

# BCA Dispatch

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

*We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors—  
We borrow her from our children.*  
—Indigenous proverb

## CHAPTER NEWS (Continued on Page 8)

### Chapter Calendar

\* \* **Strategic Nonviolence 2** \* \*

Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy's next meeting will be on **Wednesday, October 25**, at 7:00 p.m. at **Cambridge Friends Meeting**, 5 Longfellow Park (10-minute walk from Harvard Square T station, west on Brattle St.), Cambridge.

#### Agenda

How can we transform our corporate-dominated governmental system which is ruining our democracy, our children's lives, the societies and lives of so many others on earth, our honor as a nation, and the earth itself? Join in discussion with folks who participated in last month's Gandhi Circle, and interested others.

As a resource person we have invited **Marshall Ganz**, "one of the greats on social movements and nonviolent direct action", according to John Passacantando of Greenpeace. Dr. Ganz has decades of experience as a labor organizer and strategist, and teaches at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

— Refreshments —

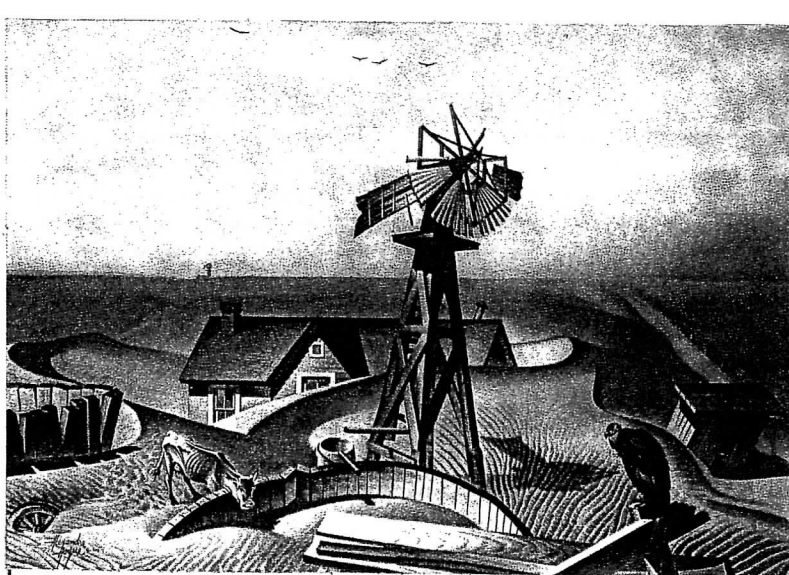
## Same Song, Different Scandal GOP Character Corrupts A Whole Era

by Robert Kuttner, *Boston Globe*, 7 October 2006

Throughout the Bush era, voters have not always connected the dots. The Foley scandal now enveloping the House Republican leadership offers a belated opportunity for voters to make some connections. Yes, the scandal is about the disgrace of a congressman sending disgusting messages to teenage pages, and the failure of leaders to act on escalating warnings. But it is so much more.

Mark Foley was chairman of a House caucus on missing and exploited children. This was a party that literally put a pedophile in charge of pedophilia. Does that have a vaguely familiar ring? It should. It's the same party that put the oil companies in charge of energy policy, and invited the drug and insurance industries to write the Medicare prescription bill for their own maximum profit. As investigations have revealed, it put lobbyists for polluting industries in charge of environmental protection. So there is a consistent theme here of the fox guarding the chicken coop.

And more. If the account of House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert ignoring bad news about Foley also sounds familiar, it should, too. It is of a piece with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld burying intelligence accounts that did not (Continued on page 2a)



"Drouth-Stricken Area" by Alexandre Hogue, 1934

## Massive Drought Coming Global Warming to Bring Desert, Starvation

by Michael McCarthy, *The Independent (UK)*, 4 October 2006

**D**rought threatening the lives of millions will spread across half the land surface of the Earth in the coming century because of global warming, according to new predictions from Britain's leading climate scientists.

Extreme drought, in which agriculture is in effect impossible, will affect about a third of the planet, according to the study from the Met [Meteorological] Office's Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research. It is one of the most dire forecasts so far of the potential effects of rising temperatures around the world—yet it may be an underestimation, the scientists involved said yesterday.

The findings, released at the Climate Clinic at the Conservative Party conference in Bournemouth, drew astonished and dismayed reactions from aid agencies and development specialists, who fear that the poor of developing countries will be worst hit. "This is genuinely terrifying," said Andrew Pendleton of Christian Aid. "It is a death sentence for many millions of people. It will mean migration off the land at levels we have not seen before, and at levels poor countries cannot cope with."

One of Britain's leading experts on the effects of climate change on the developing countries, Andrew Simms from the New Economics Foundation, said: "There's almost no aspect of life in the developing countries that these predictions don't undermine—the ability to grow food, the ability to have a safe sanitation system, the availability of water. For hundreds of millions of people for whom getting through the day is already a struggle, this is going to push them over the precipice."

