Friends Meeting**, 5 Longfellow Park (9-minute walk from Harvard Square T station, west on Brattle St.), Cambridge.

"We are the ones we have been waiting for." We have **5** projects going or starting up. Come hear about them from participants. **Choose one, and go for it!**

- * **Election Defense.** Get trained to stop vote fraud.
- * **Venezuela trip.** Go, see, make the connections.
- * **Gandhi Circles.** Launch strategic nonviolence.
- * **Corporations Out of Schools.** Bottled water out first.
- * **Regional Roundtables.** Local-based regional economy.

— Refreshments —

A New, Project-Oriented BCA? It's Time Again to Act on Challenges

by *Dave Lewit, BCA chapter co-founder and co-chair*

The Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy (BCA) started in 1996 with determination and turbulence. The turbulence had to do with establishing an organizational theme and structure. Ronnie Dugger's clarion call to grapple with the megacorporate juggernaut packed the First Baptist Church in Central Square, Cambridge. Fortnightly meetings attracted several dozen people for a year (Continued on Page 2)



Internet, class C networks, (detail) by Barrett Lyon: www.opte.org

Information Highway Robbers AT&T Bribes Rep, Would Sink Net-Neutrality

by *Joel Bleifuss, In These Times, June 2006*

What makes the Internet revolutionary is that it is democratic, open to anyone with a computer and an Internet connection. That could soon change. [See footnote with news to this effect. —Ed.]

As *In These Times* went to press, the House was setting to vote on the "Communications Opportunity Promotion and Enhancement (COPE) Act of 2006," a bill written by the telephone and cable TV corporations. Among other provisions, the act formally guts what is known as the First Amendment of the Internet—"network neutrality." (The Senate will consider a similar bill in early June.)

"Net neutrality ensures that the public can view the smallest blog just as easily as the largest corporate Web site and prevents companies like AT&T from rigging the playing field for only the highest-paying sites and services," says Timothy Karr, the campaign director for Free Press, a media reform organization. Karr is coordinating SavetheInternet.com, a bipartisan coalition working to preserve network neutrality.

They Would Charge for Fast Lane, or Censor Spots

By not including network neutrality protections, the COPE Act upholds a 2005 ruling from the Federal (Continued on Page 3)

BCA PROJECTS (Continued from Page 1)

of trying out issues in small groups, settling on a mission and structure, and struggling for leadership. To a large extent, contention was around our focus—local issues like neighborhood preservation, or global systems like the hegemonic Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). Megacorporate forces were clear around the MAI, but relatively trivial around local developers eyeing the decaying Central Square store fronts and small apartments. A local coalition held large citizen hearings on neighborhood preservation, but few Alliance devotees attended. The developers ultimately scaled back a bit, but replaced the storefronts with more expensive stores, offices, and housing.

BCA's First Big Projects

Meanwhile, six BCA members and six North Bridge (chapter in Boston's far west suburbs) members combined to organize a high-profile confrontation with the MAI. Two hundred people packed a Boston College lecture hall and break-out rooms all one May day, to learn about international trade and politics, and to judge a debate involving a US Treasury negotiator, a conservative think-tank researcher, Citizens Trade Campaign's director, AfD's founder Ronnie Dugger, and Congressman John Tierney. The MAI—secretly negotiated to 90 percent completion—went down in flames, with AfD having done its part among the civil society organizations opposed to MAI in a dozen countries.

In the year following, BCA meetings moved to Longfellow Park on the other side of Harvard Square, and organized a citizen task force to construct a democratic alternative to the MAI and the whole free trade system. The result was the model treaty A Common Agreement on Investment and Society (CAIS), which has been aired at international conferences and continues to evolve.

Drifting Toward Educational Meetings

After these striking achievements, BCA's direction was pretty well set on systemic issues such as community transformation (e.g., Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative & Food Project), globalization (e.g. BCA's MA Globalization Impact Bill), regional cooperation (e.g., Mondragon giant co-ops), strategic non-violence (e.g., A Force More Powerful), telecommunications (wireless phoning), regional power systems (California/Enron), and war (Kosovo). Because chapter co-chair Jean Maryborn resigned to form a new chapter, Mass Bay South, that position was up for refilling but we had already lost our business-meeting format. Despite calls for nominations and voting, the position remains vacant. We had drifted away from task forces toward educational meetings. But early in September, 2001, BCA's meeting was announced to discuss "Shall BCA shift emphasis from educational meetings to small-group projects?"

9-11 Disoriented Us and Our Collaborators

Then, BOOM! On 9-11-2001 the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon were hit, and our meeting the following day was packed with 40 people aghast, needing to confer and relate to one another. Meetings followed in which we connected with Boston's Muslim people, who felt scapegoated. Our small-group projects went by the boards. With elected officials distracted, it became problematic to continue to lobby legislators to pass our Globalization Impact Bill. CAIS languished. Our chapter activities became pretty much educational mini-forums, except for fear of another stolen election—a few members initiated and co-organized the well-attended Electronic Voting in Massachusetts panel at Suffolk University Law School. Still, in Ohio and

other states Republicans jiggered the 2004 elections to return Bush to office.

New Energy

Now, with Bush's ratings sinking and 2006 congressional and state elections looming in November, BCA is getting into gear again. At our March meeting we had a panel of water-protecting activists, and in April we had a panel of participants in the World Social Forum in Caracas, Venezuela with Chavez's Bolivarian revolution. At our May meeting Jonathan Simon launched the Election Defense Alliance (EDA) with Sally Castleman, focused on electronic voting and tabulation fraud. We had good attendance including many new faces, and will use the sound recording and its transcription to recruit other civic organizations, and then bring possibly hundreds into workshops to monitor and challenge foul play in the precincts—we have Sally's cover letter, and await a more detailed proposal. Download and hear a recording of the meeting at <http://492cafe.org/audio/temp/> thanks to techie Jeff Manzelli, known on the air as Freeman Z.

BCA's steering committee met as usual one week after the chapter meeting. Using prior input from chapter member Lee Ann Hoff, we decided not to have a speaker at the next meeting, but to do what we had planned just before 9-11-2001—to *shift emphasis to small group action projects*, noting that there are already five active projects in which BCA is involved, and fostering the expansion of one or more through community alliances. National AfD may offer help. We have had AfD national coordinators and regional representatives at BCA meetings before, and this might be a good time to discuss a whole new chapter format, with ad hoc meetings of task groups and semiannual regional meetings to help coordinate projects beyond the local, e.g., election defense. Our website www.NewEnglandAlliance.org can be expanded to interactively host task groups from all chapters in New England: BCA, North Bridge, Seacoast (NH), Mass Bay South, Capital District (NY), and Down East (ME). Indeed, the weaker chapters are in need of re-organization. This meeting can hear members of each action project or task group.

Expanding Ongoing Projects

So now we need to identify members, conveners, and leaders of task groups:

- * *Election Defense* (citizen monitoring, etc.), collaborating with EDA and other groups
- * *Gandhi Truth-Force Centennial* (strategic nonviolence), with Nonviolent Peaceforce and other groups
- * *Bottled Water Out of Schools* (corporate influence), with AfD's Defending Water for Life campaign
- * *Regional Roundtables* (local-based regional economy), with AfD's campaign on Corporate Globalization & Positive Alternatives
- * *Venezuela Trip* (participatory budgeting, CAIS, etc.), with World Social Forum organizers

Each of these projects can benefit from community and regional involvement. With less frequent chapter meetings focused on one or more of these topics, can BCA and its sister chapters have a new life? Can we have a more certain impact on the world and its future? ■

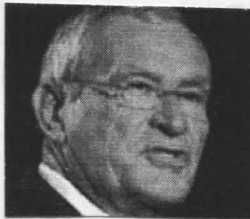
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NET NEUTRALITY (Continued from Page 1)

Communications Commission that allows Internet service providers—telephone companies like AT&T and Verizon and cable companies like Comcast—to charge Web content creators a fee to make their sites readily accessible.

For example, take a filmmaker who wants to produce a documentary and distribute it to the public on his Web site. Under this new legislation, a service provider like AT&T would be able to charge the filmmaker for making his content available to their customers. Or, if AT&T did not approve of the documentary, it could refuse to let its customers access it all together—thereby allowing corporate censorship of a medium now characterized by the freewheeling exchange of ideas. In effect, the legislation allows the telecom industry to become the tollbooth operator on the information superhighway. The Internet will begin to look like cable TV, where viewers can only choose from available options.

SavetheInternet.com puts it this way: "The Internet has always been driven by innovation. Web sites and services succeeded or failed on their own merit. Without net neutrality, decisions now made collectively by millions of users will be made in corporate boardrooms."



AT&T CEO Ed. Whitacre

To harness the power of those millions is the goal of Save the Internet.com, whose key players in addition to Free Press include MoveOn, Punk Voter, Gun Owners of America and Consumers Union, along with bloggers like Glenn Reynolds at InstaPundit and Matt Stoller at MyDD. But as netizens are heeding a call to arms, the telecom industry has responded with a counterattack.

Karr observes, "How can you tell when corporations are running scared? When they wind up their coin-operated frontmen in Washington to unleash a tide of untruths upon the public."

Bill Clinton's Propagandist vs. Netizens

He is referring to the man leading the campaign against net neutrality, Mike "Industry Sock Puppet" McCurry, the former press spokesman for President Bill Clinton. McCurry is now a partner at Public Strategies, a PR firm whose motto is "managing campaigns for corporations around the clock, around the world." In other words he is a 24-hour call boy for the telecom industry.

Using a classic PR technique, McCurry obfuscates the issue, invoking the First Amendment and dismissing net neutrality as "regulation." Writing on the Huffington Post, he addressed his critics: "The First Amendment of the Internet is under assault! ... The Internet has worked absent regulation, and now you want to introduce it for a solution to what?"

At Verizon, McCurry has gotten Peter B. Davidson, the senior vice president for federal government relations, on message. In a mass e-mail to the constituents of Congress members, Davidson told the voters "troubling 'net neutrality' provisions ... have the effect of regulating the Internet. ... Urge your representative, [insert name of representative], to support the swift passage of a clean, unencumbered cable-choice bill that will give consumers real choice and bring lower prices to the cable market WITHOUT regulating the Internet."

