

Dispatch

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

Only America went from barbarism to decadence without passing through civilization.

—Oscar Wilde

CHAPTER NEWS (Continued on Page 5)

Chapter Calendar

* * **Strategic Nonviolence** * *

Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy's next meeting will be on **Wednesday, September 20**, at 7:00 p.m. at **Cambridge Friends Meeting**, 5 Longfellow Park (10-minute walk from Harvard Square T station, west on Brattle St.), Cambridge.

Ally yourself with **Gandhi on this 100th** anniversary of his launch of **Satyagraha—Truth Force—nonviolent resistance** to an oppressive system. Each person in turn will read a paragraph taken from Gandhi, Gene Sharp, Brian Martin, Peter Ackerman, or others that tie together into a picture of growing people-power—in S. Africa, India, Denmark, Alabama, Poland, and Bolivia. After a short break we will consider questions and freely discuss implications for today's people power.

Become a *satyagrahi*—carry this exercise to other groups in your community. Build the movement to resist Bush-Cheney, the neocons, and the system that makes this barbarism and decadence possible. View and/or copy the above materials at www.NewEnglandAlliance.org.

— Refreshments —

Eyes Left on September 16th Mexico "Loser" to Create Parallel Governm't

by Mark Stevenson, Associated Press, 29 August 2006

ANDRES MANUEL LOPEZ OBRADOR, convinced he won't be awarded the presidency, has vowed to create a parallel leftist government and is urging Mexicans not to recognize the apparent victory of the ruling party's Felipe Calderon. [In fact, on 5 September the national election Tribunal gave the election to Calderon, after examining evidence of ballot manipulation in less than 10% of Mexico's districts. —Ed.]

While his party lacks the seats in Congress to block legislation, Lopez Obrador can mobilize millions to pressure his conservative rival to adopt the left's agenda—or to clamp down and risk a backlash. Both scenarios are possibilities as the former Mexico City mayor lays out plans to create his own government to rule from the streets, with the support of thousands who are already occupying protest camps throughout downtown Mexico City. [Lopez Obrador has called for a popular assembly in Mexico City on September 16th, Mexico's day of independence from Spain, to create a parallel government. —Ed.]

Some predict his parallel initiative—which Lopez Obrador's supporters call the "legitimate government"—could turn those protest camps into the core of a violent revolt, especially if the government tries to shut it down. Such (Continued on Page 2a >>)

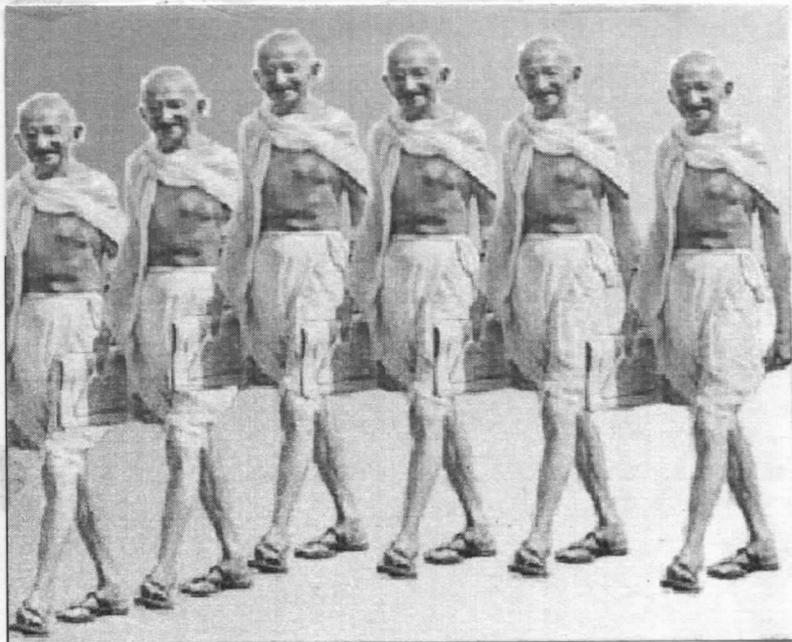


photo montage by Sergio Reyes

Twenty Gandhis Enough to Spark a New World

by Robert C. Koehler, Tribune Media Services, 31 Aug 2006

AS THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11 APPROACHES, many of the nation's values—tolerance, forgiveness, personal freedom, perhaps even courage itself—remain trapped in the wreckage.

It may take another anniversary, another 9/11—Sept. 11, 1906, to be precise—simply to remind us of what lies buried beneath the fear and cynicism, the ignorance and politics; and, even more importantly, to wake us up to the urgency of reclaiming those values and healing as a nation.

Led by a president incapable of protecting us but eerily adept at exploiting tragedy, we went off on a howling revenge quest against "the axis of evil" and proceeded to compound the horrors of 9/11 worldwide—turning this day into an excuse for torture and wiretapping and the indiscriminate "shock and awe" bombing of a country that had nothing to do with what had happened.

