

BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the
Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy

July
2008

Q. Do you think America is ready for a woman president or a black president?

A. This is such a non-question—Did anyone ask us in 2000 if America was ready for a moron?

—Jon Stewart, responding to talk show host Larry King

If Bush is retarded, it's only slightly. Mainly, he is a psychopath. By nature, he feels no pain, and doesn't give a damn. —Ed.

CHAPTER NEWS

Care about 9/11? Want a fair investigation? Go to

----- **Action Alert** on back page of this issue! -----

Working at Cambridge Community TV, **Joanna Herlihy** has edited New England Roundtable tapes (Burlington, 9/06) into DVDs to be vetted by **Cynthia Ritsher** and **Dave Lewit** next week. Meantime, **Karen O'Donnell**, **Jed Schwartz**, and Dave observed a meeting of the New Hampshire Citizens Trade Commission in Concord NH on 7 July. (Continued on Page 8 >>)

Obama's Inner Hillary Once a Corporatchik Always a Corporatchik?

by Dave Lindorff, *CommonDreams.org*, 28 June 2008

Now that the primary season is over, we can see that the clear winner was Hillary Clinton.

Oh, I know. Barack Obama got the most votes and the most delegates, and he'll be the Democratic presidential nominee this August, but increasingly, it's becoming obvious that he's just a pretty wrapper. Sneak a peak inside the wrapper and you'll find Hillary Clinton inside.

Look at the facts: No sooner did the last votes get counted in Montana, than Obama hied himself off to Washington to show his fealty to the America Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), where he promised to do whatever Israel wanted. You would have thought he was Bush or Hillary, so fulsome was his promise to unquestioningly back the worst policies and actions of Israel's criminally insane right-wing government. Claim all of Jerusalem for the Jewish state? Fine by him. Starve and terrorize a million people in Gaza? No problemo. Attack Iran to prevent a merely suspected nuclear program from eventually producing a possible bomb? Okay. Negotiate with Hamas? Never.

Then there was the FISA and Fourth Amendment-violating campaign of spying by the National Security Agency. Some members of Congress and the courts have been trying for years to find out what Bush and Cheney have really been up to with this program, but they've been stymied by the administration's insistence that the phone companies, who enabled most of the spying, are immune from prosecution and don't have to surrender records of, or talk about what they actually did. Congress, with the help of a spineless Democratic majority in both houses, came up in June with a bill that endorses the spying and gives retroactive immunity to the phone companies. [Only] fifteen senators—all Democrats—opposed that wretched sell-out of the Constitution and the American people. (Continued on Page 6 >>)



Michael Reynolds and friends at work. Note used tires—the basic building-block, front-left and background—filled with dirt compacted with a long-handled mallet.

Mud & Trash Dwellings

Rebel Architect Spawns Total Independence

by Rob Sharp, *The Independent/UK*, 17 July 2008

They are eco-friendly, bizarre-looking bolt holes, and have earned the name “earth ships” for the simple reason that they appear to have landed from the future. But these homes are more than just wacky props. They are a blueprint for our future living habits.

The ziggurats—constructed from refuse such as beer cans—are the brainchild of Michael Reynolds, an eco-architect who has spent most of his professional life perfecting the concept, which derives its name from the earth-filled tires that make up the walls. He built the first example in Taos, New Mexico, in 1988 and, 20 years later, still lives there.

Due to his hard work, there are more than 1,000 “earth ships” across New Mexico, and the word has spread; hundreds more are springing up in the US, in Scotland, Normandy, Spain and even Siberia, and in April 2007, permission was granted to build 16 in Brighton. Now, Reynolds' life and work are celebrated in *Garbage Warrior*, a documentary screening in cinemas around the UK.

“Imagine a home that heats itself, that provides its own water, and grows its own food,” says Reynolds. “Imagine that it needs no expensive technology, it recycles its own waste, and it has its own power source. And now imagine that it can be built anywhere, by anyone, out of the things that society throws away.”

The documentary was the idea of Oliver Hodge, a Brighton [UK]-based director who met Reynolds in May 2003. The architect and his “crew” had come on a two-week visit to build a prototype earth ship in Brighton. “When I met Mike I was so inspired and I could see that he would be able to create a strong story. I realised that he had won and lost all these battles: that he is a frontline activist for social change.”