McCurry is a masterful propagandist. Consider his 561-word Huffington Post screed against the slimy "net neuts." Of the 26 sentences in this "essay," 11 of them were rhetorical questions. Such questions allow a person to hide behind the guise of critical inquiry and make unsubstantiated allegations. For

example, I might ask, "Mike McCurry, when did you decide to become an industry whore?" (Well, sometimes unsubstantiated.)

Another of McCurry's facile ploys is to provide his readers with false choices. Consider this sentence: "I'd rather have a robust Internet that can handle the volume of traffic that we will put on it in the near future rather than a public Internet where we all wait in line for the next porno-spammer to let his content go before we get to have arguments like this." That's our choice?

Responding to McCurry's nonsense, ITT Senior Editor David Sirota observed: "Mike McCurry is in the middle of one of those tailspins of dishonesty and contradiction that is so wildly out of control you just have to sit back, grab some popcorn and watch with laugh."

While Stoller, at MyDD, added: "Bashing Mike McCurry is not only fun, it's important, as there must be a cost to his decision to sell us out."

Congressional Step 'n' Fetchit

Such costs must also be borne by those in Congress who have decided to help gut net neutrality. The most prominent Democratic sponsor of the COPE Act is Rep. Bobby Rush, a former Black Panther who represents Chicago's South Side.



Rep. Bobby Rush

How did this one-time militant morph into the Step 'n' Fetchit of the telecom industry? (Note the rhetorical question.) Perhaps the \$1 million that AT&T (formerly SBC) gave to the Rebirth of Englewood Community Development Corporation has something to do with it. Rush and his wife founded and serve on the board of this company, which employs their son and which used AT&T money to build the Bobby L. Rush Center for Community Technology.

Sheila Krumholz, the acting director of the Center for Responsive Politics, the nonprofit group that tracks the role of money in politics, noted, "It is a clear conflict of interest for Rep. Rush to weigh in on this bill, much less take a leadership role championing the position of a company that paid \$1 million to name a building after him."

While the \$1 million might have completed the bill of sale, the bidding for Rush's services began years ago. Since 1998, telecom companies have contributed \$204,000 to Rush's reelection campaigns, with AT&T (and its predecessors) leading the pack at \$49,000.

In most mature democracies, this would be against the law, but until we enact meaningful campaign finance reform, such bribery is perfectly legal.

Mass Rep. Ed Markey to the Rescue?

There are some honorable people in Congress. In the House, Rep. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) has now introduced the Network Neutrality Act of 2006 that, in his words, "is designed to save the Internet and thwart those who seek to fundamentally and detrimentally alter the Internet as we know it." However, the GOP-controlled Rules Committee is unlikely to let it on to the floor.

Meanwhile, in the Senate, Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) and Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) are currently drafting a net neutrality bill. Whether that bill has a future—along with the net as we know it—depends on the volume of public protest.

Ed. Update: *Markey's amendment came to the House floor on 8 June and was defeated 269-152 by most Republicans and the DLC. Then they passed the COPE bill 321-101 :< . So on to the Senate. Sign a petition to save internet neutrality at <http://www.SavetheInternet.com> and make your voice heard.*

Saving the Internet

House Vote Quashes Local Democracy

by Robert McChesney, www.Free Press.net, 9 June 2006

Passage of major telecom legislation without enforceable Net Neutrality is a low point in the history of US policymaking. The telephone-cable Internet duopoly providers deluged Congress with an army of lobbyists, countless millions spent on misleading PR spin and outright lies, and a single-minded determination to put their bottom line ahead of the democratic principles of an open, neutral Internet.

If we lose Net Neutrality, we lose the most promising method for regular people to access and provide diverse and independent news, information and entertainment. We will see the Internet become like cable TV: a handful of massive companies will decide what you can see and how much it will cost. Gone will be the entrepreneurship and innovation that has made the Internet the most important cultural and economic engine of our times.

The Senate cannot ignore the massive right-left coalition of Americans that have unified behind Net Neutrality: over 750,000 individuals, nearly every consumer group, the Internet's founders, and a rapidly growing coalition of nearly every industry that relies on the Internet.

In the past two months, net neutrality has gone from little-known tech jargon to the most contentious issue in the COPE Act. The hundreds of thousands of Americans who signed the SaveTheInternet.com petition, added the coalition to their MySpace accounts, voted pro-net neutrality videos to the front page of YouTube.com and called their Members of Congress represent the tweak of the tiger's tail. The House vote is a pyrrhic victory for the telecom lobby. Momentum to defend net neutrality will only grow as Americans realize that the threat to internet freedom is real. Senators can expect to hear their constituents loud and clear on their responsibility to protect net neutrality and we will be watching closely to make sure they listen.

The internet was created with your tax dollars to help scientists communicate freely on defense projects. Now the GOP and DLC are privatizing it's control. Internet freedom was essential for citizen groups to stop MAI takeover of world economy. Finis? —Ed.

ISRAEL-PALESTINE

Israel "A Sick Society"

Poverty, Suicides, Vets on Drugs

Dorothy Naor, *New Profile*, 17 May 2006

RAMAT HA SHARON (ISRAEL) — New Profile, an Israeli organization, wishes to express appreciation to PCUSA (Presbyterian Church USA) for contemplating adopting a policy of selective divestment as a means of bringing peace to Palestinians and Israelis. We fervently support such an endeavor, and hope that PCUSA will indeed adopt divestment as a non-violent means of ending Israel's Occupation of Palestinians and their lands.

We wish to assure PCUSA that it is no more anti-Semitic to criticize and oppose Israeli government policies than it was anti-American to oppose the Vietnam war.

Evils of Occupation Boomerang

Indeed, ending the Occupation can only benefit Israelis. For,

the Occupation exacts a price from Israelis as well as from Palestinians. In addition to loss of life and increased militarism, Israelis have witnessed these past years a steady devaluation of human life, as is evident from the socio-economic sphere and the affliction of post-traumatic distress. It also seems clear that without outside help, Israel's Occupation of Palestinians and their lands is unlikely to end.

Successive Israeli governments have spent enormous amounts of money on expansion, to the detriment of social benefits for the Israeli population. While it is true that had their been no Occupation, Israeli governments might not have spent the money on social benefits, the fact that expansion continues apace reveals Israel's intent to prevent the emergence of a Palestinian state and to rid the West Bank of as many Palestinians as possible.

To this end, money is spent on maintaining a large military presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, on erecting the apartheid wall at 4 million dollars a mile, with 400 miles planned (twice the length had it been built on the 'green line'), constructing 6,000 more units in highly subsidized settlements (this past year alone, some 12,000 new settlers moved into the West Bank, 4,000 more than were evicted from the Gaza Strip). Much money goes also for constructing super-highways for Israelis-only in the Occupied Territories, as well as for new lookout towers (that can double as sniper towers), and checkpoints galore (mainly separating Palestinian communities).

Poverty, Violence, Suicides, Meds Too Costly

While all this is taking place at considerable economic cost, poverty in Israel has increased sharply. Over 1/4 of Israelis now live under the poverty line. A staggering 34.1 percent of them are children. Last year 1 of every 5 children lived under the poverty line; now 1 of every 3 children goes to bed hungry. And every 4th elderly person is poor. No wonder, then, that Israel's elderly are "Suicidal," as Yedioth Ahronot revealed in a report showing that over 50 percent of suicides in Israel every year are committed by people aged 65 and more. There are additional worrying trends. Not only are the few rich getting richer and the numerous poor getting poorer, but also many in the middle class who have jobs are sliding into poverty due to low wages.

One result of the increased poverty is that now 25% of Israelis forego medical care because they cannot afford it. 75% of the poor cannot afford medication. But of all the sad statistics, one of the more shocking is that 40% of Holocaust survivors now live in desperate straits. It is shameful that of all places in the world, in Israel, Holocaust survivors live in dire poverty and misery.

The worsening economic conditions contribute, in turn, to escalation of stress and violence. Thus one of every five elderly Israelis is subject to abuse, mainly by spouses or children. Additionally, the Israeli police recorded a 36 percent increase in violence among minors in 2004, a 24% increase in violence among them the first months of 2006, and a 55% increase of violence against children these past 10 years.

Post-Traumatic Stress

A direct cost of Occupation and a threat to Israel's welfare is post-traumatic stress, which can result in addiction to drugs and alcohol, and can also contribute to violence. A rehabilitation center that opened in 2001 with capacity for 25-30 addicts, soon discovered that most of the problems resulted from experiences the addicts had had while in the military. The center, Kfar Izun, then publicized itself, and was shocked to receive 900 requests for help in a single week.

A counselor at a rehabilitation center terms the malady "a

ticking bomb." Help, he relates, is unavailable for many soldiers who have gone "into terrible distress of drugs, beatings, violence, impatience, ... soldiers who clashed with a civilian population, and when they were discharged understood that they had been wrong." Hundreds, he reveals, "are roaming about with the feeling that there is no point to living, and the path to suicide and drugs is very easy. We are afraid that former soldiers will commit criminal acts as a result of their distress."

One young woman, having succumbed to drugs after her discharge, blames the drug phenomenon on the "sick Israeli society"—a "society of war." The soldier who killed "a man or a child" or "entered the home of an Arab family at night, beat a child, a mother and took the father into detention" upon release takes drugs "to try to forget the pictures that are with him all the time since then." She said that drugs are "an expression of the strong desire of young Israelis to escape from the insanity that has been forced on them."

Yehuda Shaul, a former conscript, caps it all: "It's a situation that screws up everyone. ... People start out at different points and end up at different points, but everyone goes through this process. No one returns from the territories without it leaving a deep imprint, messing up his head."

—Visit www.newprofile.org Special thanks to George Salzman.

Israel Vet Raps Moral Corruption Checkpoints Bar Truth, Not Terrorists

by Michel Hoebink, www.radionetherlands.nl, 2 June 2006

Two years ago, a group of ex-soldiers in the Israeli army decided to go public with their photographs and stories about the routine harassment and humiliation of Palestinians by the Israeli army in the occupied territories. Their initiative provoked angry reactions in Israel but also found support. Yehuda Shaul, the founder of the group recently gave a lecture in Amsterdam. "We are warning Israeli society of irreversible corruption."

