

BCA Dispatch

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Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy

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2008

I am sorry, gentlemen, but I have to answer to hundreds of thousands who are anxious for the success of Zionism. I do not have hundreds of thousands of Arabs among my constituents.

—President Harry Truman, to critical State and Defense Department experts, on the eve of Israel's establishment.
(See Page 6 for article on Zionist Terror, 1948 and after.)

CHAPTER NEWS (Continued on page 8)

Good news! After eight years of foresight, writing, meeting, planning, waiting, waiting, and finally action—the Globalization Impact Bill has at last surfaced in the state legislature, and is on its way to a vote, with the favor of the Joint Committee on Economic Development & Emerging Technologies. And the hero of this action phase is—**Karen O'Donnell!** Karen—a BCA stalwart, labor activist, and former state representative—kicked into gear and hauled the bill, with **Dave Lewit**, **Joanna Herlihy**, and **Janet Eaton**, from the murky depths of committee through the warmer waters of dozens of legislators' staffs, and onto to top of the committee's—chaired by **Rep. Dan Bosley**—agenda. There it competed with the contentious Casino (Continued on Page 8 >>)

Privatizing Colombia

Bush Fast-Tracks NAFTA-like Pact

by Yifat Susskind, *CommonDreams.org*, 2 April 2008

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION IS PUSHING HARD to pass another trade agreement based on the failed NAFTA model, this time with Colombia. The Administration is in a race against public opinion, which is quickly turning against the kind of neoliberal trade deals that have worsened poverty and inequality in every country where they have been implemented and led to a massive loss of jobs in the United States. The proposed Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Colombia promises more of the same. The deal will also strengthen Colombia's government, which is responsible for severe human rights violations...

A vote for this trade agreement is a vote for:

Worsening Rural Poverty and Hunger

The FTA cuts tariffs on food imported from the US but benefits only the few Colombian farmers who export to the US. Moreover, the deal bars the Colombian government from subsidizing farmers, while large-scale US corn and rice growers enjoy billions in subsidies. These double standards guarantee that US agribusiness can undersell Colombian farmers, who will face bankruptcy as a result. Many of Colombia's small-holder farmers are women and Indigenous Peoples who are losing their livelihoods and being forced off their lands.

Fueling Armed Conflict and Drug Trafficking

The intertwined crises of poverty, landlessness, and inequality are at the root of Colombia's 50-year armed conflict. The FTA will further concentrate wealth in the hands of a few while worsening poverty for millions of people. Many Colombian farmers, whose livelihoods will be destroyed by the FTA, will be compelled to cultivate coca (the raw material for producing cocaine) to earn a living.

Continuing a trend begun in the wake (Continued on Page 2 >>)



The Kalevala's old sage Väinämöinen ("Vaino") sings "the seas to honey...wide woodlands into cornfields...the hills to sugar cakes and the boulders into hen's eggs..." Refreshingly, Finland's epic, lyrically translated by Finland/Fitchburg/Cambridge late blind poet Eino Friberg, uses song rather than the sword to vanquish the inimical and bring "joyant" life to most. The horn (illustrated by Björn Landström) holds ale.

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## A Joyant Democracy

### Sanders Brings Finland to Vermont

by Katrina vanden Heuvel, *Editor, The Nation*, 6 April 2008

**L**AST MONDAY WELL OVER 300 VERMONTERS PACKED CITY HALL in downtown Burlington. It was standing room only with every seat on the floor and in the balcony occupied. The occasion was a town hall meeting with Senator Bernie Sanders, a forum he thoroughly enjoys and frequently hosts throughout the state because, as he said later, "it brings the government close to the people."

Ambassador Pekka Lintu of Finland was the guest speaker. Sanders invited him because he wants his constituents to know about a country that has quality universal healthcare, free childcare, free college education, employment benefits unimaginable to most American workers, virtually no childhood poverty, and one of the most competitive economies in the world. While Sanders anticipated a good turnout, the actual attendance exceeded his expectation. "It shows," he would later say, "that people are hungry to hear about alternative visions to the way we are doing things in this country."

Neither Lintu nor Sanders denied the differences between the US and Finland—in population [a bit less than Massachusetts], size, and diversity. "Yet as we acknowledge the difference we should also acknowledge that we are all human beings with very much the same DNA, the same kind of intelligence and the same human needs," Sanders said. "Is there something that we can learn from [Finland's] model?"

Lintu is a striking presence—tall and debonair. (One woman in the audience joked that he was "Finland's best evidence of the quality of its healthcare system.") But while Sanders has a straightforward, fearless style that his constituents have grown accustomed to, Lintu has a dry sense of humor and is soft-spoken. So much so that as he began his remarks several audience members called out for him to speak louder. Lintu finally joked, "Finns are rather non-talkative people, rather known as shy people. We say that you can know the difference between an introverted Finn and an extroverted Finn. (Continued on Page 3 >>)

wake of 9/11, the US has cast the FTA as a matter of its "national security", and the Colombian government has followed suit by treating anyone opposed to the deal as a terrorist. Colombia's workers, Afro-Colombians and indigenous peoples have taken a clear position against the FTA. Their peaceful protests have been met with severe repression, including murder.

