

BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the **February**
Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy **2007**

Gandhi's "Seven Social Sins"

Politics without Principle
Wealth without Work
Pleasure without Conscience
Knowledge without Character
*Commerce without Morality **
Science without Humanity
Worship without Sacrifice

* (see discussion, Page 5. Each month a different sin will be discussed. Letters to the Editor are encouraged.)

CHAPTER NEWS (Continued on page 8)

Chapter Calendar

* * *Rethinking Our Local Alliance* * *

Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy's next meeting will be on **Wednesday, February 28, at 7:00 p.m.** at **Cambridge Friends Meeting house**, 5 Longfellow Park (10-minute walk from Harvard Square T station, west on Brattle St.), Cambridge.

Agenda

Do you feel that our program and our meetings lack focus? Are we floundering? Are old members losing conviction or interest?

Now that Congress has a new lease on life, giving us hope, let's share ideas about enlivening BCA and its sister groups for **grappling with the corporate undermining of our society** —and **projects for democratization**. See discussion on Page 8. At this meeting we will post your ideas, and refocus the chapter and its relations with other chapters and action groups.

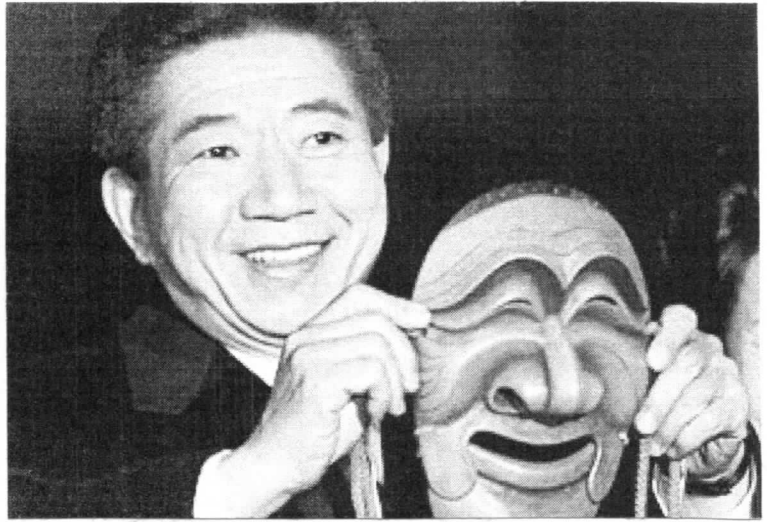
Refreshments — North Bridge and AfD members welcome!

Bravo, World Social Forum The 'Alter-Globalists' Hit Their Stride

by Immanuel Wallerstein, *Int'l Herald Tribune*, 2 Feb 2007

THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM, founded as a sort of anti-Davos [World Economic Forum], has matured and evolved more than even its participants realize. From the beginning, the [sixth] WSF, which met in Nairobi from Jan. 20-25, has been a gathering of a wide range of organizations and movements from around the world that defined themselves as an opposition to neoliberal globalization and imperialism in all its forms. Its slogan has been "another world is possible" and its structure has been that of an open space without officers, spokesmen or resolutions. The term "alter-globalists" has been coined to define the stance of its proponents.

In the first several WSF meetings, beginning in 2001, the emphasis was defensive. Participants, *(continued on page 4 >>)*



Korea's President Roh----populist unmasked?

Korea-US Free Trade Looms Huge Corporate Coup Faces July 1 Deadline

by Christine Ahn, *TomPaine.com*, 8 Feb 2007

TRADE REPRESENTATIVES from the United States and South Korea are racing against the clock to sign the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement under the "fast track" deadline. With \$72 billion dollars traded annually between the two countries, the KorUS FTA would become the second largest trade deal after the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). While such a trade deal would normally sail through the halls of the U.S. Congress and the Korean National Assembly, times have changed since the first free-trade regimes rolled into Washington, D.C., and Seoul.

Critics of unfettered trade have had over a decade of evidence revealing how NAFTA has devastated the lives of working people across the continent. In the 2006 midterm elections, 37 members of Congress were elected on a fair-trade platform, ousting pro-free trade incumbents. Newly elected Democratic Sen. Jim Webb of Virginia even took the opportunity on prime-time national television to challenge the Washington consensus on trade. In response to President Bush's State of the Union address, Webb said that America's workers should "expect, rightly, that in this age of globalization, their government has a duty to insist that their concerns be dealt with fairly in the international marketplace."

Congress granted President Bush *fast track*, also known as Trade Promotion Authority, to speed the negotiation of trade agreements. In return, legislators are given 90 days to review the proposed deal before they vote up or down. As this authority will expire on July 1, U.S. and Korean trade representatives will meet in Washington for three days beginning February 11 in a frenzied attempt to smooth over colossal differences in order to come up with an agreement by April 2. Wall Street corporations and South Korean *chaebols* (trading conglomerates) are salivating at this trade deal that would lower their tariffs and increase their profits.

Given the effects of NAFTA on America's manufacturing workers and Mexico's farmers, free traders can no longer simply tout the miracles of neoliberal economics. According to the Economic Policy Institute, since NAFTA took effect over one million workers in the U.S. lost their high-paying manufacturing jobs, and were forced to take lower-paying service jobs where they now earn 23 percent less. U.S. workers without a college edu-

cation—73 percent of the population—saw their wages drop by 13 percent since NAFTA took effect.