Yehuda Shaul (23) spent two of his three years of military service in the West Bank city of Hebron, where hundreds of Israeli soldiers protect 500 Jewish settlers living amidst a population of 130.000 Palestinians. As he approached the end of his military service, when he started to think of himself as a civilian again, he realised the gravity of the situation. Together with some of his comrades, he decided to do something about it. "We felt we had a moral obligation to reveal what is going on in the occupied territories each and every day."

Breaking the Silence

In June 2004, the group organised an exhibition in Tel Aviv entitled 'Breaking the Silence'. It featured photographs and videotaped testimonies of ex-soldiers who served in Hebron. The exhibition explained the daily routine of the occupation, the small and more serious incidents of harassment and humiliation of Palestinians by the Israeli military. Although Israeli soldiers have voiced their concerns in the past by refusing to serve in Lebanon or in the occupied territories, it was the first time soldiers had produced such explicit evidence.

The organisers were overwhelmed by the public response to their initiative. Thousands came to visit the exhibition, which was publicised by the national and international media. The exhibition was also displayed in the Israeli parliament, but ended up being raided by the military police, who confiscated some of the

video material and threatened to prosecute the testifying ex-soldiers for being implicated in the abuses.

Last Monday, Yehuda Shaul was in Amsterdam, where he gave a lecture for university students. Shaul, a sturdily built orthodox Jew with a skullcap and beard, explains that the main concern of his group is the moral corruption which is a result of the occupation. "We feel that service in the occupied territories has distorted our emotions and our sense of justice, the moral values which we were taught."

When Shaul and his comrades joined the Israeli Defence Force, they thought of it as "the most moral army in the world". This belief, however, was shattered during their first weeks of service in the Palestinian territories.

Looting, destruction, perversion

Shaul talks about incidents of looting and destruction of Palestinian properties; of driving over private cars with armoured vehicles for fun; about the practice of leaving handcuffed and blindfolded Palestinians to "dry out" for hours in the sun, merely "because they smile too much at a checkpoint" and about indiscriminate shelling of a Palestinian neighbourhood with grenades in response to Palestinian gunfire. "After a while, being part of this makes it impossible to continue viewing Palestinians as equal human beings."

The behaviour of the army in the occupied territories not only destroys the moral of the soldiers, says Shaul, it erodes the core values of Israeli society. But the Israeli public prefers to turn a blind eye; the whole society, Shaul says, is involved in the denial of the realities of the occupation:

"The Israeli public wants to maintain at any cost this image of the Israeli military as the most moral army in the world and of our operations in the Palestinian territories as 'enlightenment occupation'. Checkpoints are in fact designed not to keep terrorists out but to prevent the realities of the occupied territories from entering Israel. It is as if the Israeli people are saying: 'We know that some shit is going on out there, but please don't tell us about it!' Reports of abuses against Palestinians are regularly dismissed as 'extreme cases', not representative of the general situation."

Catharsis

The Breaking the Silence group views itself as a form of national catharsis; it wants to break through this wall of denial and confront the Israeli public with the realities of the occupation. "Our sole message", says Shaul, "is that there is no such thing as 'enlightenment occupation'. Occupation does not go together with an ethical code of conduct. In its daily realities, injustice is the rule."

Although divided between support and rejection, public responses to the groups' message are always emotional. Here in Europe, says Shaul, it is easy to tell these stories, but in Israel it can be very hard. "Among the audience may be mothers of soldiers who are serving in the Palestinian territories or who sit at home with psychological problems."

Since the exhibition in 2004, hundreds of other discharged soldiers have come forward with their stories from other parts of the occupied territories. The main activity of the group is now to record their testimonies, which are placed on their website. They also give lectures throughout Israel and organise guided tours for Israelis and foreigners through the city of Hebron, to give them an insider-view of the way the occupation affects the daily life of ordinary Palestinians.

Recently, the group has decided to take their message outside Israel. In March, a new exhibition was opened in Geneva. This autumn, the exhibition will also come to the Netherlands. ■

9-11 FRAUD

WTC Bldg 7 Guided Planes Then Was Demolished To Cover Up

Paul J Watson & Alex Jones, *Prison Planet.com*, 21 April 2006

Former member of the Helmut Schmidt cabinet, 25-year veteran German Parliamentarian and global intelligence expert Andreas Von Bülow, says that the 9/11 attack was run by the highest levels of the US intelligence apparatus using WTC Building 7 as a command bunker which was later demolished in order to destroy the crime scene.

Speaking to The Alex Jones Show on the GCN Radio Network, Von Bülow said that "the official story is so wrong, it must be an inside job."

Von Bülow discussed the special software programs that allow the CIA to track suspicious stock market movements in real time. Record put-options placed on United and American Airlines in the week before 9/11, a speculation that the stock would crash, clearly indicated inside foreknowledge of the impending attack.

"If the stock market has very strange movements immediately they take care of this and they had a lot of tapes and the lawyers told the people to destroy these tapes.

"The Bush administration is in a deep defensive [mode] and probably they would like to come out with a new offensive," said Von Bülow as he considered whether a new staged false flag terror attack could be launched to further an interventionist agenda. "I would hope that one 'new Pearl Harbor' is enough," said Von Bülow, "but I cannot be sure."

Von Bülow commented on the disputed identities of the named hijackers. "The names of these nineteen [hijackers] never came up in the official passenger list, until now there's no proof they were on the planes." He also pointed out how the alleged hijacker's flight instructors told investigators that they couldn't even fly Cessna's, never mind complex large commercial airliners.

Von Bülow also touched upon the implausible collapse of the buildings. "The towers came down in the velocity of free fall which is totally impossible, they fall down in 8, 9, or 10 seconds, the pancake theory is ridiculous," he said.

Von Bülow also highlighted the fact that there were 67 successful intercepts of errant aircraft in the year of 2001 before 9/11 and yet four planes were allowed to veer wildly off course without any being intercepted on that one day.

Rudolph Giuliani opened a \$13 million emergency Command Center (pictured) on the 23rd floor of World Trade Center Building 7 in June 1999 in part to respond to and manage terrorist attacks.

Von Bülow referenced the command bunker in Building 7, calling it the "optimal place" to run the attacks using remote control technology to guide the planes in and then destroying the crime scene by imploding the building. "There were two procedures, one was flying in the aircraft; the second was the explosions," he said.

When asked precisely which parties carried out the attack Von Bülow said it must have been a "very small group" within the CIA with the help of Saudi Arabian and Pakistani secret service intelligence.

Von Bülow outlined his view that one reason for the execution of 9/11 was to provide the justification for US military bases in the near and Middle East to be built in anticipation for a future confrontation with China, whom the Neo-Cons believe have grown too powerful and need to have their geopolitical wings clipped.



Zogby Poll Revisits 9-11 NYers See Government Complicity

by Mike Berger, *911truth.org*, 22 May 2006

Although the Bush administration continues to exploit September 11 to justify domestic spying, unprecedented spending and a permanent state of war, a new Zogby poll reveals that less than half of the American public trusts the official 9/11 story or believes the attacks were adequately investigated.

The poll is the first scientific survey of Americans' belief in a 9/11 cover up or the need to investigate possible US government complicity, and was commissioned to inform deliberations at the June 2-4 "9/11: Revealing the Truth, Reclaiming Our Future" conference in Chicago. Poll results indicate 42% believe there has indeed been a cover up (with 10% unsure) and 45% think "Congress or an international tribunal should re-investigate the attacks, including whether any US government officials consciously allowed or helped facilitate their success" (with 8% unsure).

According to Janice Matthews, executive director of 911truth.org, "To those who have followed the mounting evidence for US government involvement in 9/11, these results are both heartening and frankly quite amazing, given the mainstream media's ongoing refusal to cover the most critical questions of that day.

"Our August 2004 Zogby poll of New Yorkers showed nearly half believe certain US officials 'consciously' allowed the attacks to happen and 66% want a fresh investigation, but these were people closest to the tragedy and most familiar with facts refuting the official account. This revelation that so many millions nationwide now also recognize a 9/11 cover up and the need for a new inquiry should be a wake up call for all 2006 political candidates hoping to turn this country around. We think it also indicates Americans are awakening to the larger pattern of deceit that led us into Constitutional twilight and endless war, and that our independent media may have finally come of age."

Poll co-author, W. David Kubiak concurs, saying: "Despite years of relentless media promotion, whitewash and 9/11 Commission propaganda, the official 9/11 story still can't even muster 50% popular support. Since this myth has been the administration's primary source of political and war-making power, this level of distrust has revolutionary implications for everyone working for peace, justice and civil liberties. If we ever hope to reclaim this country, end aggression and restore international respect, we all must finally scrutinize that day when things started to go so terribly wrong. The media and movement

leaders ignore this call at their peril, because tens of millions are clearly telling us here they are ready for 9/11 truth."

The poll sponsors see knowledge of the collapse of World Trade Center Building 7 as a bellwether issue, because if people do not know this elementary fact, they have probably not been exposed to any independent 9/11 research at all. Since only 52% of respondents had ever heard of this collapse and 45% support a reinvestigation, it may be reasonably inferred that a public fully informed of all the unreported 9/11 facts might support a new investigation by a margin of 80% or more.

The poll of American residents was conducted from Friday, May 12 through Tuesday, May 16, 2006. Overall results have a margin of sampling error of +/- 2.9 percent. For technical details of survey, go to <http://www.911truth.org/article.php?story=20060522022041421>

Education, Pay for Venezuela's Poor They Grasp Rights Despite Negative Media

by John Pilger, *The Guardian* (UK), 13 May 2006

I have spent the past three weeks filming in the hillside barrios of Caracas, in streets and breeze-block houses that defy gravity and torrential rain and emerge at night like fireflies in the fog. Caracas is said to be one of the world's toughest cities, yet I have known no fear; the poorest have welcomed my colleagues and me with a warmth characteristic of ordinary Venezuelans but also with the unmistakable confidence of a people who know that change is possible and who, in their everyday lives, are reclaiming noble concepts long emptied of their meaning in the west: "reform", "popular democracy", "equity", "social justice" and, yes, "freedom".

The other night, in a room bare except for a single fluorescent tube, I heard these words spoken by the likes of Ana Lucia Fernandez, aged 86, Celedonia Oviedo, aged 74, and Mavis Mendez, aged 95. A mere 33-year-old, Sonia Alvarez, had come with her two young children. Until about a year ago, none of them could read and write; now they are studying mathematics. For the first time in its modern era, Venezuela has almost 100% literacy.

