

BCA Dispatch

"The issue is not issues; the issue is the system"
—Ronnie Dugger

Newsletter of the **September-October**
Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy 2010

*To a country I love, the United States of America:
You will swim so much better without that imperial albatross
around your neck. Drown it before it drowns you, and let a
thousand flowers blossom!*

—Johan Galtung, from his 2009 book *Fall of the US Empire*

COMMUNITY NOTES

Don't be left out! Join the BCA/NorthBridge planning group—
call Barbara Clancy for time and directions: 781-894-1179.

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Citizen Trade Commission Enacted

After ten years of filing and refiling legislation to establish a
"Globalization Impact Bill", with endorsements by Boston City
Council and the AFL-CIO Central Labor Council, and having
twice been reported out favorably by the Joint Committee on
Economic Development & Emerging (Continued on Page 15 >>)

A Right to Communicate

Facing Prison for Filming Md Police

by Chris Arsenault, *Al-Jazeera-English*, 26 August 2010

WHEN POLICE ARRESTED ANTHONY GRABER for speeding on
his motorbike, the 25-year-old probably did not see him-
self as an advocate for police accountability in the age
of new media.

But Graber, a sergeant with the Maryland Air National Guard,
is now facing 16 years in prison, not for dangerous driving, but
for a YouTube video he posted after receiving a speeding ticket.

The video, filmed with a camera mounted on Graber's motor-
cycle helmet designed to record biking stunts rather than police
abuse, shows a plain clothes officer jumping out of an unmarked
car and pointing a pistol at the motorcyclist. It does not portray
the policeman in a positive light.

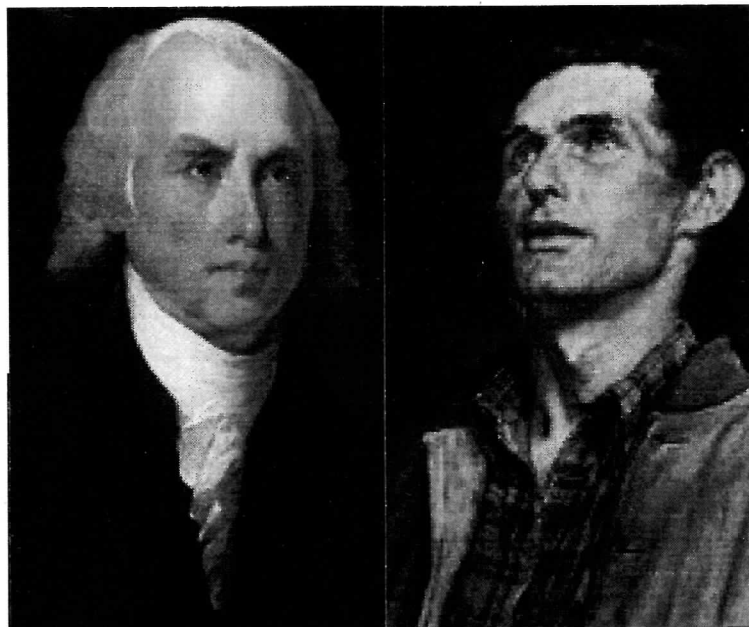
After he posted the video on YouTube, police raided Graber's
home, seized computers and put him in jail.

"The case is critical to the protection of democracy because I
don't think you can have a free country in which public officials
are able to criminally prosecute people who film what they are
doing," David Rocah, a lawyer with the American Civil Liberties
Union in Maryland who is representing Graber, said.

Wiretapping

Even though he had never been arrested before, Graber is be-
ing charged with illegal wiretapping and could face 16 years in
jail. "This is about shielding the policeman, a public servant,
from journalistic scrutiny," Steve Rendall, a media analyst with
Freedom and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), told Al Jazeera.

The arrest happened in April and the trial is expected to begin
later this year. Rocah said his client "was charged under the
wiretapping statute which prohibits taping oral communications
without consent". The statute, which (Continued on Page 2 >>)



*James Madison, main author of
the US Constitution & Bill of Rights.
Painting by Gilbert Stuart.*

*Spirit of Freedom of Speech
at New England town meeting.
Painting by Norman Rockwell*

Corporate-Court Tyranny

We Must Amend the Constitution

by Rick Jurmain, *WI MoveToAmend*, 11 August 2010

AT THE TIME OF THE FOUNDERS of our country, and the
Framers of our Constitution, there were only a few big
corporations in the entire world. These few corporations
were all created by royalty around the world. All were distrusted
by our Founders for their corruption, abuses, and unfair trade
practices competing with American small businesses. For ex-
ample, the corruption and resulting unfair tax loopholes granted
by the king of England to the British East India Company were
the primary reasons behind the original Boston Tea Party.

It is historically preposterous to think that our Founders con-
sidered corporations to be part of "We The People", much less
that corporations were eligible for protection under our Bill of
Rights. And even more preposterous is the suggestion that
our Founders would consider money equivalent to free speech.

Yet five individuals on the Supreme Court now claim the
preposterous is true, and have thereby changed our world.
And only a Constitutional Amendment can change it back.
That's because all three branches of our government have
been put out of action on this issue. The Judicial Branch start-
ed it all when the Supreme Court erased 103 years of anti-
corruption laws at a single stroke. The Legislative Branch is
now forbidden from writing any meaningful replacement laws
because they will be ruled unconstitutional by the Judicial
Branch. And the Executive Branch, whose job it is to enforce
laws, cannot enforce laws that have been erased, nor laws
that cannot be written.

We have but one alternative: the Constitution provides for
amendment of itself when needed. We The People have the
right and the duty to demand an amendment that removes
corporate corruption from our elections.

Let me emphasize the seriousness of what has happened.
The five-person majority on the Supreme Court grossly over-
stepped its bounds and violated its own rules. They willfully
and extensively changed a case, called *Citizens United*, that
was brought before them. (Continued on Page 14 >>)

does not mention video recording, is not supposed to apply to "conversations in a colloquial context, but in a private context" Rocah told Al Jazeera.

The encounter happened on a public street and, according to Rocah, police officers - public officials tasked with protecting the public interest—should not be able to hide behind such rules to avoid scrutiny. "The value of documenting what is happening cannot be over-stated," he said.

Threat to privacy?

Supporters of the crack-down on filming police argue that citizen journalists pose a threat to privacy. That is the logic Joseph Cassily, the prosecutor handling Graber's case, is likely to make at the trial.

In media interviews, Cassily presented a scenario where police stopped someone on suspicion of drinking and driving, asking for



Cop approaching Graber

a breath test, and a random passerby filmed the encounter, putting it on the Internet without consent from the driver or the officer. "Is there some interest in protecting private individuals who may be having a conversation with the police? Yes," Rendall said. "But in the end, I think that is outweighed by the public's right to know." "[Furthermore] you can't walk through Washington Square [a public space in New York] without being in the view of dozens of video cameras run by the police."

Recording ban

The wiretapping statute which bans "secret" recording of private conversations is legislated by the state of Maryland, not the US federal government. Other US states, including Florida, Illinois and Massachusetts, have used similar laws against citizen journalists.

In 2007, police in Florida arrested Carlos Miller, after the journalist photographed the arrest of a woman. "They [police] told me to leave the area, saying it was a 'private matter' and I said 'this is a public road'. They escorted me across the street and told me to keep moving. I had the right to be there and kept taking photos.

They arrested me," Miller said. He was charged with a series of misdemeanors and like many Americans arrested for filming police, Miller was eventually acquitted in court. The arrest prompted the reporter to start the blog Photography is Not a Crime* where he has documented more than eight similar incidents. But the idea of winning court battles against journalists may not be the reason security forces prosecute journalists with wiretapping laws and other methods.

Intimidating journalists

"The whole reason for these laws is to intimidate people from filming," Rendall said.

Attempts to intimidate journalists into putting down their cameras reach far beyond the US. In February the UK's *Guardian* newspaper ran the headline "Photographer films his own 'anti-terror' arrest" for a story and video about a man who was held by police for eight hours after taking pictures of Christmas celebrations in the small town of Accrington.

Rocah points to the example of the post-election protests in

Iran. "The regime completely shut down the traditional media," he said. "It was citizens' video posted on the web that allowed the world to see what was happening."

Barack Obama, the US president, went so far as to ask Twitter to hold-off on a maintenance operation because the social networking site was playing an important role in the protests.

Police assault

The most prominent US example of a citizen journalist filming police was arguably the case of Rodney King, a black man in Los Angeles who was assaulted by several police officers. His beating was filmed by a citizen standing at a nearby gas station. Without video evidence, King, a convicted felon, may have stood little chance testifying against police officers in court. But the video of King's beating flashed across news screens and helped spark the 1992 Los Angeles riots, which left more than 50 people dead and caused about \$1bn in property damage.

The dynamics of video-taping have fundamentally changed since then. "I think that technology is making the issue [of arrests] arise with increasing frequency because the ability to record is more widely distributed than it ever has been," Rocah said. The civil liberties lawyer, who believes the wiretapping law is unconstitutional and will eventually be struck down, says he is confident his client will be found not guilty.

Broader trends

But even if he is, this case is indicative of broader trends in media, and consequently, the exercise of power. As technology outpaces the abilities of states to control the flow of information, governments in the US and beyond are cracking down on independent journalists. "In the past, freedom of the press only really belonged to those who owned newspapers, TV stations or other major outlets," Miller said. Now information is more diffuse; history easier to record and technology easier to afford.

Direct evidence, including video of police abuses, is the easiest way to hold the powerful to account. And that may be exactly why security forces do not want to be caught on tape.

* Photography Is Not A Crime (PINAC) blog:

Web: www.carlosmiller.com

Email: carlosmiller@magiccitymedia.com

Ed. Comment: *Here is another reason why our Constitution must contain an amendment for the Right to Communicate, along with the Right of Local Self-Governance, the Rights of Nature, and the denial of personal rights to corporations. Exceptions to the right to communicate—e.g., re private conversations—must be clearly defined, along with illegality of gross deception and intentional lies told/shown in public/media.*

Google-Verizon Deal

The End of The Internet as We Know It?

by Josh Silver, *Free Press*, 5 August 2010

FOR YEARS, INTERNET ADVOCATES have warned of the doomsday scenario that will play out on Monday: Google and Verizon will announce a deal that the *New York Times* reports "could allow Verizon to speed some online content to Internet users more quickly if the content's creators are willing to pay for the privilege."

The deal marks the beginning of the end of the Internet as you know it. Since its beginnings, the Net was a level playing field that allowed all content to move at the same speed, whether it's ABC News or your uncle's video blog. That's all about to change,

Three Million Dead Churchill Sacrificed Them for The Empire

A DOGGED ENEMY OF HITLER and bold leader of Great Britain through World War II, Winston Churchill has been venerated as one of the great political minds of the last century. The darker side of Churchill's record during WWII, however, has gone woefully unexamined. At the same time that Churchill vehemently opposed the Nazis genocidal barbarism, he governed India with total contempt for Indian lives. A series of Churchill's decisions between 1940 and 1944 directly and inexorably led to the deaths of some three million Indians.