But NAFTA's impact is even more apparent in Mexico where real wages dropped by 80 percent and unemployment rose from nine to 15 percent. Approximately 1.5 million Mexican farmers were forced to give up farming because they were unable to meet the price of corn produced by massively-subsidized U.S. agribusinesses. Undersold and without many other job options in a depressed economy, Mexican farmers sought low-wage work in the maquiladoras or risked the dangerous journey to cross the heavily militarized U.S.-Mexico border. Mexico, where maize originated, is now facing riots by its people over high tortilla prices because the growing demand for ethanol have inflated corn prices on the global market. These are the effects of NAFTA that free traders must address when they espouse the limitless benefits of an integrated continental economy.

Seeing the devastation that a U.S. FTA has wreaked on Mexican peasants, Korean farmers are not about to wait for U.S. rice—the most subsidized crop in the world—to flood the Korean market. According to Dr. Ki-woong Lee, Chairman of the Agriculture Economic Department at Suncheon National University, the KorUS FTA would be a death knell for up to 140,000 Korean farmers.

Free traders argue that reducing tariffs would level the playing field and increase the efficiency of producers. But Korean and American farms are not just leagues apart, they're constellations apart. From 1995 to 2005, the U.S. rice industry received over \$10.5 billion dollars in government subsidies, and the lion's share—25 percent—went to the top one percent of rice growers. In the U.S., the average rice farm is 397 acres, compared with South Korea's average rice farm of 3.5 acres. Approximately 8,000 of America's two million farms grow rice, compared with South Korea, where over 787,000 farms—or 57 percent—cultivate rice.

South Korean farmers make up just eight percent of the population, but they are highly visible, well-organized and able to sway popular opinion. The three largest department stores in South Korea—Lotte, Hyundai and Shinsegae—have decided against purchasing imported rice and serving it to consumers for fear of public backlash against their chains.

Since negotiations began in February 2006, over one million South Koreans have protested the FTA, organizing hunger and general strikes. In response, the South Korean government has used secrecy and severe repression to silence the majority of South Koreans now opposed to the FTA. As a pre-condition to even beginning negotiations, South Korean president Roh Moo-Hyun unilaterally accepted to amend four Korean laws to allow U.S. markets access to Korea. When the Korean government finally held a hearing on whether to pursue the FTA, it stopped public comment after 20 minutes because so many people were opposed to it.

The state-run Korean Advertising Review Board blocked an ad by farmers and film makers opposing the FTA from being aired, saying that it was unfairly biased against the South Korean government. Meanwhile, President Roh's Committee to Support the Conclusion of the Korea-U.S. FTA freely broadcast a \$3.8 million propaganda ad. After over 100,000 peasants, farmers and workers took to the streets last November in protest, the government instituted a ban against public FTA protests. They have deployed thousands of police to use physical violence, including water cannons, against protestors, raided local offices of civic organizations, detained 19 leaders of farmers' and workers' organizations and issued summons and warrants for 170 leaders.

Politicians advocating the FTA are promoting the trade deal

as an opportunity to mend bridges between the U.S. and South Korea at a time of heightened strained relations between the two countries. Washington and Seoul have diverged on their approaches to Korean reunification and the North Korean nuclear crisis, which, in tandem with other factors, has prompted a rise in anti-American sentiment in South Korea. One of the pre-conditions that President Roh agreed upon was to lift the ban on U.S. beef instituted in 2003 with the discovery of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). Last December, he allowed for the import of boneless beef, which has prompted 70 percent of Korean housewives in their 30s and 40s to say that they "won't buy" U.S. beef. The FTA is big news in South Korea, and the majority of Koreans are opposed to the FTA. A July 2006 poll found that 62 percent opposed the FTA. A popular image on placards at anti-FTA protests is one of Uncle Sam holding a chained Korean peasant on his knees with the caption "Koreans are enslaved to American beef."

South Koreans have become a vital force in the global justice movement through their highly visible demonstrations at WTO protests. They brought global media attention to the desperate struggle facing peasants and workers under neoliberal globalization when peasant leader Lee Kyung Hae stabbed himself in the heart at the 2003 WTO ministerial meeting in Cancun, Mexico while wearing a sign saying, "The WTO Kills Farmers."

If a trade deal is signed next week, Congress has an opportunity to vote it down. Social movements in South Korea and the United States must ensure that Congress is not reading outdated rhetoric claiming the limitless benefits of free capital. Now elected officials—seeing the new faces in Congress—must be held accountable to the anger and frustration felt by middle and working class people who see their security dwindling to further line the pockets of white-collar business executives.

Christine Ahn is a policy analyst with the Korea Policy Institute and Oakland Institute and a member of the Korean Americans for Fair Trade coalition.

Ed. Note: How could a populist president, elected by 49 percent in 2002, act so contrarily to the electorate? The answer lies largely in the persistent, massive, corporate corruption of the South Korean political process.

Roh was born to poor farmers, but managed to become a prominent human-rights lawyer and government minister critical of the US. A Korean "Howard Dean" (Time/CNN) upon election, it was soon revealed that Roh's campaign finances included big corporate money. He vetoed legislation to set up a special prosecutor to investigate corruption of his colleagues, he was impeached in 2004 and saved from removal by Korea's Constitutional Court, he pardoned 160 industrialists convicted for major irregularities—supposedly to save the Korean economy (he did not pardon the biggest two), and he unpopularity sent Korean troops to Iraq (there are still 30,000 US troops in S. Korea).

At the same time he is moving major government functions away from Seoul and enabling provinces to be more decisive in their development. He is proposing that his party merge with the more conservative major opposition party. Less than a year ago Roh announced the start of negotiations for a free trade agreement with the US. His term expires in less than a year, and his approval ratings have slipped to around 20 percent.

