

BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the
Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy January 2003

An elite with little loyalty to the state and a mass society fond of gladiator entertainments form a society in which corporate Leviathans rule and democracy is hollow.

—Robert Kaplan, Atlantic, Dec 1997

ALLIANCE NEWS (Continued on page 5>>)

Chapter Calendar

BCA Voices...

The Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy's next meeting will be on **Wednesday, January 15th**, from **7:00 to 9:15 p.m.** at **Cambridge Friends Meeting**, 5 Longfellow Park (9 minute walk from Harvard Square T station, west on Brattle St.)

— Proposed Agenda —

- ★ Discuss "Corporate Repression and the PATRIOT Act" with **Jed Schwartz**.
- ★ Discuss "The New Democratic Caucus at the State House" with **Brit Eckhart**.
- ★ Discuss "Toward a New England Confederacy" with **Dave Lewit**.
- ★ What should BCA do about these things in 2003?

US Grabs, Censors Iraq Report US Mainstream Media Totally Silent

by **Andreas Zumach**, Die Tageszeitung (TAZ), Germany, 18 Dec 2002. Translated by **Anu de Monterice**

Germany and the other non-permanent members of the UN Security Council received only a cleaned-up version of the weapons dossier. Data concerning foreign suppliers of Iraq are missing. On it's face, removing 3/4ths of the document would discredit the US rationale for invasion of Iraq. Why do US papers and TV ignore such a scandal? —Ed.

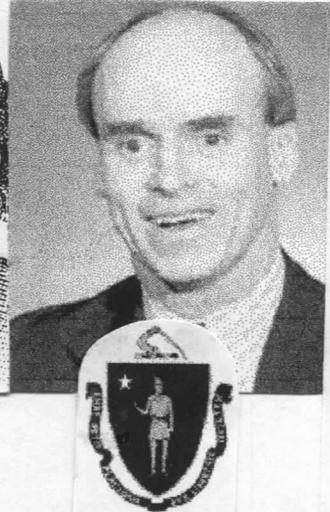
Geneva: The 10 non-permanent members of the UN Security Council—to which Germany will belong starting in January—have had withheld substantial parts of the Iraqi arms report. All information about the supplies from—and the support of—foreign companies, research labs and governments from the mid-1970's on, related to Iraqi arms programs, have been deleted. The five permanent Council members—the USA, Russia, China, France and Great Britain—are aware of this censorship. According to the German Press Agency DPA, it has reduced the 12,000 page report to 3000 pages. [The copies which TAZ has come from the only complete original report, which after its arrival in NY Sunday night, only US specialists had access to.]

From information gathered from UN diplomats of 2 of these 5 countries TAZ learned that the censorship was agreed on primarily upon the urging of

(Continued on page 4>>)



State Representative
Byron Rushing



House Speaker
Tom Finneran

The state seal and flag of the Commonwealth centers on a buckskin-clad Massachusetts warrior or hunter. Above the shield is a cocked arm gripping a sword. The Latin motto translates as "By the Sword We Seek Peace, but Peace Only Under Liberty." Rep. Rushing seeks to remove the arm and sword. Speaker Finneran seems to prefer that it be retained.

Rebel Rushing 17, Spkr. Finneran 118 Opposition Mounts to Speaker's Domination

See page 2 for struggle to institute democratic rules. Here, Reps. Kahn and Balsemer preview the contest:

Why we're voting for a new Speaker

by **Kay Khan and Ruth B. Balsemer**, Newton TAB, 30 Dec 2002

On New Years Day, we will be sworn in as representatives and will vote for Speaker of the House. We have decided to vote for Representative Byron Rushing rather than either of the other two candidates - the current Speaker, Thomas Finneran or Brad Jones, the Republican Party Leader. We believe that the current leadership, which came to power through an alliance of conservative Democrats and Republicans, has undermined the democratic process. The members of the House and, thus, the voting public have been shut out of the political process.

Massachusetts gives its legislative leadership tremendous power. The House Speaker and the Senate President control appointments of committee chairs, additional salaries, staff, assignment of committee membership, office space, and they have virtually complete control over what bills are released for debate. When he was U.S. House Speaker, the great Tip O'Neill once remarked that he wished his power equaled that of the Speaker of the Massachusetts House.

Recognizing that all Massachusetts Speakers wield tremendous power, we also are aware that different individuals have exercised that power differently. We are part of a group of Democratic legislators who believe that the current speaker is at the extreme end of the continuum in terms of autocratic control. The democratic process in the House of Representatives has been seriously compromised in recent years, and we believe it is important that a group of Repre-

(Continued on page 2>>)

sentatives speak out in defense of democracy.

We believe that the voters of the commonwealth want to restore democracy to the House of Representatives. In 18 legislative districts, voters were asked if they would direct their Representatives to vote against the current Speaker. An overwhelming majority voted yes. In the gubernatorial election, pre-election polls turned when the governor-elect convinced voters that a vote for him was a vote against a stronghold on power by the legislative leadership.