Around the country, and particularly in New York City, the wakeup call is about to be sounded, as grieving Americans—grieving as much for the future we're bequeathing our children as for the past—proclaim 9/11 a day of healing and peace, not revenge. The memory of Mahatma Gandhi will help drive the message home.

The twist of historical fate juxtaposing the birth of "satyagraha," the world's first large-scale nonviolent resistance movement, with the terror attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, is downright chilling, like the sound of rhythmic tapping coming from beneath the rubble. Someone's still alive down there! Hope floods the heart.

Liz Graydon, a former middle-school teacher who is now education coordinator for New Yorkers for a Department of Peace, saw mention in a newsletter from Nonviolent Peace Force, which does peace work in Sri Lanka, that this Sept. 11 would be the 100th anniversary of Gandhi's movement for social justice. Not surprisingly, "The date just jumped out at me," she told me. It immediately became the focal point of plans to commemorate 9/11, and the stunning aptness of it has lit up the national peace network. (Continued on Page 2b >>)

violence broke out in the southern city of Oaxaca after Gov. Ulises Ruiz sent police to evict striking teachers. Outraged citizens' groups joined the protests, setting fire to buildings and public buses, seizing radio and TV stations and forcing the closure of businesses in a city known throughout the world as a quaint tourist destination.

"Everything we do, from property taxes to permits to natural resources, will go through the 'legitimate government,'" said Severina Martinez, a school teacher from Oaxaca camped out in a tent in Mexico City's main Zocalo plaza. "We won't have anything to do with the official government."

Some supporters took out a newspaper ad Tuesday, calling on Lopez Obrador to set up his own treasury department and said all Mexicans "should channel federal revenues to the new treasury department."

Lopez Obrador is encouraging his followers to disobey Calderon, whose 240,000-vote advantage was confirmed Monday by the country's top electoral court... "We do not recognize Felipe Calderon as president, nor any officials he appoints, nor any acts carried out by his *de facto* government," Lopez Obrador said after the court ruling, which he claims overlooked evidence of fraud in the July 2 elections.

Lopez Obrador's Democratic Revolution Party, or PRD, increased its number of congressional seats in those elections and became the second-largest bloc, behind Calderon's National Action Party, on Tuesday as new lawmakers were sworn in. But it holds only a quarter of the seats — not enough to block legislation, especially if Calderon forges a likely alliance with the former ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party. That alliance would hold a majority in each house of Congress.

Lopez Obrador has ruled out negotiations with what he calls the "spurious" and "imposed" government. Because PRD legislators fear crossing him or his fervent followers, they can't cut deals to get their own legislation approved, making them even weaker. "There is no possibility that we federal legislators in Congress will start any dialogue with the government," said PRD Senate leader Carlos Navarrete, considered one of the party's moderates. "We will never forget that the leader and director of the Mexican people's action and the left is Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador."

Lopez Obrador's plan is to have his government help the poor, oppose privatizations and make the news media—which he has accused of ignoring him—more "truthful and objective." It's not clear how he plans to do that, but his supporters are already planning to hold an alternative swearing in ceremony to rival the official inauguration on Dec. 1.

People close to Lopez Obrador say he is assuming the role of his hero, 18th century President Benito Juarez, who led a roving, "unofficial" presidency from 1863 to 1867 during the French invasion, before driving out the invaders and executing the French-installed Emperor Maximilian. "Juarez ran the government from a carriage and restored the republic," said Rosario Ibarra, a human rights activist who frequently shares the stage with Lopez Obrador at his rallies. "We just hope there won't be any need to shoot anyone."

So far, protesters have only scuffled with police. Some fear the movement could turn violent, although Lopez Obrador says it will remain peaceful. The administration of President Vicente Fox hopes it will all just boil down to some fiery rhetoric and posturing. "We think this is a symbolic, political act that has no validity in the affairs of state," Fox's spokesman, Ruben Aguilar, said Tuesday. Asked about Lopez Obrador's plan to declare himself head of state, Aguilar noted that "in this country, everyone is free to say whatever they want."

There is no question that Lopez Obrador is taking his "legitimate government" or "government in resistance"—the exact title has yet to be determined—very seriously. Asked whether Lopez Obrador would wear some version of the presidential sash

during his swearing-in ceremony, PRD spokesman Gerardo Fernandez accused reporters of poking fun at the candidate. He also upbraided those who spoke of plans for an "alternative government."

"What Andres Manuel has suggested is not an alternative president," Fernandez said. "It will be a legitimate government with a legitimate president."

20 GANDHIS (continued from page 1)

In August 1906, Mohandas K. Gandhi, a young Indian lawyer living in South Africa, was stunned almost to paralysis—"an impenetrable wall was before me," he later wrote—upon learning about the law the province of Transvaal had just passed, known as The Black Act, requiring Indian nationals to submit to a humiliating registration and fingerprinting process. Its intent was obviously racist, a first step by the white government to marginalize and eventually expel "coloreds" from South Africa.

"I clearly saw that this was a question of life and death," Gandhi wrote. ". . . the community must not sit with folded hands. Better die than submit to such a law."