The findings represent the first time that the threat of increased drought from climate change has been quantified with a supercomputer climate model such as the one operated by the Hadley Centre. Their impact is likely to even greater because the findings may be an underestimate. The study did not include potential effects on drought from global-warming-induced changes to the Earth's carbon cycle. In one unpublished Met Office study, when the carbon cycle effects are included, future drought is even worse. The results are regarded as most valid at the global level, but the clear implication is that the parts of the world already stricken by drought, such as Africa, will be the places where the projected increase will (Continued on page 2b)

square with the Saddam Hussein-Al Qaeda story he was peddling, and the White House blowing off intelligence warnings about an impending Al Qaeda operation in summer 2001. As Bob Woodward recently revealed, these warnings went as high as CIA Director George Tenet paying an urgent call on then White House National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice warning of an imminent attack, only to be rebuffed.

It's not surprising that Hastert did not lead. He was hand-picked by then majority leader Tom DeLay to be a reassuring and largely powerless figurehead speaker. When DeLay fell, the cardboard Hastert was not up to the job.

This pattern should also ring a bell. It was Dick Cheney, selected in 2000 by party leaders to find a running mate for novice candidate George W. Bush, who conducted a national search and then selected himself. Cheney, like DeLay, has been the power behind the throne. And when the time comes for hard decisions, Bush, like Hastert, is AWOL.

In the Foley case, the Republicans are especially vulnerable, because they have made a fetish of traditional values — one of which is hiding homosexuality in the closet and bashing it publicly while protecting closeted Republican gays. But their base of social conservatives, who excuse wrongheaded policies on national security and on the economy, will not give a pass to the Foley lapse.

The Cheney-Bush-Karl Rove governing coalition has always been an uneasy alliance between Wall Street elites, who benefit from the financial foxes lusting after the economic chickens, and social conservatives who have a genuine concern for families and traditional morality. There are just not enough votes of multi-millionaires and K-Street lobbyists to keep the coalition in power, so the party depends heavily on its social base.

Social conservatives do not take kindly to child molesters, or their enablers. Republican candidates will suffer from a genuine wave of public revulsion, not just at what Foley did, but at how the leadership protected him. As always, the coverup is politically more damaging than the original event.

As various House Republicans point fingers and try to protect their behinds, this scandal will messily dominate the news between now and Election Day. Bit by agonizing bit, the facts of who knew what when, and did nothing, will agonizingly dribble out over the next several weeks.

If history is any guide, Hastert will resign. Others have resigned over less damaging lapses. Democratic Speaker Jim Wright was hounded from office in 1989 for having invited lobbyists to purchase copies of a memoir he had published. (Wright's nemesis, Newt Gingrich, was later forced out for abusing a tax-exempt political front group.) But investigations will continue, and even a Hastert resignation will not stem the damage.

The Greeks had a piece of wisdom that applies: Character is Fate. The Foley affair, and all it reveals, was an accident waiting to happen. It was a logical product of the cynicism, opportunism, and hypocrisy that pervade the Bush era.

There is an old saw in American politics that when your opponent is destroying himself, just get out of the way. Like much conventional wisdom, it is mostly wrong. This scandal, of its own accord, will certainly damage Republican congressional candidates. But if the Democrats are shrewd, they will help voters connect these dots.

*Robert Kuttner is co-editor of The American Prospect and a senior fellow at Demos. His column appears regularly in the Globe.*

have the most severe effects.

The study, by Eleanor Burke and two Hadley Centre colleagues, models how a measure of drought known as the Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI) is likely to increase globally during the coming century with predicted changes in rainfall and heat around the world because of climate change. It shows the PDSI figure for moderate drought, currently at 25 per cent of the Earth's surface, rising to 50 per cent by 2100; the figure for severe drought, currently at about 8 per cent, rising to 40 per cent; and the figure for extreme drought, currently 3 per cent, rising to 30 per cent.

Senior Met Office scientists are sensitive about the study, funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, stressing it contains uncertainties: there is only one climate model involved, one future scenario for emissions of greenhouse gases (a moderate-to-high one) and one drought index. Nevertheless, the result is "significant", according to Vicky Pope, the head of the Hadley Centre's climate programme. Further work would now be taking place to try to assess the potential risk of different levels of drought in different places, she said.

The full study—Modelling the Recent Evolution of Global Drought and Projections for the 21st Century with the Hadley Centre Climate Model—will be published later this month in *The Journal of Hydrometeorology*. It will be widely publicised by the British Government at the negotiations in Nairobi in November on a successor to the Kyoto climate treaty. But a preview of it was given by Dr Burke in a presentation to the Climate Clinic, which was formed by environmental groups, with *The Independent* as media partner, to press politicians for tougher action on climate change. The Climate Clinic has been in operation at all the party conferences.

While the study will be seen as a cause for great concern, it is the figure for the increase in extreme drought that some observers find most frightening. "We're talking about 30 per cent of the world's land surface becoming essentially uninhabitable in terms of agricultural production in the space of a few decades," Mark Lynas, the author of *High Tide*, the first major account of the visible effects of global warming around the world, said. "These are parts of the world where hundreds of millions of people will no longer be able to feed themselves."

Mr Pendleton said: "This means you're talking about any form of development going straight out of the window. The vast majority of poor people in the developing world are small-scale farmers who... rely on rain."

#### **A glimpse of what lies ahead**

The sun beats down across northern Kenya's Rift Valley, turning brown what was once green. Farmers and nomadic herders are waiting with bated breath for the arrival of the "short" rains—a few weeks of intense rainfall that will ensure their crops grow and their cattle can eat. The short rains are due in the next month. Last year they never came; large swaths of the Horn of Africa stayed brown. From Ethiopia and Eritrea, through Somalia and down into Tanzania, 11 million people were at risk of hunger.