We are part of a group of legislators who developed a set of four principles that would define a reform movement and we asked Representative Byron Rushing of Boston to lead the campaign. The principles are as follows:

We believe that the House of Representatives belongs to the people of Massachusetts through our elected representatives. We believe that the citizens of the commonwealth are not being fully represented and it is time to take back the House.

We believe that legislation, which has earned broad support through the reasoned judgment of our colleagues, should be granted real consideration and a vote by the membership. Too many bills are buried in committees.

We believe that members should have the freedom to vote on any measure, according to their own convictions and the interests of their constituents, without fear of punishment or reprisal.

We believe that the committee process, the under-appreciated backbone of a healthy Legislature, must be revitalized by enabling members to serve on panels whose jurisdiction mirrors their strengths and experience. Renewal of the committee process will spawn greater innovation in public policy as ideas of the many and not just of a few, will produce truly representative legislation for our communities and reflect the broad diversity of the membership.

Some of our colleagues have indicated they agree with our perceptions of the current process and support our recipe for reform. Others feel that maintaining the status quo is best during these difficult fiscal times. We reject the notion that challenging fiscal times requires the consolidation of power in the office of the Speaker, and the resulting disregard for our representative democracy. Difficulty balancing the state budget is no excuse for eliminating the rights of citizens to be heard through their elected representatives. In fact, we would argue that especially during difficult times, a democratic process - the expression of all views and then developing a consensus - assures us of the best solutions.

There is a great deal at stake for Massachusetts in selecting a Speaker of the House. If members of the House elect a Speaker committed to an open legislative process, our citizens can have a voice in creating the laws that affect our daily lives and we will preserve our democratic system of government.

Kay Khan and Ruth B. Balsler are two of the three representatives of Newton in the House of Representatives.

Rules Reform Package

Rules reforms to enhance the flow of legislation from committees to the floor for debate

Any bill (including one in a "study") may be discharged from any committee with the Clerk instructed to put the item on the calendar for the next sitting upon the submission of a request signed by 40 Members.

Example: A bill assuring Gender Equity in insurance premiums and benefits was kept captive in committee. Committee chairs, appointed (and removable) by the Speaker, control release.

The Clerk shall place on the calendar for the next sitting any bill that has been in the Committee on Bills in 3rd Reading for more than 30 days.

Example: The Dark Skys bill would regulate outdoor street lights to cut light pollution, save energy, and increase public safety. It was delayed in committee 23 months + 3 weeks. With only 8 days left in the session, senate work on the bill fell only hours short of completion, and the whole process had to restart in the next session.

The Clerk shall place on the calendar for the next sitting any bill that has been in the Committee on Rules (with the exception of Bills in a "Study") for more than 30 days.

The Clerk shall place on the calendar for the next sitting any bill that has been in the Committee on Steering and Policy for more than 30 days.

The Clerk shall place on the calendar for the next sitting any bill that has been in the Committee on Ways and Means for more than 90 days.

Examples: "Too numerous to list"

The Clerk shall assign to the appropriate committee, within one week of its submission, all petitions filed subsequent to June 1 in the first year of a biennium. (A comparable change in Joint Rules is required to complete this attempt to deal with late file bills. The rules on late files do not reflect the current two-year cycle of legislation.)

Members must receive notice by noon the day before any bill is presented in an informal session for a third reading, engrossment or enactment.

Budget

Rule 20 shall be changed to read: The committee on Ways and Means shall report in appropriation bills the total amount appropriated. The General Appropriation Bill shall be in printed and electronic form at least seven calendar days prior to consideration thereof by the House, and no day on which the Bill was not available before noon shall be counted toward these seven days.

Rule 20A shall be changed to indicate that Members shall have five full calendar days to file amendments after the budget is made available. Again, no day on which the budget was not available before noon shall be counted toward these five days.

Committee Assignments

Members shall be assigned to at least one of their top three choices for committee assignment.

Speaker's Term Limit

The rule limiting the Speaker to no more than 4 terms (8 years) shall be reinstated. #

Of "Lungos" & "Señoritos" A Colombian View Of Venezuela

by Hector Mondragon, Z-Net, 2 Jan 03

At the petroleum refinery of Barrancabermeja the workers who are consigned to hard manual labour are called 'lungos'. There are a lot of them and they earn very little. They are almost all temporary laborers and they live in the poor neighbourhoods. When the 'lungos' go on strike, technology guarantees that production doesn't totally stop—so even when the majority of the workers are united in protest, if they can't actually stop the plant from functioning, the engineers, supervisors, and managers can keep the refinery going under 'contingency plans'.

Right now the oil-workers union of Colombia, USO (Union Sindical Obrera), is getting ready to go on strike in response to the Uribe government's offensive. That offensive is headed by Isaac Yanovich, a businessman from the private banking sector who has been named president of the state oil company. The workers, who struggled and won the creation of a national oil company (Ecopetrol), have resisted its privatization for the past 25 years. They have paid a terrible price for their resistance: 100 union leaders and activists assassinated (4 during 2002, which saw 160 Colombian unionists killed), 2 disappeared, 10 kidnapped, 31 imprisoned (6 of whom are still in prison), and 250 fired (11 of whom were fired just a few days ago).