In November that year, the filmmaker took a team to Reynolds' US base. Soon, he realised he had arrived “in the middle of something massive”, so spent the next three years jetting between the UK and New Mexico, following his man around. Reynolds was a perfect subject, says Hodge: “He would do anything for me. Sometimes I even got him up at five o'clock in the morning.”

The film is the latest chapter in Reynolds' colourful life. He graduated from architecture school (Continued on next page >>)

[U of Cincinnati] in 1968, and soon produced a house made from beer containers, which upset the national bricklayers' union so much, he had to can it.

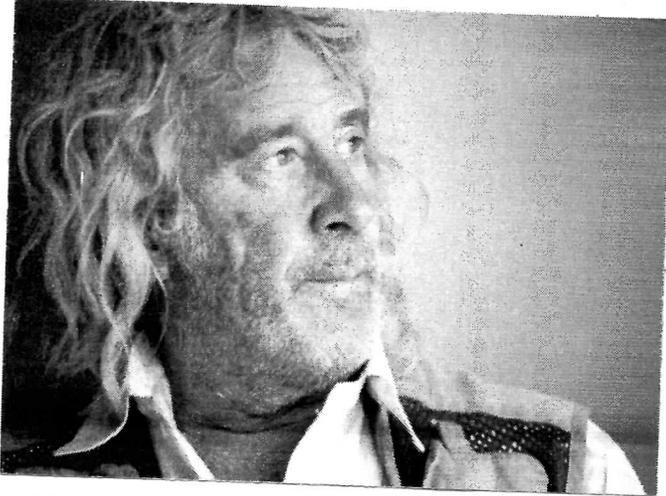
Inspired by the nascent green movement, Reynolds came up with a building that promoted several tenets: it should be "off-the-electricity-grid" (which could be achieved by solar power); it should be made from used car-tires (common landfill material) and incorporate rainwater-recycling facilities, too.

To achieve this vision, he moved in the early Seventies to the desert near Taos, where tolerant planning laws and sympathetic local government enabled him to experiment: some houses looked like castles, others like pyramids. Over the next 25 years, he created an energy-independent community, but his flouting of regulations landed him in hot water: and, in 1997, his communities were shut down.

keep them alive in "every way", with its sewage treatment facilities as well as sustainable water, electricity, and food supplies. "There's no question that after you've gone down a trail you might find a better way of going down it," he concludes. "I would make alterations in my path, but it wouldn't be that much different. I don't think it's possible to do anything without getting into a little trouble."

Dave Lindorff is a Philadelphia-based journalist and columnist. His latest book is "The Case for Impeachment".

'Garbage Warrior' is showing in the UK but not yet in the USA. But there's a DVD. And you can see video segments at www.garbagewarrior.com In the film Reynolds says: "There's nothing coming into this house, no power lines, no gas lines, no