Korea's chaebol (industrial trust) system is similar to Japan's zaibatsu or post-WWII keiretsu except that most chaebol (Samsung, Hyundai, SK, etc.) are controlled by a single family, and can buy foreign patents, enabling them to quickly produce technologically advanced products, but unlike the Japanese, they are forbidden to control banks. Virtual monopolies, their influence on governments has been gross, with Roh's predecessor Kim Dae-jung also plagued by their corrupting power.

The KorUS FTA negotiations, similar to NAFTA, were begun less than a year ago with President Roh's approval. Term limited, he must step down at the end of 2007.

Canada-US Torture Partnership? SPP--Not Just Your Ordinary Free Trade Deal

by Maude Barlow, *Toronto Star*, 22 Jan 2007

IN A FEW WEEKS, CANADA'S NO-FLY LIST goes into effect. All travellers entering or leaving Canada will have their names checked against a list of "specified persons" the government doesn't want flying. There has been a lot of speculation about whether that list will be shared with the United States, with most commentators guaranteeing that it will be.

This is bad news for Canadians, whose legal and human rights have been put into question by recent U.S. laws. But criticizing the no-fly list successfully demands that we look at the broader picture of security co-operation with George Bush's America.

The Maher Arar commission revealed the consequences of sharing information about Canadians with foreign security agencies. Justice Dennis O'Connor pointed out in his report last year that once such information is in foreign hands, "it will be used in accordance with the laws of the foreign jurisdiction, which may not be the same as Canadian law."

A review of our security arrangements with countries like Syria and Egypt is well overdue. But we must not forget that the United States is also a foreign country. It was, after all, the laws of that foreign jurisdiction that allowed Arar, a Canadian citizen, to be deported to Syria and tortured. In fact, the recent signing of the Military Commissions Act by President George Bush makes it even easier for the U.S. to deport Canadians to countries where they will be tortured.

The Military Commissions Act strips all non-U.S. citizens, including Canadians, of their constitutional right to a fair trial. It grants the U.S. president the authority to detain non-citizens indefinitely, without charge, and "to interpret the meaning and application of the Geneva Conventions" as they relate to torture.

Worse, according to the American Civil Liberties Union, the act "allows detainees to be sentenced to death based on testimony literally beaten out of witnesses (and) grants officials in the Bush administration a retroactive "get-out-of-jail-free card for war crimes."

So why is Canada even considering a shared no-fly list and closer security and policing ties with the U.S. when it puts us at such enormous risk?

Since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, there has been a strong push on both sides of the border to integrate the Canadian and American security apparatuses. Much of this push is happening within the framework of the Smart Border Agreement of 2001 and the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP), agreed to by Canada, the U.S. and Mexico in 2005.

Dozens of bureaucratic working groups are currently implementing the SPP through adjustments to Canadian policy, especially security policy. If you haven't heard about the security partnership, it's because our government is very careful to disguise what are actually tri-national security measures as "made-in-Canada" solutions to terrorism.

This is especially worrying because of the degree to which the security partnership adopts U.S. measures as the norm, pulling Canadians under U.S. jurisdiction. For instance, Transport Minister Lawrence Cannon's "made-in-Canada" no-fly list is anything but. We know, from the 2006 SPP Report to Leaders, that "compatible (North American) advance passenger information systems" and "compatible criteria for the posting of lookouts of suspected terrorists and criminals" are priorities of

the security integration agenda of the security partnership to be completed by June 2007.

However, "made-in-Canada" our list is for the moment, it will be ultimately merged with the U.S. no-fly list, which has already included peace activists, preschoolers and one U.S. senator. We know now that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has been storing information on all travelers entering and leaving the U.S. in order to grade them on their risk as a terrorist or criminal.

Under the Automated Targeting System (ATS), travelers are not permitted to see or challenge their terrorism score, even if it can be used to detain or deport them to countries where they will be tortured. More disturbing were revelations in the final Arar commission report that the Canadian Border Security Agency has also been collecting data on all Canadian travelers through a National Risk Assessment Centre (NRAC).

"Canada and the United States use the same risk-analysis system," wrote O'Connor in his report. And, "pursuant to a 2005 memorandum of understanding, NRAC automatically shares information with the U.S. National Targeting Center ..." Furthermore, the Arar commission claims that, eventually, information on any Canadian flyer whose risk score is above a certain threshold will be automatically shared with U.S. authorities.

Arar was deported under this kind of careless information-sharing agreement. That's not a threshold anyone should find comforting. While it is obviously important to collaborate with the United States on certain common security issues, there must be clear limits on how information is shared with all foreign governments.

"The need for information sharing does not mean that information should be shared without controls," wrote O'Connor. "Nor does it mean exchanging information without regard to its relevance, reliability, or accuracy, or without regard to laws protecting personal information or human rights."

The signing of the Military Commissions Act and recent reports about the U.S. Automated Targeting System make it obvious that Washington holds little regard for laws protecting personal information and human rights.

And yet Canada is plowing ahead with plans to further integrate our two security apparatuses through opaque tri-national agreements like the security partnership.

It's crucial that we keep this in mind while criticizing Canada's new no-fly list. There is a larger agenda at work here and stopping some Canadians from flying is just the beginning.

Maude Barlow is national chair of the Council of Canadians.

SATIRE

The Heat Is On Go North to Canada, Young Man

by Ian Williams, *The Guardian (UK)*, 31 Jan 2007

THE HEAT IS ON PRESIDENT BUSH over global warming; we can expect a Road to Damascus conversion soon. Who says this guy is not responsive to the popular mood?