This devastating image of a drought-ravaged region offers a glimpse of what lies ahead for large parts of the planet as global warming takes hold. In Kenya, the animals died first. The nomadic herders' one source of sustenance and income—their cattle—perished with nothing to eat and nothing to drink. Bleached skeletons of cows and goats littered the barren landscape.

(Continued >> )

The number of food emergencies in Africa each year has almost tripled since the 1980s. Across sub-Saharan Africa, one in three people is under-nourished. Poor governance has played a part. Pastoralist communities suffer most, rather than farmers and urban dwellers. Nomadic herders will walk for weeks to find a water hole or riverbed. As resources dwindle, fighting between tribes over scarce resources becomes common.

One of the most critical issues is under-investment in pastoralist areas. Here, roads are rare, schools and hospitals almost non-existent. Nomadic herders in Turkana, northern Kenya, who saw their cattle die last year, are making adjustments to their way of life. When charities offered new cattle, they said No. Instead, they asked for donkeys and camels— animals more likely to survive hard times.

Pastoralists have little other than their animals to rely on. But projects which provide them with money to buy food elsewhere have proved effective, in the short term at least.

—Steve Bloomfield

## Coca-Cola Drains India's Water Boston-Area Colleges Roused for Boycott

October 4, 2006, India Resource Center

Over a thousand villagers protested at Coca-Cola's north India headquarters in Gurgaon today, demanding that the company take immediate actions to clean up its act in India or leave India. The protest at Coca-Cola's headquarters comes at the end of the "Water Rights Tour", where residents from the village of Mehdiganj in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh traveled across the state to raise awareness on the issue of groundwater depletion and pollution by the Coca-Cola company and Pepsico. Close to 1,500 villagers also protested at the Parliament of India in Delhi on Tuesday, demanding that the government take action against the Coca-Cola company and Pepsico.

The village of Mehdiganj and surrounding villages have been experiencing severe water shortages since Coca-Cola started bottling operations in the village, and the remaining groundwater and the soil have been polluted as a result of the bottling plant's operations. A recent study of water conditions in eight villages within a 3 kilometer radius of the Coca-Cola bottling plant in Mehdiganj found that the number of wells that had dried up increased seven-fold since Coca-Cola commenced operations in the area, and on an average, the water levels in the wells in the area had dropped 18 feet.

The Central Pollution Control Board of India, the primary environmental regulatory agency, has also confirmed high levels of lead, cadmium and chromium in the sludge being produced by the Coca-Cola plant. Most recently, the Coca-Cola company has suffered dramatic loss in sales because of reports that confirm high levels of pesticides in Coca-Cola products in India.

"With the pesticides in Coca-Cola products, at least consumers have a choice—they can choose not to drink Coca-Cola. The villagers of Mehdiganj and surrounding villages do not have such a choice. Their water tables are dropping



Armed Protection for Coca-Cola Plant in Mehdiganj



Police Attack Protesters at Mehdiganj

dramatically and their land and water is being polluted, and for them, it is a matter of survival," said Sandeep Pandey of the National Alliance of People's Movements, one of the organizers of the protest.

"Access to water is a fundamental human right and the Coca-Cola company is denying this right to thousands of people across India," said Nandlal Master of Lok Samiti, a community organization from Mehdiganj at the forefront of the campaign against Coca-Cola. "We will continue to campaign until people across India can live free of the abuses being perpetrated by these companies."

The protesters at Coca-Cola's north India headquarters were met by Mr. Kalyan Ranjan, Senior Manager of Public Affairs & Communication at Coca-Cola India. Visibly nervous, Mr. Ranjan denied any knowledge of the various reports implicating the Coca-Cola company for pollution and water depletion. Mr. Ranjan is also known for making outlandish statements. In February 2006, he announced that there was no campaign against Coca-Cola in Mehdiganj.

"We find it preposterous that even three years after the government of India confirmed the dangerously high levels of cadmium, lead and chromium in its waste, the company claims it knows of no such study. The Coca-Cola company is trying to act above the law in India, and this is not acceptable," said Amit Srivastava of the India Resource Center, an international campaigning organization.

Communities in India campaigning against Coca-Cola for creating water shortages and pollution enjoy tremendous support internationally, with close to twenty colleges and universities in the United States and the United Kingdom restricting the sale of Coca-Cola products until the company genuinely addresses the concerns in India.

The campaign against Coca-Cola in the United States has just completed a successful speaking tour of six colleges and universities last week, including Fordham University, Wellesley College, Harvard University, Stony Brook University, Brandeis University and Clark University. All these campuses are campaigning to ban Coca-Cola products.

A public debate is scheduled with the Coca-Cola company at the University of Minnesota on October 11. The debate is being organized by the student government at the University of Minnesota who have resolved to investigate the issues further. The University of Minnesota has one of the largest campus contracts with the Coca-Cola company in the world, and students are campaigning to cut the contract because of Coca-Cola's abuses in India and around the world.