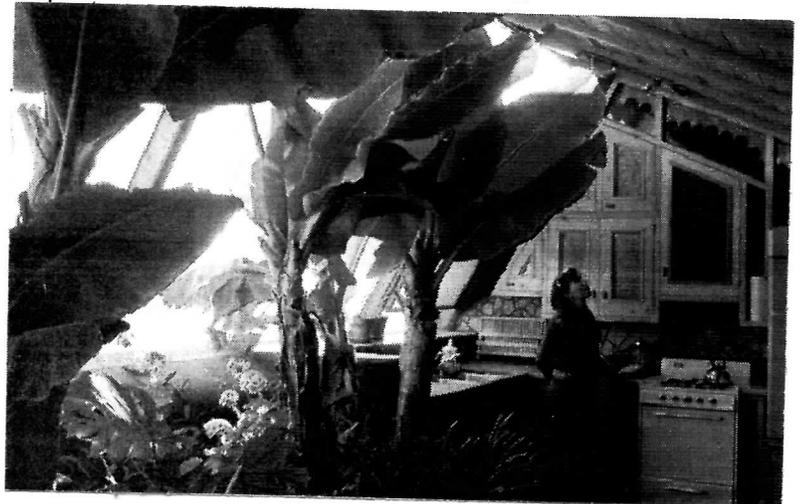
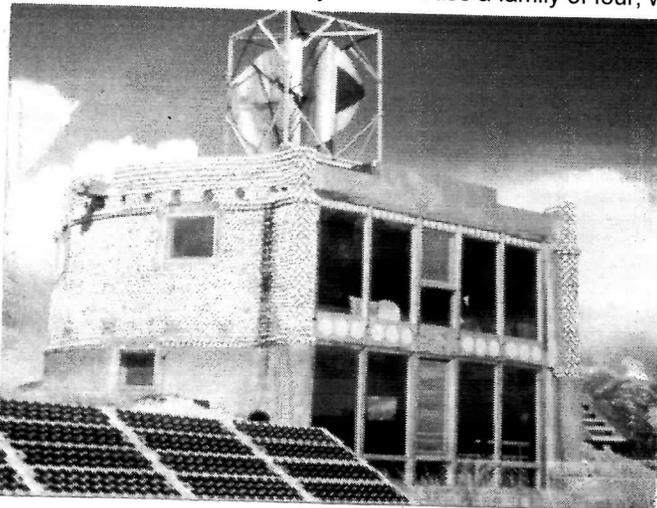
The documentary joins the architect soon after, and charts his long battle with planners. "In my opinion, the planet situation is so critical we need to be doing anything we can," he explains. "My rationale is that any little roof leak or system glitch in one of my single family homes, compared to the alternatives, is nothing. To me it's important to go for it and make a few mistakes."

Frustrated by his lack of progress, in early 2005 Reynolds heads to the Nicobar Islands in the Indian Ocean, which had been devastated by the Asian tsunami. His hope? That the lack of infrastructure would render the "bureaucratic niceties" irrelevant. "We shoot from the hip," Reynolds says of the excursion. "We are always out of our depth whenever we go abroad, which happens three or four times a year. It may not be to local codes or ready to sell to a millionaire, but it will be shelter which will keep people comfortable. We have a method."

Now, back in Taos, the architect is focusing on his latest project, "the Phoenix". He says it will house a family of four, will

sewage lines coming out, no water lines coming in, no energy being used ... We're sitting on 6,000 gallons of water, growing food, sewage internalized, 70 degrees year-round ... What these kind of houses are doing is taking every aspect of your life and putting it into your own hands ... A family of four could totally survive here without having to go to the store."

Since each house could be custom-built by a proud owner and friends, we may be overcoming the scourge of suburban, bank-owned sameness. We wonder: Can such resource-efficient dwellings be built into compact communities—cities, socially and culturally inclusive and regionally connected? How long must existing dwellings stand before they become more economical when replaced? Depends on how fast we conceive alternatives and their direct and indirect economy, doesn't it? Can these ideas be adapted on a scale large enough to accommodate the millions here in New England, or any region—thus a revolution? —Ed.



Creeping Homogenization

Traveler: Chain Store/Radio Can Kill Us

by David Sirota, TruthDig.com, 11 July 2008

I spent the July 4th weekend in my own Americana cliché: I relaxed in the humid heartland, drank one too many alcoholic beverages (screwdrivers), ate at a chain restaurant (Noodles & Company), played with my dog (a golden retriever mix) and attended Hollywood's latest paean to mediocrity (Will Smith's "Hancock"). I was in the bucolic suburbs of Lafayette, Ind., but really, I could have been anywhere or everywhere in America—which is both satisfying and troubling.

In the lead-up to my Independence Day respite, I went through the montage of diners, rental car counters and air mattresses commonly known as a book tour. The nationwide journey has been a blur—and not because I've been under-rested and over-caffeinated, but because America's newly homogenized culture has made everything seem the same.

As I discovered, the contemporary road trip tells the tale of hegemony better than even shared holiday experiences. Turn on your car radio and your listening experience is standardized. No matter where you are, you find yourself unable to find much other than either Rush Limbaugh rants or Bad Company songs on a dial now owned by a tiny group of conglomerates. The off-ramp pit stop—once the spicy outpost of local flavor—today seems mass-produced from a Chinese factory, a bustling harbor of franchise commerce astride Jack Kerouac's endless road. Towering signs for Applebee's, Wendy's and Bob Evans are the boat masts on a sea of corporate food below.