But based on his track record, we can expect the form of his conversion to be distinct and innovative. He acknowledged electoral discontent over his failure in Iraq by sending in 24,000 more troops and limbering up for a war in Iran. In short, when in a muddy hole, keep digging until you find the exit.

So we can expect the president to give some verbal recognition of global warming, and to accompany it with some forthright domestic measures—like a temporary twenty-five year tariff on hybrid cars to allow Detroit's SUV's to catch up on fuel efficiency, and a reduction of taxes on gasoline to limit the effects of climb-

ing oil prices on motor-voters.

But there are steps that the US must take internationally as well. Increasing temperatures and rising sea levels may make many parts of the United States uninhabitable. I mean, who would buy Florida real estate on a long lease? New Orleans is already written off, and the rest of the Gulf area can't be far behind.

About the only part of US business that is competitive internationally is corn and grain production, and rising temperatures may soon lay waste those fields of waving corn. Clearly strong measures are called for. Once again, Manifest Destiny beckons.

The United States has put a lot of energy into bringing about global warming, and the main beneficiaries of our hard work are a bunch of ungrateful foreigners. Canada's grain-growing capacity is going to expand as America's shrinks. Canada's northern territories are emerging from the ice and will soon be fertile meadows—all as a result of patriotic Americans burning gas selflessly, regardless of the cost.

As the Great Plains become dustbowls and the southern states and our coastlines go under water, Americans will be driven to ducking under the wires on the 48th parallel and fleeing north to escape the heat.

Can we tolerate American citizens being turned back by hard-hearted Canadian Mounties, or hunted down and deported by Canuck vigilantes? Surely not. Fortunately, the White House is believed to be considering a Nine Step Global Warming Recovery programme:

1. Canadian based forces in 1813 burnt down the White House and the Capitol—a terrorist attack for which payback time is long overdue.
2. As the strict constructionists in the Supreme Court are well aware, Article XI of the Articles of Confederation provides for the incorporation of Canada into the Union, and just because our last attempt in 1812 was unsuccessful should not put a cap on the business.
3. Canada is harboring Maher Arar, a Muslim terrorist with documented connections to Syrian torturers, and even paying him compensation, defying the efforts of our Ambassador David Wilkins to set them right.
4. Canada refused to send troops to Iraq.
5. Canada is harboring deserters from the US forces, who can't get the same safe haven in the Texas Air National Guard that they used to.
6. Canada cannot fight terrorism effectively because it has abolished the death penalty.
7. Canada has a socialistic health service.
8. A Lot of Canadians speak French.
9. Canada has lots and lots of oil. And pipelines.

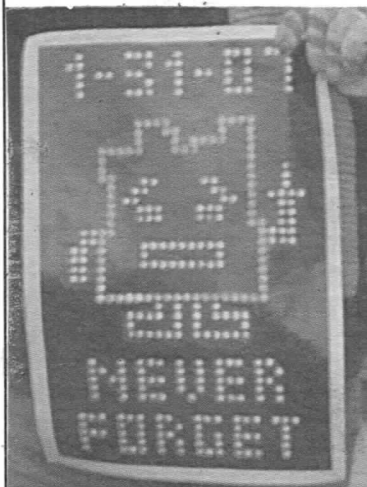
The logic is inescapable. Fellow Americans, there is only one way forward from here: Go north!

Art Panic in Boston Mod Ads Terrorize Terror-Police

by Winston Warfield, *Counterpunch*, 1 Feb 2007

IT SEEMS AN EDGY ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN for a late-night adult cartoon series caused a bomb scare of epic proportions in Boston yesterday, paralyzing the city for most of the day... Electronic art figures depicting the character "Err" in light-emitting diodes of this cartoon, replete with a "bird"-flipping left hand, sent Boston's police/anti-terror forces into overdrive...The figures had been installed under bridges and overpasses, and have been in place

for several weeks, unnoticed by clueless over-30's, but accepted by 20-something's as provocative and trendy ads, sort of guerrilla advertising. A subway worker freaked, thinking they might be bombs, and the three-ring circus ensued while the "sophisticated devices", as was reported in the frenzied media, were located and removed.



If anyone needs a better example of what the "War on Terror" has brought us to, I'd like to see it. Here you have a security bureaucracy and a fear-indoctrinated population of consumers so on the edge of panic that an entire city is brought to its knees. Fear. That's been the main product being offered by the government/corporate media culture for the last five years, and it's been free of charge. Now we're so drenched in it, we've lost our wits. No one had the intestinal fortitude to stand up (and thus

stand out), and say "Wait a minute, this looks like a prank, at worst."

Fear has so taken command, that the "What if" question drives everything. It's beyond doubt that the "What if it's really a 'device'?" question shifted entire bureaucracies into overdrive, petrified at being held responsible should any one of these have been "I.E.D.'s" and not "L.E.D.'s (harmless light-emitting diodes), which is what they were. There's no doubt they were unusual, which was the point of the ad campaign, after all. In today's commercial message-saturated world, the Madison Avenue contest revolves around how to best be noticed (thus the considerable energy put into shock and humor ads during the Superbowl ratings extravaganza). In today's world, however, being unusual in one person's eyes means being suspicious in another's.

It's already begun, of course. Who isn't nervous when going through the security screenings at airports? Everyone's quiet, and no one wants to "look suspicious". Who doesn't dread border crossings, especially when returning to the U.S. from overseas, sweating while the cheery officer looks up your computer file to decide if you need a little more scrutiny in a closed room? How soon will there be routine checkpoints at state borders? Or roving checkpoints at random? "Driving While Black" is already a crime to many law enforcement personnel.