#### **Repressing Labor Rights**

Colombia is already the world's deadliest country for trade unionists, with more than 2,000 labor activists killed since 1991. The FTA does not require Colombia to meet international core labor standards; it merely calls on the government to abide by its own weak labor laws. Without enforceable labor protections, the trade deal will put more workers at risk. US workers' power to negotiate better wages will also be weakened by a deal that allows corporations operating in Colombia to keep labor costs down through sheer violence.

#### **Exacerbating Climate Change, Threatening Biodiversity**

The FTA will increase logging in the Colombian Amazon, weakening the rainforest's capacity to stabilize the Earth's climate. Under provisions sought by the US, corporations that have bought the rights to a country's forests, fishing waters, mineral deposits or oil reserves can totally deplete these resources, with grave consequences to ecosystems and the many species that inhabit them. Small-scale farmers and indigenous peoples who depend directly on these natural resources will be the first people to suffer.

#### **Subordinating National Sovereignty to Corporations**

By allowing corporations to sue governments for passing laws that could reduce profits, the FTA erodes Colombia's prerogative to regulate foreign investment and undermines citizens' chances of improving health, safety and environmental laws. In anticipation of the FTA, the US pressed Colombia to pass a law that would expropriate land from Indigenous and Afro-Colombians and allow multinational corporations to gain control of millions of hectares of rainforest. The forestry law was part of a series of constitutional "reforms" undertaken to meet the conditions of a US trade agreement. In January 2008, Colombian civil society won an important victory: the forestry law was struck down as a violation of Indigenous rights. Had the FTA already been in place, US corporations would now be allowed to sue the Colombian government for "lost future profits".

#### **Deteriorating Public Health**

By extending patent rights on medicines produced in the US, the FTA hinders the use of far cheaper generic drugs and puts life-saving medicines out of reach for millions of Colombians. Women, who are over-represented among the poor and primarily responsible for caring for sick family members, are particularly harmed by this provision.

#### **Loss of Vital Public Services**

The FTA requires the Colombian government to sell off critical public services, including water, healthcare and education. Elsewhere in Latin America, this kind of privatization has resulted in sharp rate increases by new corporate owners that deny millions of people access to essential services. Women are hardest hit because it is most often their responsibility to meet their families' needs for such basic services.

#### **Harming Indigenous Women**

The FTA would enable corporations to exploit Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge by allowing companies to patent seeds, plants, animals and certain medical procedures devel-

oped and used by Indigenous women over centuries. Under the FTA, Indigenous women could lose access to important medicinal plants and agricultural seeds unless they pay royalties to patent holders. Indigenous women's role as the protectors of their community's natural resources and traditional knowledge would be eroded, threatening Indigenous cultures and women's status within the community.

#### **Viable Alternatives to Free Trade Agreements**

Despite more than a decade of failed NAFTA-style trade deals, the US continues to insist that its trading partners adhere to rigid neoliberal economic policies. But Latin America's social movements are articulating viable alternatives for regulating trade and economic integration in ways that benefit women, families, communities and the environment. The women of MADRE's sister organizations in Colombia and throughout Latin America affirm the need for Fair Trade Agreements that:

- \* Are negotiated through democratic processes with effective participation from communities that will be impacted, including women's organizations.
- \* Ensure that life-sustaining resources such as water, food staples and medicinal plants are guaranteed to all people and not reduced to commodities.
- \* Ensure that access to basic services, including health care, housing, education, water and sanitation, are recognized as human rights that governments are obligated and empowered to protect.
- \* Institute the region's highest, rather than lowest, standards for labor rights and health, safety and environmental protections.
- \* Adopt principles of "fair trade", including social security and development assistance programs that protect small farmers and workers and that recognize the economic value of women's unpaid labor in the household.
- \* Require foreign investors to contribute to the economic development of the communities where they have a presence.
- \* Promote policies that respect local cultures and collective Indigenous rights and that preserve traditional agricultural techniques and biodiversity in agriculture and nature.
- \* Recognize the links between economic growth, environmental sustainability and building peace.

*Yifat Susskind is Communications Director for MADRE, an international human-rights organization originally focused on women in Nicaragua.*

*Ed. Note— The Colombia FTA bill goes far beyond trade, promoting a repressive, elitist, colonial state and looking out for the interests of agribusiness, oil giants, coal companies, weapons makers, pharma patent owners, etc. The bill was filed just before the expiration of "fast track" executive trade authority, which means that Congress has no options other than to vote the bill up or down, without amendments, within 90 days. This will obviate much debate. Thus critics have no option other than to urge congressmembers to just vote "no". Call your congressmember: For his or her phone number go to [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and enter your address, or phone congressional switchboard at (202) 224-3121.*

*To join in local action against the Colombia FTA, contact Encuentro5 at 617-482-6300 or Greater Boston Latin American & Caribbean Coalition at [richardkrushnic@rcn.com](mailto:richardkrushnic@rcn.com) or 617-635-0365. Ask about workshops with Stan Gacek on 26 April.*

An introverted Finn, when he talks to you, he's looking at his own shoes. An extroverted Finn, when he's talking to you, he's looking at your shoes."

Lintu spoke openly of some of the challenges now facing his country - an aging population, a need for alternative energy, unemployment just under 6 percent, alcohol that is "still a mythic thing for young people." There was an economic crisis in the early 90's when unemployment rose from 4 percent to 17 percent in just two years. Lintu said that Finns by no means enjoy paying taxes—the total taxes per capita were 43.1 percent in 2007—but they do enjoy what they get for their money. It allows for stability and confidence in planning a family, and for adjusting to the pressures of a global economy.