Closely researched and vividly detailed, historian Madhusree Mukerjee's *Churchill's Secret War* restores this oft-overlooked tragedy to the larger context of WWII, Churchill's legacy, India's fight for independence, and the ultimate downfall of Britain's global empire.

In 1943 Winston Churchill and the British Empire needed two million Indian troops, all of India's industrial output, and hundreds of thousands of tons of Indian grain to support the Allied war effort. Such massive contributions, paid for by inflationary policies—printing paper money—were all but certain to trigger famine in India. Because Churchill believed that the fate of the British Empire hung in the balance, he proceeded, sacrificing millions of Indian lives in order to preserve what he held most dear. The result: the Bengal Famine of 1943-44 in which millions of villagers starved to death.

Relying on extensive archival research and first-hand interviews, Mukerjee weaves a riveting narrative of Churchill's decisions to ratchet up the demands on India as the war unfolded and to ignore the corpses piling up in the Bengali countryside. The hypocrisy, racism, and extreme economic conditions of two centuries of British colonial rule finally built to a head, leading Indians to win their independence in 1947, accompanied by a brutal partition into India and Pakistan.

Few Americans know that World War II was won on the backs of these starving peasants; Mukerjee shows us a side of World War II that we have been blind to. We know what Hitler did to the Jews, what the Japanese did to the Chinese, what Stalin did to his own people. This story has largely been neglected, until now.

—from Amazon reviews of Madhusree Mukerjee's new book, **Churchill's Secret War: The British Empire and the Ravaging of India During World War II** (Basic Books, 2010).

Madhusree Mukerjee, a native of India, won a Guggenheim Fellowship to write her book The Land of Naked People. She previously served on the board of editors of Scientific American. She lives in Schmitten, Germany.



Sketch by noted
Bangladeshi artist
Zaimul Abedin
1943

and the result couldn't be more bleak for the future of the Internet, for television, radio and independent voices.

How did this happen? We have a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that has been denied authority by the courts to police the activities of Internet service providers like Verizon and Comcast. All because of a bad decision by the Bush-era FCC. We have a pro-industry FCC Chairman [Genachowski]* who is terrified of making a decision—conducting back room dealmaking, and willing to sit on his hands rather than reassert his agency's authority. We have a president who promised to "take a back seat to no one on Net Neutrality" yet remains silent. We have a congress that is nearly completely captured by industry. Yes, more than half of the US congress will do pretty much whatever the phone and cable companies ask them to. Add the clout of Google, and you have near-complete control of Capitol Hill.

A non-neutral Internet means that companies like AT&T, Comcast, Verizon and Google can turn the Net into cable TV and pick winners and losers online. A problem just for Internet geeks? You wish. All video, radio, phone and other services will soon be delivered through an Internet connection. Ending Net Neutrality would end the revolutionary potential that any website can act as a television or radio network. It would spell the end of our opportunity to wrest access and distribution of media content away from the handful of massive media corporations that currently control the television and radio dial.

So the Google-Verizon deal can be summed up as this: "FCC, you have no authority over us and you're not going to do anything about it. Congress, we own you, and we'll get whatever legislation we want. And American people, you can't stop us.

This Google-Verizon deal, this industry-captured FCC, and the way this is playing out is akin to the largest banks and the largest hedge funds writing the regulatory policy on derivative trading without any oversight or input from the public, and having it rubber stamped by the SEC. It's like BP and Halliburton ironing out the rules for offshore oil drilling with no public input, and having Minerals Management Service sign off.

Fortunately, while they are outnumbered, there are several powerful Net Neutrality champions on Capitol Hill, like Nancy Pelosi, Harry Reid, Henry Waxman, Jay Rockefeller, Ed Markey, Jay Inslee and many others. But they will not be able to turn this tide unless they have massive, visible support from every American who uses the Internet—whether it's for news, email, shopping, Facebook, Twitter—whatever. So stop what you're doing and tell them you're not letting the Internet go the way of Big Oil and Big Banks. The future of the Internet, and your access to information depends on it.

Author's Note: Notice how a company can change their tune in the name of profitmaking. From Google in 2006: "Today the Internet is an information highway where anybody—no matter how large or small, how traditional or unconventional—has equal access. But the phone and cable monopolies, who control almost all Internet access, want the power to choose who gets access to high-speed lanes and whose content gets seen first and fastest. They want to build a two-tiered system and block the on-ramps for those who can't pay."

* **Ed. Note:** Let FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski know you want the FCC to take action on net neutrality. His e-mail is Julius.Genachowski@fcc.gov.

Participatory Budgeting Today Proliferation, Compromise, Diversification

by Dave Lewit, Alliance for Democracy, 25 August 2010

IN 25 YEARS THE GREAT DEMOCRATIC participatory budgeting (PB) experiment has spread from southern Brazil to more than a thousand municipalities all over the world. It has been adopted not just by cities but by schools, housing colonies, student governments—wherever there are large constituencies who want their organizational money to be spent fairly. And yes, poor people as well as middle class turn out by the thousands to decide how to spend public money... but children?

The children involved were Sebastian, Bethan, Chloe and Kieron—all under 5. They were supported by Jo Walkden, one of the teaching staff at the Walkergate Children's Centre in Newcastle, England. "They were asked if they would like to design and choose the equipment for an outside play area for babies in the nursery. The process was broken down into small steps. First the children took photos of the equipment they liked. They took photos of the babies playing and observed the toys and types of play they liked. The children visited the Babies' Garden, which at that point was just a grassed area. Next they looked at their photos and thought about what the babies might like in their outdoor area. They looked at the catalogues and chose equipment they thought the babies would like to play with. They counted out the money for the equipment, an innovative way of dealing with the spending' side of the project. The equipment and structures for the garden were then ordered and installed. The children were able to see their project become a reality." (—Jez Hall, UK)

That, in a nutshell, is the PB process. The classic case of Porto Alegre, Brazil, involving 50,000 residents and \$200 million per year peaked around 2004. Then the sponsoring Workers Party (PT) was voted out of the mayoralty locally because of corruption at the national level and disappointment with President Lula da Silva's bows to the market system. The incoming neoliberal "Socialist Popular Party" watered down and partially privatized the city's PB, and renamed the process for "good government"—hoodwinking many poor participants by tying benefits to limited "entrepreneurship".

But the 16 years of PB success (e.g., ending local corruption, redressing inequality) in hundreds of Brazilian municipalities rang bells in much of Latin America and parts of Europe, Canada, Africa, Asia, and even Polynesia, thanks in part to the United Nations' Habitat program (see Resources, below). Toronto Community Housing, for example, has been using PB for nine years to generate projects and distribute now \$9 million (in 2009) for upgrading hallways, kitchens, and bathrooms; a computer resource center; playground improvements; and so on—tenants' choices. A school in British Columbia has used PB, and the cities of Guelph and Montreal, for example.

The first municipal PB in the United States was undertaken only this year, with 1600 residents of Chicago's 49th ward (north-east corner) deliberating and voting infrastructure innovations to cost \$1.3 million, the sum allocated to the ward's alderman Joe Moore to do with what he wanted—and he wanted the people to decide. There was much committee activity and research, but limited to infrastructure projects—the city had ruled out adding services and personnel. Like most PB programs so far around the world, neither revenue inputs (taxes, fees, state enterprises) nor planning were authorized.

A conference earlier this year in Berlin, Germany, revealed great variations in PB in different places. Seville, Spain, sought social justice and empowerment, sticking pretty much to the

Porto Alegre model. Seeking modernization, German usage was mostly online, risking abuse, bypassing real (face-to-face) deliberation, and largely deferring decisions to city officials (budget "consultation"). Africans sought "good government" (minimizing corruption) and new ways of raising revenue. In Spanish cities PB decisions were binding, not mere recommendations to the city government. Providently, most projects have welcomed evaluation and improvement in process from year to year.

In any event, a big determinant of PB success is the amount of money the participants have to work with—\$1 million vs. 200 million makes a difference in participation. And of course, whether the participants' decision is binding and implemented. Nevertheless, PB is giving millions of people around the world the experience which can turn hope into living democracy for themselves and hundreds of millions of their compatriots.

Resources

www.participatorybudgeting.org (hosted by US's Gianpaolo Baiocchi & Josh Lerner)
www.participedia.net (hosted by Archon Fung & Mark Warren; in wikipedia form)
www.tni.org/article/facing-problems-learning-lessons (hosted by UK's Hilary Wainwright; explore sidebar)
[www.sasnet.org/documents/Tools/FAQ Participatory Budgeting.pdf](http://www.sasnet.org/documents/Tools/FAQ%20Participatory%20Budgeting.pdf) (UN handbook on PB)
www.ongcidade.org (hosted by Porto Alegre's Sergio Baierle; click on English Version)

This article will also appear in the Alliance for Democracy publication, *Justice Rising*.

PB in Bandung, Indonesia; Harbin, China There's democratic good, but what is the bad?

"I think it is important to contact some donors working in [South-east Asia], like Ford, Action Aid, International Budget Partnership) USAID, Oxfam-Novib, etc. Together with the World Bank, they have promoted the participatory democracy agenda in the region, for the good and for the bad":

The Bad:

- It doesn't empower the popular communities or it only empowers the already empowered local bosses;
- It is used to legitimate anti-popular public policies like evictions and gentrification to favor real estate companies projects;
- The rules are constantly manipulated by government in order to get control of the participants;
- Only "kitty money" is on the table for discussion and decision;
- All the information and propaganda is controlled by the government and no civil society autonomous sources of information on the public budget and on its annual execution are available;
- The forums of discussion between government and participants are not for real and the decisions are taken behind the scenes;
- The governments are just accepting the idea in order to get access to international funding;
- The government needs to hire an army of hundreds loyal servants to permanently supervise what happens at grassroots level;
- The budget continues to be executed the same way as ever, with the same regressive fiscal policies, and the same lobbies continue to have profit with this;
- Poverty levels and inequality remains the same or people are just prevented from dying;
- Social movements are replaced by NGOs and Private Foundations, loyal to donors and corporations visions; and, as

consequence,

- Social responsibility replaces popular sovereignty, conditional aid replaces rights, social cohesion is priced instead of expression of freedom.

This is not to get depressed, but to rescue some basic values for engagement, I hope.