Gandhi called a meeting of the Indian community on Sept. 11, which about 3,000 people—Hindus, Muslims and others—attended. One angry speaker, according to Gandhi's account, declared: "If any one came forward to demand a certificate from my wife, I would shoot him on that spot and take the consequences."

Gandhi had another idea: "It will not...do to be hasty, impatient or angry," he said. "That cannot save us from this onslaught. But God will come to our help, if we calmly think out and carry out in time measures of resistance, presenting a united front and bearing the hardship, which such resistance brings in its train."

Gandhi's vision, which he came to call satyagraha (a combination of Sanskrit words literally meaning "seize the truth"), held the day, indeed, kept the Indians of South Africa unified through eight years of intimidation, abuse and imprisonment. In 1914, the government agreed to end all anti-Indian discrimination. And of course, this movement continued in India itself until 1947, when British colonial rule finally ended.

Graydon, who used the 1982 movie "Gandhi" in her middle school curriculum, said her students were invariably skeptical that nonviolence could accomplish anything. She recalled one boy who conceded, halfway through the film, that it was pretty convincing, "But c'mon, Miss Graydon, there are 6 billion people on the planet. You'll never get all of them to be nonviolent."

She noted that the population of India at the time of Gandhi's movement was 300 million. "We don't need 6 billion Gandhis," she told him. "We need 20 Gandhis."

New Yorkers for a Department of Peace, in conjunction with the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, has organized 32 screenings of "Gandhi" around the country on Sept. 11, including, in New York, at the Regal Theater, across the street from Ground Zero. As far as I can tell, many other events are being planned that day, both in conjunction with and independent of the New York event, that will draw inspiration from this mystical confluence of anniversaries.

"Nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind," Gandhi said. "It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man."

Maybe the time has come to learn how to use it.

Robert Koehler, an award-winning, Chicago-based journalist, is an editor at Tribune Media Services and nationally syndicated writer. See www.commonwonders.com.

Soldier Porn Blogs

Swapping Girlfriend Nudies for e-Horrors

by James Harkin, *Guardian (UK)*, 12 August 2006

THE US ARMY ANNOUNCED on Wednesday that it had arrested four Iraqis in connection with the abduction of the journalist Jill Carroll this year. Before she was released in March, Carroll had been filmed weeping and pleading for her life, in a series of straight-to-internet productions posted by her captors.

A week before, the same army took the unusual step of demanding that its soldiers stop posting video clips on the web. And with good reason—last year, a minor scandal broke when it emerged that GIs were sending pictures of dead Iraqis to a website called *Nowthatsfuckedup.com* in exchange for naked pictures of other people's girlfriends.

Little wonder, then, that the military men should be getting hot under the collar. Quietly, via the vast panoply of cables and copper wires that make up the world wide web, and under the noses of the broadcast media, sites such as MySpace and YouTube are becoming the repository for gruesome images of war shot by American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The traffic in gory pictures is in both directions. Specialist sites such as *Ogrish* use sophisticated programs to monitor extremist *jihadi* websites to provide their customers with a vast supermarket of images of death and dismemberment; at their most brutal, these clips show carefully choreographed execution videos such as that made of Ken Bigley. Most of us would rather not see such things, but many are taking a sneaky peek while no one else is around. On an average day, *Ogrish* claims to receive between 125,000 and 200,000 unique hits on its website; on a major news day, that can rise to 250,000.

What are we to make of this new battle over images? Fifteen years ago, the French social theorist Jean Baudrillard argued—with his tongue partly in his cheek—that the first Gulf war did not really exist but was a mirage conjured up by the broadcast media. More recently, in his 2004 essay "War Porn", Baudrillard drew attention to the way in which the garishly explicit images of barbarity arriving from Iraq borrowed from the aesthetics and production values of modern porn.

The posing of Iraqi inmates for those famous pictures in Abu Ghraib prison, he pointed out, shot on digital camera and originally intended only for private distribution, smacked of a kind of specialist, niche pornography. The photos, he argued, constituted "the degradation, atrocious but banal, not only of the victims, but of the amateur scriptwriters of this parody of violence". There was no longer any need to "embed" journalists in armies, declared Baudrillard, because the soldiers themselves have become so immersed in the media war. "Due to their omnipresence, due to the prevailing rule of the world of making everything visible," he intoned gravely, "the images, our present-day images, have become substantially pornographic."

War porn is designed not to titillate, but to humiliate its victims and horrify its audience. Like pornography, its producers heighten their sense of reality by videoing themselves in the act, while its audience does the same by ogling the videos. Grotesque new horror film franchises such as *Hostel* and *Saw* might be movies imitating war porn, which in turn has been inspired by movies. If the previous Gulf war seemed to exist only as a television spectacle, the new Iraq war can claim to be the first war fought by protagonists armed with digital cameras and access to the web. If the first existed only as a media-generated fantasy, this new one looks more like a pornographic nightmare. #

Free-Trade Is Losing

The Way Forward Out of the WTO

by Lori Wallach & Deborah James, *Public Citizens' Global Trade Watch*, www.tradewatch.org, 14 Aug 2006 (conclusion)

In this time of unwarranted war—or mass slaughter, why should you be concerned with trade agreements? US wars are fought to defend and extend corporate globalization. The most critical result of US-promoted "free-trade" agreements is the spread of global apartheid—extreme poverty with malnutrition and bad sanitation, claiming the lives of 18 million people every year, including 11 million children under the age of 5. —Ed.