It is in such difficult conditions that the Colombian oil workers are preparing their strike for the beginning of 2003. The victory of their movement will depend on their ability to halt production. For this reason the union and the government are both putting forth massive efforts to win the engineers and supervisors to their side. If the union is unable to win these over, the workers will have no option but to occupy the plant. This will mean that they will face military repression like they did in 1971. In that year, as workers in the union remember well, worker Fermin Amaya was murdered as he was about to stop production at the Barranca refinery.

Next door in Venezuela, the world is flipped entirely upside down. There, the 'lungos' are working intensely while the call to strike is followed with fervour and without hesitation by the managers. On December 2 the managerial body of Venezuela's state oil company, PDV (Petróleos de Venezuela), blocked the entrance to the refinery and used their vehicles to stop the workers, the 'lungos'—who had showed up to work in massive numbers— from entering.

The same managerial body was joined by the executive of labour relations in its attempts to bar the entry of workers.

US ex-Chiefs Control Critical Computers

But the real strength of the strike in Venezuela has been in the computers that control the giant and highly automated petroleum industry. Even though the PDV is nominally state-owned and run, the computer system is in the hands of the 'mixed' (public-private) enterprise Intesa. The party with the technical skill in the partnership is the Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC)—a transnational computing company. Among its directors: ex-US Secretaries of Defense William Perry and Melvin Laird; ex-directors of the CIA John Deutsch, Robert Gates; Admiral Bobby Ray Inman (ex-director of the National Security Agency); other retired military staff including Wayne Downing (former commander in chief of US

Special Forces) and Jasper Welch (ex-coordinator of the National Security Council). The hold-up of the oil-tankers was directed from these computing centers.

The hold-up was welcomed by various captains, but the tankers were forced to shore in any case: nothing moves without direction from the computers, which also stopped key operations in the refineries and the entry of vital gas for the iron and steel industries of eastern Venezuela. 'Lungos' from Guayana had to recover the gas.

"Middle Class" Not Craftsmen, but Corporate Favorites

The high salaries, privileges, and commissions of the managers, labour relations chiefs, systems engineers, and tanker captains has become a useful weapon of political control for the transnational corporations who seek to privatize Venezuela's (and Colombia's, Ecuador's, and Brazil's) petrol industry.

This 'middle' class with its disposable income is the political base of the right in Colombia and Venezuela (and its heroes are Bush, Aznar, or Berlusconi). It is the electoral force behind Colombia's president Alvaro Uribe Velez and behind the coup in Venezuela. Washington uses the mailed fist in Colombia and the velvet glove in Venezuela, but in both cases its local support is from these 'middle' classes who, like Bush himself, are too deaf to hear of the assassinations of unionists in Colombia but scream in rage if a hair on the head of a manager or oil-tanker captain in Venezuela is touched; who are quiet when 2 million Colombians are displaced from their lands but enraged by the Venezuelan Land Law when it threatens the unproductive ranches of large Venezuelan landowners.

On September 16 2002, Colombian peasants were treated cruelly for their protests on the highways. Their food was burned. They were denied drinking water. They were surrounded by the military and their leaders were arrested. Three were disappeared. International delegates were deported. 7 of the protest leaders have since been assassinated, one disappeared, and many others harassed and threatened with murder. They stand accused—of blocking the roads. In Venezuela on the other hand, the 'middle' and upper classes blocked roads with their Mercedes Benz and BMWs, and their rights were respected.

In Cali, Colombia, the public service workers have been protesting privatization. The young workers of the apprentices' union have been protesting to maintain state control over the apprenticeship institution, SENA. Both sectors have been incessantly, brutally attacked and the international media have nothing to say. The media are silent as well on the daily confrontations on the Caribbean coast of Colombia when the privatized electricity company tries to cut electricity to thousands of indebted, poor people. Neither popular protest nor state repression make the international news if they occur in Colombia which, to the media, is a land strictly of terrorism and drugs.

The 'middle' class ought to watch out though—sometimes it can end up the victim of its own heroes, whether they be politicians like Bush or the mainstream media itself. That was what happened with the 'corralito' in Argentina, when the whole country—including the 'middle class'—mobilized against the banks and were denounced for it in the media.

Until this happen the 'senoritos' in wealthy eastern Caracas, in the Chico of Bogota and of Miami, will be the darlings of the media.

Hector Mondragon is an economist and activist in Colombia.

Translated from the Spanish by Justin Podur .

the United States.* Among the 5 permanent members of the Security Council it was the USA that stood out by giving the strongest support to Saddam Hussain's regime by arming it with the means of mass destruction.**

The report gives us a complete overview of these supplies for the first time. In particular it names the 24 US companies and when and to whom in Iraq the supplies were delivered. And it makes clear how strongly the Reagan and the first Bush administrations supported the arming of Iraq, from 1980 up to the Gulf conflict of 1990/91. Substantial construction units for the Iraqi nuclear weapon and rocket programs were supplied with permission of the government in Washington. The poison Anthrax for the arming of Iraq with biological weapons stemmed from US laboratories. Iraqi military and armament experts were trained in the US and there received know-how having to do with their domestic arms programs.