We can take this even further, of course. The hodge-podge swarm of "security" forces, increasingly militarized into S.W.A.T.-style special ops units, will be asking the "What if" question more and more as the generalized panic gets hard-wired into the culture. They will increasingly answer that question with an itchy finger on a trigger, and opt to "play it safe" by the ever-so-slight pressure needed. After all, no police officer would want to be held responsible for letting a real bad guy go, and the unfortunate collateral damage (you and I) will be seen as by-products of the campaign to keep us all "safe".

A nation of sheep, indeed. Boston's security panic yesterday should be a lesson as to what's coming, while our Constitution is being whittled away by a national security state apparatus run amok and its willing army of politicians, pundits and media models all chattering up a deafening cacophony boiling down to one thing: "be afraid". We citizens should be ashamed and embarrassed at participating in this shallow circus, with such potentially deadly consequences. Are we?

Winston Warfield is member of Veterans for Peace. He lives in Boston.

Gandhi's Fifth Sin: Commerce without Morality

(See all seven of Gandhi's Sins at top of Page 1.)

My Dad's Commerce

MY FATHER RULED OUR HOUSEHOLD with a self-righteous, all-knowing presence. To see only this side of his life, you would think that he was not a happy man. Nor were his wife or children happy. But in his business, as out in the community, he was a different man. His coming lit people's eyes. He interacted fairly and vigorously, with a sense of purpose and progress. He was a sort of successful Willy Loman.

In their teens, he and his cousin worked for an uncle in a harness business. A few years later the cousins started their own business, supplying lacquer and tools to automobile body repair shops. This was the new age of the automobile—a home in the suburbs and a car for everyone, even during the days of gasoline rationing during World War II. Keep 'em running and keep 'em looking good. The business burgeoned again after the war, when every new model was the talk of the locker room, and continued to Dad's roast-beef and cigarette death at age 58.

Even though his business employed only a couple of dozen traveling salesmen (and one saleswoman) and office workers, Father read *Fortune* magazine, identifying with big business. He probably believed that "what was good for General Motors was good for the country." The Korean War was just defending the free world from enslavement by Communism. What with a biased press (Scripps Howard's *New York World-Telegram*) can he be blamed for not knowing that US bombers had burned and flattened Pyongyang as thoroughly as Allied bombers had destroyed Dresden a few years earlier? Or that the war, like the wars in Teddy Roosevelt's day, was fought to enable American big business to expand its dominance?

Father thrived in a growth industry. Growth was natural and exhilarating. He and everyone else were innocent regarding the automobile's role in global warming, possibly leading to the death of the Earth in his great-grandchildren's time. He probably knew nothing about Standard Oil's and Firestone Rubber's tearing up rails—the main means of local mass transportation in several US cities—in order to promote autos, buses, and suburban sprawl. For my father, President Eisenhower's network of interstate highways was a boon, not the death-knell for passenger and much freight rail and of small towns, leading to an unsustainably top-heavy nation. Texas and California oil was cheap and plentiful, as was rubber tapped, invisibly, by *untersmenschen* in Indonesia and Brazil.

Now Exxon-Mobil, through its American Enterprise Institute, invests \$1.6 million in bribing scientists to insist that human activity—burning fossil fuel—contributes little if anything to global warming. What, besides war itself, could be more immoral? I may be the only one among my sisters and cousins who has thought twice about it.

Morality—Individual and Systemic

Gandhi, in addressing the Indian youth of his day, may have been referring to the individual's awareness—or responsibility for being aware—of the ugly side effects of much commerce. Having absorbed much of Buddhism, Gandhi understood the importance of mindfulness as you go about business. What is behind this product and the processes which brought it into being? What lies ahead beside its most obvious uses? Are there "externalities"—as conventional economists would say of factors lying outside their convenient formulas—

which make life harder or impossible for many people and other creatures?—which would reveal the immorality of the enterprise?

How do you treat your employees, or fellow employees? (Was Dickens right about Scrooge, or was Ayn Rand right?) Does "competition" condone wage-squeezing and out-sourcing for the sake of industrial growth? Does that growth benefit all, or most? Are unions merely instruments of corruption, and not of community and humanity? Does the "survival" or dominance of one vehicle or brand indicate its "goodness"—moral value? Should you blame or congratulate your competitors and yourself for getting a free ride on lobby-inspired favoritism from Congress or a regulatory agency?

We must also go beyond these individual concerns, to systemic morality. Does the capitalist system engender immorality?—greed, callousness, prejudice, elitism; resource exhaustion, classism, war? How is it that even after the Cold War the US—corporations with Pentagon certifications—zoomed to unknown heights or depths of weapons production and distribution? How is it that Anti-Trust actions have been limited to a ludicrous and lachrymose end point?

Where does any corporation fit into the system, to drive it or be driven? When a scientific institute accepts grants or contracts from chemical or nuclear power companies, are they responsible for growing pollution and public complacency? If you are a member of the local Chamber of Commerce, should you blow the whistle when the U.S. Chamber of Commerce drafts and negotiates—with the Treasury and Commerce departments—elitist trade treaties like NAFTA, WTO, CAFTA, and the looming SPP (Security & Prosperity Partnership of North America)? Or even when congressmembers readjust tax law to lower, and lower again, corporate taxes—shifting the tax burden (or burden of medical payments and education, for instance) to people, especially lower-income people?