—Sérgio Gregório Baierle, Cidade. Porto Alegre, Brazil

ENVIRONMENT

Don't Frack Me Bro

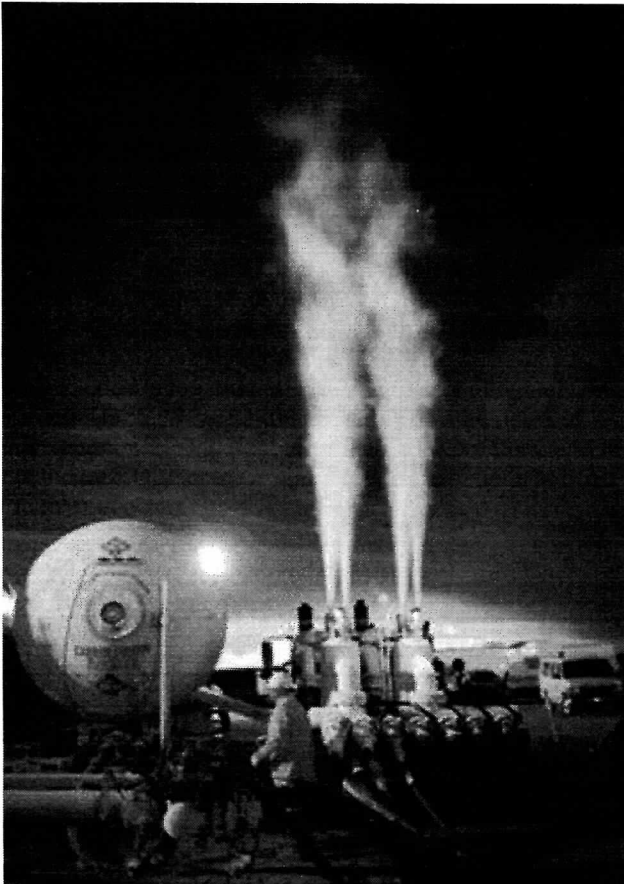
A City Bars Gas Extraction

by Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, 17 Aug 2010

AT A CITY HALL PRESS CONFERENCE today, Councilman Doug Shields announced he will introduce a bill that would ban corporations from drilling for gas in the city of Pittsburgh. He said he will introduce the ordinance following Council's current recess.

At the heart of "Pittsburgh's Community Protection from Natural Gas Extraction Ordinance" is this statement of law: It shall be unlawful for any corporation to engage in the extraction of natural gas within the City of Pittsburgh.

Also included in the ordinance is a local "bill of rights" that asserts legal protections for the right to water, the rights of natural communities, the right to local self-government, and the right of the people to enforce and protect these rights through their municipal government.



Workers release carbon-dioxide vapor after 'fracking' a natural-gas well in eastern New Mexico

The bill was drafted by the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund at the invitation of Council members.

Commenting on his legislative proposal, Shields stated, "Many people think that this is only about gas drilling. It's not—it's about our authority as a municipal community to say "no" to corporations that will cause damage to our community. It's about our right to community, local self-government."

Shields urged all municipalities in the Commonwealth to enact similar laws "to send a message to Harrisburg," and he insisted that a temporary moratorium "will not be an acceptable consolation prize for a failure of the State to recognize this local law and these fundamental rights."

Energy corporations are setting up shop in communities throughout Pennsylvania, with plans to drill for natural gas in the Marcellus Shale formation. The frenzy of industrial gas extraction that once appeared to be confined to rural communities and state forest lands has taken residents of the city by surprise. Corporate "land men" have busily signed-up Pittsburgh property owners to contracts allowing wells to be erected on private property throughout the city. The prospect of paved-over green spaces, nights lit like airport runways, round-the-clock sounds of loud machinery, broken and pitted roads from the high volume truck traffic, and the threat of toxic trespass by a cocktail of patented chemicals and escaping methane into the ground water, has alarmed neighbors of lease-holders, and they've begun to organize in opposition to the proposed drilling.

Ben Price, Projects Director for the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, said he applauds the Council member for taking a stand on behalf of community rights. "Some will say it's controversial, or that the city doesn't have the authority to ban gas drilling. The only way that's true is if the State has the authority to strip the residents of the city of their rights, and it doesn't."

Price commented that "we don't have a gas drilling problem. What we have is a democracy problem. We need to stop treating the environmental symptoms and cure the societal disease that's brought fracking to our doorstep. The State says we don't have the right to decide whether or not we get fracked and that only the corporate-lobbied members of the General Assembly have the wisdom to decide how much harm should be legalized through state-issued permits. There's something sick about that kind of thinking. If we cure the systemic anti-democratic disorder manifested by our state's refusal to recognize the right to local, community self-government, gas drilling without consent of the governed will go away."

The gas extraction technique known as "fracking" has been cited as a threat to surface and ground water throughout the region, and has been blamed for fatal explosions, the contamination of drinking water, local streams, the air and soil. Collateral damage includes lost property value, ingestion of toxins by livestock, drying up of mortgage loans for prospective home buyers, and threatened loss of organic certification for farmers in the affected communities.

The Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF), located in Chambersburg, has been working with people in Pennsylvania since 1995 to assert their fundamental rights to democratic local self-governance, and to enact laws which end destructive and rights-denying corporate action aided and abetted by state and federal governments. ■

Huge Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone

Fed by Biofuel Corn Fertilizer Runoff

by Carolyn Lochhead, San Francisco Chronicle, 6 July 2010

WHILE THE BP OIL SPILL has been labeled the worst environmental catastrophe in recent U.S. history, a biofuel is contributing to a Gulf of Mexico "dead zone" the size of New Jersey that scientists say could be every bit as harmful to the gulf.

Each year, nitrogen used to fertilize corn, about a third of which is made into ethanol, leaches from Midwest croplands into the Mississippi River and out into the gulf, where the fertilizer feeds giant algae blooms. As the algae dies, it settles to the ocean floor and decays, consuming oxygen and suffocating marine life.

Known as hypoxia, the oxygen depletion kills shrimp, crabs, worms and anything else that cannot escape. The dead zone has doubled since the 1980s and is expected this year to grow as large as 8,500 square miles and hug the Gulf Coast from Alabama to Texas.

As to which is worse, the oil spill or the hypoxia, "it's a really tough call," said Nathaniel Ostrom, a zoologist at Michigan State University. "There's no real answer to that question."

Some scientists fear the oil spill will worsen the dead zone, because when oil decomposes, it also consumes oxygen. New government estimates on Thursday indicated that the BP oil spill had gushed as much as 141 million gallons since an oil-rig explosion and well blowout on April 20 that killed 11 workers.

Corn Pesticides Are Biggest Culprit

The gulf dead zone is the second-largest in the world, after one in the Baltic Sea. Scientists say the biggest culprit is industrial-scale corn production. Corn growers are heavy users of both nitrogen and pesticides. Vast monocultures of corn and soybeans, both subsidized by the federal government, have displaced diversified farms and grasslands throughout the Mississippi Basin.

"The subsidies are driving farmers toward more corn," said Gene Turner, a zoologist at Louisiana State University. "More nitrate comes off corn fields than it does off of any other crop by far. And nitrogen is driving the formation of the dead zone." The dead zone, he said, is "a symptom of the homogenization of the landscape. We just have a few crops on what used to have all kinds of different vegetation."

In 2007, Congress passed a renewable fuels standard that requires ethanol production to triple in the next 12 years. The Department of Agriculture has just rolled out a plan to meet that goal, including building ethanol refineries in every state. The Environmental Protection Agency will decide soon whether to increase the amount of ethanol in gasoline blends from 10 percent to 15 percent.

A 2008 National Research Council report warned of a "considerable" increase in damage to the gulf if ethanol production is increased.

Pet Cause of Congress

One of the authors of that report, agricultural economist Otto Doering at Purdue University, said that a 50 percent boost in the ethanol blend in gasoline will significantly raise corn prices, driving farmers to pull land out of conservation and pastureland and into corn production. They are also likely to add more nitrogen fertilizers to boost yields.

Corn ethanol has been heavily subsidized since the Arab oil

embargo in the 1970s. Viewed by the corn industry as a lucrative market, ethanol is a perennial favorite in Congress. Ethanol consumes two-thirds of all federal subsidies for renewable fuels, said Ken Cook, president of the Environmental Working Group, an advocacy group, leaving solar, wind and the rest to fight over the remaining third. Corn ethanol cost taxpayers \$17 billion from 2005 to 2009, his group estimates.

"This is another industry that's entirely a creature of the government, even more so than corn growing per se," Cook said. "The production of ethanol wouldn't happen at all without government subsidies and protection."

The National Corn Growers Association ran a media blitz in Washington last week to press for the renewal of the 51-cents-a-gallon tax credit for ethanol. With pictures of the BP oil spill looming in the background, the Corn Growers' video announces, "Ethanol: Now is the time."

Conservation Plan Hurt

The ethanol boom over the past decade has lured farmers to withdraw millions of acres from the Conservation Reserve Program, which pays farms not to plant fragile land. Much of this land has been returned to native prairie grasses, at taxpayer expense. Millions more acres are up for renewal over the next few years.

"There's been a very large-scale conversion of these CRP lands to biofuel production," Ostrom said. Those soils have accumulated carbon from the atmosphere and stored it, becoming "a pretty significant sink for atmospheric CO₂," he said. "If we suddenly start farming those soils, we basically release all of the carbon that's been sequestered for decades, and that may more than offset any carbon benefit of switching to biofuels."

To meet its goal of tripling ethanol production, Congress called for more cellulosic ethanol, which is made from wood, crop waste, perennial grasses such as switchgrass, and even native prairie grasses. Perennial grasses are considered far less damaging to the environment than corn because they require less fertilizer and their roots remain in the ground, helping to stabilize the soil and reduce runoff. But commercial production of cellulosic ethanol remains a pipe dream. It would require large subsidies to dislodge corn ethanol.

There is no experience with commercial production of switchgrass. Purdue's Doering said it will require fertilizer and is likely to be planted on conservation lands and pasture instead of displacing corn.

Joan Nassauer, a professor at the University of Michigan who has studied how alternative agricultural policies could alleviate the dead zone, said cellulosic ethanol could work. "It might be one of those win-wins, but it's not in production yet," she said. "What we've got now all over the Corn Belt is corn, and that's definitely not a win-win."

SOUTHERN COMMAND

Costa Rica

US Warships Cause Unease

by Jeff Leff, Global Post, 20 August 2010

A U.S. WARSHIP CAPABLE OF DEPLOYING more than 1,000 military personnel and dozens of helicopters is headed this way—right for Costa Rica's peaceful Caribbean coast.

USS Iwo Jima comes in peace, according to a U.S. embassy statement, as part the Southern Command's "Continuing Promise 2010" mission, a humanitarian operation that aims to bring free health care, engineering projects, veterinary attention, dona-

tions and even baseball games to locals.

A charm offensive like this—a friendly naval ship armed with aid for one of the country's poorest regions—might be just what the United States needs to calm the waters around its longtime friend Costa Rica.

In July, the legislative assembly here approved a U.S. request for permission to dock 46 warships and 7,000 military personnel, mostly for narcotics missions on Costa Rican territory, sparking outrage among skeptics of the global war on drugs. The critics include outspoken politicians, pacifists, student groups and everyday Ticos, who are proud of their country's six decades without a military.

Leftist lawmaker José María Villalta said these vessels are looking for a fight. Legislator Luis Fishman said congress was uninformed when it voted and claimed the arrival of the boats would be an assault on Costa Rica's sovereignty. They filed complaints with the country's high court, which has suspended the agreement while it mulls over the case.