This achievement is due to a national programme, called Mision Robinson, designed for adults and teenagers previously denied an education because of poverty. Mision Ribas is giving everyone a secondary school education, called a bachillerato. (The names Robinson and Ribas refer to Venezuelan independence leaders from the 19th century.) Named, like much else here, after the great liberator Simon Bolivar, "Bolivarian", or people's, universities have opened, introducing, as one parent told me, "treasures of the mind, history and music and art, we barely knew existed". Under Hugo Chávez, Venezuela is the first major oil producer to use its oil revenue to liberate the poor.

Mavis Mendez has seen, in her 95 years, a parade of governments preside over the theft of tens of billions of dollars in oil spoils, much of it flown to Miami, together with the steepest descent into poverty ever known in Latin America; from 18% in 1980 to 65% in 1995, three years before Chávez was elected. "We didn't matter in a human sense," she said. "We lived and died without real education and running water, and food we couldn't afford. When we fell ill, the weakest died. In the east of the city, where the mansions are, we were invisible, or we were feared. Now I can read and write my name, and so much more; and whatever the rich and their media say, we have planted the seeds of true democracy, and I am full of joy that I have lived to witness it."

Latin American governments often give their regimes a new sense of legitimacy by holding a constituent assembly that drafts a new constitution. When he was elected in 1998, Chávez used this brilliantly to decentralise, to give the impoverished grassroots power they had never known and to begin to dismantle a corrupt political superstructure as a prerequisite to changing the direction of the economy. His setting-up of missions as a means of bypassing saboteurs in the old, corrupt bureaucracy was typical of the extraordinary political and social imagination that is changing Venezuela peacefully. This is his "Bolivarian revolution", which, at this stage, is not dissimilar to the post-war European social democracies.

Chávez, a former army major, was anxious to prove he was not yet another military "strongman". He promised that his every move would be subject to the will of the people. In his first year as president in 1999, he held an unprecedented number of votes: a referendum on whether or not people wanted a new constituent assembly; elections for the assembly; a second referendum ratifying the new constitution - 71% of the people

approved each of the 396 articles that gave Mavis and Celedonia and Ana Lucia, and their children and grandchildren, unheard-of freedoms, such as Article 123, which for the first time recognised the human rights of mixed-race and black people, of whom Chávez is one. "The indigenous peoples," it says, "have the right to maintain their own economic practices, based on reciprocity, solidarity and exchange ... and to define their priorities ...". The little red book of the **Venezuelan constitution** became a bestseller on the streets. Nora Hernandez, a community worker in Petare barrio, took me to her local state-run supermarket, which is funded entirely by oil revenue and where prices are up to half those in the commercial chains. Proudly, she showed me articles of the constitution written on the backs of soap-powder packets. "We can never go back," she said.

In La Vega barrio, I listened to a nurse, Mariella Machado, a big round black woman of 45 with a wonderfully wicked laugh, stand and speak at an urban land council on subjects ranging from homelessness to the Iraq war. That day, they were launching Mision Madres de Barrio, a programme aimed specifically at poverty among single mothers. Under the constitution, women have the **right to be paid as carers**, and can borrow from a special women's bank. From next month, the poorest housewives will get about £120 a month. It is not surprising that Chávez has now won eight elections and referendums in eight years, each time increasing his majority, a world record. He is the most popular head of state in the western hemisphere, probably in the world. That is why he survived, amazingly, a Washington-backed coup in 2002. Mariella and Celedonia and Nora and hundreds of thousands of others came down from the barrios and demanded that the army remain loyal. "The people rescued me," Chávez told me. "They did it with all the media against me, preventing even the basic facts of what had happened. For popular democracy in heroic action, I suggest you need look no further."

The venomous attacks on Chávez, who arrives in London tomorrow, have begun and resemble uncannily those of the privately owned Venezuelan television and press, which called for the elected government to be overthrown. Fact-deprived attacks on Chávez in the *Times* and the *Financial Times* this week, each with that peculiar malice reserved for true dissenters from Thatcher's and Blair's one true way, follow a travesty of journalism on Channel 4 News last month, which effectively accused the Venezuelan president of plotting to make nuclear weapons with Iran, an absurd fantasy. The reporter sneered at policies to eradicate poverty and presented Chávez as a sinister buffoon, while Donald Rumsfeld was allowed to liken him to Hitler, unchallenged. In contrast, Tony Blair, a patrician with no equivalent democratic record, having been elected by a fifth of those eligible to vote and having caused the violent death of tens of thousands of Iraqis, is allowed to continue spinning his truly absurd political survival tale.

Chávez is, of course, a threat, especially to the United States. Like the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, who based their revolution on the English co-operative moment, and the moderate Allende in Chile, he offers the threat of an alternative way of developing a decent society: in other words, the **threat of a good example** in a continent where the majority of humanity has long suffered a Washington-designed peonage. In the US media in the 1980s, the "threat" of tiny Nicaragua was seriously debated until it was crushed. Venezuela is clearly being "softened up" for something similar. A US army publication, **Doctrine for Asymmetric War against Venezuela**, describes Chávez and the Bolivarian revolution as the "largest threat since the Soviet Union and Communism". When I said to Chávez that the US historically had had its way in Latin America, he replied: "Yes, and my assassination would come as no surprise. But the empire is in trouble, and the people of Venezuela will resist an attack. We ask only for the support of all true democrats."

A Voice from the Center-Right Venezuela a Democracy for 40 Years

by Guillermo Parra, *Venepoetics*, 7 Jan 2004

Mandarin

Alexander Cockburn's recent essay on Venezuela highlights the level of ignorance one finds among certain American and European intellectuals regarding Venezuela's current crisis.

One item that does catch my attention in the essay is his reference to "RCTV, one of the right-wing media companies leading the Venezuelan opposition and recall effort." Radio Caracas Television, like many other privately-owned media outlets in Venezuela, have had their offices attacked by *chavista* militias, urban guerrillas that work for the petty revolution. Cockburn makes no mention of the Venezuelan government's use of Cuban military advisers to train urban militias, whose purpose is to defend the so-called revolution with guerrilla military tactics. This is an illegal intrusion into Venezuelan affairs by Cuba and it reveals the gangsterism that underlies *chavismo* as a political movement.

Cockburn has not bothered to pay close attention to the wide range of media outlets that are opposed to the current President's autocratic regime. Notice also that he does not mention a single Venezuelan intellectual or political analyst. His sources of information remain those marketed and approved by the Venezuelan government, in its desperate attempt to sell itself to the international left as a legitimately progressive movement (Cf. Patton Boggs or that Ode to Leni Riefenstahl [*celebrated Hitler filmmaker —Ed.*] called "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised"). He would make the uninformed American reader believe that the entire Venezuelan opposition belongs to the right.

This is false. If anyone wants to know what the Venezuelan left thinks about the current crisis they should read what intellectuals such as Elizabeth Burgos, Teodoro Petkoff and Héctor Silva Michelena (to name just three) have written recently in publications such as *El Nacional*, *TalCual*, and *El Universal*. None of these newspapers could be described as being "right-wing media companies" and yet they are among the staunchest critics of the Venezuelan government. *El Nacional* was founded in 1942 by the noted Marxist poet and intellectual Miguel Otero Silva. *TalCual* was founded and is directed by Teodoro Petkoff, the former guerrilla commander and co-founder of the political party Movimiento Al Socialismo (MAS). Of the three, *El Universal* could perhaps be called a center-right newspaper. Regardless, it would be foolish to dismiss, or ignore, what is published in such an important and well-edited newspaper.

Hugo Chávez is indeed a tropical fascist who represents a return to the worst traditions of Venezuelan caudillismo. Alexander Cockburn is direly mistaken in supporting such a mediocre tyrant.

When I was in graduate school, a professor of mine once referred to César Vallejo dismissively as a "mandarin." In other words, someone who may have intellectually supported Marxism but who never helped accomplish an actual revolution. I still laugh at the ludicrous nature of his comment regarding such a brilliant poet as Vallejo. His poverty in Paris, his magnificent European poems, his essays and fiction, his unmistakable voice, all these are nothing but a bohemian mestizo's adventures in Empire. I see the same type of misunderstanding of Latin America in my former professor's comment as I do in Cockburn's essay.

MEXICO-US

Intimate Inclusion: Farmers & Workers SubComandante Is Now Delegate Zero

by Al Giordano, *www.narconews.com*, 23 May 2006

from "In Querétaro..."

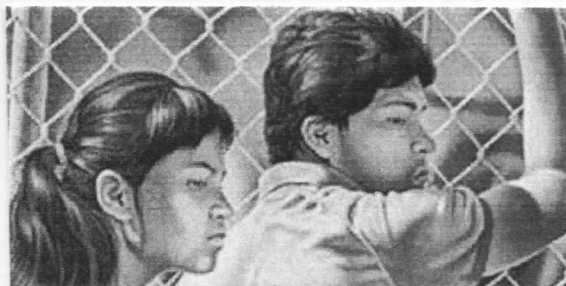
Listening to "the simple and humble people who fight," Marcos has heard from, and shone the spotlight upon indigenous and peasant farmers in Quintana Roo fighting to defend their lands from seizure by developers of airports and tourist Meccas. He has taken the testimony "from below" of those most threatened by big money's plan to turn the state of Yucatán into a "gigantic hacienda." He has written down notes on how campesinos have organized in Campeche, Tabasco and Veracruz. He has drawn a line in the sand over the David-vs.-Goliath fight to defend Oaxaca's Isthmus of Tehuantepec from greedy energy mega-projects... The Mexican countryside is up against the wall and readying to defend itself from annihilation, as the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN, in its Spanish initials) has demonstrated can be done. Rural Mexico is already harvesting Zapatismo from bottom to top.

As the masked rebel spokesman headed North, he also heard the true stories of teachers struggling to save public education and democratize their union against corrupt bosses, of telephone technicians and marginalized sweatshop factory workers in Puebla and their "story of pain," of the elderly ex-braceros who assembled in Tlaxcala and will soon join Marcos along the U.S. Border in June... But it was here in Querétaro, birthplace of the Mexican struggle for independence from Spain in 1810, where the hand that holds the machete sickle picked up the worker's hammer and Marcos said to the urban laborer: "We want to learn from you."