Lintu described Finland as both a welfare society and a competitive country. He believes that the strength of the welfare society stems in part from women getting the vote and the right to run for political office in 1906. "The decision to involve women in decision-making [early on] has a lot to do with it," he said. "Maternity and childcare, education, healthcare... many of these issues that are important 'family issues' I trace back to early involvement and ownership of women in politics."

Today, women in Finland hold 83 of 200 Parliament seats; 12 of 20 cabinet positions; and the presidency.

The keys to Finland's economic success, according to Lintu, are the safety net which help people adapt to the pressures of globalization and change; an education system recognized internationally as one of the best in the world; economic development that uses environmental sustainability as a framework; and good governance—ranked as the "#1 least corrupt government" by Transparency International, a global network that fights government corruption and advocates for reforms. Finland also ranks second in the world in percentage of GDP spent on Research and Development.

Lintu quickly turned the floor over for a Q&A and they fired away. (In fact, two hours later a number of hands would still be in the air when Senator Sanders called it a night. Lintu had spent the day meeting with college students and professors, business and community leaders, labor representatives and activists, and Sanders didn't want to wear out his guest.) Does universal healthcare mean long waiting lists and poor care? Do people fear immigrants inundating the country with different languages and values? How do you create a culture that sees taxes as a positive thing? Does Finland invest in teachers and give them room for creativity in the classroom? Does the government tax greenhouse emissions and how does that impact the economy? How much of the budget is devoted to defense spending? What is the gap between top-paid CEO's and workers? Is there a strong lobbying presence and are campaigns publicly funded? What is Finland's view on globalization?

Lintu said of the healthcare system that waiting lists were indeed a problem for non-urgent operations a few years ago. So the government allowed people to pay a premium for an earlier appointment—for non-emergency operations only and on the doctor's own time, not during regular hours of the free system. This has shortened the queues. Sanders noted that despite healthcare being almost free for everyone, it still "ends up costing about half as much per capita as our system." (Even with almost 50 million people uninsured, the US spends 14% of GDP on healthcare, Finland spends 7.5%.) As for quality of care—infant mortality is quite low, and the average lifespan is approximately 75 years for men and 82 years for women.

The economic gap between people isn't "enormous...at least

it's on the same planet," and Lintu sees this allocation of resources as important to the success of the welfare society. There are no caps on what people can earn but the very largest corporations pay CEO's 3 to 5 million US dollars. Sanders asked Lintu why CEO's aren't asking for outsized US-style salaries? Lintu said that companies are free to pay what they want to but the CEO's are sometimes criticized for their salaries.

Lintu tied the success of Finland's education system to the holistic approach raising kids. There is maternity leave for 3 months at full-pay, and 7 more months of either maternity or paternity leave at 70 percent of salary. Then a parent is permitted to take two more years—without pay, but with a guaranteed job to return to when the child is three years old. (Sanders contrasted this with the Herculean fight in Congress over the Family Medical Leave Act, which provides three months leave without pay.) For parents who work, states and municipalities are required to provide daycare with accredited staff for every child. When children turn six they are entitled to enroll in pre-school if desired, and compulsory "basic school" begins at age 7, through age 16. The graduation rates are astounding—99.7 percent complete basic school; 87 percent complete "upper secondary" (ages 16-19); and 70 percent of upper secondary graduates go on to study at a university or polytechnic.

Lintu said it's true that the curriculum is more flexible than in the US, allowing teachers freedom to adapt to the needs of the class. But the nation is perhaps most proud—not of the high-rankings internationally—but that "the system produces a rather egalitarian result, with less than a 5 percent difference in the testing results between the best and worst schools."

And then there are the workers. Imagine, one of the most competitive economies in the world, 80 percent unionized, 30 days paid vacation, 10 national holidays. Sanders noted, "The American worker now works the longest hours of anyone in a major country... many of our families are stressed out and exhausted.... The benefits that workers receive [in Finland]... dwarf what workers in this country receive." As for immigration, the government doesn't view it as a threat, but as one of the possible solutions to the problem of an aging population and the need for skilled labor. There are now 1.7 employed workers to every welfare recipient. Given current population trends, the ratio would be 1:1 in 2030.

What about paying for all of these services? "Well, I think it would be an exaggeration to say that Finns love taxes," Lintu joked. "But taxes are not a bad word.... I think that the success of the system... what you get, a family with two kids... free daycare, free preschool, primary school, high school and university. And then healthcare." Sanders added, "I think the issue is not so much what you pay - it's what you get for what you pay."

The Ambassador and the Senator spent a half-hour continuing to speak with Vermonters after the meeting had adjourned. When his last constituent had left, Sanders reflected on the importance of this gathering. "If you think about human history, the fact that a nation has been able to virtually abolish poverty, take care of its people, and be so competitive—it's amazing. People need to know about it. Agree or disagree, we should learn from it, debate it, and adopt these models where they make sense."

It was a good night in Burlington. A good night for small-d democracy. A good night to express the yearning citizens feel for a better way for America. A good night for looking beyond our own borders for vision, inspiration, and concrete examples of how things are working—and working well—in another nation.