TAKEN TOGETHER, THE EVIDENCE POINTS CONCLUSIVELY to a global shift away from the neo-liberal corporate globalization model embodied by the WTO based on people's experience of the model's failure. With the Doha Round's collapse, the story to be written is about viable alternatives to the WTO—as well as to the bilateral or regional trade agreements based on the same failed model.

Instead of pinning blame on specific countries, the focus of energy should be on how the world's governments can develop a multilateral trade system that preserves the benefits of trade for growth and development, while pruning away the many anti-democratic constraints on domestic policy-making contained in the existing WTO rules. These rules are designed to create a world that operates as one single homogenized global market rather than setting terms of trade between separate nations with distinct priorities.

The critics of corporate globalization are for international trade between different, unique countries or regions when it is mutually beneficial. To strike this balance between promoting trade while respecting the laws and values of different countries, some existing international rules and institutions need to be cut back, while others need to be bolstered.

Currently, the WTO trumps all other international agreements. The WTO must be scaled back so that the human rights, environmental, labor and other multilaterally agreed public interest standards already enshrined in various international treaties can serve as a floor of conduct for corporations seeking the benefits of global trade rules. For instance, the International Labor Organization provides core labor standards; there are more than 200 multilateral environmental treaties covering toxics, air pollution, biodiversity and waste dumping; and the World Health Organization and the U.N. Charter on Human Rights provide many standards on access to medicine and food security.

Two hundred and six civil society organizations, including social movements representing millions of people in poor and rich countries alike, support a WTO transformation program dubbed "Stop Corporate Globalization: Another World is Possible," available at www.ourworldisnotforsale.org. The International Forum on Globalization has published the book *Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Better World is Possible*, which reports on proposals for alternatives gathered through years of conversations with civil society leaders, scholars and government officials in poor and rich countries. [See the Alliance for Democracy's own "Common Agreement on Investment and Society", created by a group of 14 citizens, published on the web several years earlier, by googling that title. —Ed.] Replacing the overreaching WTO agenda with fair rules aimed at facilitating trade between willing countries is the only way forward. Such change globally requires work from us living here in the United States. We can start by building a majority in our elected leadership who understand that the corporate globalization system implemented by the WTO has failed American workers and farmers, failed the most basic tenants of democratic governance and failed the world... #

Hold Still While I Bleed You! Iraqi Oil Workers Fight Privatization

by Andy Barenberg, Ctr for Popular Economics, 23 Aug 2006

IN IRAQ A NEW BATTLE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN. On one side is the Iraqi Government, backed not only by occupation forces but also by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's secretive and deadly Badr Corps militia. On the other side stand 23,000 workers in Iraq's General Union of Oil Employees (GEOU). The stakes: one of the greatest prizes of natural resources on the planet.

The June appointment of the respected Dr. Hussein Shahrstani to the position of Oil Minister gave the union hope; but all signs now indicate he was brought in to give political cover to the signing of a new energy law that would effectively end Iraq's public control and ownership over the oil fields. On July first GEOU held an emergency strategy meeting with the Iraqi Freedom Congress. The union swore to stop the new law "no matter what the cost."

The Government of Iraq can't take such things lightly. The union has proven before [that] it can stop the flow of oil, but has never done so for more than a day or two—the indefinite strike now threatened promises to be the occupation's gravest political crisis since Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani's massive rallies demanding elections. The Iraqi Government has moved to neutralize the union's power by seizing its bank accounts. *(The union is illegal after all; Saddam Hussein's Public Law 150, which banned public sector unions, was the one law Paul Bremmer, the former U.S. Administrator of Iraq, didn't believe he had authority to override. [Italics ours. -Ed.]* And so now the battle begins.

Although the actual content of the law has been withheld from the public, it is almost sure to authorize the use of production sharing agreements (PSAs) as proposed by the US State Department's pre-war "Future of Iraq Project." Under a PSA, an oil field is technically not privatized. Instead a corporation receives exclusive rights to the oil field and it gets complete control over the revenue up to the cost of its investment. After costs are covered, the revenue is split between the company and the government in some predetermined rate, most likely to be 50/50 in Iraq.

Such agreements are popular in areas where oil is difficult to get to—such as offshore or deep in a jungle—and where the amount of oil is uncertain. Under a PSA in such conditions, the government avoids paying the risky cost of trying to develop the oil field. Compared to service contracts traditionally used in Iraq and the Middle East where the corporation receives a set fee for work done, a PSA promises windfall profits for the corporation should they happen to strike oil.