It is a 21st Century fight that goes way beyond 20th century hammers and sickles: The Zapatista "Other Campaign" has been joined by thousands of organizations, families and individuals; by youths who are tired of being criminalized for being young and rebellious; by housewives "who see the difference between the prices of basic products and the low salaries available" noted Marcos today; by political prisoners and their families; by alternative media and authentic journalists; by gays, lesbians and "other loves;" by children; by elders; by everyone left out by the mercantile and political classes... a breadth of resistance that this country — perhaps no land — has ever seen weaving its many struggles into one big fight.

Perhaps the greatest challenge for a movement that began in the mountains of the Mexican Southeast with a surprise uprising of rural indigenous farmers is whether it can cross over into the factories, the mines and the urban workplaces and become truly national. "The Other Campaign will not be a class struggle," acknowledged Marcos on Tuesday, "without the workers present."

The "Other Campaign" reaches out now to the hand that builds and the hand that builds is reaching back. We begin this report in the recaptured Union Hall of the tire factory workers that were fired and replaced when the French multinational corporation Michelin bought the companies — B.F. Goodrich and Uniroyal — where they once labored... and may yet toil again...



Zapatistas Tour Mexico Bottom-up "Listening Campaign" Due at US Border

by Brenda Norrell, *Indian Country Today*, 9 January 2006

Zapatistas began a six-month tour of Mexico with a welcome extended from Tohono O'odham at the northern border, as Mexico's indigenous joined those of Bolivia and Venezuela to lead a continental shift toward support for indigenous rights.

Launching the six-month tour of Mexico's 31 states, Subcomandante Marcos, now known as Delegate Zero*, embarked on the nationwide tour on a black motorcycle, reminiscent of Che Guevara's consciousness-awakening tour of South America in the 1950s.

"We will listen to people in the places where they work, in the places where they are exploited, where they suffer racism," Marcos said as he launched the great "listening tour" of Mexico.

With its timing, the Zapatista tour, dubbed the "Other Campaign",** became part of a wider struggle of the 60 million Indians in Latin America, catapulted by the sweeping reforms of Venezuela President Hugo Chavez and the election of an Indian president in Bolivia.

Among the leading thinkers making this point was poet Juan Banelos: "The election of Evo Morales in Bolivia and the Zapatista movement are part of an uprising of indigenous people that will change the continent."

Already, Chavez has extended an offer of low-cost heating oil to American Indians, with tribal leaders in Maine being the first to meet with Venezuela. Leaders from Paiute, Lakota and other tribes in Indian country are ready to enter talks.

Jose Garcia, lieutenant governor of the Tohono O'odham in Mexico, is among the indigenous at the northern border who are anticipating the Zapatista tour's arrival in the state of Sonora. Garcia said he looks forward to seeing his friends—Zapatistas he has visited many times in Chiapas since 1994.

Garcia said the Zapatistas have offered Indian people a great gift: a great hope of achieving their goals. Observing that Indian people are hindered by distractions, criticisms, discriminations and prejudices, he noted that the Zapatistas have established a code to overcome the barriers.

"The Zapatistas, for 20 years—long before they emerged—established a code for themselves and all Indians," Garcia told *Indian Country Today*.

"We should be proud of what they are doing; they should be an inspiration to all Indians in their struggles."

With the Zapatista movement now more than a decade old, the Other Campaign celebrates the 12-year anniversary of the Zapatistas' emergence from the Lacandon Jungle in 1994.

American Indian supporters from the United States have joined the Zapatistas since the beginning. An indigenous human rights delegation—comprised of Tohono O'odham, Yaqui, Dakota and Hopi—climbed to the remote mountain village of Emiliano Zapata in 1995, serving as human shields to protect the Zapatistas from military assassinations.

Indigenous delegations were also organized by New Mexico-based First Nations North and South (a group founded by Eulynda Benalli, Navajo) and traveling to Chiapas and Oaxaca to support Zapatistas.

In 2001, when the Zapatista caravan toured central and southern Mexico, onboard were Tohono O'odham, Yaqui, Mayo and Navajo tribal members from Sonora, Mexico and Arizona.

The caravan arrived in Mexico City with nearly a million people cheering the arrival of the Zapatistas. However,

Congress watered down the Zapatista-backed constitutional amendment for Indian rights in 2001.

After Tohono O'odham and Mayo traveled to La Realidad, the heart of the Zapatista stronghold near the Guatemalan border in July 2004, Mayo leaders were arrested in their Zapatista village in Mexico. The Mayos' village, on the border of the states of Sonora and Sinaloa, was the first on the west coast of Mexico to proclaim itself a Zapatista community.

Now, American Indians along the U.S. border are e-mailing their welcome to the Zapatistas' tour, slated to arrive in six months at the U.S.-Mexican border.

Among them is Ofelia Rivas, Tohono O'odham and organizer of "O'odham Voice Against the Wall," a group that opposes a U.S.-proposed border wall that would slice through O'odham territory on both sides of the border. Mexican and Venezuelan presidents, Vicente Fox and Hugo Chavez, respectively, opposed the border wall recently; Chavez praised Fox for his opposition.

In Mexico, the home of 13 million Indians, the Other Campaign coincides with the 2006 presidential campaign. While Marcos promised to form a new national leftist movement, Fox launched his own weeklong tour of Indian communities.

The Other Campaign began the tour near San Cristobal during the first week of January. Marcos met with 300 people at the Universidad de la Tierra, a center of alternative education for Zapatista supporters.

Always undertaking the campaigns with little money, Marcos said the indigenous of Mexico have a well to draw from: their rich imaginations.

"I think that you can hold public events that are very rich in imagination. Doing this is important because it is important that at this stage in the Other Campaign, it contrasts with the electoral campaigns. I have no doubt that you have initiative, ingenuity and creativity."

Further, Marcos said the Other Campaign would not end with Mexico's political campaigns targeting the June election. He said when their "circus" is finished, the people "will continue."

**We have corrected author's incorrectly cited "Comandante Zero" —Ed.*

*** The Other Campaign contrasts with the election campaigns of establishment politicians.*

Cuban Doctors Live with Victims in Pakistan

One of the most horrendous tragedies of recent years was the October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. In addition to the huge toll, unknown numbers of survivors have to face brutal winter weather with little shelter, food or medical assistance. There has been extensive coverage of Western aid, but one has to turn to the South Asian press to read that "Cuba has provided the largest contingent of doctors and paramedics to Pakistan," paying all the costs (perhaps with Venezuelan funding), and that President Musharraf of Pakistan expressed his "deep gratitude" to Fidel Castro for the "spirit and compassion" of the Cuban medical teams. These are reported to comprise more than 1000 trained personnel, 44 percent of them women, who remained to work in remote mountain villages, "living in tents in freezing weather and in an alien culture" after the Western aid teams had been withdrawn, setting up 19 field hospitals and working 12-hour shifts.

---Noam Chomsky

NEW ENGLAND

The Price of Big Wind

Raw Mountain Tops, Dead Game

by Deidre Consolati, from *The Advocate*, Berkshires, MA
30 March 2006

People of Hancock, you have already been asked if you would be willing to give up some personal joy [of pleasant hills] as you go about your daily life. You've said yes to a few wind turbines. The deal as it has been presented to you would be this: In exchange for some of your mountain land, your town would given some extra dollars to help pay the yearly expenses. And what town can't use a bit more revenue—for road repairs or new suits for the fire department or health insurance, or whatever?..

But have you ever heard of forest fragmentation? It's what happens when our natural habitats are broken into pieces, fragments, that cannot support the kind of wildlife that needs large spaces in which to roam and mate and find food. Forests in the Berkshires have been fragmented at lower elevations, but the mountain tops—this is where the last of our wild creatures thrive.

Now imagine a wind turbine being constructed on that mountain top. A road would have to be built—a large one, probably as wide as Route 43, for it would have to accommodate very large pieces of equipment being pulled up the mountain. The pieces would be assembled and would eventually rise to a height of around 30 to 40 stories... What would happen on the mountain top? It would be cleared and blasted and covered with fill. The creatures who thrive on the mountain would either die, or flee.

There are people who have lived for a very long time in these hills. In the early days they farmed and lived off the land. Today they're called old-timers. There are others too, who simply choose rural subsistence living because they want to. Although many of them have outside jobs, they still keep chickens, or a cow, and a large garden, and they put food by for the winter. They heat their homes with wood, possibly from their own lots, and they hunt and fish and put that food away too. I doubt if many of these folk would support wind turbine projects; I suspect that many would be vehemently opposed. We must keep faith with them...

We have all been reading about GE and how PCBs from their manufacturing plants have polluted the city of Pittsfield. Here is a corporation that buried its waste in 55-gallon drums in local neighborhoods, and dumped it on the earth and then used it as fill for family driveways, and leaked the pollutant into a local lake and the Housatonic River where it traveled down to Connecticut and into the Long Island Sound. It is this corporation, GE, which has proposed to construct the very turbines that might find their way to the Berkshire Hills. Don't you believe that GE has done enough?

For all of the hoopla about wind energy, it turns out that you need a whole lot of turbines to create even a small amount of electricity. And I mean a lot. And for this tiny economic benefit, you would be asked to give up the last and most cherished of



your natural resources. From this, can you see it isn't worth the swap? And that, in fact, it is pure theft?..

Townpeople of Hancock, pass the measure on height restrictions that has been proposed by the Planning Board. Keep Big Wind out of your town and big turbines off your mountains.



Deedee Consolati edited her mother's rich, snapshot-filled, 100-year encyclopedia of Lee MA as "See All the People". She is a Lee town meeting representative, a successful battler (with AfD support) against water privatization, and an intervener in the appeal against the 70% French-owned EnXco wind energy

company. At www.greenberkshires.org see soul-healing mountain and woodland views of the area which Gov. Mitt Romney would sacrifice to wind turbines despite his opposition to them in Nantucket Sound.

Canadian Water Leader to NH: Fight, Hug—We Are Winning!

Ottawa, 24 May 2006

Dearest Denise and all my good friends at SOG, I am so very sorry that you have had this awful set-back, I must say that I am not surprised. The courts in our countries are becoming increasingly timid and afraid to take a stand. The one silver lining that we have is that there is a legislative opening in the decision that suggests next steps.*

I can sympathize more than you can imagine. We recently lost two very important court cases.