## Should Massachusetts Divest From Iran?

Dear Senator Wilkerson and Representative Cabral:  
[Sponsors, in Joint Committee on State Administration & Regulatory Oversight]

**H.4270**, a so-called ACT TO PROTECT THE MASSACHUSETTS PENSION FUND FROM THE RISKS OF INVESTMENT IN IRAN, has come to my attention. I have read the bill.

I have no complaint about the Commonwealth divesting from, or ceasing to do business with, severe human-rights abusing countries like the former Apartheid South Africa or currently Burma (a.k.a. Myanmar). Indeed, the Commonwealth might also consider such blatant abusers as China, Colombia, Egypt, Haiti, Israel, Kazakhstan, North Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, Congo and certain other African countries.

Unfortunately, the identification of human rights-abusing governments is mixed up with US commercial or military interests, as well as likely interpretations of the US Supreme Court as in the Massachusetts Burma Law case. It is further mixed up with political biases related to Neoconservatives in US government offices as well as powerful pro-Israel lobbies seeking to stigmatize, weaken, or foster regime change in Iran, as happened by CIA intervention to topple the oil-nationalizing government of former Iranian prime minister Mossadegh.

H.4270 also focuses on petroleum interests, seeming to protect companies in the Massachusetts pension portfolio with options on undeveloped Iranian oil and gas [lines 17-19], which has little to do with human rights or investment risk. Also having little to do with human rights are Iranian nuclear capacities. This is a matter of international energy and/or security policy rather than human rights concern, and might more correctly be addressed by instructing our Congressional delegation. Also having little relevance to human rights is alleged Iranian military aid to Shiite Muslims in Iraq, which also seems a matter of national/military concern which would override concern which the Commonwealth may have for the aspirations of its ethnic or religious minorities.

As for investment risk, H.4270 provides no criteria or findings for discriminating against Iran.

I doubt that Massachusetts state divestment and loan prohibition would much affect the economy of Iran, though it would bolster the morale of Zionists in the Commonwealth and elsewhere.

Massachusetts citizens must debate what values it collectively wants to assert and defend through law and policy. Human rights seems a good one. Fairness is another. If Massachusetts wants to use pension funds and loan prohibitions to further an agenda of either "investment risk" or "human rights", it might well set up public investigations of all likely target countries—such as those listed in the second paragraph above—before choosing to discriminate against any one.

*Note: Israel—which officially boycotts Iranian oil—actually imports large quantities of Iranian oil by buying it in Europe [Richard Silverstein, The Guardian (UK), 4 April 2008].*

## Mexico Billionaire Surpasses Gates Diversified Industrialist Keeps Buying

by AP and Los Angeles Times, 13 March 2007

One-man conglomerate Carlos Slim Helú is now—a year after the following report—THE richest person in the world, thanks in part to NAFTA, with 7% of Mexico's gross domestic product, says Hector Sánchez of Global Exchange. He spoke at MIT on 9 Mar 2008, cosponsored by the Alliance for Democracy (AfD) and the Greater Boston Latin American and Caribbean Coalition.

THE WORLD'S THIRD-RICHEST MAN, CARLOS SLIM, is gaining rapidly [March, 2007] on Bill Gates and Warren Buffett with a fortune that grew \$19 billion last year—the largest wealth gain in a decade, according to *Forbes* magazine.

It's also a sign of the wealth gap in Mexico's monopoly-laden economy. Since Slim bought the telephone monopoly in a 1991 privatization, he has used Telmex as a cash cow to build an empire. Mexicans buy cigarettes from Slim's tobacco company, apply for mortgages at his bank and purchase policies at his insurance firm. Shoppers patronize his Sears department stores, eat at his Sanborns restaurants and browse for CDs at his Mixup music outlets.



Tycoon Carlos Slim

Travelers fly his airline. Industrialists buy his auto parts, electronics, steel and ceramic tile. The government hires his infrastructure firm to build highways, water-treatment plants and oil platforms. More than 250,000 people draw paychecks from his companies. "It's virtually cradle to grave. It's Slimlandia," said George Grayson, a Mexico expert at the College of William & Mary in Virginia. "You are engulfed by Slim in Mexico."

Slim, 67, has more than tripled his fortune since *Forbes* published its 2004 list, thanks to a string of acquisitions and his ballooning telecom holdings. His net worth is equivalent to nearly 6 percent of Mexico's gross domestic product, a feat unmatched by even U.S. robber barons at the height of their influence.

To many Mexicans, his rise shows their businessmen can run world-class companies. He is widely praised for turning Telmex—once notorious for taking months or years to install a phone line—into a modern, professional operation.

"I'm rooting for him to take first place" on the *Forbes* list, said Teresa Sotelo, 50, a Mexico City public accountant. "He's Mexican. We always have to root for our countrymen."

Yet, he also has kept phone rates high in a country where the minimum wage is about 50 cents an hour, and his success inspires anger among Mexicans who resent the concentration of wealth in the hands of the nation's relatively tiny elite.

"Why should we want a few people to hoard all the wealth, if the majority of Mexicans don't have enough to eat and 30 million Mexicans live on less than 22 pesos [\$2] a day?" leftist former presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador thundered last week.