Of course in Iraq, where oil can be found practically by stubbing your toe on the ground, a PSA represents one of the greatest give-aways in history. More importantly, should a future Iraqi government try to change the agreement the company can sue for expropriation. According to the US State Department's pre-war planning, "the most important feature from the perspective of private oil companies is that the government take is defined in the terms of the [PSA] and the oil companies are therefore protected under a PSA from future adverse legislation." Not surprisingly, the US and British are pushing hard for these agreements to be signed while they have near total control over the Iraqi government.

Greg Muttitt of the oil watchdog group PLATFORM, using conservative assumptions, estimates that a PSA program in Iraq means oil companies can expect "annual rates of return ranging from 42% to 62% for a small field, or 98% to 162% for a large

field" and that this will "cost Iraq between \$74 billion and \$194 billion in lost revenue, compared to keeping oil development in public hands." Just how conservative is this estimate? Well, he was using the assumption that the cost of oil would stay at \$40 a barrel over the next 40 years; just changing the assumption to the current price of roughly \$75 a barrel almost doubles the estimates.

The wealth of Iraqi oil can play a role in creating a future Iraq where the needs of the people are met, but only if the General Union of Oil Employees succeeds in keeping control of oil in Iraqi hands.

Ed. Comment: TRUE DEMOCRACY

Any future government of Iraq, or segments of what had been Iraq, should disavow any opportunistic public-private agreements made by an interim government—such as the oil virtual-privatization of which Andy Barenberg writes (above). Certainly the debts of a dictator like Saddam Hussein should not be payable by the people who remain under a new government—that is grossly "blaming the victim". The same is true of the greedy successors to Saddam. The legitimacy of this government and constitution is questionable. When the game is over, all bets are off. The game must be disavowed. The days of the privatization game are numbered, as corporate globalization withers under newfound public scrutiny. Nature's limited bounty—oil, water, clean air, knowledge, etc.—is not up for grabs.

The underlying question is "what requirements are legitimate, and therefore must be obeyed?" We might say that there are three levels of legitimacy: the state's level, God's level, and the people's level.

Most states today are backed by coercion—police and military violence. Coercion is never morally legitimate. State mandate is legitimate only when affirmed by the people—the large majority of people freely speaking, and subject to their further review. When a congress or a supreme court is stacked or bribed, or ignores accurate opinion surveys, it cannot speak for the people.

God's level is shorthand for moral authority. That is, the unbiased application of principles which most people hold dearest—the wisdom of tribal elders, what people would die for (not corporate or priestly spokespersons—like conservative economists or celebrities). Indeed, Gandhi's satyagrahis resisted state authority, and were inspired by nonviolent moral authority—truth and love. Their kind of courage and determination liberated India, and many other oppressed peoples. (The opposite of love is not hate—the opposite of love is fear.)

People's level is where we must focus. Some day we may have a happy society, without rules (laws) or rulers. In the meantime, we strive for "true democracy" (as in AfD's mission statement). Democracy = demos (people) + kratos (power). What Bush pushes as "democracy" is really hamstrung and manipulable republicanism—legislators and executives and their court appointments, whose elections are limited by nomination hurdles, and by corporate media. True democracy is open, inclusive, free and active—regularly tested and reviewed without limitation by heavy advertising and lawyer fees. True democracy would involve not just 50% of the people every few years, but 80% on a daily or monthly basis. How would you write democracy into our Constitution? #

CHAPTER NEWS

BCA'S FIVE ACTION PROJECTS are moving along, thanks to support or cooperative leadership from sister groups. Most immediately, the Gandhi Circles will be launched at our next chapter meeting, on 20 September, as you can see from the announcement box on Page 1. Some people say "But that's not 9/11 (1906, the actual date of Gandhi's speech pledging 3000 S. African Indians to non-violent resistance to discrimination)." Think of it as a centennial year. We need hundreds of Gandhi Circles building every month for years, until every community has a core of citizens educated to the power of nonviolence, with the imagination to put it to work on a daily basis, as those Indians did for 8 years until their oppressive government relented. With the same energy we are building a just, loving new world. **Everybody:** Download the readings and discussion questions at our web site www.NewEnglandAlliance.org and schedule a circle with your civic, neighborhood, or church group.

Next, the Venezuela project. **Jorge Marín** of Bolivarian Circle, our tour-delegation leader, has arranged most of our contacts and schedule—28 Nov to 7 Dec, including national election 3 Dec. See sidebar. We are looking for 20 participants, and already have about eight, from various groups. Sign up by sending \$100 registration fee by the end of September to Boston-Cambridge Alliance, 271 Dartmouth St #2h, Boston MA 02116. The money will be forwarded to Jorge as administrator. Contact him for further information at cbmlkboston@hotmail.com, or see **ACTION ALERTS** to attend planning meeting on 21 Sept. Jorge can also put you on the email list for frequent news updates on Venezuela.

Our Corporations-Out-of-Schools project has delivered packets of information for interested teachers, students and administrators on bottled water to Boston English High School prior to a meeting with a small group of them during the week of 18 Sept. It's the beginning of an educational and organizing campaign to end contracts with Coca-Cola or other major corporations hooking students and schools on their products and cash commissions. Please contact **Dave Lewit** (see Colophon) to participate.