The blogosphere began to boil over with posts titled, "U.S. invades Costa Rica," and conspiracy theorists seethed about alleged Washington plots against neighboring Nicaragua. In short, it's been an outright public relations disaster.

"We are not sure why there is this uproar," U.S. Ambassador Anne Slaughter Andrew told Costa Rica's English-language newspaper *The Tico Times*.

To be sure, the legislature's controversial sign-off was actually a renewal of an accord with the United States known as the "Joint Patrol" agreement, first inked in 1998 and turned into law the following year, according to a U.S. embassy fact sheet.

(When lawmakers realized that among the vessels approved was the gift-bearing *Iwo Jima*, they called a new vote earlier this month to approve the humanitarian mission's arrival.)

The dispute has been a test of mettle for new President Laura Chinchilla—a former vice president and security chief—on an issue that's been among her most fiery rally cries: the need for a coordinated, collaborative clampdown on the illegal drug trade. Mauricio Boraschi, the country's drug czar, a new post set up by the Chinchilla administration, said the government also intended to be transparent in its fight against drugs.

"Under no circumstance could it be misinterpreted, as this permission request has been in the legislative assembly, as an attempt to militarize the fight against narcotics, nor does it represent any danger to Costa Rican sovereignty or of us turning into some kind of military base," Boraschi said at a recent press conference.

Seeking to assuage fears of journalists, he added that in previous years only about 20 percent of the total agreed upon number of ships actually came anyway, and when they did, it was normally to refuel.

Behind the story lies a painful paradox for this Central American country of about 4.5 million. Costa Rica's flagship talking point abroad is to urge nations to reduce, if not eliminate, their armies and military budgets. Spend less on defense, more on schools and hospitals for your poor, former President Oscar Arias used to tell rooms full of leaders before the United Nations.

Yet, Costa Rican leaders know the country needs backup to face today's dangers. While Costa Rica sinks into an uneasy role as a storage, shipping and financial base for some of the deadliest [drug] cartels, police complain they're outnumbered and outgunned by organized criminals.

The Joint Patrol deal hits that point square on the head. Its text speaks directly to Costa Rica's unpreparedness "to assume

an active and crucial role in the fight against international narco activity."

"It's a very difficult dilemma because there clearly is a real serious problem that (Costa Rica) may not be fully equipped to deal with," Michael Shifter, president of Inter-American Dialogue, a think tank in Washington, said.

A running joke about Costa Rica is that it lacks an army—and doesn't need one with the pals it has up in Washington.

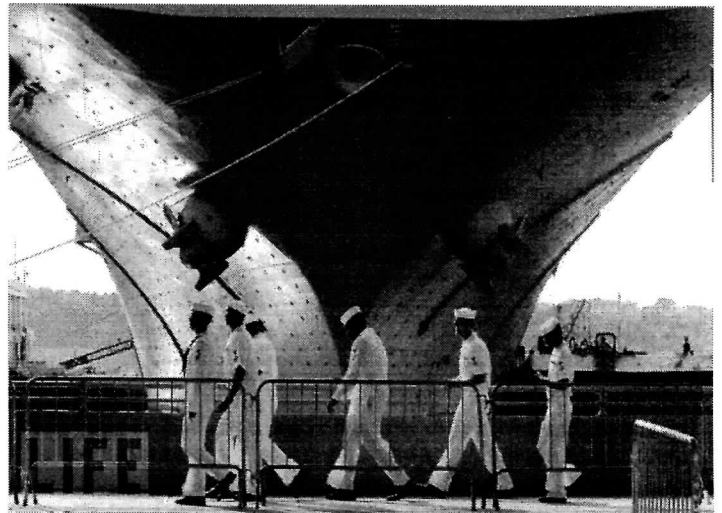
What happened to Costa Rica's own army? President José "don Pepe" Figueres abolished the military in 1948, following a civil war that claimed an estimated 2,000 and is widely considered to be the country's bloodiest event of the 20th century.

Don Pepe, founder of Chinchilla's centrist National Liberation Party, could not have predicted the bloodshed to come. Central America saw more than 33 homicides per 100,000 people in 2008, the world's highest rate of non-political killings, according to the United Nations Development Program. Costa Rica, low on the region's murder tally, saw its homicide rate nearly double from six per 100,000 in 2000 to 11 in 2008. Security analysts say the drug trade fuels the problem.

Deepening the paradox, antinarcotics officials and drug-war opponents here agree on one thing: hard-fought military crack-downs in other Latin American countries have forced cartels to bring the ruckus here.

Peace activists say it's unwise to treat the drug problem with guns. Violence engenders more violence, they say.

"Military action has been tried in Mexico and Colombia and hasn't given results. So the solution is of a social nature. We need employment," said Gerardo Brenes, a School of the Americas-trained Costa Rican policeman turned pacifist. "Don't bring us weapons, don't bring us death and desolation. Costa Rica is accustomed to living in peace and liberty, not war."



USS Iwo Jima Docked in New York

The Navy's *Iwo Jima* might not help unemployed civilians find jobs, but its army files are stacked with relief. According to a Navy news release, the *Iwo Jima* is carrying a mixture of international military staff and nongovernmental organizations on a four-month tour of Central America and the Caribbean.

After reaching earthquake-torn Haiti's Port-au-Prince late last month, *Iwo Jima* will likely be welcomed in Costa Rica, one of Latin America's most socially developed nations.

However, it's the other amphibious assault ships the Ticos are worried about. ■

Caution: Sex for Sale

Evaluating Nordic Liberality

by Janice Raymond, *Portside.org*, 20 July 2010

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE NORDIC COUNTRIES LEAD the world on most indicators of gender equality. Gender equality experts and advocates have long pointed out that in economics, politics and social services, the Nordic countries top the charts. A less noticed equality indicator is that the Nordic countries outpace others in legal action to stem the sex trade by addressing its unnoticed perpetrators—the mainly male purchasers of women and children in prostitution.

In 1999, with the approval of over 70% of its surveyed population, Sweden passed groundbreaking legislation that criminalized the buyer of sexual services. Part of a larger Violence Against Women bill, the legislation was based on the foundation that the system of prostitution is a violation of gender equality.

Sweden's legislation officially recognizes that it is unacceptable for men to purchase women for sexual exploitation, whether masked as sexual pleasure or "sex work." Equally important, its law acknowledges that a country cannot resolve its human trafficking problem without addressing the demand for prostitution. The law does not target the persons-in-prostitution.

This month, the government of Sweden published an evaluation of the law's first ten years and how it has actually worked in practice. Compared to the report's understated and cautious tone, the findings are strikingly positive: street prostitution has been cut in half; there is no evidence that the reduction in street prostitution has led to an increase in prostitution elsewhere, whether indoors or on the Internet; the bill provides increased services for women to exit prostitution; fewer men state that they purchase sexual services; and the ban has had a chilling effect on traffickers who find Sweden an unattractive market to sell women and children for sex.

Following initial criticism of the law, police now confirm it works well and has had a deterrent effect on other organizers and promoters of prostitution. Sweden appears to be the only country in Europe where prostitution and sex trafficking has not increased.

The Swedish results should be contrasted to neighboring countries such as Denmark where there are no legal prohibitions against the purchase of persons in prostitution. Denmark has a smaller population than Sweden (roughly 5½ million to Sweden's 9 million), yet the scale of street prostitution in Denmark is three times higher than in Sweden.

In casting the comparison further, we should note the dismal results of the legalization model of prostitution from countries in Europe that have normalized pimping, brothels and other aspects of prostitution and the sex industry. In 2002, Germany decriminalized procuring for purposes of prostitution, widened the legal basis for establishing brothels and other prostitution businesses, lifted the prohibition against promoting prostitution and theoretically gave women the right to contracts and benefits in prostitution establishments. Five years later, a federal government evaluation of the law found that the German Prostitution Act, as it is called, has failed to improve conditions for women in the prostitution industry nor helped women to leave. It has also failed "to reduce crime in the world of prostitution." As a result, the report stated that "prostitution should not be considered to be a reasonable means for securing one's living." The federal government is drafting a criminal provision to punish the clients of

those forced into prostitution or who are victims of trafficking—the Swedish model lite with all its caloric value removed.

The results are equally bad in the Netherlands where prostitution and the sex industry have been legalized since 2000. Two official reports in 2007 and 2008 have soured official optimism about the Dutch legalization model. The government-commissioned Daalder Report found that the majority of women in the window brothels are still subject to pimp control and that their emotional well-being is lower than in 2001 "on all measured aspects." The Dutch National Police Report puts it more strongly: "The idea that a clean, normal business sector has emerged is an illusion..." Like the Germans, the Dutch are now proposing an amendment that would penalize the buyers who purchase unlicensed persons in prostitution—another version of the Swedish model lite. Still, an indication that penalizing the buyer is gaining ground.

The failure of the legalization model in Europe helped the Swedish model to become the Nordic model in 2009 when Norway outlawed the purchase of women and children for sexual activities. One year after the Norwegian law came into force, a Bergen municipality survey estimated that the number of women in street prostitution had decreased by 20 percent with indoor prostitution also down by 16 percent. Bergen police report that advertisements for sexual activities have dropped 60 percent. Also, the police have effectively monitored telephone numbers of buyers, who respond to such advertisements, in order to identify and charge them.

An added value is that monitoring reveals a wider network of criminal groups involved in trafficking for prostitution and their links to others involved in child prostitution, pornography and drug trafficking. In Oslo, the police also report that there are many fewer buyers on the street.

The same year as Norway, Iceland passed a law criminalizing the purchase of a sexual service. Earlier in 2004, Finland approved a more anemic version of the Nordic model. This left Denmark as the outlier with no legislation targeting the demand for prostitution.

The success of the Nordic model is not so much in penalizing the men (the penalties are modest) as in removing the invisibility of men who are outed when they get caught. This, in turn, makes it less appealing for pimps and traffickers to set up shop in countries where the customer base fears the loss of its anonymity and is declining.

Legalization of prostitution is a failed policy in practice. The prostitution policy tide is turning from legalization of prostitution to targeting the demand for prostitution without penalizing the victims. Countries who want to be effective in the fight against trafficking and not havens of sexual exploitation are beginning to understand that they cannot sanction pimps as legitimate sexual entrepreneurs and must take legal action against the buyers.

Janice Raymond is Professor Emerita of Women's Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and a member of the Board of Directors of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), PO Box 9338, N. Amherst, MA 01059. You can reach her at jraymond@wost.umass.edu.

Ed. Comment: *Northern Europe is to be commended in two ways: Concern for the welfare of girls and women, and an experimental attitude toward law-making. There's a lot to think about here.*

As a "career", prostitution is both short-lived and dangerous to both physical and mental health. Worse, few women choose to become prostitutes, but many girls are tricked into transport and

virtual slavery, only to be thrown away after losing their attractiveness to johns. One wonders, however, about the fate of women who voluntarily try for a few years to be high-end call girls or mistresses. Perhaps only a few—courtesans—are able to stay healthy, wealthy, and totally in control. Since their "work" is non-institutional, what data is there on their health, etc? How does this activity compare with high-turnover divorce and selective dating?