If 2007 is as good to Slim as 2006 was, he will overtake the two leading Americans. Buffett (\$52 billion), who made his mo-

ney running the Berkshire Hathaway investment fund, and Gates (\$56 billion), the Microsoft co-founder who has topped the *Forbes* list 13 consecutive years, are focused on giving their fortunes away.

Gates has set up the world's richest charity foundation and has said he believes "that with great wealth comes great responsibility, a responsibility to give back to society." Buffett joined in last year, promising to send about \$1.5 billion every year to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

On Monday, Slim announced he would invest in health care and launch a program to supply low-cost computers to rural residents. Telmex already sponsors a charity foundation that supports education and social programs in Mexico, and the billionaire's investments in real estate have led to an urban renewal in Mexico City's historical downtown district.

Slim said his charitable foundations have about \$4 billion in endowments. But he still is expanding an increasingly diversified empire that now involves his three sons and does not appear ready to focus on philanthropy. He said Monday that businessmen should not "go around like Santa Claus." "The businessman with his talent, experience and vocation should participate more by doing" than by donating, he told a news conference.

Latin American billionaires—there are 10 others in Mexico—don't have a record of charitable giving comparable to Buffett or Gates, partly for historic reasons and partly because the region's tax laws often don't encourage donations as much as in the United States.

"It's not that there is a lack of goodwill; it's that it has been customary here to see social programs as the duty of the government," said Manuel Arango, a founder of the Mexican Center for Philanthropy. Slim's critics say he could do more for Mexicans by lowering consumer prices than by making charitable donations.

A 2005 report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development found Mexico's phone rates among the highest in the 30-member group of developed nations, although Telmex questions the study's methodology.

"It's not so much that he's building a fortune," Mexico City-based economist Jonathan Heath said. "The thing that's bad is that he's building more on his monopolies; he's getting monopolistic rents, that's why he's become so stinking rich." Now worth an estimated \$49 billion, Slim is the son of a Lebanese father who built a small family fortune from retailing.

Slim's Telefonos de Mexico SA controls more than 90 percent of the nation's fixed phone lines and made \$15.9 billion in 2006; his America Movil SA controls about 70 percent of cellphone service in Mexico and made \$21.6 billion.

It's an advantage that is not unusual in Mexico, where businesses are concentrated in a few hands. As a result, Mexicans pay more than other, wealthier nations for services such as electricity, phones and bank fees.

New [improperly elected] President Felipe Calderón has promised to battle monopolistic practices, but past efforts have been thwarted by Mexico's entrenched elite. "I have tremendous respect and affection for him personally," said former Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda, who has publicly advocated breaking up Telmex. "The problem is that this is a country where we don't have either the regulatory capacity or the political will to break up monopolies."

Slim faces a potential challenge in the telecom sector from the Televisa network, which controls about 70 percent of Mexico's broadcast market and is looking to extend its dominance in emerging communications systems that integrate telephone,

## Repression Continues in Oaxaca

WHILE CARLOS SLIM POKETS BILLIONS in profits from his telecommunications and other companies in Mexico, [improperly elected] Gov. Ulises Ruiz continues to jail and murder key journalists and indigenous leaders in his dictatorial grasp on the state of Oaxaca. Last week his assassins claimed the lives of two young women—Teresa Bautista Merino and Felicitas Martínez Sánchez—who were recently trained by a friend of AfD Maine water organizer Emily Posner to help develop the native-language radio station in the Triqui area of Oaxaca.

The grassroots organization CACTUS reports: "Our comrades were spokeswomen for Radio Triqui, The Voice that Breaks the Silence, which is the radio for the Autonomous Government of San Juan Copala. Their assassinations were perpetrated in the area of Llano Juárez, Juxtlahuaca, a zone where they had denounced the behavior of an armed group [pistoleros] tied to the Unity Party, which is a massive repressive action of the Ulises Ruiz government."

These shootings came on the heels of the murder of three other local indigenous activists: Lauro Juárez, Rosalino Díaz and Plácido López Castro. The assailants have not been arrested, since immunity is taken for granted. Twelve others are held in jails around Mexico. CACTUS is demanding justice.

television and Internet transmissions.

Even there, Slim stands to gain—his fortune includes shares in Televisa, and one of his sons sits on the network's board.



"Just answer the question."

## Who Cares About the Constitution?

New details have been revealed on government collection of Americans' personal information. The *Washington Post* is reporting so-called "fusion centers" established following the 9/11 attacks have collected a more extensive array of data than previously known. According to government documents, the fusion centers collect cell phone numbers, insurance claims, credit reports, financial records, and names of relatives and associates. The information is shared among law enforcement officials nationwide.

—Democracy Now! Headlines, 3 April 2008

## The Deir Yassin Massacre

### Israel Built on Terror, Ethnic Cleansing

by William Martin, *Counterpunch*, 13 May 2004

ON APRIL 9, 1948, MEMBERS OF THE UNDERGROUND JEWISH TERRORIST GROUP, the Irgun, or IZL, led by Menachem Begin, who was to become the Israeli prime minister in 1977, entered the peaceful Arab village of Deir Yassin, massacred 250 men, women, children and the elderly, and stuffed many of the bodies down wells. There were also reports of rapes and mutilations. The Irgun was joined by the Jewish terrorist group, the Stern Gang, led by Yitzhak Shamir, who subsequently succeeded Begin as prime minister of Israel in the early '80s, and also by the Haganah, the militia under the control of David Ben Gurion. The Irgun, the Stern Gang and the Haganah later joined to form the Israeli Defense Force. Their tactics have not changed.