Sure, when you drive north to south, Arby's morphs into Shoney's, and when you drive east to west, the Wawas become Circle K's. And yeah, you'll find differing street sign fonts, varied twangs and the occasional idiosyncratic landmark. But with the chain-store-ification of culture, that's about it—and today, even our politics is a victim.

At bookstore events in every corner of the country, the discussion is almost completely national focused. Who will be the vice presidential nominees? What will the latest scandal mean for the presidential candidates? How can Democrats or Republicans win the congressional election?

The queries, of course, reflect homogenized news from a consolidated media industry that increasingly provides cheap-to-produce, cheaper-to-replicate federal-level horse-race speculation instead of detailed local coverage. The result is that Americans obsess over distant political soap operas and palace dramas while neglecting pressing issues in their backyards.

Don't get me wrong — I'm no troglodyte pining for a heterogeneous golden age that never was, nor am I a New Ager opposing all mass culture on a hyper-localist fantasy that never will be. There's a good side to this. It's great that we can, for example, widely distribute medicine (believe me, without stomach analgesics at every convenience store my trip would have been unbearable). It's also terrific that we can have truly national conversations about presidential campaigns and difficult issues like race.

Then again, it's not great that our best-known commodities in this culture are fast-foods, gas-guzzling SUVs and subpar Will Smith movies. It's also bad that we more often end up having national conversations about celebrity breakups—and that when we do talk politics, Washington, D.C., is considered more important than what happens in our own state capitols

and city councils. Indeed, in making anywhere into everywhere, homogenization has swallowed up not only our downtowns, restaurants and radio stations, but even our understanding of American democracy.

This is the most significant—and scariest—downside.

As we have faced health, energy and environmental emergencies that demand customized answers, homogenization has taken us from "think global, act local" to "obsess federal, ignore local"—right when imminent crises mean we need to act more locally than ever. Because of this, America may yet become a casualty of its own cultural conquest.

David Sirota is a best-selling author whose newest book, "The Uprising," was released last month. He is a fellow at the Campaign for America's Future and a board member of the Progressive States Network, both nonpartisan organizations. His blog is at www.credoaction.com/sirota.

Municipal Foreign Policy

Towns Lead Where Congress Fears to Tread

by Ben Manski & Karen Dolan, Yes! mag, 15 June 2008

The heartland spoke; the world listened. On April 5, 2006, hundreds of newspapers across the globe, from Italy's *Il Manifesto* to the *Los Angeles Times*, shared a similar headline: "Wisconsin votes for troop pullout." One day earlier, citizens in 32 Wisconsin cities, towns, and villages had cast ballots for immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. Voters in tiny villages in the North Woods and the Door Peninsula, in the regional urban centers of Madison and La Crosse, and in the small cities that are the heart of the Badger State, sent a clear message. As Green Party activist Steve Burns told newspapers, the vote meant that "opposition to the war [has] become the majority sentiment," winning over communities that had voted for George Bush only months earlier.

While peace advocates rejoiced over the events, the Bush administration was unresponsive to Wisconsin's extraordinary display of democracy. White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan attempted to downplay the Wisconsin vote, concluding that while "all Americans" wanted the troops home, they also understood the importance of the "mission in Iraq."

The Wisconsin troop withdrawal votes were a best case example of "municipal foreign policy"—the practice of local communities and state governments taking on matters of national and global import. Wisconsinites revived their Progressive-era municipal direct legislation law—allowing citizens to initiate popular referenda on ordinances, resolutions, and other legislative matters—to put the war on the ballot.