Election Defense Alliance continues its organizing nationally and locally to prevent fraud in the 2006 and 2008 elections. See their loaded web site www.electiondefensealliance.org. To participate please contact sallyc@electiondefensealliance.org.

Roundtable on Local-Based Regional Economy has just enlisted **Kevin Gilligan**, who is moving to Providence RI (which is good because this is an all-New England project), but will frequently visit in Boston. When he is settled we will begin recruiting participants and their ideas for framing and following up the roundtable. Contact Dave Lewit (see Colophon) to participate.

This election season has surfaced disarray for Republicans and optimism for Democrats. On 8 September US-VP **Dick Cheney** was at the Harvard Club, corner of Mass Av and Commonwealth, Boston, invisibly ushered in and out through the police-blocked rear door, no doubt, because none of us saw him. But a crowd of 2-300 was there to challenge and jeer, including **Neil Berman**, who was on duty as a National Lawyers Guild monitor, and **Alice Copeland Brown** parading in her old-time patriot dress with a political sign. On the internet Alice also joined with **Tony Flaherty** and other Veterans for Peace in castigating **Rep. Stephen Lynch** of the 9th Congressional District of Massachusetts (Southie and south) for his pro-war stands and his weaseling speech. Alice and Tony and VfP in the district praise Lynch's opponent in the Democratic primary—**Phil Dunkelbarger**, a knowledgeable, progressive straight-shooter who does not pander to fears of "Islamic" terrorism.

Construction for the dangerous Level 4 Bioterror Lab started several months ago off Albany Street in the South End. Nevertheless, City Councilor **Chuck Turner** and many other opponents continue to demand its termination. A month ago Judge Ralph Gants of the Suffolk County Superior Court ordered work stopped until BU and the state answer two questions that they haven't answered before: "What is the worst thing that can happen if a laboratory worker were infected with a contagious pathogen?" and "Would the impact be less if the biolab were located outside of a city?" BU and the state will appeal.

REGISTER FOR VENEZUELA TRIP

The Bolivarian Circle of Boston is planning a tour-delegation to go to Venezuela for the upcoming Presidential elections on December 3rd. The delegation would leave on November 28th from Boston for Caracas and return on December 7th. The expected cost is \$1,200.00 (airfare, transportation in the country, and hotel). Additional spending for meals (\$25/day) and souvenir purchases should be planned individually. Space is limited.

Registration is \$100.00/person due by the end of September to reserve your place. The Bolivarian Circle will be collecting the registration fee at our upcoming meetings and programmed events [or send it to BCA for forwarding]. Our next meeting is on Thursday, September 21st at 7:00pm at Encuentro 5, fifth floor, 33 Harrison St., Chinatown.

Preliminary itinerary

The delegation will arrive in Caracas on Nov 28th and spend one day there to visit the newly opened Children Cardiology Hospital and the Bolivarian University and possibly meet with the city's mayor. On the 30th we'll travel to Barquisimeto, a city 5 hours SW by bus from Caracas. December 1-3 we will visit cooperatives that the Mayor's office is sponsoring. These cooperatives are in the fields of urban-agriculture, brick manufacturing, chicken coops, plant processing, and others. Also, our delegation will volunteer to be unofficial international electoral observers during the election on the 3rd in Barquisimeto. The delegation will be responsible for publishing their findings on the fairness of the election once back in the States.

On the 4th we will travel to Puerto Cabello (2-hr ride from Barquisimeto), a historic city and home to the largest sea port in Venezuela. On the 5th we will take a boat shuttle to the keys, off the coast of Falcon state, where we can relax on the beach for the day. Returning to Caracas on the 6th and settling in a hotel near the airport. Returning to Boston on the 7th of December.
—Jorge Marín

SILLY SEASON — You have two cows....

DEMOCRATIC

You have two cows. Your neighbor has none.
You feel guilty for being successful.
Barbara Streisand sings for you.

REPUBLICAN

You have two cows. Your neighbor has none. So?
SOCIALIST

You have two cows.

The government takes one and gives it to your neighbor.
You form a cooperative to tell him how to manage his cow.

COMMUNIST

You have two cows.
The government seizes both and provides you with milk.
You wait in line for hours to get it.
It is expensive and sour.

CAPITALISM, AMERICAN STYLE

You have two cows.
You sell one, buy a bull, and build a herd of cows.
Later, your inbred heifers yield retarded calves.

BUREAUCRACY, AMERICAN STYLE

You have two cows.
Under the new farm program the government pays you to shoot one, milk the other, and then pours the milk down the drain.

AMERICAN CORPORATION

You have two cows. You sell one, lease it back to yourself and do an IPO on the 2nd one.
You force the two cows to produce the milk of four cows. You are surprised when one cow drops dead. You spin an announcement to the analysts stating you have downsized and are reducing expenses. Your stock goes up.

FRENCH CORPORATION

You have two cows.
You go on strike because you want three cows.
You go to lunch and drink wine.
Life is good.

JAPANESE CORPORATION

You have two cows.
You redesign them so they are one-tenth the size of an ordinary cow and produce twenty times the milk.
They learn to travel on unbelievably crowded trains.
Most are at the top of their class at cow school.