Info at [www.IndiaResource.org](http://www.IndiaResource.org) or <http://us.oneworld.net>

## China's Emerging Labor Movement Growing Teeth on Corp Codes of Conduct

by Brendan Smith, Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello,  
*CommonDreams.org*, 5 October 2006

**T**rade unionists in the US and elsewhere have long argued that there is no labor movement in China. They rightly point out that Chinese workers lack even the most basic human rights protections, including the rights to strike and join an independent union.

But there's more to the story: Ten years ago, according to the China's Minister of Public Security, there were on average 10,000 large-scale collective protests each year. By 2004, the government recorded 74,000 large-scale protests. Late last year, the Minister of Police announced protests had increased to 87,000 last year, involving well over four million workers.

Four million workers! In the US we celebrated the birth of a new global social movement when 60,000 people showed up for the "Battle of Seattle" in 1999. In China there is now more than enough evidence of continual worker self-organization outside of official trade union channels to put to rest notions that "there is no labor movement in China".

According to Robin Munro, research director of *China Labour Bulletin* (CLB), "Whereas 10 years ago I think you could have said China did not have a labor movement, that is no longer really the case...there is no freedom of association for workers, but hitherto, people have tended to think that, therefore, there is no Chinese labor movement. I think the scale of worker unrest nowadays is so great, you can go to almost any city in the country now and there will be several major collective worker protests going on at the same time.

So China now has a labor movement. This is an important point to just put there on the table and recognize. It is not organized. It is spontaneous, it is relatively inchoate. But then so were labor movements in most Western countries before trade unions were permitted. We have basically a pre-union phase of labor movement development in China today. It also has great potential, I think, for becoming a proper labor movement."

In the years before the passage of the National Labor Relations Act—known as the Wagner Act or "Labor's Magna Carta"—there was no legally enforced right to organize, bargain collectively, or strike in the United States. But US workers who were denied these rights responded with their own "pre-union" phase of struggle. Thousands of workers were arrested or beaten and scores shot dead for trying to exercise these rights. For example, in 1934 alone there were three general strikes and a huge national textile strike – all marked by substantial violence.

Largely in response to this upsurge, in 1935 the Federal government passed the Wagner Act hoping to legalize the labor movement and divert it into more moderate channels. According to a recent study by labor law historian James Gray Pope, the massive sit-down strikes and factory occupations of the following year cajoled the Supreme Court into reversing its own precedents and accepting the Wagner Act as constitutional.

American workers did not get their rights by waiting for the government to provide them; rather, they began asserting rights they believe they were entitled to, and thereby forced the Congress and the courts to acquiesce.

One innovative labor strategy that is being encouraged by CLB as a way to relate to the new emerging Chinese labor movement is the CC-2005 Campaign or Collective Contract

2005. (According to CLB staff, the Campaign's name is "a slightly cheeky designation, thinking in terms of SA-8000" and other Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) standards.)

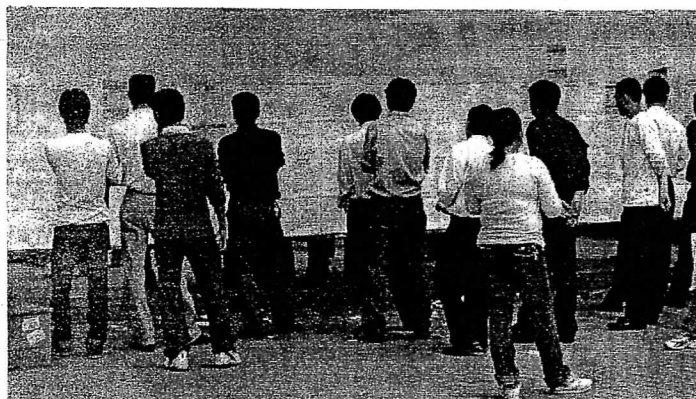
Under existing Chinese labor law, where there is no union presence in a factory, workers are allowed to elect their own representatives to negotiate and sign a collective contract. With the ACFTU holding only 30% representation outside the government sector, CLB is trying to take advantage of this legal "loop-hole" by urging multi-national corporations that operate in China "to pressure their supplier factories into allowing the workers to negotiate a proper collective contract in the workplace." The innovation of this approach is the use of existing Corporate Codes of Conduct to negotiate binding collective agreements with enforceable rights. CLB views the CC-2005 campaign an opportunity to create a basic organizing space that is legally protected in the private sector.

As Han Dongfang, Director of CLB, explains, "What we want to do is get this collective contract regulation connected, with a code of conduct, a corporate social responsibility kind of thing, which they have been trying to work out for more than 10 years but have never worked out. Now we try to put it together as a new program. We make the corporate social responsibility, the Code of Conduct document, which has no teeth, and make them, together with Chinese law, have teeth, in particular with the workers' participation, workers' representation."

CC-2005 has three major strategic objectives:

- \*To mobilize workers to participate in collective bargaining, so that they can play an active role in protecting their own rights;
- \*To achieve real implementation of China's labor laws, trade union legislation and the relevant standards of the International Labour Organization;
- \*To provide a new and effective means by which multinational buyers can realize their commitment to the principle of social accountability.

The massive number of wildcat strikes occurring in China shows that Chinese workers are not waiting for official unions to reform themselves. Instead, they are fashioning new ways to improve their lot. So the challenge is for the US and the other labor movements to find ways to reach out and encourage new independent workers organizations in China. We might want to start by supporting CC-2005 campaign.