Wisconsin has hardly been alone. In the prelude to invasion, over 200 city, town, and village councils voted against war with Iraq. In 2005, 40 Vermont communities voted in town meetings for Iraq withdrawal. In November of 2006, voters in 139 Massachusetts communities and a half dozen Midwestern cities followed Vermont and Wisconsin in casting ballots for withdrawal. *Today more than half of all Americans live under local or state proclamations of opposition to the U.S. military presence in Iraq [all italics ours]. —Ed.]*

As the federal government has increased troop deployments to Iraq, local and state officials are also upping their anti-war efforts. Lawmakers in Vermont have introduced legislation declaring that the original mission in Iraq is over and congressional authorization for deploying the National Guard has expired. If

enacted, this legislation would be more than symbolic: it would end future Vermont Guard deployments to Iraq. Other states are following Vermont's lead. Meanwhile, *citizens around the country have launched new campaigns to enact municipal laws barring military recruitment of minors.*

City and state opposition to the Iraq war is only one expression of a larger set of movements. People are turning to local governments for a voice in international affairs because they perceive the current federal government to be at best absent, at worst an obstacle. The Cities for Peace movement, which helped unite local action against the Iraq war, is now coordinating a growing number of cities that oppose a possible future attack on Iran. The climate change movement has found a voice in the more than 800 cities that have signed on to the *principles of the Kyoto Protocol*. Mayors for Peace, more than 2,100 members strong, works for the abolition of nuclear weapons. New "Sister City" relationships are forming all the time, often rekindling diplomatic ties with cities in nations spurned by the Bush administration—like Venezuela, Palestine, Nicaragua, and Cuba.

What powers these municipal foreign policy efforts is not fuel, but a vacuum. Polling shows that public faith in each of the three branches of federal government is at an all-time low. This crisis in confidence extends beyond federal failures to heed the will of the people on matters of foreign policy, environment, and peace. When New Orleans' levees were breached, Katrina exposed the depth of the divide between federal policies and local needs.

Now local governments are taking matters into their own hands. They are willing to do more than pass resolutions to pressure federal officials—they are enacting their own *minimum wage ordinances, public universal health coverage, and sick leave laws; and establishing community wireless, community cable, public power, and municipal food utilities.* A ballot measure in Humboldt County [CA] *nullifies the doctrine of corporate constitutional rights.* The sanctuary cities movement gives *local protection to undocumented immigrants.* And local governments have passed ordinances that direct local officials to respect the Bill of Rights before the Patriot Act.

Local governments have stepped into the breach—giving voice, services, and human rights protections to people, cities, towns, and counties, and becoming key agents of democratic change in America.

Challenges remain. Federal officials increasingly preempt local initiatives in international affairs, drug policy, health care, labor law, and telecommunications. But local people can and do push back. The new Local Democracy Network unites community organizers, local elected officials, and others to spread the good news about local innovation and develop strategies for strengthening local home rule.

Where is all this leading? In the short term, expect to see the municipal foreign policy trend grow. While the November elections will produce some change in Congress and in the White House, a rapid U.S. withdrawal from Iraq seems unlikely. So citizens will continue to use the levers of local government to impact U.S. foreign policy. In the mid-term, expect to see the federal government begin to respond to the bubbling up of local innovation and pressure. In the long-term, hope to see the triumph of greater local democracy and a more accountable federal government.

If, in the words of that most global of progressive happenings, the World Social Forum, "another world is possible," it is mostly because the people in our cities, towns, and villages are making it so.

Ben Manski is executive director of the Liberty Tree Foundation for the Democratic Revolution and served as legal counsel for the Wisconsin troop withdrawal campaign. Karen Dolan is a fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. and directs the Institute's Cities for Progress project. Visit www.CitiesforProgress.org and www.LibertyTreeFDR.org.

Muslim Holocaust

90x Greater Than Jewish Holocaust

by Jacqueline Carrigan, Socialism & Democracy, March 2008 (excerpt)

Data indicate horrendous mortality in the Muslim world. Thus the "excess mortality" in preponderantly Muslim countries plus the present Muslim proportion-based component of the "excess mortality" of other significantly Muslim countries totals about 550 million for the period 1950-2004.

This death toll is about [ninety] times that of the Jewish Holocaust (6 million victims) and [the comparable] "forgotten" World War II man-made famine in British-ruled Bengal (4 million Muslim and Hindu victims).

The Muslim Holocaust has many components—thus "excess mortality" has totaled 5.2 million for Iraq since 1950, 1.5 million for Iraq since 1991 and 340,000 for the Occupied Palestinian Territories since 1967. Since 1950 "excess mortality" has totaled about 49 million for the Turkish Near East and Central Asia and 70 million for the Arab Middle East and North Africa—with the present Muslim proportion-based component of post-1950 "excess mortality" estimated at 93 million for East and South East Asia and the Pacific, 148 million for South Asia, and about 189 million for non-Arab Africa.