We lost a court challenge against the federal government in Canada for allowing provinces to permit for-profit health services even though the Canada Health Act forbids such practices. Essentially, the court did not disagree with us but said it was a political matter and thus one for Parliament to take up. This drove us crazy as it is that very Parliament that is violating its own act.

The other went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. It was a showdown between Monsanto and a canola farmer in Saskatchewan over GE crops. While the court agreed with the farmer that he had not planted Monsanto's GE canola on his land and that it has in fact, blown there, it stood by Monsanto's contention that the farmer should have known that it was Monsanto canola and uprooted it! The court ruling has almost bankrupted Percy Shmeiser, the farmer. This terrible ruling has implications around the world.

However, and this is what I want to say to you as strongly as I can: in the end, the court of public opinion sided in both cases with us and we got a huge amount of political good will from these fights. In both cases, ordinary Canadians felt that their courts had let them down and did not see our cases as losers but rather as brave attempts to right a wrong that must now be fought on different levels.

Life is very funny. The underdog gets big points for courage in cases like this that can have amazing consequences. A Monsanto official said as much after the ruling. He said that the whole thing had been a public relations nightmare for Monsanto and that the company had been the real loser in the case. There was no floating on the part of the company I can

tell you. Percy, meanwhile, has become an international superstar in the sustainable food movement and speaks all over the world badmouthing Monsanto. There is not a thing they can do about it.

Let me share with you what I have learned from 30 years of activism. It is not about winning a particular case or even a campaign. It is about building a movement that is sustainable. It is about democracy. It is about supporting one another through hard times. It is about laughter and good food together. It is about long hours driving to long meetings. It is about trust and friendship. It is about protecting all that is good for future generations and the planet. It is about commitment to a dream that is larger than any one of its parts.

After we lost both the Canada-US FTA fight and NAFTA, we nearly shut down. I wrote my members in 1994 and asked them if they wanted us to continue in the face of one lost fight after another. They overwhelmingly wrote back and said: hey, we are just beginning to understand the forces allied against us and now is not the time to give up! They dug deep into pockets and found money for us to go on. Believe me, I was ready to throw in the hat. But as my 90-year-old friend reminds me, fighting for social justice is not a fashion to be worn one day and thrown out the next. It is a lifetime commitment and comes with many deep valleys and the occasional soaring mountain. "Social justice is like taking a bath," she says. "You do it every day or you start to stink!"

You have had a wonderful recent win with the New Hampshire legislature declaring water to be a public trust. In the end, this victory will prove to be more meaningful than the court loss - I promise.

So now, it is time to grieve, to rant against the injustice, to share a glass of wine and some tears. Then you will do what you must - keep on fighting for a water-secure world and continue to be part of a marvelous new global water justice movement that will, in spite of set-backs along the way, win in the end, as we must.

All my love,

Maude Barlow, Council of Canadians

Court: USA Springs Beats NH Citizens

by Emily Aronson, *Portsmouth Herald*, 20 May 2006

PORTSMOUTH - The state Supreme Court Friday issued a blow to activists who have spent years fighting a proposed water bottling plant in Nottingham. The court upheld a groundwater withdrawal permit allowing USA Springs to draw 112 million gallons of water a year from a 100-acre site in Nottingham and Barrington.

Save Our Groundwater, along with the towns of Nottingham and Barrington, brought the case after the state Department of Environmental Services refused to rehear USA Springs' permit application.

"I think SOG is disappointed, having worked on this for so long and taken it this far," said attorney Joshua Gordon. "We'll be looking at an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, but I think that's a way long shot."

The appeal challenging USA Springs argued that DES did not take into account the public interest when issuing the groundwater permit. It said withdrawing groundwater will lower the water table "over a broad area (and) thus impact both natural resources and the operation of private wells," according to the Supreme Court decision.

But the court rejected this argument, saying that DES is not required to apply an "additional public trust test" under current state regulations.

The court also disagreed that the permit violated wetlands protection laws because an adjacent wetland would be negatively impacted by groundwater withdrawal. The court again noted that DES is not required under current rules to review such impacts when issuing groundwater permits.

"We note that our decision is based upon the statutory language in force at the time of DES' decision," the ruling stated. "The Legislature is free to amend it if it disagrees with our construction."

Although it lost the appeal, Save Our Groundwater said it was pleased the case brought attention to problems with state groundwater rules. Under legislation passed by the House and Senate earlier this year, groundwater is now clearly defined as part of the public trust, and municipalities have more say over the use of local water resources.

Gordon said the legislation "will clear up the confusion" identified by the Supreme Court in its ruling.

"While it appears that we have lost this particular battle, we truly believe that water is the big winner in our state," said a statement released by SOG.

USA Springs attorney Edward Mosca was not available for comment.*

***Ed. note:** On this date the Manchester Union Leader reported Mr. Mosca's comment—quoting Julius Caesar—"Veni, vidi, vici."—"I came, I saw, I conquered." This is consistent with the attitude of sportsman Francisco Rotondo, USA Springs' owner, who evidently plans to sell this NH water in designer bottles in Italy, where no one is dehydrated. "Rotondo is hoping to present a handcrafted Bowie knife next month to [Acting] President George W. Bush. Rotondo is a former Olympic marksman who will be representing the United States in the World Cup shooting competitions. He builds [antique] Ferraris from scratch, and imported them into the country. He even sold one to Ralph Lauren." (BCA Dispatch, Jan 2004).

The New Hampshire Supreme Court has reached a new low in cowardice, affirming the "rights" of a frivolous corporate owner at the expense of the people and the land. They passed the buck to the NH legislature on dateline technicalities rather than affirming water as a "public trust", which the legislature recently affirmed.

The Alliance for Democracy is tired of tweaking regulations, regularly eaten by insatiable corporations. We know that it is a bad joke of the Gilded Age—the age of "Social Darwinist" nonsense—that corporations are "Persons" with rights of free speech, privacy, etc. Judges (with the help of a law clerk in 1886) gave them this "personhood" but find no effective way to give them "responsibility"—large corporations remain undaunted by fines, immune to jail or capital punishment, and incapable of embarrassment for spoiling societies or nature. Only two or three times in modern history has a supreme court dechartered a corporation and auctioned off its assets.

Legislators, unchallengeable by candidates without tons of money, have a double stake in corporate privilege: most of them have surplus savings (beyond their generous pensions) in corporate stock, and many of them depend on corporate contributions for their campaign funding. So the people have to get mad enough to simply deny local lodging to any type of corporation which presumes to deplete or pollute public resources, regardless of the sparkle of its goods or services..

THE ALLIANCE FOR DEMOCRACY

Alliance's Second Decade

Toward a Vision Statement

by Dave Lewit and John Terrell

Boston-Cambridge and North Bridge chapters

The Alliance for Democracy is a unique organization. Not only does it seek to end corporate rule and promote true democracy as several other organizations do, but it is structured bottom-up—with members and chapters as well as a national council. This compound structure has persisted for ten years, but AfD has lost members and chapters without completely replacing them.

These losses may in part have been due to our agitation as a result of the Bush-Cheney faction stealing the election, soon followed by the aerial attacks on the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon, and the subsequent rush to war rather than a criminal investigation and sober effort to understand the situation and tend to the country's needs. These destabilizing actions and subsequent horrors distracted Alliance members as well as the general public from maintaining a focus on world trade, for example, or protecting the commons from corporate exploitation, or the building of co-op communities—things requiring cool, steady work rather than fighting yahoo sentiment and demonstrating against racism and war.

Now these distractions are dissipating as the truth is becoming known and accepted about electoral theft and government lies leading to war and repression. We may be at a "tipping" or "take off" point with respect to Alliance aims. But do we know exactly where and how we are to go?

On 27 March national co-chair Nancy Price met for several hours with AfD office staff and several members, including ourselves, in the Concord MA area. At that time we accepted the challenge of drafting a vision statement for the Alliance, as an example of where we might go in the near future, and how to do it. The result is this 2700-word paper, and the accompanying 300-word sample vision statement embodying nuances from Nancy as well as ourselves.

Please communicate or meet with other Alliance members and comment and/or draft a vision statement that makes sense to you. Please circulate (please include us) with an eye toward collective action by Alliance members—an eye on something which may guide us in our new decade, and may inform others, promote public discussion, and possibly attract new members or allies.

1. The World We Face

Corporate Reality

The world we face in the US and elsewhere is dominated by giant corporations. Their power depends on a number of factors we regard as negative: oligopoly, limited liability, personhood privileges, privatization and commodification of public goods, undermining of communities, environmental irresponsibility, deregulation, corruption pressures, military backup, and disproportionate legal resources. Surveys reveal that the US public generally thinks that corporations have too much power.

But it is clear that corporations also attract people with their goods and services. These positive factors include commercial creativity (fancy cars, hi-tech entertainments, cell phone systems, a drug for every ill), convenience (microwave food, airline shopping online, TV—everything you need to know),

cultural identity (the well-paid deserve more, slim models are us, America the beautiful), price (basic food, basic clothing, fuel—cheap until recently), knowledge (Google, talk shows, conference calls, embedded reporters). The mass media are among the biggest corporations, an oligopoly which blocks information about the negative factors and promotes the positive through advertising, commentary, and entertainment.

The Alliance aims to reduce the negative corporate forces to a level subordinate to forces of democratic cooperation, and to transform the positive corporate forces for public benefit, not basically for the good of the privileged.

Healthy Environment, Healthy Economy

The world we face has another important side. As we enter a time of "the end of oil" and experience destructive effects resulting from global warming/climate change, radioactive pollution, and other insults to our planet, current and future elected officials must be able to understand and appreciate the seriousness of these threats. No one knows, for example, if we have enough time to halt / slow down harm to the environment from Global Warming. Nature is "setting (time) thresholds" we do not know how to predict. We monitor the melting of ice at the poles, knowing full well that if the Greenland ice-cap entirely melts, we can experience a net rise in sea levels of 20-23 feet. Lester Brown estimates that this might take 1-2 centuries. But, such an outcome will catastrophically stress our social and economic systems in ways we cannot fully predict. Nature defines the time-line of occurring catastrophes.