As for criminalizing customers, what would psychologists say? Perhaps an over-the-counter solution would work: combining soft-porn video or phone-sex with inflatable life-sized dolls. One would think phone sex service would be low-risk for women, but is there data?... Sadly, social life and adolescent development are also neglected here.

But getting back to northern European law-making, is it true that the laws a decade ago decriminalizing prostitution had provisions for evaluating and reconsidering (a step beyond sunset)? This experimental approach to legislation sounds like a good idea for all laws—especially so for potentially disastrous ventures like war, oil-drilling, educational "reform", trade liberalization (deregulation), police liberalization, and so on and on.

US Solitary Confinement Nightmare System Condones Out-of-Control Authorities

from James Ridgeway, *Corporate Crime Reporter*, 5 Aug 2010

JAMES RIDGEWAY ALWAYS WANTED TO BE AN INSIDER. But it never worked out. His DNA wouldn't allow it. He was always an outsider. Always taking the side of the less powerful.

As a student at Princeton in the 1950s, Ridgeway worked on the student newspaper to expose the elitism and racism at the university's eating club system. As a reporter at *The New Republic* in the 1960s, he exposed General Motors for spying on his friend Ralph Nader. He then exposed corporate connections to America's university in his classic book—*The Closed Corporation: American Universities in Crisis* (Ballantine Books, 1970).

And now, he says he is working to expose President Obama's lie that "America doesn't torture." Of course we torture, Ridgeway says. Right here in America. In our own prisons. An estimated 80,000 Americans are in solitary confinement. Some have been in for decades. Some are brutally beaten and restrained, even killed. Others succumb to madness and kill themselves. But to most people, they remain invisible.

James Ridgeway started a web site called solitarywatch.com to find out more. And to bring light to what he considers to be a disgrace to the nation.

"Obama says we don't torture," Ridgeway told *Corporate Crime Reporter* in an interview last week. "Let me tell you something. That's absolute bullshit. We're torturing right in the President's backyard—all over the place." "This is a long haul," Ridgeway said. "It's an uphill battle to draw attention to a situation where there are many cases that amount to torture... These little prisoners' rights groups have to have support. The larger human rights groups and criminal justice reform groups have to take on the issue of solitary confinement more directly. And there has to be more publicity about what is going on."

Ridgeway is working with David Bruck, a death penalty lawyer and a professor at Washington & Lee Law School in Lexington, Virginia. Together they are trying to set up a database that will provide some of the basic facts on solitary confinement. Like how many prisoners are in solitary. Like how do prison officials

decide who gets put in the hole.

"It could be done at the whim of a warden or even a prison guard," Ridgeway said. "After the person is convicted and sentenced, he kind of disappears. He goes into this prison... And the warden, depending on reports of the guards, can put the prisoner in one kind of solitary or another. He can keep the prisoner there for as long as the warden deems necessary."

"There's supposed to be due process, hearings to decide if they should be punished for some reported violation of the rules. But in most states, the people who run the hearings are prison officials, so of course the prisoners are always found guilty."

Horror stories abound. The Angola 3—three African Americans in the infamous Angola state prison in Louisiana—have been in solitary for 37 years. "These were three men charged with the killing of a prison guard in the early 1970s. They were convicted. But there were some open questions. The convictions are kind of dubious. They contend that they were targeted because they were Black Panthers, organizing against prison conditions... The most incredible thing was that these three guys—they have been locked in solitary confinement for 37 years."

Has Ridgeway interviewed them? "I wanted to go down and visit and talk with them and talk with the warden. But I had written one article which quoted the warden's deposition. And it made the warden look questionable... The warden, Burl Cain, is highly regarded by the press in the United States for running an open prison that anyone can go in and look around." Except for Ridgeway.

The prison banned him. "I can't visit the prison. I can't talk to the prisoners. And I can't talk with Burl Cain."

"After reading these depositions about what happened to these guys in Angola and how they had put in solitary, I began reading about other cases where people were in solitary... Attorneys told me that if I thought the Angola 3 was a bad situation, there were many, many other cases where people were in for 15 years or 20 years in solitary. And this was very prevalent. And it was a kind of torture... That's when I started Solitary Watch, together with Jean Casella, who is a writer and editor. Our partner in the project is David Bruck, who runs the death penalty clinic at Washington & Lee University Law School. They recognize that this is a major issue in U.S. criminal justice."

Ridgeway also came across the case of two African American sisters in Mississippi, Gladys and Jamie Scott, who were convicted of a \$12 robbery. "Neither of them had a previous record. And there is evidence of coerced confessions. These two women were in rural Mississippi. They were arrested and charged with a \$12 armed robbery. The circumstances were all questionable. One witness signed a statement that was written for him without reading it."

"They were teenaged boys. And they were allegedly threatened by the sheriff that they would be sent to a male prison where they would become bitches—they would be raped—unless they turned on the two women. They dreaded that. So, they would sign anything to get out of that."

"So, these two women were charged and convicted based on this testimony. No one was hurt in this robbery. There was a gun involved. But it was always a question as to who was holding the gun and who was doing what with the gun. But nobody was hurt."

The judge sentenced them to two consecutive life sentences each.

Jamie Scott has described—through a paralegal—an ugly situation in the prison, where inmates have died of second rate medical care, of sewage seeping on the floors, of raining inside when it rains outside, of the resulting mold build up, and of

spiders. "Those conditions aren't unusual, especially in solitary confinement," Ridgeway says. "There are people who say that solitary is becoming a mental institution. And people who aren't mentally ill when they go into solitary go mad inside... They start hollering and screaming—and then, of course, they just keep them in solitary indefinitely. They go mad in solitary. To me, that's the proof that it's a form of torture."

As for Jamie Scott, she has kidney disease, Ridgeway says. "She has collapsed several times in her cell. And she was put in a prison infirmary. She needed dialysis. They wouldn't send her to a hospital. They would bring in a dialysis truck. They put a stent in her arm to pump the blood in and out. And it became repeatedly infected. Sometimes the machines broke down in the middle of the dialysis.

"And she eventually became so sick that she was sent to the hospital. They straightened her out and sent her back to prison. But she continued to get sick. She was sent back to the hospital. They finally put a stent in her groin and managed to keep her alive."

"At one point, the doctor said he wasn't going to release her from the hospital, because she was going to die. I don't know what happened, but she ended up back in the prison, where she is now."

"There has been an effort by the family, by the mother, and by a paralegal named Nancy Lockhart, to try and get this woman out of jail. The Governor has no interest... So, there she sits in this situation where she appears to have not only serious kidney disease, but maybe end stage renal disease... According to one story, which apparently the prison denies, the sister Gladys offered to give her a kidney and the prison refused to consider that."

Ridgeway has reported on the case of an inmate at the Red Onion state prison in Wise County, Virginia. "There is a case in Virginia of a guy who was spared the death penalty. Instead, he was sent to solitary for life. He has begged the judge to put him to death. He said he can't stand it anymore. His name is Joseph Armstrong. He's at Red Onion State prison in Virginia—one of the worst in Virginia."

Ridgeway is not advocating for the elimination of solitary. But he does want to severely restrict it. "There may be cases where for safety reasons and other reasons, people need to be by themselves for a period of time," Ridgeway says. "But not 37 years. And not 20 years. Not for 15 years. Not for a year. And not at all, under the kind of arbitrary, corrupt system we have now. Maybe for a short period of observation, but nothing more."

"There was one recent case where a woman was thrown into solitary for reporting that she was raped by a guard... Another where a dozen Rastafarians have been in solitary for 10 years because they refuse to cut their dreadlocks... In a lot of states, the response to a prisoner being suicidal is to place him in solitary—which drives sane people to suicide... As one guy who's a prisoner in Tamms in Illinois said, 'Lock yourself in the bathroom for ten years, and see if it makes you go crazy.'"

"In one jail in Louisiana, they have been putting suicidal prisoners in 3 by 3 foot cages, and leaving them there sometimes for weeks... These things are going on all the time."

"We have a blog on Solitary Watch and we have no shortage of things to post on it—there's a new story just about every day, one more outrageous than the next."

"There are thousands prisoners suffering from mental illness who are put in solitary because they aren't treated and can't be controlled. Solitary confinement cells have become the new asylums. Children in adult prisons end up in solitary 'for their own

protection.' The system is totally out of control."

For a complete transcript of the Interview with James Ridgeway, see 24 Corporate Crime Reporter 32(10), August 9, 2010, print edition only. ■

How to Silence a Truth-Sharer WikiLeaker Pfc Manning Held in Solitary

by Eric Margolis, Toronto Sun, 15 August 2010

GEORGE ORWELL WROTE: "If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear." A true journalist's job is to expose government wrongdoing and propaganda, skewer hypocrites, and speak for those with no voice. And wage war against mankind's two worst scourges: Nationalism and religious bigotry. Not to lick the boots of government.

I've always felt kinship for free thinkers, rebels, and heretics. That's why I am drawn to the plight of Pfc. Bradley Manning who apparently believed Ernest Hemingway's dictum: "Never think that war, no matter how necessary, nor how justified, is not a crime." The 22-year-old U.S. Army intelligence analyst caused a worldwide furor by releasing to WikiLeaks secret military logs that exposed ugly truths about the brutal conflict in Afghanistan, including widespread killing of civilians.



Bradley Manning

Again to quote Orwell: "During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act." Manning also released a suppressed tape of a U.S. Army helicopter gunship killing two Reuters journalists and a civilian. A civilian hacker, employed by some shadowy U.S. government intelligence "contractor" spying on the Internet turned Manning in.

Revenge was swift. Manning was thrown into solitary confinement and faces a long prison term. His case recalls another courageous whistleblower, Israeli technician Mordechai Vanunu, who revealed Israel's large nucle-

ar arsenal, was kidnapped, served 17 years in solitary, and still remains a semi-prisoner.

WikiGate provoked a flood of bombastic pro-war propaganda from America's mainstream (read: Government-guided) media, its rent-a-journalists, and Canada's wannabe Republican neo-cons. Manning's revelations were blamed on his being gay, a loner, or maladjusted. The Soviets used to lock away such "anti-state elements" and dissenters in mental institutions.

The neocons tried to divert attention by trumpeting the plight of a wretched Afghan girl whose nose had been cut off by her backwards tribal in-laws. She was turned into a pro-war martyr. This crime was immediately blamed without evidence on Taliban and served up as the reason why the Western powers had to garrison Afghanistan.

No pictures of Afghans blown to bits or maimed by US bombs were published. No mentions of oil and gas.

Uncoincidentally, a few months ago, in response to Europe's growing opposition to the Afghan War, the CIA reportedly advised NATO the best way to keep marketing the Afghan War

to the public was claiming it was a crusade to protect women's rights. Inconveniently, the U.S. and Canada's Afghan allies—Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazara—mistreat their women as badly as Taliban's Pashtun.