Brendan Smith, Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello are co-founders of *Global Labor Strategies*, a new resource center working to assist labor and other social movements make the connections and develop the strategies needed to function effectively in the global economy. Read their blog at [www.globallaborblog.org](http://www.globallaborblog.org)

## Why the Euro Is Wrong for Them & Us Promotes Free Trade, Depresses Democracy

by Gerald Friedman, Center for Popular Economics, 6 Oct 2006

I still have some old French Francs floating around my desk drawers, but their only value these days is as souvenirs. Instead of national currencies like the Franc, since January 2002 a new currency has circulated in 12 European countries. Three EU members, Denmark, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, remain outside the Eurozone. The 10 new members admitted in May 2004 are all scheduled to adopt the Euro in the next few years.

Since the end of February 2002, the old national currencies have been demonetized. But I am not alone in holding onto old Francs. Many of my friends and neighbors in Paris this summer admitted holding onto Francs, and people still give prices in Francs. I suspect that much of the affection for the old currency reflects deep disappointment with the Euro; and I fear that this is spreading into disenchantment with the entire European project.

There are many small problems with the Euro: unattractive bills, a general shortage of small denomination coins ('monnaie'), and a widespread perception that when prices were converted from national currencies to the Euro the conversion rate was rounded up to give a boost to profit margins.

The real problem is that the Euro was sold to Europeans under false pretenses. It was presented to the European public as a painless way to raise productivity, reduce unemployment and promote growth. But it has done none of these. On the contrary, monetary integration has come with slow growth and persistently high unemployment. Today, it appears that the Euro's promises were never serious; instead, from the beginning, the Euro was a weapon in an ongoing attack on the European welfare state.

Proponents promised that replacing national currencies with the Euro would raise productivity by reducing the costs of changing money and allowing businesses to market their goods more efficiently in foreign countries. No one should be surprised that these specious promises have not been realized. Money changing remains a large business in European tourist destinations, with stands changing dollars, yen, and other currencies into Euros instead of into Francs. The money-changing business is declining, but this is due more to the ATM and the use of credit cards than to the Euro. As for the trouble businesses have with multiple currencies, the invention of the pocket calculator and computer spreadsheet, not to mention the nearly universal use of the US dollar, has virtually eliminated the cost of calculating foreign exchange rates as a business consideration.

While the Euro has done little or nothing to raise productivity, it has had great economic significance. By preventing countries from balancing their international accounts through changing currency values, the Euro forces all of Europe to adopt a uniform economic policy regardless of different national needs. Worse, the rules and treaties behind the Euro give this uniform policy a strong deflationary bias, tying the hands of European governments and preventing labor and socialist administrations from taking effective action against rising unemployment and stagnant real wages. With different currencies, countries could maintain different growth rates while devaluing their currency to balance any differences in national inflation rates. But countries with a common currency are driven to a uniform growth rate because faster growth and a higher rate of inflation will lead to an exodus of business and jobs to a country's slower growing

trading partners.

Logically, uniformity could come with all countries growing faster and driving down their unemployment rates even at the risk of somewhat more inflation. But the rules of the common currency were written to prevent this. The 1992 Maastricht Treaty that established the European Monetary Union leading to the Euro, established stringent conditions for countries entering the monetary union including limits on the use of fiscal stimulus to reduce unemployment and an explicit requirement that monetary convergence be on the basis of lowering inflation to a common, low level. Furthermore, authority over monetary policy was given to an appointed and undemocratic Frankfurt-based European Central Bank charged with holding down inflation but with no official responsibility for reducing unemployment or maintaining high growth rates.

Through practice and design, the dominant role in Europe's new uniform monetary policy went to the Continent's strongest economy, Germany, a country that entered the Euro with an undervalued currency. Now, Germany has a \$200 billion trade surplus and its strong export industries are pulling up the value of the Euro which has risen by 60% against the dollar since 1998. Germany's bankers and wealthy cash holders applaud the rising value of the Euro; but by lowering the cost of imports and driving up the price paid for Europe's exports, the rising Euro value has been a dead weight around the neck of European industries, contributing to high unemployment throughout the Euro-zone.

In the Euro we see the designs of a new economic order intended to undo a century's social progress. Democratic politics had brought into place welfare states that redistribute income from rich to poor, from lucky to less fortunate. By cushioning citizens and workers from economic misfortune, by limiting the burden of unemployment, welfare policies promoted democracy by limiting the power of wealth and control over access to the means of production. But from the beginning, by promoting free trade ahead of political union, the European Common Market was founded on a contrary principle to free market exchanges from the 'burden' of state regulation.

Now, the Euro brings recession, unemployment and slow growth to a continent without effective democratic political institutions able to regulate continent-wide markets and monetary institutions. As a result, instead of national or super-national Keynesian growth policies, Euro-zone politicians can only try to alleviate unemployment by driving down wages and reducing taxes in a beggar-thy-neighbor attempt to attract the favor of bond markets and footloose capital.

The petty problems of the Euro will be fixed. More coins will be minted and I suspect that artists, scientists, and humanitarians will find their way onto the bills. Maybe they will even replace the silly bridges pictured on the bills with examples of Europe's great architecture. But the real problems will be harder to fix because they require changing the very direction of European integration and the Community's vision of freedom.