The massacre at Deir Yassin was widely publicized by the terrorists and the numerous heaped corpses displayed to the media. In Jaffe, which was at the time 98 percent Arab, as well as in other Arab communities, speaker trucks drove through the streets warning the population to flee and threatening another Deir Yassin. Begin said at the time, "We created terror among the Arabs and all the villages around. In one blow, we changed the strategic situation."

From about 1938 on to the founding of Israel, Begin was the leader of the Irgun. That group regularly assassinated English soldiers in Palestine and frequently hung their booby-trapped bodies in public places. Under Begin, the Irgun blew up the King David Hotel in Jerusalem in 1946, killing 97 British civil servants. The Stern Gang, under Shamir, also assassinated the U.N. representative to Palestine, Count Bernadotte, in 1948.

But Deir Yassin was not the only massacre by the Israeli Defense Force. [There were 33 such massacres.\*] That army, under Moshe Dayan, took the unarmed and undefended village of al-Dawazma, located in the Hebron hills, massacred 80 to 100 of its residents, and threw their bodies into pits. "The children were killed by breaking their heads with sticks ... The remaining Arabs were then sealed in houses, as the village was systematically razed ..." (Nur Masalha, *The Historical Roots of the Palestinian Refugee Question*).

We read further. According to Yitzhak Rabin's biography:

We walked outside, Ben-Gurion accompanying us. Alon repeated his question: "What is to be done with the population?" BG waved his hand in a gesture, which said: Drive them out! ... I agreed that it was essential to drive the inhabitants out.

Continuing the narrative, Ben-Gurion University historian Benny Morris writes in "Operation Dani and the Palestinian Exodus from Lydda and Ramle in 1948", *Middle East Journal*, 40

At 13.30 hours on 12 July [1948]... Lieutenant-Colonel Yitzhak Rabin, operation Dani head Operation, issued the following order: '1. The inhabitants of Lydda must be expelled quickly without attention to age. They should be directed to Beit Nabala,... Implement Immediately.' A similar order was issued at the same time to the Kiryati Brigade concerning the inhabitants of the neighboring town of Ramle, occupied by Kiryati troops that morning... On 12 and 13 July, the Yafthah brigades carried out their orders, expelling the 50-60,000 remaining inhabitants of and refugees camped in and around the two towns....

About noon on 13 July, Operation Dani HQ informed IDF General Staff/Operations: 'Lydda police fort has been captured. [The troops] are busy expelling the inhabitants.... Lydda's inha-

bitants were forced to walk eastward to the Arab legion lines; many of Ramle's inhabitants were ferried in trucks or buses. Clogging the roads... the tens of thousands of refugees marched, gradually shedding their worldly goods along the way. It was a hot summer day. The Arab chroniclers, such as Sheikh Muhammed Nimr al Khatib, claimed that hundreds of children died in the march, from dehydration and disease. One Israeli witness described the spoor: the refugee column 'to begin with [jettisoned] utensils and furniture and, in the end, bodies of men, women, and children.

There were many other such villages with Arabic names that have almost been expunged from memory—but not quite. These facts have always been known to some historians, however they have been consistently denied by the official Israeli histories, as, indeed, Israel has never taken any responsibility for the exodus of Palestinians from the land of the present state of Israel.

Within the last 10 to 20 years, however, there has been an exponential increase in historical studies of the origins of the state of Israel which have coincided with the release by Israel of many, but not all, of the historical and military archives. Ben-Gurion University historian Benny Morris, as well as others, have systematically mined these documents and found numerous instances of massacres, and, by the way, not one shred of evidence for the frequently repeated official Israeli lie that the Palestinians fled Palestine because the surrounding Arab states told them to.

In fact, according to UN estimates, which some say are conservative, 750,000 Palestinians fled the site of the present Jewish state in 1948. Those refugees and their descendents now number about 4.5 million and constitute the largest and longest standing refugee population in the world. Many live in squalid refugee camps distributed in the surrounding Arab states or in the West Bank or Gaza, many retain the titles to their land, recognized by the British before 1948 or the Ottomans before that, and many retain the keys to their front doors of their former homes in what is now Israel, whether or not those doors still exists.

The '67 War generated a second wave of about 300,000 refugees from the West Bank and Gaza who were either expelled through direct or psychological methods or fled the Israel aerial attacks on the territories which included the extensive use of napalm.

The reader is invited to read the Hagana's Plan D, which has been available in English since the 1960s and was a military strategy of 1948 that entailed the evacuation of the Palestinian population from the areas of a future Jewish state.\*\*

Those who invoke the suicide bombings against mostly Israeli civilians to infer the righteousness of the Israeli cause live in a twilight of psychic denial of an otherwise unambiguous historical record: the state of Israel was founded on terrorism and ethnic cleansing.

The suicide bombings inside Israel, the first of which only occurred in 1994, after 25 years of occupation, is only a side show. That is a symptom and long way from the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

There will never be a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict until Israel takes responsibility, under U.N. Resolution 194, calling for reparation of the Palestinian refugees, and recognizes the immense suffering it caused at that time. We need also to recognize the US is giving unqualified moral [and material! -Ed.] support to a state that is based on racial purity and one that is intrinsically expansionist.