When I served in the U.S. Army, we were taught it was our duty to report up the chain of command all violations of the Geneva Conventions and war crimes. These included killing civilians, torture, reprisals, and executions. Manning reportedly sought to report to his superiors just such crimes committed in Afghanistan by some U.S. forces and their local allies and mercenaries. He was ignored. Just as was the courageous Canadian diplomat Richard Colvin when he warned Ottawa that prisoners were being handed over to the brutal Afghan secret police for torture and execution.

Manning's motivations for whistleblowing matter not. What does matter is he revealed to the public the brutal nature of the colonial war in Afghanistan and the bodyguard of lies protecting it from public scrutiny.

If Americans and Canadians really knew the truth of this resource-driven war, and its carefully concealed cost, they would end it very quickly.

Eric Margolis' latest book is American Raj: Liberation or Domination?: Resolving the Conflict Between the West and the Muslim World. "After 27 years, this is my last Sun column. I am grateful to the Sun for allowing me to freely express my views even when it disagreed with them. My Sunday column continues at my website: ericmargolis.com and at the Huffington Post, LewRockwell.com, Bigeye.com and newspapers abroad. Twitter: @ericmargolis "

Obama Moves Good Jobs Abroad US Taxpayers to Train Asians to Help Corps

by David Sirota, *OpenLeft.com*, 5 August 2010

WITH THE PRESIDENT OBAMA REVERSING his campaign promises on trade issues by pushing to pass NAFTA-style trade agreements with South Korea, Panama and Colombia, and with the unemployment crisis persisting, the key jobs question is once again front and center in American politics. Specifically: How do we create jobs here at home and build our most valuable 21st century industries?

The first and foremost answer is that our government should stop doing stuff like the program described in this stunning new report from *Information Week*: **U.S. To Train 3,000 Offshore IT Workers**

Despite President Obama's pledge to retain more hi-tech jobs in the U.S., a federal agency run by a hand-picked Obama appointee has launched a \$22 million program to train workers, including 3,000 specialists in IT and related functions, in South Asia. Following their training, the tech workers will be placed with outsourcing vendors in the region that provide offshore IT and business services to American companies looking to take advantage of the Asian subcontinent's low labor costs...

The outsourcing program (is) sure to draw the most fire from critics. While Obama acknowledged that occupations such as garment making don't add much value to the U.S. economy, he argued relentlessly during his presidential run that lawmakers needed to do more to keep hi-tech jobs in IT, biological sciences, and green energy in the country.

Now look, I'm all for a robust foreign aid budget—we don't do nearly enough to help the developing world. However, using for-

ign aid money to specifically help private corporations "take advantage of low labor costs" in the developing world—that's absolutely grotesque.

Right now, Even if we do not reform our atrocious trade policy that incentivizes a wage-cutting race to the bottom, the least we should be doing is investing every single available dollar we have in job training and job creation here at home.



Rajiv Shah, a 36-year old former under-secretary of the Department of Agriculture, now leads the U.S. Agency for International Development for the Obama administration. Under director Shah, the USAID will partner with private outsourcers in Sri Lanka to teach workers there advanced IT skills, as well as skills in business process outsourcing and call center support. Prior to the USDA, he worked for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, one of the leading private development organizations.

New England Win-Win Strategy Good Business: Infrastructure, Education

by Talking Union, *DSA Labor Network*, 17 August 2010

THE NEW ENGLAND STATES CAN NO LONGER AFFORD to spend scarce resources on tax credits and other business giveaways. Instead, the region needs to focus its economic development efforts on rebuilding neglected infrastructure and improving education for people at all levels, from pre-school youngsters to older adult workers.

Those are the conclusions of a new study released today by economist Jeffrey Thompson of the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Thompson's paper is based on his extensive analysis of research on what works and doesn't work to create jobs and strengthen state and regional economies. It suggests a better approach to economic development, one that the New England states should pursue as they slowly dig out from the Great Recession that began in late 2007.

According to Thompson, the New England states have for too long viewed funding for public services and economic development as competing interests. That's a false dichotomy, he says.

"In many cases the most effective options for creating jobs are the same options that support public services," Thompson says in *Prioritizing Approaches to Economic Development in New England: Skills, Infrastructure, and Tax Incentives*. "Spending and investing in areas at the core of the public sector mission—providing education and maintaining infrastructure—are effective at creating jobs in the short term and building prosperous economies over the long term... The tax-cuts-and-business-subsidies approach to economic development, on the other hand, will do little to create jobs in the short run, and is not the most effective approach to generating growth over the long term."

The study provides ample evidence that infrastructure (roads, bridges, dams, energy transmission systems, drinking water, etc.) and education are effective approaches for creating jobs and generating economic growth in the state and region. Many of these activities—road and bridge repair in particular—bring in matching funds from the federal government as well as triggering investment from private businesses. And by necessity, infrastructure repairs employ local workers and local materials: it's just not possible to have an underground water main located in Providence replaced in China.

These activities would be simultaneously meeting an increas-

ingly urgent need: the evidence reviewed by Thompson shows that in New England, 40% of bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete; most roads are in poor or mediocre condition, and drinking water infrastructure is in need of \$12 billion worth of repairs and renovations over the next 20 years.

Thompson goes on to demonstrate that investing state funds—even when scarce—in education not only helps attract business to the state, but has been found to raise gross state product, increase employment in metropolitan areas, and raise personal income. In the shorter term, education spending is one of the strongest job-creation engines there is: each million dollars spent by the states creates between 25 and 39 jobs for teachers, aids, custodians, nurses, professors, bus drivers, and others.

Unfortunately, Thompson describes how, instead of making these investments, state policymakers are too often turning to corporate tax breaks to lure businesses, and public subsidies for employers who promise to hire workers. These policies have been tried for decades, but the evidence suggests that these tax subsidies—to which the region dedicates billions of dollars each fiscal year—just don't work.

But the real harm done by corporate tax incentives and subsidies is that they deplete resources that could be spent on the education and infrastructure investments that do create jobs, and real economic growth, for our region...

"Infrastructure expansion is essential to achieving our long range vision for Somerville," said Somerville Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone. "The MBTA Green Line will be extending into our community by 2015. When that occurs, we will go from having 15% of our community within half a mile of mass transit to 85% of our community within half a mile of mass transit. An additional Orange Line station also is slated to be built in Assembly Square where the largest mixed-use development on the Atlantic seaboard will be taking place. We expect new infrastructure to provide benefits to this community for generations to come in the form of jobs, a stronger tax base and a better quality of life."

Jeffrey Thompson is a research economist based at the Political Economy Research Institute at UMass, Amherst and funded, in part, by the New England members of the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative network. The full study, "Prioritizing Approaches to Economic Development in New England: Skills, Infrastructure, and Tax Incentives", as well as a policy brief, are available at www.peri.umass.edu.

BOOK REVIEWS

Stones into Schools: Promoting peace with books, not bombs. by Greg Mortenson. Viking, 2009.

Reviewed by Jean Marybom

MORTENSON'S SECOND BOOK, *Stones into Schools*, is as engaging a page turner as his first, *Three Cups of Tea*—the runaway best seller which tells of his heroic efforts to build schools, especially for girls, in remote Pakistan villages. Written in the first person, we immediately connect with the charm and humility of the man.

The first school, promised to the Pakistani village which saved Greg's life after a failed Himalayan ascent, has burgeoned into 131 schools now extending into Afghanistan with a string right through Taliban territory. It's a miracle, repeatedly.

After the 2005 Pakistan earthquake they built quake-proof schools. The current floods have not affected any of the schools—they are high in the mountains.

Mortenson responds to requests from village elders, ardent about education as the way out of their abject poverty after years resisting the savage Soviet occupation, then the Taliban. So

first: empowerment for local leaders, who find land and laborers to build and defend their schools.

His political savvy has impressed General David Petraeus and Admiral Mike Mullen. They and thousands of soldiers have read his book, and I'm sure Greg has influenced recent efforts to protect civilians. What couldn't be done with the money that keeps just one soldier in Afghanistan!, he laments.

Stones into Schools starts and ends with a memorable tale of a four-room school in the northernmost tip of Afghanistan. At 12,470 ft, the "roof of the world" village is snowed-in seven months a year. Building supplies were stranded far from the village: no roads—too remote even for US helicopters. The ill leader rallies his people, cement and lumber are ferried by yak, and builders race the descending snow line to complete the school. So 200 children had a school and classes last winter, thanks to Greg's faithfulness, ordinary American donors, his iron-willed and brilliant foreman, and especially, the peoples' own determination. Books, rather than bombs. The paradigm is cooperation and respect.

Mortenson's Central Asia Institute, based in Butte, Montana, channels funds for schools, supplies and teachers. Greg spends exhausting time speaking here and abroad. For his quarterly e-newsletter, visit www.ikat.org/alima. Though none of Greg's schools has been affected by the disastrous flooding in Pakistan, (remote means high up in the mountains,) he suggests donations be sent to the Human Development Foundation, www.HDF.com.

Wired for War: The robotics of revolution and conflict in the 21st Century. by P. W. Singer (Penguin, 2009), is a paradigm opposite Mortenson's—power over. This modest bestseller is riveting, provocative, and extremely important. It is not bedtime reading. We need to be informed on the robotics revolution some think as great as the Industrial. August 23 headline: "Iran launches first pilotless bomber." Militaries around the world are spending billions on them, says the *Christian Science Monitor* of 14 February, and lists the pros and cons of a robot army.

Robots, cyborgs—a blend of carbon-based life and electronic components. "Enhanced" life forms. Robots to care for the elderly. Play with the young, and "grow" with them. Spooky? Worst for me was the insect-like robot that could walk up walls, look in windows to spy. Johan Galtung, July-August *BCA Dispatch*, predicts a US empire collapse leading to a US "blossoming"... or fascism. Some fear the technologies for overbearing surveillance are at hand: drones overhead, ID microchips, electronics keeping track of us individually.

We know of the Predator drones bombing Afghanistan. No pilots to loose, they're controlled from Nevada. We had some 5,300 in 2008. A Pentagon buyer told one robotics exec "Make 'em as fast as you can."

Unmanned, or unmanly? Arab targets find the all-seeing eye in the sky depressing, but also question our valor—their defiance increases. Another huge problem: these drone surveillance/bombers can be made cheaply by groups labeled "terrorist" such as Iran.

Geneticists saw themselves entering new territory (cloning etc) and established an ethics oversight group. Robotics fascinates it's fans, but we must ask questions about what we should do, beyond what we can do.

Jean Marybom is former co-chair of the Boston-Cambridge Alliance. She now lives in northern Idaho, closer to nature, her daughters and grandchildren, and the creative spirit. Email: marybom@earthlink.net.