Should any of us, or groups of us, blow the whistle when corporations use the dodge of free speech, privacy, or other Constitutional amendments meant for natural persons, for getting away with resource stripping, corporate corruption, union-busting, mendacious advertising, environmental science-busting, or any other systemic sin? Should media conglomerates and universities dominated by foundation and defense grants continue to serve corporate interests at the expense of public awareness and inventiveness—and truth? Should these organizations determine what's taught in our public schools, and professional schools?

Gandhi's *satyagraha*—"truth force" toward universal justice and peace—demands our concerted action to change the system. We face the advocates of "regime change" who would benefit the children of empire, and we must face them down. Beyond this, mindfulness urges us to look at what may lie ahead, so that we may advocate an alternative beneficial to all—an alternative based in social and ecological fact, not the counterfactual faith and propaganda of Market Fundamentalism and militaristic government.

—Dave Lewit

Under Raul Castro Cuba Debates Economic Path Ahead

by Marc Frank, Reuters, 7 Feb 2007

CUBAN ECONOMISTS ARE BUSY STUDYING WAYS to rev up one of the world's last communist-run economies, a step encouraged by acting President Raul Castro since he took over from his ailing brother six months ago.

The debate is focused on how to make Cuba's inefficient

command economy more productive and take advantage of new-found financial buoyancy in foreign exchange earnings.

"There is consensus on our goals: more popular participation, the country's development and a better material and spiritual life," China expert and economics professor Evelio Vilarino told Reuters this week at a globalization conference. "Where there is no consensus is on how best to achieve that."

In a series of end-of-the-year speeches, Raul Castro expressed frustration with bureaucracy, demanded answers to declining food output, urged Cuba's press to be more critical and authorized a study of socialist property relations.

Cuban economist and agriculture expert Amando Nova said agriculture reforms of the early 1990s—when Cuba divided state farms into worker cooperatives and legalized private produce markets—stopped halfway.

"We need farmers to participate more in production and price decisions, to be able to purchase inputs and in general enjoy more autonomy from the state," said Nova, who is involved in a report on agriculture commissioned by the government. Similar reports are being prepared on other sectors of the economy where the state dictates most output and prices in exchange for inputs and credits.

Many experts view Raul Castro, 75, as more pragmatic than his brother and believe he could steer Cuba's 90 percent state-run economy toward one that resembles the more open Chinese model.

Adapt, Don't Adopt

Luis Marcelo Yera of the National Economic Research Institute, a member of the panel looking into property relations, said Cuba is taking a path closer to one of his favorite Japanese sayings. "Adapt, don't adopt -- we can adapt the best experiences but not adopt another's model," he said.

Marcelo said the panel was "looking at better defining property under socialism ... because experience has demonstrated it has many problems functioning."

Cuba's foreign exchange earnings have nearly doubled over the last two years, thanks mainly to the export of medical and other services to Venezuela and record-high nickel prices.

Economic growth has sped up to three times its pace at the start of the decade when Cuba was pulling out of the economic collapse that followed the collapse of its former benefactor, the Soviet Union, in 1991.

Nevertheless, the state has run into problems investing the revenues through its more than 3,000 state-run companies. The economy also suffers from chronic disorganization, bad accounting, poor quality, lax discipline and graft.

The head of parliament's economic commission, Osvaldo Martinez, told Reuters the debate over economic policy probably would be taking place even if President Fidel Castro were not too ill to govern.

"We are not talking about the Chinese model, but a Cuban model, the best way forward given Cuba's possibilities, realities, resources and problems," Martinez said.

Some Cuban economists believe that only by adopting China's model of a capitalist market under communist political control, or at a minimum by decentralizing and developing private cooperatives and markets in nonstrategic sectors, can internal production be improved.

Others say any opening would provide the United States with a chance to topple the socialist system. Agriculture specialist Nova said taking steps to loosen the economy would not threaten his sector.

"Decentralization and more autonomy would result in more production and food security, consolidating our economy and making us less vulnerable," he said. #

Cochabamba Backlash

Bolivian Elites Mobilize for Autonomy

by Conn Hallinan, *portside.org*, 29 Jan 2007

UNREST IN BOLIVIA'S EASTERN PROVINCES is spreading, as local landlords and the European-origin wealthy elite who dominate the region dig in to resist President Evo Morales' efforts to institute land reform and use the region's natural gas reserves to raise national living standards.

Bolivia is the poorest country in South America, with 6 in 10 people living under the poverty line, a figure that jumps to 9 in 10 in rural areas.

Morales and his Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) won last year's election on a platform of reclaiming a controlling interest in gas and oil resources, raising fees on foreign mining companies, and turning idle land over to the landless. Gas and oil was successfully nationalized, and income from mining has increased six-fold. As a result, the economy is growing at a respectable 4 per cent, and the government has built up a 6 percent budget surplus, which it is using to improve education and subsidize food for the poor.

But an effort to distribute 48 million acres of land has sparked demonstrations in Cochabamba, Bolivia's third largest city and capital of Cochabamba province, where an anti-Morales governor, Manfredo Reyes, is pushing an autonomy referendum. The departments of Pando, Beni, Tarija and Santa Cruz all voted for autonomy in July 2006. Nationwide, however, the autonomy referendum was defeated.

While the Parliament approved the land distribution—10 per cent of Bolivia's families own 90 percent of the land—landlords, backed by powerful multinationals, like Cargill, Monsanto, and Brazilian soybean producers, have mobilized to resist the move.