On its current path, the Community has become a battering ram, breaking down democratic regulation, and the dream of European integration has been hijacked to become a weapon in the class struggle against labor and the welfare state. Meaningful change will require restoring democracy to Europe. #



## Latin America Declares Independence Popular Participation Trumps Rep Gov

by Noam Chomsky, *International Herald Tribune*, 3 Oct 06

Five centuries after the European conquests, Latin America is reasserting its independence. In the southern cone especially, from Venezuela to Argentina, the region is rising to overthrow the legacy of external domination of the past centuries and the cruel and destructive social forms that they have helped to establish.

The mechanisms of imperial control—violence and economic warfare, hardly a distant memory in Latin America—are losing their effectiveness, a sign of the shift toward independence. Washington is now compelled to tolerate governments that in the past would have drawn intervention or reprisal.

Throughout the region a vibrant array of popular movements provide the basis for a meaningful democracy. The indigenous populations, as if in a rediscovery of their pre-Columbian legacy, are much more active and influential, particularly in Bolivia and Ecuador.

These developments are in part the result of a phenomenon that has been observed for some years in Latin America: As the elected governments become more formally democratic, citizens express an increasing disillusionment with democratic institutions. They have sought to construct democratic systems based on popular participation rather than elite and foreign domination.

A persuasive explanation for this has been offered by Argentine political scientist Atilio Boron, who observed that the new wave of democratization coincided with externally mandated economic "reforms" that undermine effective democracy. In a world of nation-states, it is true by definition that decline of sovereignty entails decline of democracy, and decline in ability to conduct social and economic policy. That in turn harms development.

The historical record also reveals that loss of sovereignty consistently leads to imposed liberalization, of course in the interests of those with the power to impose this social and economic regime. It is instructive to compare recent presidential elections in the richest country of the world and the poorest country in South America.

In the 2004 U.S. presidential election, voters had a choice between two men born to wealth and privilege, who attended the same elite university, joined the same secret society where young men are trained to join the ruling class and were able to run in the election because they were supported by pretty much the same conglomerations of private power. Their programs were similar, consistent with the needs of their primary constituency: wealth and privilege.

For contrast, consider Bolivia and Evo Morales' election last December. Voters were familiar with the issues, very real and important ones like national control over natural gas and other resources, which has overwhelming popular support. Indigenous rights, women's rights, land rights and water rights were on the political agenda, among many others. The population chose someone from its own ranks, not a representative of narrow sectors of privilege.

Given its new ascendancy, Latin America may come to terms with some of its severe internal problems. The region is notorious for the rapacity of its wealthy classes, and their freedom from social responsibility. Comparative studies of Latin American and East Asian economic development are revealing in this respect. Latin America has close to the world's worst record for

inequality, East Asia the best. The same holds for education, health and social welfare generally.

Latin American economies have also been more open to foreign investment than Asia. The World Bank reported that foreign investment and privatization have tended to substitute for other capital flows in Latin America, transferring control and sending profits abroad, unlike East Asia.

Meanwhile, new socioeconomic programs under way in Latin America are reversing patterns that trace back to the Spanish conquests—with Latin American elites and economies linked to the imperial powers but not to one another. Of course this shift is highly unwelcome in Washington, for the traditional reasons: The United States expects to rely on Latin America as a secure base for resources, markets and investment opportunities.

And as planners have long emphasized, if this hemisphere is out of control, how can the United States hope to resist defiance elsewhere?

*Noam Chomsky is emeritus professor of linguistics and philosophy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His most recent book is "Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy."*

## Harvard Students to Study in Cuba 18-Month Application for 12-Month Stay

by Justine R. Lescroart, *Harvard Crimson*, 2 October 2006

Harvard is preparing to launch a spring-semester study-abroad program at the University of Havana, despite strict federal regulations on U.S. travel to communist Cuba and activists' concerns about academic freedom in the island-nation. The David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies (DRCLAS) and the Harvard College Office of International Programs (OIP) have obtained a federal license for a joint effort with Cuba's preeminent educational institution.

The U.S. government's current embargo on trade with Cuba has stymied Harvard students' past attempts to study in the country with programs that were not College-affiliated. Current law forbids student travel to Cuba unless the student is from a university that has applied for and received an academic exchange license from the U.S. Treasury Department.

The arduous process of obtaining this license took 18 months, and permission lasts for only one year, according to Harvard's vice provost for international affairs, Jorge I. Dominguez. The Cuban-born Dominguez wrote in an e-mail to the *Crimson*, "We will apply again for a license [next year] but have no certainty whether we will get it or by what time."

Even now that Harvard has a license, Cuba-bound undergraduates must participate in a formal 10-week or longer academic program that counts for College credit, according to the DRCLAS program associate who manages the center's Cuban Studies arm, Lorena Barberia.

The ban on trade with Cuba makes for several unusual travel rules in addition to of the required letter-of-license. When returning home, students will be permitted to carry only \$100 worth of merchandise, for which they must have receipts, according to the OIP. The OIP instructs students not to take cell phones into Cuba. Cell phones can only be carried in the country with official authorization, according to the U.S. Commerce Department.

The 2007 program will run from late January to early May. For these four months, students will live in Havana, the country's

capital, which is home to 2.2 million residents and is the island's cultural, educational, and industrial center.