Huge Census Assures "Brazil for All"

Remote Afro-Brazilians Counted At Last

by Tom Phillips, *Guardian* (UK), 25 August 2010

WHEN JORGE MOREIRA DE OLIVEIRA'S GREAT-GREAT-GREAT-great-great-grandfather arrived in Brazil in the 18th century he was counted off the slave-ship, branded and dispatched to a goldmine deep in the country's arid mid-west. After years of scrambling for gold that was shipped to Europe, he fled and became one of the founding fathers of the Kalunga quilombo, a remote mountain-top community of runaway slaves.

On Wednesday last week, more than 200 years later, it was Moreira's turn to be counted - this time not by slavemasters but by Cleber, a chubby census taker who appeared at his home clutching a blue personal digital assistant (PDA).

"I'm Kalunga. A Brazilian Kalunga," Moreira told his visitor from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, who diligently noted down details about the interviewee's eight children, monthly income and toilet arrangements.

Such is Brazil's 2010 census—a gigantic logistical operation that aims to count and analyse the lives of more than 190 million people in one of the most geographically and racially diverse nations on earth.

The scale of the mobilisation is staggering. With a budget of around 1.677bn Brazilian reais (£600m) the census, which began on 1 August, will peer into approximately 58m homes in 5,565 municipalities across 8,514,876 sq km (3.3m sq miles). Between now and the end of October around 190,000 census takers will venture into illegal goldmines, sprawling slums, high-security prisons, indigenous reserves and quilombola communities such as Engenho II, travelling by motorbike, donkey, canoe and plane.

But for people such as Moreira, the census is about more than number-crunching. For the Kalunga, descendants of slaves shipped to Brazil from places such as Angola, Mozambique and Ivory Coast, it is a chance, finally, to be counted, heard and helped by a government that has long ignored them.

"The federal government has to know that we exist - what we do, what we have," said Moreira, a 42-year-old subsistence farmer, who attributes recent improvements in his community, including the arrival of roads, electricity and a school, to Brazil's last head-count, in 2000. "Before, we were totally forgotten. Now equality is coming through the census and the interviews."

Identity

"It is a question of identity," said Ivonete Carvalho, the government's programme director for traditional communities. "When you assert your identity you are saying you want [government] action and access to public policies. [The census] is a fantastic x-ray."

The Kalungas' fight for recognition is part of a wider movement for racial equality in Brazil, a country with deep roots in Africa but where Afro-Brazilian politicians and business leaders remain few and far between. According to Carvalho, only one of Brazil's 81 senators is black, despite the fact that Afro-Brazilians represent at least 53% of the population.

The last census found that fewer than 40% of Afro-Brazilians had access to sanitation compared with nearly 63% of whites.

Just as descendants of Brazil's runaway slaves are finding their voice—and telling the census takers about it—so too are Brazil's officially black and indigenous communities swelling as a growing number of Brazilians label themselves "black" or

"indigenous" rather than "mulatto" when the census takers come knocking.

"People are no longer scared of identifying themselves or insecure about saying: 'I'm black, and black is beautiful,'" Brazil's minister for racial equality, Elio Ferreira de Araujo, told the *Guardian*.

For the first time in Brazilian history, this year's census will map out the different indigenous languages spoken in Brazil and register the number of same-sex relationships. It will also ask people their "ethnicity" - a thorny issue in a country that has long regarded itself as a racial melting pot and the rainbow nation of the Americas.

Since president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva came to power in 2003, increasing steps have been taken to bridge the social chasm between Afro-Brazilians and their white counterparts. A ministry for racial equality has been created and university quotas introduced. The Brasil Quilombola programme, which aims to provide basic social services to thousands of slave descendants, has been rolled out across the country.

Engenho II, a village that is home to around 4,500 "Brazilian Kalungas" and was officially recognised by the government in 2009, has been one of the communities to benefit from the cause's new visibility.

Calamitous

"It was pretty calamitous here before," said Cerilo dos Santos Rosa, the territory's 56-year-old leader. "We didn't have roads, or energy. We'd have to take our produce to town on donkeys or on our backs."

The Kalungas also hope that their land will soon be formally demarcated by the government, with plans to offer compensation to landowners who leave the area, around 320km from Brazil's capital, Brasilia.

Not everybody is enthusiastic about the government's sudden engagement with quilombola communities. Some claim the arrival of brick houses, cash-transfer programmes and roads will irreparably damage their culture and create divisions between them and other communities. Others speculate that the government simply wants access to the abundant mineral resources buried under this sparsely populated savannah region.

Local people, however, are united in their praise for Lula's attempts to create what he calls a *Brasil para todos*—"Brazil for all".

"Lula has been a great example. He was the first president to visit our community," said Rosa, a father of 11 and grandfather of 29 who credits the president with building 40 brick homes and 93 toilets in the territory.

Government officials defend their attempts to offer "contemporary" life to some of the country's poorest, most isolated citizens.

"Cultural preservation has to be our objective . but giving quality of life to families that live in such remote places is also part of the mission," said Ferreira, the racial equality minister. "We have to value their culture but also the economic support that will give them social benefits."

Carvalho, herself born into a quilombola community in southern Brazil, said the government had finally started paying "an historical debt" to those whose forefathers were "wrenched from their motherland".

Brazil's excluded, she said, were increasingly willing to stand up and be counted. "I'm here. I'm me. I'm not ashamed of my history." "The progress is slow but it is progress," said Moreira, sat beside his shack's rickety wooden door, bearing the chalked words: "God in first place."

"Before, the government didn't care if we existed or not. Today things are different. Today we all have to be registered. We have to appear. That's the only way things will get better."

Brazil Social Facts

- In 1872, when the first Brazilian census was conducted on the orders of Emperor Dom Pedro II, the population was divided into free people and slaves, who represented 15% of the population.
- Just 1.8% of the 1872 population were considered "rich" - 23,400 families. In 2000 that figure had risen only slightly to about 2.4%.
- The following census, in 1890, found that 83% of over-fives were illiterate. By 2000 this had fallen to 17%.
- Brazil's population has more than doubled in 50 years, from 71 million in 1960 to more than 190 million today.
- 734,000 Brazilians identified themselves as "indigenous" in the 2000 census.
- This year, more than 7,000 data centres will compile information from about 225,000 PDAs.

AMEND THE CONSTITUTION (Continued from Page 1)

Citizens United was originally a case about accounting, that is, which pot of their money the wealthy nonprofit political corporation, Citizens United, should use to pay for political ads within 30 days of an election. The issue was whether the ads should be paid for using money from a corporate general account or from a political action committee (PAC) account. The corporation Citizens United never claimed that its speech had been restricted, much less censored or banned. The corporation simply wanted to use a different pot of money to pay for broadcasting their movie.

Instead of ruling on the matter of accounting brought before them, the Supreme Court completely changed the case in order to rule on issues that the case did not raise, and some issues that no case had ever raised. This blatantly violated 220 years of American tradition and their own Supreme Court rule, called "judicial restraint". In an unprecedented case of legislating from the bench, they overturned the last 103 years of American anti-corruption laws and tradition. While Citizens United is a nonprofit political corporation, the Supreme Court applied its ruling to all corporations, profit and nonprofit, commercial and political. They justified this massive purge of laws using a hypothetical case they themselves invented. They have now made it virtually impossible for Congress to fight political corruption because they have now legalized the corruption process. According to the Supreme Court, corporations are now people who are protected by Constitutional freedom of speech, and their money is their speech.

The result is that the most common form of corporate bribes, campaign contributions, are now treated as free speech. All laws regulating corporate political contributions have been thrown out. The public no longer even has the right to know which corporations give how much money to which campaigns. Corporate campaign contributions can now be secret. And the court made no distinction between US corporations and foreign corporations. Foreign corporations now have equal right to bid for and buy American elections, alongside of domestic corporations, and all in secret.

The Supreme Court majority based their decision on no evidence other than their preconceived opinions. This is astonishing: they gathered and presented no evidence. They ignored the documented fact that our Framers were more concerned

with controlling corruption than almost any other issue. The Framers repeatedly stated that a democracy cannot function effectively when its constituent members believe laws are being bought and sold. They pointed to concentrations of wealth as the source of that corruption, and they knew protections were needed to control that corruption.

The Supreme Court majority fabricated a wildly imaginative history about the intent of the Framers of our Constitution. They justified their ruling using sheer speculation about possible future legal issues, issues that have not happened and may never happen. This is in blatant violation of their own 220-year-old rules to never address a Constitutional issue until compelled to do so.

Having fabricated a case for doing so, they addressed it with a sledgehammer, not the precise scalpel that their own rules and American legal tradition require they use. In essence, five people have overturned the rule of law in the United States, replacing it with the rule of their personal whim. This is a violation of American principles so vast, so breathtaking in scope, that it defies description. This travesty must not stand.

MoveToAmend.org and other national groups are organizing public support for a Constitutional amendment to end this travesty. One proposed wording of the amendment is:

1. *Only human beings, not corporations, are entitled to Constitutional rights.*

2. *Money is not speech, and therefore regulating political contributions and spending is not equivalent to limiting political speech.*

That's it. That's all that's needed. Nothing complicated. Just two fundamental American truths: (1) We The People includes only human beings, and (2) money is not speech. These are the two fundamental American truths that the Supreme Court majority has just overturned, and we must restore.

It takes three-quarters of the states to pass a Constitutional Amendment. No individual party can win on its own. The Framers of our Constitution designed the amendment process that way, and for good reason. If an issue does not unite across party lines, it is not worthy of being a Constitutional Amendment.

Many American citizens are concerned about the corrupting influence of big unions in addition to big corporations. The wording of the amendment applies equally to both. Unions and many other types of politically active organizations could be listed explicitly, but it would make no legal difference. All collective organizations, from Big Business to Brownies, are addressed equally by this wording.

This movement is about to go head-to-head with Big Corporations. Not small businesses. Small businesses are on our side and always have been, back to the founding of the United States. This will be head-to-head between Humans and BIG Business.

Big Business will try to break us into factions, left versus right. But this issue is not left versus right, it is top versus bottom. It is corporations versus human beings.

Corporations have vast amounts of money, \$13.1 trillion dollars in the last election cycle. They have vast amounts of power. They do not grow old, so time is always on their side. As our Founders frequently said, corporations are soulless. They do not need clean air to breathe. They do not need clean water to drink. They have liability protections we do not. They can outspend and outlive human beings in courts. They cannot be put in jail. They own all the popular media. (By the way, that's why you won't hear much about this on CNN or FoxNews.) And while they know they can NOT defeat our ideas, they also

know they don't have to. All they have to do is break us into factions and outlast us. If that happens we will defeat ourselves.

And we will lose our voice in our democracy.

This January the Supreme Court gave Big Corporations, foreign and domestic, the legal right to secretly buy all American elections, federal and local. A Constitutional Amendment is the only way to overrule the Supreme Court. It is legal and ethical and it is our duty. The Framers planned for this sort of thing to happen. They gave us the tools and entrusted WE THE PEOPLE with the responsibility. It's been done 27 times already. But if we don't move quickly to overrule the Supreme Court, we could lose our country. It will no longer be run by human citizens. It will be run by big corporations. Not just partially, as it has been for much of our history. But completely.