According to the estimation of Susan Wright, a US arms-control expert from the University of Michigan, publication of this information would be "especially embarrassing for the USA." It would "remind people in the USA of a very dark chapter, which the Bush administration would prefer to forget about." Whether the USA had this information stricken before it made copies for the other four permanent Council members continues to be unclear.

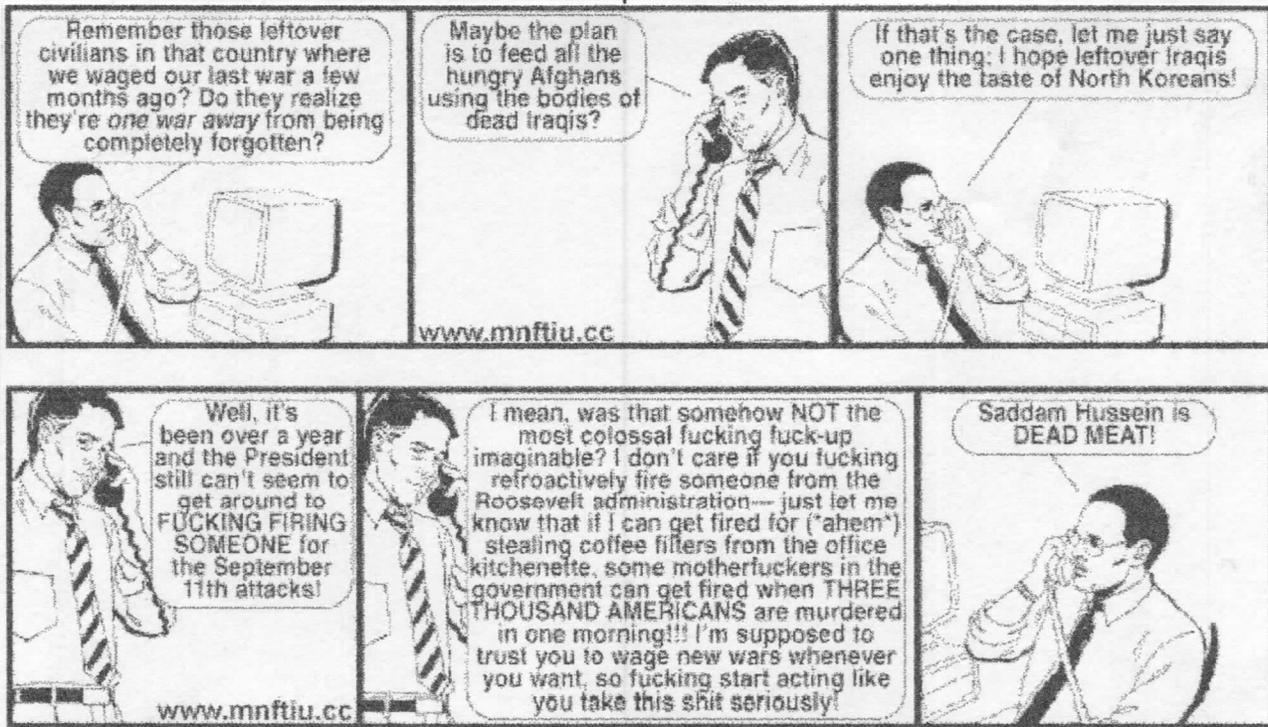
* *Democracy Now!* says that the US blackmailed the Colombian chairman of the UN Security Council into handing over the Iraqi report. Hear interview in English with Andreas Zumach at <http://www.democracynow.org/Zumach.htm>

** *Russia and China are supplying arms to Iraq even today.*

List of US Companies Named in the Iraqi WMD Declaration to Inspectors

From: <http://www.taz.de/pt/2002/12/19/a0080.nf/textdruck>

- 1 Honeywell (R, K) (A) = nuclear program,
- 2 Spectra Physics (K) (B) = bioweapons program,
- 3 Semetex (R) (C) = chemical weapons program,
- 4 TI Coating (A, K) (R) = rocket program,
- 5 Unisys (A, K) (K) = conventional weapons,
- 6 Sperry Corp. (R, K) logistics, supplies, buildings
- 7 Tektronix (R, A)
- 8 Rockwell (K)
- 9 Leybold Vacuum Systems (A)
- 10 Finnigan-MAT-US (A)
- 11 Hewlett-Packard (A, R, K)
- 12 Dupont (A)
- 13 Eastman Kodak (R)
- 14 American Type Culture Collection (B)
- 15 Alcolac International (C)
- 16 Consarc (A)
- 17 Carl Zeiss - U.S (K)
- 18 Cerberus (LTD) (A)
- 19 Electronic Associates (R)
- 20 International Computer Systems (A, R, K)
- 21 Bechtel (K)
- 22 EZ Logic Data Systems, Inc. (R)
- 23 Canberra Industries Inc. (A)
- 24 Axel Electronics Inc. (A)



"Get Your War On"

Go to www.mnftiu.cc

David Rees created these cartoon strips using stock "clip art" on his computer, making the characters say what he was feeling after 9/11. Daniel Sinker, editor and founder of *Punk Planet* magazine, interviewed Rees for *In These Times*. Sinker ventured

that mainstream media have become so neutered. Rees retorted, "I don't think neutered is the right word. You watch CNN, and they have a huge fucking hard-on for a war with Iraq." *Get Your War On* is on-line. It got 25 million hits in the past year.