\* See Alison Weir, *Counterpunch*, 8 April 2008. (More >>>>)

William James Martin is a visiting instructor of mathematics at the University of Central Florida, Orlando. He can be reached at: [martinw@email.unc.edu](mailto:martinw@email.unc.edu)

**Ed. Comment:** *Israel is one of the great tragedies of our day—tragedy, as in supreme irony. The supposed "light unto the nations" has proven to be a selfish and murderous organization inverting the victimhood of its people's millennial history. Perhaps its Middle Generation conclusion is: What the hell, let us just be the same, morally, as the rest of flawed humanity. The hell with leading, the hell with compassion, the hell with truth. Live for now, believe we deserve the goodies of the western world, and let our fate be the same as that of the ignorant and the bullies around us—even as the abused Earth withdraws her support.*

*Middle Generation?—those Jews who grew up in Europe or Israel or America in the '60s and '70s when Israel had become a State which Biblically overcame its Enemies in a few days of holy combat. Not the Earlier Generation of crazed children of the Nazi persecution who had to break their bonds of impotence and humiliation. Not the Now Generation growing up in Bush-depraved America. Many of these young people accept their humanity—neither kikes nor landsmen nor geniuses—and have a wider concern with people of all skin-colors, levels of property, and levels of education—and with our environment.*

*Trained in social science, I am chagrined at our professions' failure to investigate and experiment with the prophetic teachings of mindfulness, nonviolence, compassion. There are a few, like David Likken, Phil Zimbardo, and Brian Martin, who have experimented or theoretically extended understanding of violence and nonviolence. There are philosopher / theologians like John Cobb and David Ray Griffin who have furthered mindfulness by framing Godliness with science-informed reason, ethics, and personal courage. There are politicians like Chuck Turner and teachers like Elise Boulding who lead the way in our dim jungle of opportunities.*

*But we need groups of prophets—a new generation of cooperating "Vinoba"s (Gandhi's disciple who walked all over India persuading landlords to give land to the commons)—to allay the fears and defensiveness of the Zionist elites there and here, and to exchange compassion for humility and friendship.*

## LETTERS

### **Did Captain May Thwart A Second 9/11? Did US Use Neutron Bomb at Baghdad Airport?**

*From: John B. Cobb, Jr. [Professor Emeritus, Claremont (CA) Graduate School of Theology]*

*To: Dave Lewit [Editor, BCA Dispatch] Date: 28 March 2008*

Your March issue has a lot of new material for me. Many, many thanks. I was particularly interested in Eric May's article. Do I understand him to be saying that several efforts to pull off another 9/11 have been thwarted? I wanted to follow up, but I could not get any of the sites cited. This seems to be extremely important. —**John**

*Here are the essential parts of Dave's reply, on 1 April 2008:*

[Captain] Eric H. May appears histrionic and self-adulatory, and is a difficult person to get a fix on. Nevertheless, I took a chance and published this article because of its relevance,

novelty, specificity and logic. The article which I reprinted... was posted at [www.GlobalResearch.ca](http://www.GlobalResearch.ca). (You can see the whole article without ellipses at [www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=8165](http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=8165).) This Montreal-based site is radical and I think reliable, with Prof. Michel Chossudovsky as editor and a major contributor. He is Professor of Economics, University of Ottawa, Centre for Research on Globalisation (CRG), Montréal—author of "Globalization of Poverty" and "America's War on Terrorism" among other [books]...

As to your question concerning thwarted attacks. May's position is that 9/11 attacks were engineered by insiders, and that another possible attack, on Texas City in 2005, was thwarted by his warnings to media, federal agencies, and local police. This [self-congratulation] may serve as a clue to the man's possible paranoia. Indeed, though plausible, he presents no solid evidence for states of emergency or plans for attack in Texas (or Chicago or Portland), although there were explosions in the BP refinery in the Galveston area. Similarly, his analysis of "the Battle of Baghdad" (in his 12/2003 bio below\*) is speculative with little direct evidence. For example, in an interview just a year ago at

[www.lonestaricon.com/absolutenm/anmviewer.asp?a=1294](http://www.lonestaricon.com/absolutenm/anmviewer.asp?a=1294) May asserts—based on unnamed "international sources, scientific sources"—that US forces, in a serious battle (concealed from the public), used a neutron bomb to vanquish Iraqi defenders at the Baghdad airport.

This sounds bizarre, but six days after this interview with May the following appeared on the usually reliable al-Jazeera English-language web site [italics mine]:

The former commander of Iraq's Republican Guard has accused the US of using non-conventional weapons in its war against the Middle East country. Saifeddin Fulayh Hassan Taha al-Rawi told Al Jazeera that US forces used neutron and phosphorus bombs during their assault on Baghdad airport before the April 9 capture of the Iraqi capital. "The enemy used neutron and phosphorus weapons against Baghdad airport... There were bodies burnt to their bones," he said... "The bombs annihilated soldiers but left the buildings and infrastructure at the airport intact," he added.\*\*

(<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/BA8304F2-89FE-49DC-8FB0-2212FE7889F7.htm>)

I conclude that I might have withheld this article if I'd dug as deeply as your email inspired me to do... A hoax is deliberate fakery. Eric May may [or may not] be paranoid, but many of us 9/11 Truth people—not paranoid—have been so accused. The crux of the matter is the resistance of officials and credible witnesses to investigation, together with the judgment or fatigue of credible reporters who may simply not undertake to investigate—and their editors who may not want to publish such reports (as well as military policy for embedding).