All students in the program must take one mandatory course on U.S.-Cuban relations, according to the OIP. According to a fact sheet from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, academic freedom is "limited" in Cuba, and "some fields of study, such as the social sciences, are denied to those who lack the proper revolutionary zeal and political awareness." A March 2006 report from Amnesty International described freedom of expression in Cuba as "very restricted," and said that 72 dissidents are currently being held as "prisoners of conscience" in the country.

DRCLAS and OIP officials expressed enthusiasm about the program. OIP Acting Director Leslie M. Hill wrote in an e-mail, "This is a unique intellectual opportunity for a small group of Harvard College students to study at an outstanding Latin American university, live in a dramatically different social, political, and economic landscape, view the world from a Cuban vantage point, and hear some of the world's greatest music live!"

## LETTERS

### Coup Attempt Expected in Bolivia

Heinz Dieterich [article in Spanish; contact BCA] is calling for everyone to be aware that a coup-d'etat is in the works in Bolivia. Expected date: this Wednesday 11 Oct 06. The scene is being prepared by the usual suspects. The commercial media, the disloyal officers, the corrupted unions (including the transportation union, which called for a general strike this Wednesday), and the oligarchy in general are hoping that by putting pressure from all these angles a coup d'etat will be justified. One thing the coupsters have lost is the surprise factor, thus the reason to circulate this e-mail. Stay attentive to developments in Bolivia this week.

—Jorge Marin, [cbmlkboston@hotmail.com](mailto:cbmlkboston@hotmail.com), 8 October

### "Fusion Voting" for Massachusetts?

*On Election Day, 7 November, there will be a ballot question on whether Massachusetts should allow "cross-endorsement" of candidates—for example, a minor party endorsing a candidate of one of the major parties, so that voting for an unknown minor party candidate will not "waste" your vote. Thus the parties temporarily "fuse" to support one candidate one time. The Green-Rainbow party has been debating whether to support this initiative, which has been working well in New York City for many years, broadening the political debate and encouraging minor parties to be active. The Dispatch doesn't know what the GRP final position is, but the Communications Director in Worcester County has argued in a web-posted internal letter as follows:*

#### Reconsideration of Fusion Proposal

...Fusion, I believe, does give voters, at the very least, "options" at the ballot box that were not available prior to its passage. But more importantly, it gives parties options previously not available. Fusion empowers our state committee to make the calls on whether or not we use fusion, and judging by the current composition of our State Committee, I do not see us endorsing the corporatist Democrats anytime soon. On the flip side, I could see us in some cases using our ballot status to endorse viable and compatible Socialist candidates, and adding them to our ballot line—this is an option that was not previously available.

One final comment: I think that no matter what we decide on the subject of fusion, we must promote Instant Run-Off Voting (IRV) as the best electoral reform available at present. We must say that Fusion is a poor substitute for IRV, where voters must make *positive* decisions in terms of who they will support.

—Colby E. Peterson, [www.Green-Rainbow.org](http://www.Green-Rainbow.org), 8 July

### NV Action in Ireland

BCA members **Bill and Dotty Fine**, formerly of Back Bay, have settled in Dublin. They support the court-exonerated "Pit Stop Ploughshares" group, vowing to nonviolently end US military traffic through Shannon Airport on the way to illegal war in Iraq and Afghanistan. See [ploughsharesireland.com](http://ploughsharesireland.com), [counterpunch.org](http://counterpunch.org), [indymedia.ie](http://indymedia.ie), etc. To help bring 5 US vets to 28 Oct Shannon demand demo, send \$\$ for their airfare by contacting the Fines at [dottyochbill@yahoo.com](mailto:dottyochbill@yahoo.com).

## CHAPTER NEWS (Continued from Page 8)

for "Atlantica"—an economic union of the Atlantic Provinces, parts of Quebec, NY and New England, with Halifax as a super-port connecting with the supercorridor, for transport of world materials to Mexico for cheap manufacture, and sales to North America and the world. Layout: \$184 billion. There is no estimate of the social, cultural and environmental costs.

The good news, from Lee MA's **Deedee Consolati**, is the defeat, as Democratic candidate for state senate from western Massachusetts, of water-privatizer Chris Hodgkins, and nomination of the young, anti-privatization Ben Downing. Hooray!

### Venezuela Trip

Twelve people have thus far signed on to the election-observing/social inquiry delegation tour of Venezuela, 28 Nov-7 Dec.—a "go"—including **Jesse Burkhardt**, **Bonnie Preston** (ME), and **Dave Lewit**. You're free to go and return at any time, and can get cheaper fares by going through the group's travel agent. Most are traveling on the same plane. Contact **Jorge Marin**, tour leader, at 508-577-4661 or call *Dispatch* editor.

### Election Defense

Check out [www.electiondefensealliance.org](http://www.electiondefensealliance.org) for the array of activities you can partake in to ensure fair balloting on 7 November, whether in Massachusetts or any state.

**John Bonifaz**, our election reform candidate, lost to incumbent John Galvin in the Democratic primary for secretary of state of Massachusetts. But John, this was your first run—do it again and win!

### Localization

The third roundtable, on local-based regional (NEng) economy, is still in abeyance, but we are hopeful that Janet Eaton (above) and Gar Alperovitz (below) may participate, even though they are not New Englanders.