BCA's December guest speaker, **Tennis Lilly**, executive director of the Lawrence Grassroots Initiative (LGI), changed jobs and was unable to appear. So with **Dave Lewit's** help we discussed the threat of privatization of Lawrence's city water system and the campaign to prevent that from happening. Tennis will volunteer on weekends, but the campaign will go forward with the leadership of **Jonathan Leavitt** of the Green Party and **Rose Gonzalez** of LGI. See **Action Alerts** for citizen meeting in Lawrence (25 Jan.) and contact #s.

Your best bet for helping is to wait for the Lawrence City Council decision, probably in February, on whether or not to go along with Vivendi's offer to privatize. If they accept the offer, citizens have 21 days to collect 5000 signatures calling for a special election for the voters to say yes or no. Almost all Lawrence citizens want to keep their water system public, so our job will be to go there and *help gather the signatures*. Stay tuned. Then, for creative BCA members, we can join the effort to *find loans or grants for Lawrence to do necessary system repairs*.

Now, about the other water crisis—Nottingham, New Hampshire. The breaking news is that arsonist(s) burned down the 30 by 50-ft renovated barn on USA Springs' property at 3 a.m. Dec 12th. The culprit has not been found, but Save Our Groundwater emphasizes its legal and nonviolent protest policy. They will meet again on Jan 9th so stay tuned for updates. See **Action Alerts** for hearing in Nottingham on Jan 22nd. The Alliance for Democracy (Northeast Region) is planning to spark Water Watch Councils all over Massachusetts, to prepare for water wars in likely cities and towns. To join in the effort, call **Nick Biddle** 781-894-1179 or nickatafd@aol.com.

Time-Warner Could Strangle Internet Will Cities Act to Protect Our Access?

by Stacy Mitchell, in Portland (ME) Press Herald, 1 Jan 2003

As Time Warner begins the process of renegotiating its franchise agreement with the city of Portland, much of the coverage in the *Press Herald* has focused on cable television. And for good reason. City residents have no cable choice but Time Warner, and since 1996 the cost of its service has risen three times faster than inflation.

But a far more serious long-term issue for Portland residents and Maine's economy is Time Warner's stranglehold on broadband cable Internet service. The Internet as we know it developed within a framework of "open access." That is, people could choose their own Internet service provider (ISP), view any Web site and transmit any information they desired.

Open access did not happen by chance but rather by regulation. Many years ago, the Federal Communications Commission required that, for a reasonable fee, local phone companies allow their wires to be used by rival ISPs to provide Internet service. The result was robust competition. More than 7,000 ISPs sprang up nationwide. Competitive, low-cost service ushered in rapid growth. Open access ensured that the Internet developed as a diverse, free-flowing and democratic medium.

Today, most people still access the Internet through a dial-up modem. But dial-up is rapidly being supplanted by broadband. Broadband is many times faster and allows users to view high-

resolution streaming video, download graphics-rich Web sites and utilize new real-time interactive applications and services. Broadband service can be provided through a cable network, or through a digital subscriber line (DSL) that runs on the local phone network, or by satellite.

Rather than extend open access rules to broadband, the Bush administration issued regulations last March that allow cable companies to lock out rival ISPs. A few months later, the administration proposed lifting the open access rules for DSL lines as well. This means that just two companies—Time-Warner and Verizon, which offers DSL—could control Portland's broadband service for the foreseeable future.

When Does Competition Work?

The administration says its policies are necessary to ensure that big cable and telephone companies have an incentive to roll out broadband service nationwide. But about 80 percent of all households are already linked to one or more types of broadband infrastructure. There's no indication that heightened competition will slow deployment.

The administration also argues that people will be able to choose among different kinds of broadband (DSL, cable or satellite) and this will provide sufficient competition. But satellite service has technological limitations that render it less than ideal. That leaves at best a duopoly.

Lack of competition means higher prices. Even worse, the lack of nondiscriminatory open access rules will allow broadband providers like Time-Warner to inhibit or block access to certain Web sites.

This is no far-fetched conspiracy theory. Cisco Systems, a leading network equipment manufacturer, issued a memo to providers recently explaining that Cisco tools can "restrict the incoming . . . broadcasts (from competitors) as well as subscriber's outgoing access to the . . . site to discourage its use. At the same time, you could promote and offer your own or partner's services with full-speed features to encourage adoption of your service." Time-Warner could thus transmit its own content and the content of affiliated companies at high speeds while slowing or blocking access to rival sites.

The economic implications are severe. Imagine if a private corporation controlled the highways and allowed affiliated companies to truck their goods in the fast lane while rivals were restricted to a snail's pace. We would never stand for it—nor should we allow the Internet, another key piece of economic infrastructure, to be similarly hijacked.