At present, we citizens have to consult whatever flawed sources—blogs and even respectable nonprofit web sites—judging what is worthy of holding as tentative truth, always remaining skeptical of overriding belief. I will take May's writing as an hypothesis worthy of investigation...

\* For further citations, please contact Editor.

\*\* After US capture of Baghdad in April 2003, the Telegraph (UK) reported: "The audacious capture of Saddam International Airport on Friday gave the lie to Iraqi boasts and revealed the truth of the Special Republican Guard. They were no more special than the rest of the Iraqi regime."

**CHAPTER NEWS** (Continued from Page 1)

Gambling issue, The bill may also have to clear another hurdle: the Rules Committee or some other which could either delay the bill, or offer amendments. Stay tuned. The bill is brief, and amendments could bring specifications good or bad. So we all, dear Readers, need to communicate our wishes to our respective state representatives and senators. Read the bill, with suggestions for amendment, at [www.NewEnglandAlliance.org](http://www.NewEnglandAlliance.org) and scroll down to "Globalization Impact Bill H.374".

Of course our *éminence grise* was **Rep. Byron Rushing** who sponsored the bill and introduced the speakers at our info session in the State House on 26 March. More than a dozen legislative aides showed up along with the public and other interested public officials, picking up our document packet from Byron's able legislative director **Heather Ross**, who coordinated our work along with work on other bills. Byron had provided us with a list of key legislators, and Karen led Janet and Dave to them or their chiefs-of-staff or legislative aides the day before, to promote the session.



Karen O'Donnell

Did we forget to review what the **Globalization Impact Bill** is all about? It will set up a commission to scrutinize international agreements now dealing not just with trade, but with infrastructure, military, and security arrangements as well. Who will be appointed to the commission is largely in the hands of legislators, the governor, a labor council, the municipal association, and university departments of economics—apart from ex officio appointments such as the attorney general of MA. We wish we could be sure of hefty representation of citizens critical of neo-liberal economics—the WTO type of thinking—that has gotten the world into so much trouble with poverty, wars, and ecological devastation as well as enriching and further empowering the corporate few.

**Janet Eaton** came down from Nova Scotia specially to promote the bill. She and Karen and Dave discussed the SPP (see Janet's thumbnail description below) at the Cambridge Community TV studios with Joanna behind one of the two video cameras. The next day Janet discussed SPP with powerpoint slides at the Boston Public Library before a crowd of about 40, including students from Emerson College. Finally Janet presented a shorter version at the State House, followed by three other speakers we helped recruit:

**Peter Riggs** of the Center for Democracy & Trade—an affiliate of Georgetown University Center for Public Law—was key. He fosters and coordinates state-level commissions like this, which already exist in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Peter emphasized mandated state involvement in creating international agreements, as well as regional empowerment.

Cambridge City Councillor **Sam Seidel** stressed the necessity to protect us from market forces concerned with selling beef, fuel, etc. AFL-CIO's—and AfD's—**Karen O'Donnell** stressed the featuring of labor and human rights in renegotiating and creating new international agreements. Finally, during the discussion period, **Jay McCaffrey** of Sierra Club endorsed the bill.

Janet Eaton is sending a DVD on SPP to Heather and to **Barbara Clancy** of the Alliance national office in Waltham, for distribution to community TV sponsors—Call Barbara to help, at 781-894-1179. She can also provide you with Joanna's DVD of our 30-minute discussion of SPP for the same use.

\* \* **OTHER ISSUES** \* \*

A quickie: Want to help defeat the proposal to boycott Iran, discussed in our Editorial on Page 4? Want to end Israel lobby's stampeding our legislators that only shames them and promotes war? **Cynthia Ritsher** suggests circulating a version of the editorial as a petition, and presenting the signatures to the key legislative committees and officers. Call Cynthia at 781-259-8104.

- Our continuing issues, which you and some other folks may wish to implement, include (discuss at meeting—see below):
- \* Followup lobbying on Globalization Impact Bill
  - \* Community TV—getting our videos out to every town
  - \* Web site improvement and maintenance
  - \* Democracy Protection—questioning town officials about Homeland Security cooperation and refusal
  - \* New Civics—high school human rights and citizen involvement
  - \* New England Roundtables—planning NER-3, perhaps in Boston, on "Local-Based Regional Economy" (*this is long-term*)

---**OUR NEXT MEETING: Monday, 28 April, 7pm, Waltham**---  
760 Main St. (3 bl W of Common). Take #70 bus, CentralSq Cam

**SPP IN A NUTSHELL**

*The SPP, the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, announced in March 2005 by the leaders of Canada, the US and Mexico, is an undemocratic "NAFTA Plus" initiative within a "security trumps all" framework planned and negotiated between corporate and executive powers in Canada, the US, and Mexico [i.e., without citizen or Parliamentary/Congressional input or oversight] in order to deepen energy, regulatory, security, military, economic, transportation, guest worker, and trade integration between the three countries.*

—Janet Eaton, PhD, Canada

**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? \$\_\_\_\_\_

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**COLOPHON**

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