Our legislators and the Alliance must understand the risks we could face as we employ agricultural products, such as corn, to convert to ethanol. Brown warns that ethanol service stations could compete with farms for agricultural products, i.e., rising oil prices would lead to rising food prices. This could lead to a disruption in our economy. We need a responsible and honest government working and making appropriate laws which will help to ensure a healthy economy along with Green power, conservation, and reduced poverty, for example. Brown states that our democracy has a mission to "save our civilization" in light of these serious threats. This means that our legislators must understand what is happening to this planet and will work to provide operational models that will lead to actionable options which can be used by decision makers, hopefully, to ensure a sustainable life-style. For our younger people, we must teach them about sustainability and in our forecasting for the future look ahead as many generations as possible. The Alliance must play a role in bringing qualified people into our governments, modifying our governance processes to make this possible.

Thinking Systemically about Democratic Alternatives

To accomplish these goals concerning corporations, ecology, and governance requires strengthening the forces of democratic cooperation as well as changing institutional arrangements and attitudes which support corporatism. Supporting democratic cooperation are such institutions as producer and consumer cooperatives, locally-owned businesses, tax-supported transportation, water, clinics and schools, coop housing, participatory municipal budgeting, systematic evaluation of new laws, open town meetings, credit unions, local currencies, land trusts, public broadcasting, open access internet, progressive taxation, public-benefit corporate chartering, and so on.

These are tall orders, so the Alliance must take a long-term, multi-institutional, dynamic, interactive/systemic view. "Dynamic" recognizes shifting pressures of technological innovation,

population, ecological and economic trends; "systemic" recognizes the multiple and remote impacts and adjustments caused by changes at all levels from war and trade treaties to appointed school boards, urban thruways and greenhouses. We must act locally/regionally, strategically, and courageously in order to reverse and redirect corporatist forces into democratic paths.

Corporatist forces are certainly economic, political (e.g., industrial farm subsidies, free trade) and military (e.g., weapons contracts, paramilitaries). But they are also social. Education, culture change, and psychological concerns—such as identification with brands, acceptance of command, and belief in military fixes—play a vital role, and must be part of our strategic thinking. We must attend to childhood experience and education, and to involvement of adults of all ages.

Ours is an uphill battle. The battle is nonviolent because a strategy of violence is immoral, and because violence is far too costly in lives as well as money, and has negative effects in politics and culture. But there are nonviolent ways to change economic systems. Stockholders can bring issues and recommendations to corporate annual meetings, but such meetings are generally packed with management and major shareholder proxies, and unplanned changes are rarely voted or taken seriously in board meetings. Boards of major corporations are interlocking, so systemic change would be likely only if a group of corporations were ready to change. Union negotiations and industry-wide strikes bring pressure on management, but are usually directed toward adjustments in labor arrangements and rarely affect corporate policy. Regulatory agencies cannot alter or create policy without state or federal approval, or legislative mandate, so citizen lobbying is barely if at all effective, especially when countered by paid corporate lobbying or even lobbying by civil society organizations asking very modest changes. This is especially so given the governmental system which largely assures incumbent legislators of re-election.

To make system changes the Alliance must use stronger medicine and act strategically. We must prepare to promote large work stoppages, pinpoint resignations, suspension of sales and advertising, boycotts, finding substitute products and services, defiance of certain laws, using electronic voting only for instant-runoff voting (IRV), and promoting of alternative media. The need for such non-cooperation with big business and conventional government becomes more urgent as corporate interests keep expanding, often in novel ways such as factory farming. It is not enough to enforce anti-trust laws or to strengthen regulations—we must eliminate undesirable corporate presence and activity at the local and regional levels, as by encouraging towns and states to ban factory farming, and by blocking privatization of municipal services such as water and schools. Most important, the Alliance must encourage system innovation, as by fostering integration of cooperative enterprises, participatory municipal budgeting, and other democratic types of enterprise. Such innovation may well displace profit-oriented business, reducing capitalist excesses while building community inclusive even of erstwhile profiteers.

Acting Locally and Regionally

We recognize that global conditions and considerations impact the regional and local—and vice versa. It is at the local level that citizens can act directly and have the greatest effect, while at the same time build community and assert human rights. It is at the local and regional levels that indirect causes and indirect effects of corporate activity can more readily be sorted out and measured, so we must also ensure transparency in policy making, setting priorities, contracting, construction, and oversight of

public projects. Doing so has multiple beneficial effects, including reducing corruption.

Localization and regionalization also work to build democratic institutions such as participatory municipal budgeting—how cities and towns spend tax money and other revenue. The Alliance must foster new models of institutions and institutional linkages functioning as democratic systems for the public good. It must foster the proliferation and further development of models linking democratic law-making, licensing, finance, research & development, education, oversight, ecology, and economic integration for regional self-reliance, free of unreasonable control or exploitation by distant transnational corporations or corporatist institutions such the national congress as presently structured and regulatory agencies including military recruiting and draft. At the same time we must foster communication and assistance between regions, especially where imports are necessary or inequality too great.

Our commitment to transforming corporate-shaped economic and cultural systems, and our commitment to strategic nonviolence obliges us to study history, systems, and communication and to selectively foster critical actions. Institutional change must be consistent with basic principles of governance—constitutional and moral principles often serving as the focus of our actions rather than particular laws or institutional arrangements. In other words, we must often consider replacing institutions rather than merely modifying them.

2. The Alliance as an Organization

Goals and Means

As stated above, the Alliance aims to reduce negative corporate forces to a level subordinate to forces of democratic cooperation, and to transform positive corporate forces for public benefit. Coupled with these it promotes new and more effective forms of democratic activity and institutions.

Strategic goals should include: (1) building durable constituencies to address issues important to our democracy; and (2) increasing the visibility of the Alliance as we advocate for federal, state, and local policies and international agreements that would improve economic justice among working people around the world.

Consistent with our localist world view, the Alliance must strengthen its local and regional activity and initiatives, with national or regional offices to help with communication and resources or resource-exchange.

The Populist Model

Certainly growth in membership and member activity is desired. A respected model is the Alliances of the 1880s and '90s, with tens of thousands of speakers directly interacting with hundreds of thousands of exploited farmers and townsfolk throughout the heartland of the country. Today's Alliance must be as clear about rights and institutional change as the populists of 120 years ago. We must clarify our understanding of democracy and corporatism, and our visions of a better world in terms of changed social relations and economic and political institutions. Part of this clarification must be through local experimentation with such alternatives. Though the Populists failed to gain the presidency, their institutional experiments—cooperative banks, grain reserves, direct election of senators—gained national acceptance in later decades.

One reason that the progressive populists of the Gilded Age failed to become a national majority was their failure to unite with urban worker movements. Today's Alliance must identify

and reach out to groups with like interests, listening to them with a readiness to accept their challenges. Given the past century's demographic and organizational changes, it is particularly important that we make common cause with neighbors who, unlike neighbors in the past, have issues we hardly know.

How is the Alliance to foster such initiatives? We must practice the connections implicit in the old Alliance model. Members in one area or chapter must visit with groups of other members, and adopt at least a few common objectives and projects. They must stay in touch by internet, phone, newsletter, exchange of products, and occasional visits and meetings. Naturally these connections will tend to be regional, and build regional strength. The regional values they have in common with other regions, and the mutual desire for reinforcement, should occasion inter-regional connections. Thus the Alliance will become a living network rather than a wobbly spoke-and-hub as at present.

Members As Missionaries

What can individual members do, especially those in the majority not connected to a chapter? They should amicably connect with other local groups, consistently injecting into their deliberations questions and understandings regarding corporatism and democratic alternatives. Those groups may include fraternal, religious, and civic organizations, but more importantly governance forums such as hearings of city councils and state legislatures, and political party associations.

Realizing an Active Network

As for the formal organization of the Alliance, the constitution and bylaws mandate a central council which controls a national office staff. A biennial national convention is supposed to set policy, but participants in the conventions are far from a cross-section of the membership, and policy development requires more frequent and local involvement. This hierarchical model must be rethought in relation to democratic values of direct participation and member determination of policy and support, and the constitution and bylaws set aside until they can be redesigned. Despite council recommendations, mid-decade national coordinators did little to keep in touch with chapters. Resources, including volunteers and unpaid interns, must be provided to maintain regular two-way connections with all chapters and with chapterless members, and become involved with informal networks of members and allies who communicate with each other, hitherto without the office being informed. We should consider the decentralization of office functions to regions—defined in terms of mutual dependence and ease of visitation rather than arbitrary state conglomerations as at present.

Handling Funds

Fortunately the Alliance currently has excellent fiscal management through its treasurer. However, unlike well-staffed nonprofits, we have no development office. Indeed, a populist organization perhaps should not follow the nonprofit model. So beyond volunteer work, how is the Alliance to be adequately funded? Who is to decide what projects get funds? Presently, substantial funding comes from grants obtained by project leaders and held by the Alliance treasury as a tax-exempt agency. If the Alliance were to gather substantial revenue not dedicated to particular projects, distribution might be better handled regionally, paying regional administrators who act on the basis of regional councils. Distribution within regions and exchange between regions might be worked out by an internet council of the budget, using annually modifiable formulas, according to local and project need.

3. Practical Next Steps

Our comments above embrace a wide range of considerations to be kept in mind for achieving near and far goals. This section points to a few steps which may be taken in one year's time to get the Alliance moving fruitfully in a proper direction.