The First Amendment implications are even more chilling. While phone companies are prohibited from interfering with a citizen's right to call (or access through a dial-up modem) anybody he or she wishes, these same protections have not been extended to broadband. With Time-Warner in control, how long will we be able to view sites criticizing big media companies or advocating open access or lower cable rates? Unfortunately, federal laws bar Portland from requiring open access as part of Time-Warner's franchise renewal.

The City Council, however, could pass a strong resolution calling on the federal government to revise its policies and adopt open access. A resolution could bring attention to the issue and perhaps spur our congressional delegation to action.

Stacy Mitchell of Portland is a researcher with the New Rules Project of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance
<http://www.newrules.org>

From Finland: Please Copy for Urgent Hometown Anti-War Resolution

Here's a touching message from a physicist in Finland. It could be used to help members of our city/town councils to draw up formal letters of resistance to war with Iraq. The organizers of the plan are hoping to have 100 before the State of the Union speech January 28th. —Pat McSweeney 508-822-2882

patmcs1@juno.com

6 Jan 03 To the attention of
Foreign Ministers of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

Dear Sirs:

During the first 8 weeks of Afghanistan war, October 2001 to December 2001, US has killed over 3767 civilians in Afghanistan, by classical mass destruction weapons, like

- Cluster bombs
- Thermobaric 15,000-pound bombs
- B-52 "Carpet" bombings
- Cruise missiles, equipped with 1000-lb shrapnel warheads.
- Depleted uranium (DU) bombs.

And the civilian killings are still going on by US, up to date.

Observe: these are all classical mass destruction weapons, they are NOT precision guided weapons.

Observe also: During the Iraqi war 1990, the "International Coalition" bombed Iraq with depleted uranium bombs (300 tons DU, in 1 million bombs and ammunition). Due to this reason, several thousand Iraqi children are now lying and waiting for death in Iraqi hospitals due to cancer, Hodgkins leukemia, mutations, immunosuppression, etc... Due to the UN embargo, over 560,000 Iraqi children have died from 1991 to 2002.

Therefore the following question arises: Why are US and UK allowed to kill civilians, by classical mass destruction weapons? Where now are the famous "Human Rights", "Freedom", and "Democracy"?

Dear Ministers: We appeal to you that you do everything at your hands to prevent the attack against Iraq planned by US and UK. There is already a great hurry because, to our knowledge, the attack is planned to start January-February 2003, IMMEDIATELY after 27.1.2003.

As we all know, Mr. Bush has offered Russia 8 billion US dollars NOT to veto against the coming new UN Iraq Resolution in the UN Security Council, designed specifically by US and UK to allow them to attack Iraq.

Dear Ministers: The Iraqi children's lives are NOT a matter of business by money! It is well known that the real reason for the US and UK attack against Iraq is: oil. Iraq has the SECOND richest oil reserves in the world. An equally well known fact is that the US has to import 70% of its oil from outside countries, mostly from Arab countries, due to shrinkage of domestic oil production in US (Source: Oil & Gas Journal/USA).

Dear Sirs: The Iraqi oil belongs to Iraqi children—their future depends on it. The Iraqi oil DOES NOT belong to US and Western financial circuits and US oil companies.

With best regards,
Dr. Stig Froberg/Physicist, Finland

DOGGEREL FOR OUR TIME

The Night Before Christmas 2002

*'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the land,
not a critic was stirring, for stirring was banned.
A thousand brown prisoners, snug in their cells,
all held without charges or tinsel or bells;*

*and mamma was wrapped in the national flag,
while we sang "Where there's never a boast or a brag."
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.*

*Away to the TV I flew like a flash;
(I then watched "Survivor" and reruns of "Mash.")
The fireworks, exploding above the new snow,
gave a luster of objects to people below.*

*When what saw my wondering eyes in the flashes:
a miniature George Bush and eight tiny fascists!
Their jerseys were blue and said "WORLD DOMINATION";
I knew right away this was not just claymation.*

*More rapid than eagles the warlords they came,
as the little Bush whistled and called them by name:
"Now, Daschle! now, Ashcroft! Now Strom, don't relent! On,
Poindexter, Rumsfeld! on Henry and Trent*

*To the top of the globe, while the crowd's at the mall,
now bomb away, bomb away, bomb away all!"
His sack had a war game for each girl and boy;
his pocket, four billion from just Illinois.*

*Far up on his high seat the driver did mount,
with more massive weapons than Kofi could count.
And then, I heard sounds from away off somewhere,
the booming of bombs that were bursting in air.*

*As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
down the chimney old Dick Cheney came with a bound.
He said not a word, nor disclosed his location;
he wiretapped my house in the name of the nation.*

*Then holding the strings of his little Bush puppet,
he went to the chimney and quickly rose up it.
The sleigh was still running, but Dick didn't hurry;
gas guzzlers, it seemed, were no longer a worry.*

*He popped the champagne
and exclaimed as he served it,
"The world is now ours, and
GOD DAMN, we deserve it!"*

—Nora F. Crow, Department of English, Smith College

Thanks to Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF) for forwarding this poem. Contact: Elisabeth Leonard 617/561-9139.