**Dave Lewit** attended Liberty Tree's Local Democracy Convention in Madison, Wisconsin, 29 Sep-1 Oct, organized largely by former AfD member **Ben Manski**, who, as a lawyer and scholar, elaborated on Home Rule, a form of municipal autonomy from state or federal control. Among other interesting speakers, foreign and domestic, **Gar Alperovitz**, author of *America Beyond Capitalism*, signaled the death of democratic socialism and rising, upbeat bottom-up localized developments. **Sergio Baierle** explained how conservatives are undermining participatory budgeting in Brazil, but **Evan Paul** explained a DC adaptation. Stay tuned for more *Dispatch* news on this.

## CHAPTER NEWS

### Gandhi Circles

BCA's first reading of the 28 paragraphs (and narrative) on strategic nonviolence drew ten participants at our September meeting including **Sherry Zitter**, president of the local chapter of Nonviolent Peaceforce. Ten worked just fine. The paragraphs covered successful NV resistance in S. Africa, India, Denmark, Alabama, Poland, and Bolivia (*LETTERS in this issue warn of another coup coming*). Discussion was lively, with participants formulating their own questions rather than repeating questions suggested in the script. They asked and discussed:

- \* *Is there a role for violence, at least in small doses, or defensively, or symbolically?*
- \* *How to overcome fear of being hurt or jailed, which stopped me (Soesan Kae Clarke) at Selma?*
- \* *How to choose a boycott target, and who gets hurt?*
- \* *Does nonviolence provoke violence?*
- \* *After a coup, as in Chile, does the struggle continue under ground?*
- \* *With Gene Sharp's 198 nonviolent methods [appended to readings]—which methods are better, and when?*
- \* *Mexicans in Oaxaca are rebelling, nonviolently taking over city halls and radio stations. What can make that happen here?*
- \* *Is property damage "violence"?*
- \* *Can a nonviolent movement work without TV?*
- \* *Why didn't massive, worldwide protests stop the Iraq invasion?*

This month's meeting will follow up, with an expert resource person, on 25 October.

The entire packet with narration, questions, & appendix can be copied from [www.NewEnglandAlliance.org](http://www.NewEnglandAlliance.org).

### Water

Boston's English High School in Jamaica Plain has welcomed BCA to work with teachers and students to end sale of bottled water, and ultimately to reduce corporate influence in public schools. **Dave Lewit** is working with biology teacher **Gabriell Paye** and students, meeting next with the Social Justice club on 26 October at 2pm. BCA's **Soesan Kae Clarke**, who lives in JP, and WILPF's **Marie Jackson-Miller** may join in. Call *Dispatch* editor for information.

Meanwhile, Massachusetts Global Action's **Jonathan Leavitt**, with AfD as partner & BCA as endorser, ran "Our Communities, Our Water" conference at UMass/Amherst 22-24 September. (Jonathan will soon move to central Maine, where he will campaign for legalization of marijuana and hemp.) Several BCA members attended. *Dispatch* expects to report more fully, but two issues stood out: AfD's work in **Barnstead NH** resulted in the town's framing an ordinance denying corporations the privilege of withdrawing groundwater and selling it outside the town, and more basically, denying corporations any rights as "persons"—free speech, privacy, due process.

The other issue is the looming threat of massive water export from Canada via a proposed Mexico-US-Canada "super-corridor"—a 10-lane superhighway flanked by rails and pipelines, 300 feet wide. AfD good friend **Janet Eaton** of Nova Scotia explained that this emerged from a low-profile "Security & Prosperity Partnership of North America"—business interests pushing for a "North American Union" which would force the US and Canada to change their laws to conform with their corporatist aims, like the largely failed NAFTA. Concordant with this is a Canadian business proposal (Continued on page 7 <<)

## ACTION ALERTS

Wed 18 Oct ~7:00pm. Belmont. Film: "**Iraq for Sale**" — ripoffs & harms in reconstructing Iraq infrastructure. Belmont Studio Cinema. Info: 617/484-9751, 617-924/6547.

Wed 18 Oct ~7:00pm. W. Newton. Film: "**911 Mysteries**" — evidence that the World Trade Towers and Building 7 were demolished by pre-set explosives, and similar concerns. West Newton Cinema. Info: 617/965-6552.

Sat 28 Oct. 10-5pm. Stockbridge. 26th Annual E.F.Schumacher Lectures. **Stacy Mitchell** on independent businesses. **Will Raap** on land restoration and agricultural sustainability. **Richard Heinberg** on options and actions for a post-carbon world. Info: (413) 528-1737.

Tue 7 Nov. **VOTE**. Polls are open until 8pm. To help ensure fair balloting, see [www.electiondefensealliance.org](http://www.electiondefensealliance.org) TODAY.

Sun 12 Nov. N. Cambridge. Daytime. **Nonviolent Direct Action Training**. Learn tactics useful in outdoor demonstrations. American Friends Service Committee offices. Info on times and details: 617/491-4857 or 617/455-4127.

Tue 28 Nov. Logan Airport. **Depart for Venezuela** with Boston delegation to observe election and visit many social/political organizations. Enroll now with Jorge Marin. See "Venezuela Trip" under CHAPTER NEWS above, and prior *Dispatches*.

## 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 or copy 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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Visit our new regional web site: [www.NewEnglandAlliance.org](http://www.NewEnglandAlliance.org)

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