1. **Support effective ongoing projects**, by recruiting members who can play effective roles, and possibly by financial help. These project include Water Protection, Election Integrity, Popular Governance, Understanding the Commons, Campaign Finance, and Media. Financial help might take the form of member-dedicated contributions for a particular project they select, as well as dividing of local dues with national.
2. **Telephone hundreds of members** to get their vision. What are they doing as AfD members, as chapter members, and outside the Alliance? What do they want? What do they expect? Who are leaders or potential leaders? Ask about their interest in our ongoing projects.
3. **Combine member visions** into a vision statement. Subject this to member comment and approval. Post the vision statement on AfD web site. Solicit member commitment to some project—with volunteer work, and/or money.
4. **Improve the web site** by better organization and making it interactive.
5. **Redraw regions** according to member responsiveness and member connectedness to other member groups and allied organizations. Identify leaders in each such region—or draw regional lines around leaders. Set up AfD web site, or several regional web sites, to enable members to work together on projects.
6. **Broaden membership** by searching the Web and deliberately engaging groups with high numbers of people of color, young people, immigrants, poor people, and other categories largely missing from AfD. Engagement can be of many sorts, e.g., joint meetings, livingroom conversations, exchange of gifts, visiting their institutions, exchanging articles in newsletters, ...
7. **Engage consanguine national groups** such as Liberty Tree, Black Radical Congress, Women's International League for Peace & Freedom, ... and local pro-democracy groups for possible collaboration.
8. **Engage active community groups** which are not like us, starting with reformist groups, and then conservative groups. Listen to them and report jointly to them and us. Use insights for attitude and organizational review, and for developing more inclusive membership and vision.
9. **Explore other organizations** with similar concerns, regarding decentralization. Consider which functions should be centralized and which decentralized. Consider proper inter dependencies of central and local, and local to local. Develop a decentralized model for AfD and try it out. Consider an "1890 Chapter" to duplicate the structure and functioning of an historic Alliance group, speakers and all.
10. **Conduct workshops** in all regions to examine visions of the Alliance, and to plan implementation. Workshops would include selection and strategic justification of projects, and also how chapters and national council can support each other.

*During this **second growth phase**, treat each step as an objective, and encourage supporters to dedicate contributions to any objective which is lagging.* ■

SAMPLE VISION STATEMENT (revised early June 2006)

Alliance Mission:

"The mission of the Alliance for Democracy is (1) to free all people from corporate domination of politics, economics, culture, the environment, and information; (2) to establish true democracy; and (3) to create a just society with a sustainable, equitable economy." —Adopted 1997

Alliance Vision for Next Ten Years:

1. **Strong local chapters** with regional integration and national facilitation. Chapters know which corporations have positive or negative influences on their communities. Projects are undertaken in cooperation with friendly local groups as well as other AfD chapters.
2. **Good communication** within and between chapters regionally, across regions, nationally, and internationally. A well-organized and interactive Alliance web site is connected to regional AfD and allied group web sites. Regions are defined for easy visiting among chapters.
3. **Solidarity.** The Alliance reaches out to working and oppressed groups and develops exchange visits and partnerships. Current events are understood from the viewpoints of the oppressed, the marginal, and the foreign, as well as the liberal and conservative establishments.
4. **Strategic justification** of projects. Local groups take into account the aims, justifications, needs and progress of other relevant projects as well as their own. Actions are planned and modified in view of social, economic, and political forces which speed or impede their progress.
5. **New funding.** Members support projects in which they are involved actively or as observers. The national Alliance leverages contributions by highlighting local achievements as well as national projects. Chapter help is a major part of the national AfD budget. The national Alliance compiles foundation and government sources consistent with Alliance aims. Discretionary funds are distributed through a Council of the Budget elected regionally.
6. **Nonviolent resistance.** When corporations or governments (local, state, national, or international—direct or through front organizations) set up barriers to our justified initiatives, including expensive and drawn-out legal procedures, we engage in selected actions from a wide range of strategically and morally appropriate tactics. We prepare by studying valid historical, sociological, and technical theory and practices.

ERRATUM

Several lines were inadvertently dropped from Jesse Burkhardt's letter in the May issue. We reprint the letter in its entirety, with the restored lines bolded.

Vote Fraud—Where's the Outrage?

Bravo Bev [Harris],

I love the poetry: "Like an antibiotic that's too weak, we believe that H.B. 550 [*the Holt Bill to extend Help America Vote Act—HAVA*] will create a more resistant strain of election infection." And ... "Putting into the Holt bill a provision specifying the method of EAC [*US Election Assistance Commission*] audit (2% or more precinct sampling) simply telegraphs to cheaters how to cheat and not get caught..."

The Holt bill would serve as another HAVA style canard—though a canard it probably is not. The bill's supporters are probably sincere in their wishes for reform. One thing you could add to your admonition is the issue of tabulation hacking.

All the avenues of vulnerability in tabulation tampering are not all addressed by Holt's 550.

And I concur with both yourself and Lynn Landes: "It's not about a paper trail—It's about banning **SECRECY**." An open, visible ballot would do much to close windows of vulnerability, **though many people are worried about discriminatory pressures this may cause. I would gladly invite political party-based discrimination rather than have no chance to have a meaningful vote at all.**

I fear that 2006 and 2008 will both still be lost. There is almost no grass roots movement in this country. We are a nation of political illiterates. There seems to be no outrage. The only thing we could hope for is a revival of polling—especially exit polling, or Landes's idea of conducting parallel voting on election days—to cast a big light upon fraudulent tabulations. For this to happen there must be swollen national sentiment of discontent that will not be able to be obscured by rigged elections.

—Jesse Burkhardt, Cambridge

CHAPTER NEWS

Coming your way!

Liberty Tree, Journal of the Democratic Revolution is in the mail to you, if you haven't already received your free copy. If you like *Justice Rising*, you'll love *Liberty Tree*! It's coming to you at BCAD's request from **Ben Manski**, former AfD member, former Green Party executive director, lawyer, now a leader of the Liberty Tree RFD fellowship and editor of this journal. We had a paragraph on him in the last *BCAD*. This issue, 40 pages, has articles on Localization (Hilary Wainwright), Globalizing democracy (Medea Benjamin, Dan'l Chavez, Gabor Scheiring), Venezuela (M. Scaglione), Corporation's deep history (Manski), Climate change (Ted Glick), Corporatization (Steve Chappell), and Music commons (David Rovics). *Good reading!*

Boo Condoleezza

150 or so people signaled their disapproval of Condoleezza Rice and the Boston College authorities for choosing to honor her with an honorary doctor of laws degree, at BC's graduation ceremonies on May 22. **Jeff Manzelli** (FreemanZ) wheeled up his home-rigged sound system, projecting chants (*Shame! Shame! Shame!...*) speeches, and songs (with **Jonathan Leavitt**, **Jason Pramas**, and others playing), audible (but not intelligible) across Beacon Street in the stadium, where a number of students and faculty stood and turned their backs on Rice. **Alice Copeland Brown** strutted her colonially garbed flag stuff, while sign-bearing **Dave Lewit** and many others hailed passing motorists (about 50 gave thumbs-up while only one gave thumbs-down).

When we got home we looked up Secretary of State Rice on Wikipedia. We almost feel sorry for her—the social striver and adoring pupil of Josef Korbel, Madeleine Allbright's anti-communist refugee father, in international relations. Condoleezza was an accomplished piano student (her name is taken from *con dolcezza*—with *sweetness* in musical notation) but quit when bowled over by Korbel. Seems ideology trumps esthetics as well as ethics.

Vote Anti-Fraud Project

Twenty people who attended BCA's 17 May meeting with **Jonathan Simon** and **Sally Castleman** indicated interest in followup, and were sent information to contact Sally to help organize the training program—to monitor use and abuse of voting machines and electronic vote tabulation here in November. She, Jon and Dan Ashby (Calif.) have formed the **Election Defense Alliance** (visit www.electiondefensealliance.org). One element for which they will train citizens is ELECTION DAY RAPID RESPONSE: "A supracommittee coordinating Alliance resources in an intensive Election Day mobilization to identify and expose fraud or error in official election results, warn candidates not to concede, generate mass publicity supported by public demonstrations, and prepare for recounts."

Just now Sally needs help with writing, editing, creating data bases, helping to create materials including graphics experience, designing a logo, doing web research, grantwriting, brainstorming, assisting with administrative functions e.g., copying, mailings; fundraising. Please contact her at (781) 862-0454 or stcastlema@aol.com. Hear Jonathan's and Sally's remarks on the web. Contact BCA Dispatch editor for info. >>>



Yo-yo Ma & Rice

And for homework, try reading Robert F. Kennedy, Jr's landmark article "Was the 2004 Election Stolen?": www.rollingstone.com or copies on CommonDreams and other sites, or in the current *Rolling Stone* magazine.

Go to Venezuela

Of the six people who signed up at our 17 May meeting for more information and planning for going to Venezuela, **Cynthia Ritscher**, **Jesse Burkhardt**, and **Dave Lewit** met with South America traveler **Christy Lanzl** and Boston's Bolivarian Circle leader **Jorge Marín** on 6 June. We are a core planning group, expecting to draw 15-20 participants finally. We are very fortunate that Jorge, a native of Venezuela, volunteered to lead the tour. The 10-day tour will center on 3 December, election day in Venezuela, when we expect to observe voting with preparation from the UN or Carter Center, and compare processes with US voting four weeks earlier. Expenses will run about \$40 per day in folksy accommodations, food, and rented van, plus about \$600 round-trip air fare.

Among the 17 issues we considered for tour planning are democracy (including elections), debt slavery, public finance, oil industry, participatory budgeting, fate of CAIS and other projects brought to the World Social Forum in Caracas in January, role of Cubans, media, music (llano), and Maracaibo waterways and beaches. Come aboard! Contact your *Dispatch* editor (below).

Seeking Employment

John Terrell (Lincoln MA, 781-259-9341, jterr1@comcast.net) has extensive experience in physics, engineering, and environment in industry and teaching. He is presently looking at jobs in Boston as senior research analyst for a not-for-profit company; researcher on social, environmental, and ethical performance of companies, globally; energy assessment of buildings; etc. Please contact John with leads.

JOIN THE BCA

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE IN BOSTON TO LOVE BCA

Please help us as we fight to make a better future for ourselves and our children -- Join the Boston/Cambridge Alliance for Democracy. (Cut out this form and send it to Dave Lewit, 271 Dartmouth St., Boston, MA 02116.)

BOSTON-CAMBRIDGE ALLIANCE for DEMOCRACY PLEDGE

- \$26/Year - "Count me in!"
 \$52/Year - "Contributor" (We need to average this amount.)
 \$104/Year - "Sustainer" (Helping us thrive.)
 \$208/Year - "Community Steward"
 \$500/Year - "Realize the vision"
 What's fair for YOU?_\$____

Name : _____ Date: _____
Street, No./Box/Apt: _____
Town and Zip: _____
Phone: Day _____ Night: _____
E-mail: _____

COLOPHON

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Diana Licht, Tony Flaherty, Associate Editors

Visit the Alliance web site: www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org

Visit our new regional web site: www.NewEnglandAlliance.org

Web builder: Sergio Reyes. Webmaster: Stan Robinson.