OPINION

O My People!

Jews Silent on Bush Totalitarianism

by Nina Moliver, Jamaica Plain

First, they came for the Communists. And I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a Communist ...

*—Rev. Martin Niemoller, Germany, 1945,
upon his liberation from Dachau*

I am beginning to know. It is like being a frog sitting in a pot of water as it heats up slowly and imperceptibly, by bits and pieces, until it is too hot to get out.

Shortly after George W. Bush took the White House, America was attacked under suspicious circumstances. Strict Air Force protocol for intercepting wayward airplanes, and downing them if necessary, was mysteriously ignored.

Bush has done everything to forestall an inquiry into the event. First he saw to it that the Freedom of Information Act was gutted so that his regime could guard its "right to privacy." When a new investigative commission became unavoidable, he designed it so that we would be unable to find out how much the regime knew in advance or whether there was any American complicity in the attacks. These are reasonable questions to ask, given the Bush family's longstanding intimate relationship with the Bin Laden family and with Saudi Arabia, where most of the hijackers came from.

While carefully shielding the facts from public view, Bush has used the events of Sept. 11th to suck a huge reservoir of power into the executive branch of the Federal government and to increase its secrecy. His regime is characterized even by friends in the right wing as dictatorial, "out of control," devoid of thoughtful policy, and driven by political machination. Not only have constitutional checks and balances increasingly become an empty formality, but he has actually created a secret parallel government consisting of nothing but an executive branch of unknown composition. Judges appointed by Bush, or his family and friends, turn around and issue rulings to protect him. The White House refuses to reveal how, or with whom, it makes its decisions; it refuses to enforce international treaties, court rulings, and laws passed by Congress.

Corporate criminals and convicted felons occupy powerful positions in the regime. Bush himself has escaped judgment for alleged drunk driving, cocaine possession, desertion from the armed forces, tax evasion and insider trading. Environmental protections have been rescinded on behalf of the worst of corporate polluters. Basic indicators of our well-being, such as the job market and the crime rate, have all turned against us. Having come to power by circumventing the constitutional process and getting votes thrown away, the regime now promotes a computerized voting technology which is owned by top Republican donors and which is not being audited or overseen.

The more privacy the Bush regime claims for itself, the less it allows to its citizens. It has rushed through legislation overruling the Bill of Rights, the right to a trial by jury and the due process of law. It has allocated to itself the right to prohibit people from leaving the country; to put Americans into makeshift "detention camps"; to vaccinate citizens forcibly; and to detain any person without charges, hearings, or the right to a

lawyer. Reports of peaceful, nonviolent dissenters being arrested for no legal reason and held without due process, or prohibited from travel, are increasing daily. People working for environmental causes are particularly targeted. "Terrorism" is re-defined as speech or advocacy in disagreement with current policy, as was "communism" during the McCarthy era. Reasonable criticisms are muffled.

Invasions of our rights and freedoms have long surpassed our worst fears in December 2000, when a smiling media delivered the news of a presidency hijacked from the voters with the aid of a Supreme Court acting outside the law.

How can we expect others to come to our aid when we are targeted, if we comfortably reassure ourselves that the sugar-coated corporate militarism creeping up around us is targeting only others? Jews have been critical for so long of the world's silence during the Holocaust, but as the "new tone in Washington" drones louder, the silence within the Jewish community has been deafening.

A shortened version of this article appeared in The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 27 Dec 2003.

Nina Moliver, writer and health counselor, is starting a Brookline/Jamaica Plain Chapter of Alliance for Democracy. She may be contacted at 617-524-9432 or ninalynn@bigfoot.com or www.TakeBackThePresidency.com.

Editor's comment:

The "deafening silence" which the writer hears may come as a surprise to those who focus on the Judaic creed honoring peace and justice—the prophetic duty to act for justice whenever injustice rears its ugly head, as in the dismemberment of Palestine. Conversely, it should come as no surprise to those who focus on politics, that is, the balance of power as it affects one's identity group—Israel, for example.

Often for fear of another holocaust (from where?), people actively involved in the Jewish community in the Boston area seem strongly to support Fortress Israel and the policies of its leaders, subordinating and compartmentalizing the Judaic ethic. A staunch ally of the U.S., Israel desperately depends on U.S. aid—largely military. How can those who strongly identify with the state of Israel then be critical of a militant (p)resident of the U.S. who sends that aid?

Even if Bush speech and policies resemble those of Mussolini, Hitler, or Stalin, how can they cry out against him when he consistently supports their principal interest? It takes gumption to risk offending one's community to refocus on creed, or to reconstrue one's politics. Sad to say, this is the same conformist psychology which led to the holocaust.

ERRORS

December's **Indy Page** on "Nonviolence" was by Jean Maryborn, whose email address was wrong. Her correct email address is maryborn@earthlink.net

The editorial in our December issue referred to Jagdish Bhagwati's "Wall Street-industrial complex." We meant to say "Wall Street-Treasury complex"—the post-Reagan US Treasury's dedication to guaranteeing with your tax dollars IMF's bad loans and those of US banks overseas.