GERMAN CORPORATION

You have two cows.
You engineer them so they are all blond, drink lots of beer, give excellent quality milk, and run a hundred miles an hour.
Unfortunately they also demand 13 weeks of vacation per year.

ITALIAN CORPORATION

You have two cows but you don't know where they are.
While ambling around, you see a beautiful woman.
You break for lunch.
Life is good.

RUSSIAN CORPORATION

You have two cows.
You have some vodka.
You count them and learn you have five cows.
You have some more vodka.
You count them again and learn you have 42 cows.
The Mafia shows up and takes over however many cows you really have.

TALIBAN CORPORATION

You have all the cows in Afghanistan, which are two.
You don't milk them because you cannot touch any creature's private parts.
You get a \$40 million grant from the US government to find alternatives to milk production but use the money to buy weapons.

IRAQI CORPORATION

You have two cows.
They go into hiding.
They send radio tapes of their mooing.

POLISH CORPORATION

You have two bulls. Employees are regularly maimed and killed attempting to milk them.

FLORIDA CORPORATION

You have a black cow and a brown cow.
Everyone votes for the best looking one.
Some of the people who actually like the brown one best accidentally vote for the black one.
Some people vote for both.
Some people vote for neither.
Some people can't figure out how to vote at all.
Finally, a bunch of guys from out-of-state tell you which one you think is the best-looking cow.

CALIFORNIA CORPORATION

You have millions of cows.
They make real California cheese.
Only five speak English.
Most are illegals.
Arnold likes the ones with the big udders.

WHERE'S CHINA??

ACTION ALERTS

Fri eve-Sun. 22-24 Sept. Amherst MA. big **Water conference**. See one side of enclosed flier. www.MassGlobalAction.org

Thu eve-Sun. 28 Sept-1 Oct. Madison Wisc. **Local Democracy Convention** organized by Liberty Tree Foun. Dem. Revolution. See reverse side of enclosed flier. www.LocalDemocracy.org

Thu. 28 Sept. 7:30pm. Cambridge. **"Steal the Vote '08"** speech by Greg Palast, benefit for Alliance for Democracy. 3 Church St, Harvard Sq. www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org



Lopez Obrador wants you to attend this event!

JOIN THE BCA

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

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

BOSTON-CAMBRIDGE ALLIANCE for DEMOCRACY PLEDGE

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

Name : _____ Date: _____

Street, No./Box/Apt: _____

Town and Zip: _____

Phone: Day _____ Night: _____

E-mail: _____

COLOPHON

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

Diana Licht, Associate Editor

Visit the Alliance web site: www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org

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

Web builder: Sergio Reyes. Webmaster: Stan Robinson

Our Communities, Our Water

Connecting the Local and the Global

September 22-24

University of Massachusetts / Amherst – Campus Center

A gathering of New England/New York/Eastern Canadian
community activists, students and water workers

This event will feature workshops, speakers, trainings, displays, and more!

Presenters

Friday Evening – September 22, 2006

Ray Rogers Killer Coke Campaign

Ray runs the New York City-based Corporate Campaign, Inc. (CCI), which has been described as labor's most innovative strategist and "one of the most successful union organizers since the CIO sit-down strikes of the 1930s." For 25 years, Corporate Campaign has championed union and community solidarity and membership and family involvement in campaigns for social and economic justice.



Saturday Lunch keynote – September 23, 2006

Frances Moore Lappé Author

Frances Moore Lappé is the author or coauthor of fifteen books. Her 1971 three-million-copy bestseller, *Diet for a Small Planet*, continues to awaken readers to the human-made causes of hunger and the power of our everyday choices to create the world we want.



Water for Life, Not for Profit!

Saturday Social Event 7pm (Public Welcome)

Films that will be "Sneak Previewed" at the Northampton Center for the Arts, (17 New South Street, third floor, Northampton, MA 01060) at the Saturday Social Event in support of the "Our Communities, Our Water" gathering/conference.

Water First (Amy Hart) is an ongoing documentary film project about global water issues. The section shown at this event is set in Johannesburg South Africa, where residents are protesting against the installation of pre-paid water meters. Many of the residents cannot afford to pay for water, much less to pay ahead.

Water Warriors (Liz Miller) Water Warriors, is the story of one community's determination to fight the seemingly inevitable path of privatization. The film will capture up close the passionate and determined players in this dramatic conflict: seasoned community organizers, local workers, corporate managers pleading for efficiency, and local government officials, torn between state directives and citizens needs.