The tension boiled over in Cochabamba January 10, when local peasants and coca growers marched on the city demanding that Governor Reyes resign after he organized an autonomy referendum. The governor called out the police, who tear-gassed demonstrators. A right-wing pro-autonomy group, Youth for Democracy, attacked the demonstrators touching off a riot that killed two and wounded more than 100.

The eastern provinces are the wealthiest part of Bolivia—Santa Cruz alone produces almost half the nation's wealth—but there is widespread poverty as well, with working class slums sandwiched between malls and skyscrapers. While Indians make up a majority of Bolivia's population, most of them live in the poorer highlands.

Morales supporters point out that when highland tin was the Bolivian economic engine, the eastern elites supported a centralized government. It was only after natural gas deposits were discovered in the east, and Bolivia elected its first Indian president—Morales is an Aymara—that the eastern departments suddenly decided they wanted autonomy.

An ugly strain of racism has crept into the current standoff. When Morales sacked army commander Marcelo Antezana for unilaterally allowing the U.S. to destroy Bolivia's supply of Chinese shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles, the general railed against Morales' close ties with Cuba and Venezuela and "Caribbean mulattoes." Signs dabbled on the walls in Santa Cruz read "Evo, chola de Chavez," which translates, "Evo is Chavez's Indian woman" [referring to Venezuela's leftist president].

MAS is currently attempting to amend the constitution to end a two-thirds rule, which allows the elite minority to block political and judicial reforms. Even though Morales supporters have a majority in the Assembly—255 to 137—the elites have success fully paralyzed the process. *(Continued on Page 7 >>)*

The House That Fear Built: Warsaw, 1943

*The purpose of poetry is to remind us
how difficult it is to remain just one person,
for our house is open, there are no keys in the doors.*
—Czeslaw Milosz

I am the boy with his hands raised over his head
in Warsaw.

I am the soldier whose rifle is trained
on the boy with his hands raised over his head
in Warsaw.

I am the woman with lowered gaze
who fears the soldier whose rifle is trained
on the boy with his hands raised over his head
in Warsaw.

I am the man in the overcoat
who loves the woman with lowered gaze
who fears the soldier whose rifle is trained
on the boy with his hands raised over his head
in Warsaw.

I am the stranger who photographs
the man in the overcoat
who loves the woman with lowered gaze
who fears the soldier whose rifle is trained
on the boy with his hands raised over his head
in Warsaw.

The crowd, of which I am each part, moves on
beneath my window, for I am the crone too
who shakes her sheets
over every street in the world
muttering
What's this? What's this?

—Jane Flanders

BOLIVIA (Continued from Page 6)

While a nationwide referendum on autonomy was defeated in the last election, the eastern provinces are forging ahead anyway. Some in the region suspect that secession is the real goal, quietly supported by landlords in neighboring Paraguay, as well as by the Bush Administration.

Any land distribution in Bolivia is likely to reverberate in Paraguay, which has the most unequal land ownership in the hemisphere: 1 percent of the population controls 77 percent of the land. Unequal access to land is already causing unrest in Paraguay.

And as for the Bush Administration, two years ago it began a campaign against Morales, accusing him of being a cat's paw for Cuba and Venezuela. The administration has also increased the U.S. military presence in the triple border area of Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina, including deploying Special Forces in Paraguay.

If an east-west civil war breaks out, the Bush Administration is likely to be right in the middle of it.

For further information on Bolivia and Latin America in general, go to upsidedownworld.org, the best source of information on the hemisphere [along with Narco News].

each time more numerous, denounced the defects of the Washington consensus, the efforts of the World Trade Organization to legislate neoliberalism, the pressures of the International Monetary Fund on peripheral zones to privatize everything and open frontiers to the free flow of capital, and the aggressive posture of the United States in Iraq and elsewhere.

In this sixth world meeting, this defensive language was much reduced—simply because everyone took it for granted. And these days the United States seems less formidable, the WTO seems deadlocked and basically impotent, the IMF almost forgotten. *The New York Times*, reporting on this year's World Economic Forum at Davos, talked of the recognition that there is a "shifting power equation" in the world, that "nobody is really in charge" any more, and that "the very foundations of the multi-lateral system" have been shaken, "leaving the world short on leadership at a time when it is increasingly vulnerable to catastrophic shocks."

In this chaotic situation, the WSF is presenting a real alternative, and gradually creating a web of networks whose political clout will emerge in the next 5 to 10 years. Participants at the WSF have debated for a long time whether it should continue to be an open forum or should engage in structured, planned political action. Quietly, almost surreptitiously, it became clear at Nairobi that the issue was moot. The participants would do both — leave the WSF as an open space that was inclusive of all those who wanted to transform the existing world system and, at the same time, permit and encourage those who wanted to organize specific political actions to do so, and to organize to do so at WSF meetings.

The key idea is the creation of networks, which the WSF is singularly equipped to construct at a global level. There is now an effective network of feminists. For the first time, at Nairobi, there was instituted a network of labor struggles (defining the concept of "worker" quite broadly). There is now an ongoing network of activist intellectuals. The network of rural/peasant movements has been reinforced. There is a budding network of those defending alternative sexualities (which permitted Kenyan gay and lesbian movements to affirm a public presence that had been difficult before). There is an antiwar network (immediately concerned with Iraq and the Middle East in general). And there are functional networks on specific arenas of struggle—water rights, the struggle against AIDS, human rights.

The WSF is also spawning manifestos: the so-called Bamako Appeal, which expounds a whole campaign against capitalism; a feminist manifesto, now in its second draft and continuing to evolve; a labor manifesto which is just being born. There will no doubt be other such manifestos as the WSF continues. The fourth day of the meeting was devoted essentially to meetings of these networks, each of which was deciding what kinds of joint actions it could undertake — in its own name, but within the umbrella of the WSF.