ACTION ALERTS

*Sunday, 12 Jan, 3 pm. Cambridge. **The Solar Revolution:** Turning Vision Into Action. Dr. Sajed Kamal, solar energy expert, author, and Brandeis professor, will give a talk and slide presentation on practical, presently available and economically advantageous alternatives to our environmentally destructive, geopolitically problematic and unsustainable reliance upon fossil fuels. Vegan dinner: \$9.50 w bev. & tax. Veggie Planet Restaurant at Club Passim, 47 Palmer St., Harvard Sq.

Wed. 15 Jan. 7pm. Cambridge. **Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy. Monthly meeting—see **Box, Page 1**

*Wed. 15 Jan. 6pm. Roxbury. **Dialogue: Labor & the Community** with Ray Hammond (Ten-Point Coalition), Alison Bowens (Black Trade Unionists), Russ Davis (Jobs w Justice), Horace Small (Union of Minority Neighborhoods), Chuck Turner (Boston City Council). Dinner. SEIU Local 285 Conference Ctr, 15 Fellows St.

*Thurs. 16 Jan. 7pm. Boston. **Jobs with Justice Quarterly Meeting for Member Org's.** Campaign info and prep. RSVP Cassie at JwJ: 617-524-8778. Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St, Copley Sq.

*Thurs. 16 Jan. 7pm. Boston. **"The Wealth Gap in America and the Case for Preserving the Estate Tax"** with Bill Gates Sr and Chuck Collins of Responsible Wealth. For more info call Pam Rogers at 617/413-2148 ex. 27. Boston Public Library at Copley Sq.

*Fri. 17 Jan. 7:30pm. Boston. Chuck Turner speaking on **"The Fight Against Militarism, Racism and Poverty: The Life of Martin Luther King."** The Hyson Forum is an activity of the Center for Marxist Education. Community Church, 565 Boylston St., Copley Sq.

Sat. 18 Jan. Leave Boston before dawn for Washington DC. Martin Luther King Anniversary and the 12th Anniversary of the Gulf War: **National March on Washington and the convening of the **People's Peace Conference/ No War on Iraq.** Sponsored by Black National Voices for Peace. Call Sue Fitzgerald for info and bus tickets (\$35 round trip): 617/628-0434.

Sunday, 19 Jan, 12 noon. Washington DC. Rally and **March to the White House** followed by optional nonviolent civil disobedience. Gather at Farragut Park (between I and K Streets at 17th and Constitution Ave. NW, 11:30 am. The metro takes you there. Bring palcards and posters with words of Martin Luther King. Mass nonviolent training and meeting.

*Sat. 18 Jan. 7pm. Boston. **Congresswoman Barbara Lee** will be in Boston January 25th and 26th. On Saturday the 25th there will be a gathering at Roxbury Community College 2 to 4:30 with a panel addressing "the War at Home and Its Effect on Our Communities" followed by a talk by Barbara Lee and discussion. In the evening there will be a fundraising event. Call Elisabeth Leonard if you are interested in attending: 617/561-9139. On Sunday afternoon at Wellesley College, 4:30 to 6:30 Barbara Lee will speak. Reception at 4pm. RSVP 781/283-2831.

Wed. 22 Jan, 6:30 pm. Nottingham NH. Town Planning Board reviews **USA Springs Inc. bid to withdraw underground water. Call Nick Biddle or Stephanie Scadding at 781-894-1179.
Sat. 25 Jan, 10-12 noon, Lawrence MA. **"Hands Off Our Water" Citizen update and petitioning roles, w Jonathan Leavitt and Rose Gonzalez. Info: Jonathan acejalemma@hotmail.com 978-683-3967. At Lawrence Public Library, Lawrence & Haverhill Sts.

Sunday 26 Jan., 1:15 to 3:15, MIT Cambridge. **"Orchestrating New Peace" with musicians from the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra and the New England Conservatory of Music as well as speakers Randall Forsberg of Global Action to Prevent War and Winston Langley of UMass Boston. \$10.00 donation requested. Kresge Auditorium. Call Jock Forbes 617-576-3871.

Sunday, 9 Feb, 7pm. Dorchester. **Conversation with Senator John F. Kerry. Come by 6pm for seating in the main room. He wants to be President—Prepare to ask him the "tough" questions! JFKennedy Library. Free. **Reserve** at 617-514-1643.

Sat. & Sunday, 15-16 Feb., New York City. **National/ International March on the United Nations sponsored by United for Peace. Five million are expected to demonstrate world-wide against the war which may already have started. Call Elisabeth Leonard 617-561-9139.

** = Editor's choice.

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YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE IN BOSTON TO LOVE BCA
Please help us as we fight to make a better future for ourselves and our children — Join the Boston/Cambridge Alliance for Democracy. (Cut out this form and send it to Dave Lewit, 271 Dartmouth St. #2H, Boston, MA 02116.)

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