I served briefly in the Army, and I worked much of my career with various defense contractors throughout the Cold War. I studied the Soviet Union in detail. I participated in many war games against them. I understood clearly the Soviet threat to America.

But there has never been a threat to American democracy as serious as we now face. The Soviets could have hurt us, but they could not have dismantled the idea of American democracy. That idea cannot be destroyed from outside. But it can be and is being dismantled from inside.

In addition to my military experience I am an engineer, an entrepreneur, and a businessman. I live my life by facts and hard data. And the data tell me the United States is in the middle of a monumental power grab by the super rich. These are the owners and top executives and board members of the largest corporations. They are fortifying their way of life at the expense of ours. Ideology is not involved, though they will use ideology as a smokescreen to polarize us. On this issue there is no left, and no right. It's simply about money and power.

I don't dispute their right to money. Money is property, and in American tradition property is protected. But I DO dispute their right to claim money is free speech. And I DO dispute their right to legalize bribery and use their money to buy American elections.

This power grab will affect every American. And ultimately it will affect the world. There is no place to hide. We're all in this struggle, like it or not.

This violation of American tradition seriously damages every political party in America. How is a political party benefited when corporations now have more money and legal power to influence elections than political parties do? Take the traditional Conservative principles for instance: family values, small government, and low taxes. In what way does legalized bribery promote family values? In what way does legalized special interest and pork barrel politics promote smaller, cheaper government? In what way do bribed corporate tax loopholes reduce your taxes?

All of us, every political party and persuasion, were just pushed over the brink unexpectedly. A mere five individuals have just changed our world, and we have to move fast and with purpose while we still can.

If you ever wanted to do something meaningful for your country, to give back for all it has given you, and your family, and your community, now is the time. Perhaps you're already active in politics. In which case you need no encouragement. Perhaps this is the first time you have considered getting involved. Or perhaps you've fought in a war and you know how easy this is compared to what you've done before. However you got here you know this is no little special interest. This is a BIG cause. Human liberty and the core values of America are at stake here.

Get involved now because your freedom, your voice as a citizen, and your vote, were just pushed off a cliff.

Look around you at the beauty that is America. Our ideals. Our dreams. And our freedom. America is still the beacon of light in the world. It's time to earn it.

Rick Jurmain is an organizer of the northwest Wisconsin chapter of Move to Amend. He is an entrepreneur and inventor who, with his wife and partner, Mary, has committed his business to social responsibility. Thanks to Ben Manski, former Alliance member and candidate for WI legislature, for introducing Rick.

Ed. Comment: *The immediate mission of the Alliance for Democracy is "End Corporate Rule." This momentous amendment will set the US back on course as a leading, dynamic, democratic power. It is a big adjustment in the way we do things, but it is only an adjustment. Down the line we must rewrite the constitution to change the nature of the congress, the executive branch, and certainly the supreme court. In preparation we must review and debate the "federal system"—the "balance of powers". The media of communication is a fourth power and must be dealt with in the body of the constitution, as presaged in the First Amendment.*

COMMUNITY NOTES (Continued from Page 1)

Technologies, **Rep. Byron Rushing** attached the bill to an omnibus Economic Development and Jobs bill which finally DID pass both houses of the legislature. The governor signed the bill into law on August 5th. Hooray! Now BCA/North Bridge and all friends of fair trade need to focus on assuring decent appointments to the Commission. As the legislators return after Labor Day, we will be discussing this with Byron and our sister citizen trade commissions in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, and cut out a role for ourselves.

Protecting Water and Nature

North Bridge and BCA supported the people of Nottingham and Barrington NH starting in August 2001 in their struggle against corporate (USA Springs, Inc. bottlers/exporters) taking of local groundwater. We withdrew after a couple of years when it became apparent that SOG (Save Our Groundwater) was persisting in a regulatory approach rather than a rights-based approach—banning corporate exploitation of nature and the municipality. SOG did drive USA Springs into bankruptcy, but the struggle continues in the courts and permitting agencies.

Meanwhile, the Alliance has helped several other towns in New Hampshire and Maine with successful, right-based, municipal action. **Ruth Caplan** and **Bonnie Preston** are accelerating this trend with two new foundation grants which assure energetic staffing for continuing rights-based work in New England.

Remedying Unemployment in Boston

Boston Workers Alliance thanks Chuck Turner! Over 5 years ago, **Councilor Chuck Turner** and the City of Boston's District 7 (D7) Roundtable had the idea to support the formation of a new organization to fight for employment in the community. After listening to the residents of Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan, we heard loud and clear that a new organization was necessary to challenge the economic crisis we faced—thus, the "Boston Staffing Alliance".

Our founding members established two goals:

- Pass CORI* Reform, and
 - Start a CORI-Friendly Temp Agency.
- In the last week of July, 2010, Boston Workers Alliance (BWA) has been able to accomplish both of these goals.

On Monday, July 26, BWA's temp agency, the Boston Staffing Alliance opened its doors in Grove Hall at 411 Blue Hill Avenue: 617.606.3581, Email: info@bostonstaffingalliance.com, Web: www.bostonstaffingalliance.org . We were pleased to have Mayor Menino, Councilor Turner, Councilor Arroyo, and Senator Chang-Diaz join us for the ribbon cutting.

Then on Saturday, July 31, we successfully passed CORI *[Criminal Offender Record Information] reform through the legislature, representing a historic victory for our communities and the Commonwealth. Part of the CORI legislation was to make Massachusetts the first state in the country to "ban the box" [stating criminal convictions] from ALL initial job applications in the state. Councilor Turner first pioneered this policy in the City of Boston with support from Mayor Menino and Councilor Murphy. BWA is proud to have taken it statewide with our partners in the Commonwealth CORI Coalition.

As a small grassroots organization, BWA benefited from in-kind office space and a phone line in Chuck's District Office for the first 3.5 years of our existence. Chuck, his staff, and D7 members have remained invaluable advisers throughout the development of our organization.

We're proud of our victory, and while we have dozens if not hundreds of different supporters to thank, it's safe to say that without Chuck Turner's vision and commitment to grassroots organizing, the BWA in its form would not have existed.

So thank you Chuck for your radical leadership in the name of community self determination and power! We are proud to be standing as an independent organization, and will always be grateful for your belief in our ability to grow.

—Aaron Tanaka, Boston Workers' Alliance. 617.606.3580

ACTION ALERTS

Tue. 12 Oct (call for time), Boston. Trial of Chuck Turner. Boston's premier leader for progressive causes in the City Council, Chuck was set up for charges of taking a bribe from a restaurateur who wanted a liquor license. There is no person less apt to be bribed. (For one campaign, see article on CORI immediately above. Chuck led in the Council's endorsement of BCA's Globalization Impact Bill [see Page 1], and the ongoing fight against BU's level-4 "bioterror lab".) **Please attend the trial, to show popular support for Chuck.** Moakley Federal Courthouse, Boston harbor, Judge Woodlock. Call 617.261.2440 (Court-house) or 617.635.3510 (Chuck's office in City Hall) or 617.427.8100 (Chuck's office in Roxbury) for time and directions. Public transportation: Silver Line to "Courthouse" stop.

Sat. 2 Oct. Afternoon. Washington DC. ONE NATION Working Together—multi-movement grand march and demonstration.

- Had enough disappointment with Obama? Edgy about your job situation? Despairing about your debt? Worried about global heating? Angry about appeasing Republicans? Tired of feeling powerless? Want to meet like-minded people outside your box?
- Round-trip special bus only \$20! **In the Boston area, just contact MajorityAgendaProject.org** (and see names of your friends who are going), **or call MAP at 617-482-6300.**
- The purpose of the march is to show Obama and the Republicans that we—the majority—mean business. We want respect and what we voted for—jobs, social security, green policies, ending wars, ending racism and scapegoating, and a voice! People from all over the USA will march. We're looking for 100,000s!
- The organizers of the march are the NAACP, SEIU 1199, United for Peace & Justice, the AFL-CIO, Green for All, and a broad range of civil rights, labor, peace and social justice organizations around the country.

★ **Cambridge Forum 4 programs on Renewing Democracy** ★
First Parish Church in Cambridge, 3 Church Street, Harvard Square, Cambridge, MA 02138. All programs start at 7:00 pm. Info: 617-495-2727 www.cambridgeforum.org . Free.

Why this special series?—A few months ago the US Supreme Court conservative majority gave corporations unlimited license to influence elections, thus amplifying the corporate corruption of Congress. This may reach crisis proportions during and after the November elections. How can we deal with this? Join the discussion:

Wed, 15 September: Soul of a Citizen. Paul Loeb discusses citizenship. It's more than political engagement. How do creative, moral, and emotional citizenship play out in our age of cynicism and fear?

Wed, 13 October: Change Congress. Harvard Law professor Lawrence Lessig argues that American democracy is broken. What changes in Congress are necessary? How can those changes happen?

Wed, 3 November: How Important Are Elections Anyway? Constitutional scholar and Visiting Professor at Harvard Law School Sanford Levinson discusses how the Constitution limits democratic self-government. Why don't elections make more difference?

Tues, 30 November: Deadly Spin. Corporate whistle-blower Wendell Potter reveals the ways the insurance industry altered and tried to stop the process of health care reform. How is the power of corporate lobbyists exercised in our nation's capital? What can be done to counteract that power?

Fri. eve—Sun. 5–7 November, Cambridge & Boston. 25th Annual Gathering of **War Tax Resisters and Supporters.** For veteran WTR people (war tax resistance/refusal/redirection), for beginners, and for folks wanting to learn more about this powerful non-violent method of social (and personal) change. Panels, how-to sessions, small group discussions, strategizing, and entertainment. Fri & Sat events at Cambridge Friends Meeting, 9 Longfellow Park, Cambridge. Sun. event at Encuentro 5, 33 Harrison Ave, 5th Floor, Boston. **Information:** Larry Dansinger at (207) 525-7776 or rosc@psouth.net or www.nwtrcc.org/Boston_Nov2010.php. For registration forms and to register after 9/1/10, contact Becky Pierce, 617-282-3783.

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. #2h, Boston, MA 02116.)

BOSTON-CAMBRIDGE ALLIANCE for DEMOCRACY PLEDGE
___ \$33/Year - "Count me in!"
___ \$66/Year - "Contributor" (We need to average this amount.)
___ \$111/Year - "Sustainer" (Helping us thrive.)
___ \$222/Year - "Community Steward"
___ \$500/Year - "Realize the vision"
___ What's fair for YOU? _\$_____

Name : _____ Date: _____

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Town and Zip: _____

Phone: Day _____ Night: _____

E-mail (for occasional contact): _____

COLOPHON

Dave Lewit, Editor 617-266-8687 dlewit@igc.org
Visit the Alliance web site: www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org
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