Finally, there was the attention turned to what it means to say "another world." There were serious discussions and debates about what we mean by democracy, who is a worker, what is civil society, what is the role of political parties in the future construction of the world. These discussions define the objectives, and the networks are a large part of the means by which these objectives are to be realized. The discussions, the manifestos and the networks constitute the offensive posture.

It is not that the WSF is without its internal problems. The tension between some of the larger nongovernmental organizations (whose headquarters and strength is in the North, and which support the WSF but also show up at Davos) and the more militant social movements (particularly strong in the South

but not only) remains real. They come together in the open space, but the more militant organizations control the networks. The WSF sometimes seems like a lumbering tortoise. But as in Aesop's fable, the glittering speedy Davos hare lost the race.

Immanuel Wallerstein, senior research scholar at Yale University, is the author of The Decline of American Power: The U.S. in a Chaotic World. Distributed by Agence Global.

CHAPTER NEWS

For the last three or four of our ten years, BCA meetings have been devoted mainly to educating folks on high-leverage political issues. Last month's program, with **Nancy Lee Wood**, showed and discussed Cuba's salutary response to a severely restricted oil supply—a model, perhaps, for what we will face in a few years when the US price of oil puts it out of the reach of ordinary people. The program was well attended, interestingly by many folks we'd never seen before, and few Alliance members. This is happening more and more. As usual, the chair of the meeting announced opportunities for action—our five ongoing projects. But to what avail??—no new participants.



So several of us, including one member of North Bridge chapter, have talked informally about what to do. We feel that the time has come to consider reorganizing. Since control of Congress has passed from the Republicans, new hope is in the air. Does this mean that folks here in Greater Boston are ready to team up and devote serious time to a worthy project—addressing corporatism and democracy in a hard-hitting, practical way? How? Can new logistics help?

We want every Alliance member in the area to voice their ideas. **Please come to the idea-meeting announced on Page 1 of this issue.** We conspirators are tossing in ideas like

- * BCA and North Bridge combine forces
- * form all nearby chapters into one New England Alliance
- * give workshops throughout the area on corporatism and democratic action*
- * move general meetings to the "Democracy Center" at 45 Mt. Auburn Street
- * meet anywhere more convenient to people willing to commit
- * consider new general meeting times
- * speed up development of our web site NewEnglandAlliance.org for facilitating projects
- * focus on instituting "new civics" in area high schools
- * team up to make the next regional roundtable—Local-Based Regional Economy—a success
- * form a group to study and discuss "The Populist Moment" by Lawrence Goodwyn
- * form an "1890" chapter and send out speakers
- * team up to promote "Gandhi Circles" for strategic nonviolence education
- * YOUR IDEA HERE
- * YOUR SON'S OR DAUGHTER'S IDEA HERE

We are excited about the work of a sister group, Democracy Unlimited of Humboldt County (CA). By writing and promoting a ballot initiative, they have chased outside corporations from influencing their elections, and in case such a corporation is sued they have prohibited their claiming constitutional rights as "persons" (free speech, privacy, etc.). Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) has banned polluting corporations from many Pennsylvania townships.

*A key activity of various groups—Democracy Unlimited,

Program on Corporations Law & Democracy (POCLAD), CELDF, Shays 2 (after Shay's Rebellion, Western MA), Liberty Tree Foundation for the Democratic Revolution, and the Alliance for Democracy—is providing workshops to help communities assert their rights over corporations. Alliance for Democracy in collaboration with CELDF has already succeeded with this in Barnstead NH, and is similarly working in other communities threatened by corporate takeover of water—making corporate operations illegal. Can we in Greater Boston follow suit?

ACTION ALERTS

Thu 22 Feb. 7:00pm. Cambridge. **Party for Chuck Turner**, Boston City Council. Hear him on critical issues facing progressive Boston today. BCA is working with Chuck to institute a new civics curriculum city high schools, reversing the devastation of MCAS. Music, food, \$20+ donation payable to Committee to Re-Elect Chuck Turner. At home of Eric Weltman and Sarah Bennett, 384 Broadway, Cambridge. Info/RSVP 617-304-5330.

Mon 26 Feb. 7:00pm. Boston. Back Bay Salon: "**Humiliation and Global Politics**". Short evening of informal conversation in Linda Morgan's Beacon Street livingroom. Call 617-437-0542 or 617-266-8687. "The Western world displays a culture of fear, the Arab and Muslim worlds are trapped in a culture of humiliation, and Asia displays a culture of hope." Your reaction?

Thu 3pm-Sun 3pm. 1-4 Mar. Medford. Conference: "**Global Crises: Governance & Intervention**" Nukes, media, weapons, drugs, democratization, migration, water, rebellion, poverty, corporations, regionalism, space... \$25-75, Free if you're 17 or under. Tufts University. Info: www.epic.org or 617-627-3314.

Thu 22 Mar. 7pm. Concord. Workshop: "**Tapestry of the Commons**" with **Nancy Price** (Sacramento CA, AfD co-chair). Interactive matrix of economics, environment, and action. Basic to Alliance for Democracy. Info: Mary White, 978-369-1181.

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: _____

COLOPHON

Dave Lewit, Editor 617-266-8687 dlewit@igc.org
 271 Dartmouth St., #2h, Boston MA 02116

Diana Licht, Associate Editor

Visit the Alliance web site: www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org

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

Web builder: Sergio Reyes. Webmaster: Stan Robinson