Live Music from: The Reagan Babies and Rob Skelton & Pitchfork

Dance Performance from RESISTANCE

List of Supporters

Massachusetts Global Action
North American Alliance For Fair Employment
Alliance For Democracy
Food & Water Watch
Polaris Institute
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

Sponsors

American Friends Service Committee - Cambridge
Council of Canadian

Endorsing Organizations

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Local 93
ARISE for Social Justice
Boston Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador
Cambridge Alliance for Democracy
Coalition for a Strong United Nations
Concerned Citizens of Lee
Corporal Accountability International
Graduate Employee Organization/UAW Local 2322
Grassroots International
Greenfield Community College, Behavioral Sciences Department
Hands Off Our Water/Lawrence
NH Water Table
SAGE
Sierra Club - Atlantic
Sierra Club - NH
Traprock Peace Center
The Enviro Show on WXOJ-LP, 103.3FM
U. Mass, Social Thought and Political Economy Department
UNITE Local 2261
Vermonters for a Clean Environment
Western Mass AFSC
Worldwide International League for Peace and Freedom
Women of Color
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
National Save Our Water Campaign

For more information or to get involved, please visit our website at www.massglobalaction.org
call 978-683-3967 or email water@massglobalaction.org

Local Democracy Convention

The Community Power Road to Democracy



Thursday, Sept. 28 through Sunday, Oct. 1st, 2006

Madison, Wisconsin, USA

www.LocalDemocracy.org

Keynote: *Juan Barreto, Mayor of Caracas, Venezuela*

International Presenters:

- Sergio Gregório Baierle, Workers Party, Brazil
- Daniel Chavez, Transnational Institute, Uruguay/Netherlands
- Judó Esquerro, Institute for Popular Democracy, Philippines
- Gábor Scheiring, Protect the Future, Hungary
- Hilary Wainwright, Red Pepper, UK

US Presenters:

- Professor Gar Alperovitz
- Barbara Alvarado
- Patrick Barrett, Liberty Tree
- Alder Brian Benford, Madison
- Pabitra Benjamin, Liberty Tree
- Phyllis Bennis, Institute for Policy Studies
- David Cobb, Liberty Tree
- Brent Denzin, Midwest Environmental Advocates
- Karen Dolan, Cities for Peace
- Council Pres. Austin King, Madison
- Alder Brenda Konkel, Madison
- Josh Lerner, Planners Network

... US continued ...

- Paul Malischke, Fair Elections Wisconsin
- Ben Manski, Liberty Tree
- Dr. Jane Anne Morris
- Bertell Ollman, International Endowment for Democracy
- Evan Paul, America Speaks
- Reverend Edward Pinkney
- Malik Rahim, Common Ground, New Orleans
- Satya Rhodes-Conway, New Cities Project
- Juscha Robinson, Liberty Tree
- Marsha Rummel, President, Marquette Neighborhood Association
- Kaitlin Sapoci-Belknap, Liberty Tree
- Charlene Spretnak, Green Institute
- Norm Stockwell, WORT 89.9 FM
- Carl Williams, Liberty Tree
- Alfonso Zepeda-Capistran, LUCHA

and the songs of David Rovics!

Asterisked () presenters yet to be confirmed*

The US President says he's the decider. Congress and the Federal courts seem generally to agree. US military forces occupy Iraq and Afghanistan, among other countries. A national police state keeps watch on tens of millions of Americans. As the Federal government consolidates power further and further away from the people of the United States, now is a moment that evermore, to borrow from Thomas Paine, tries our souls.

Across the United States, and around the world, the verdict is coming in: People are choosing local democracy over global oligarchy. The local alternative is becoming a movement:

Did you know that . . .

- Voters in 40 Vermont towns and 24 Wisconsin municipalities have put their communities on record for immediate withdrawal from Iraq? And that the war and presidential impeachment will be on the ballot nationwide come November?
- The people of Humboldt County, California, as well as several Pennsylvania townships, have ruled corporate personhood unconstitutional?
- The people of Venezuela have established direct economic aid programs for a growing number of major US cities?
- The "Participatory Budgeting" process developed in Brazil is now on the agenda for community organizers across the US?
- Voting rights advocates nationwide have succeeded in implementing Instant Runoff Voting, public financing of elections, and non-US-citizen voting rights in local elections?
- US cities, large and small, have reinvested in public power, community cable, wireless, and cooperative development?
- Local democracy initiatives have taken root across the globe, offering models for democratization here in the US?

Local Governments as Social Change Agents - Public Power, Wireless, and Cable - Poverty & Racism: Barriers to Participation - Local Election Reform - Cities for Peace, Ecology, and Progress - Participatory Democracy, Participatory Budgeting - Neighborhoods and Neighborhood Associations - Financing of Local Governments - Local Parties, Coalitions, and Movements - Home Rule and Preemption - Local Communities for Immigrant Rights - Direct Legislation and the Citizen Initiative - Community and Cooperative Economic Development - The Local Regulatory State - Community Rights vs. Corporate Rights - Sister Cities for Democracy - States Rights & Home Rule: Local Control vs. Preemption - The Global and the Local: Globalization from Below - Local Democracy: Strategy 101 - The Law of Local Democracy - Uniting for Democracy: Schools, Colleges, and Communities - and more!

This Autumn, Sept. 28 through Oct. 1, gather with organizers and activists in beautiful Madison to share and learn from these and other important democratic successes. Network with others working on common issues. Strategize together about building the democracy movement in this country, from the grassroots, up.

Register Now: www.LibertyTreeFDR.org or 608 257 1606