The sheer magnitude of this Muslim "excess mortality" compels one to address the following questions to First Worlders: when does mass mortality become a holocaust, when is it "fit" to be reported by our media—and when does our complicity become morally insupportable?

As outlined above, the prosperous First World should have been dealing with the Muslim world with honesty, goodwill and assistance rather than with the mix of denial, neglect, hostility, malignant interference, sustained violence and war that has helped cause this horrendous and continuing Muslim Holocaust...

In contrast, the "excess mortality" for 1950-2004 totals 54 million for the countries of Australasia, North America, Western Europe and Eastern Europe that have overwhelmingly been at peace domestically; however this group includes major players (notably the US, UK, France and Russia) who have variously been imposing colonial occupation, weapons, trade exclusion, war and debt on the developing world in this period...

Editorial Comment

So, friends, the World Trade Center's 3-thousand and the Nazi Final Solution's 6-million (13-, with Soviet POWs, Poles, Serbs, Roma, gays, etc.) are side-show horrors promoted to Big-Tent obsessions, somehow eclipsing the 550-million Muslim Holocaust. During the last millennium—a small fraction of the hundred-thousand-year history of humankind—the systematic, massive horrors included Genghis Khan's train of genocides, 100 million native Americans killed in only the first century of the Conquest, British rabbit-hunt of all Tasmanians, Stalin's starving of perhaps 10 million in the Ukraine; Armenia, Cambodia, Rwanda, and on and on. None of these come near the half-billion Muslims who died unnaturally—often brutally—in the past

half century, mostly as a result of imperial policy.

Perception...Attention...Memory...Attribution...Personal responsibility. These are largely the result of education and propaganda, whereby Americans can ignore all but a select few of these mammoth crimes. OK, most of us nod in agreement. The personal responsibility factor is where we blank out. This is where "mindfulness" may help trace present disaster back to set-up, malice, control, greed, conformity, and inattention. Consistent and flexible mindfulness takes complex training in a cultural, group setting, as with science education or Buddhist meditation. Mindlessness, on the other hand, may be the result of drill as with soldiers and prison guards. Police work seems to be a combination of mindless and mindful training, such that some routines are re-set according to circumstances, including the differing attitudes of supervisors, and with discretion.

These are experiential factors. But there is also the neurological—primary and secondary psychopathy—hard-wired and conditioned. To the extent that some leaders and many core-group members, like Marines, may be insensitive psychopaths, murder becomes normal. Just call the victims "jihadis" or "collateral damage". For the many others, the confusion may also be fatal both for the Muslim enemy (and protesters) and for oneself—post-traumatic stress disorder.

The special disaster of psychopaths in the White House—Bush, Cheney, Ashcroft, neocons—challenges us to know how we allowed that, and how we may disallow such down the road. We in turn must challenge psychiatrists, social scientists, and writers to educate us about psychopathy. But the nation-level chain of mindfulness—and effectance—is too long and convoluted. A small state-sized or county-sized or corporation-sized society is about all we can responsibly handle.

So where shall we begin?

Slow Internet Hurts VT Development Japan Model Zips 100x More Video, Audio

Editorial, Brattleboro Reformer, 8 July 2008

Even though we are a primarily paper-and-ink product, we also recognize the growing importance of the Internet.

We've written often in this space about the future of Vermont's economy and how it is tied to increased high-speed broadband Internet access. However, it is becoming clear that the dream of universal access in Vermont, and other rural areas of the United States, is just that—a dream.

The digital divide is alive and well. According to a recent analysis by the nonprofit media reform group Free Press, only 35 percent of U.S. homes with less than \$50,000 annual income have a high-speed Internet connection.

That's because broadband access is in the hands of the cable and phone company duopoly, which controls access to 98 percent of the U.S. online market. It is why Americans pay more and get less than what is available in the rest of the developed world.

It should be a national embarrassment that the United States ranks 22nd in the world when it comes to affordable high-speed Internet, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. It should be a national embarrassment that the United States has dropped from No. 4 in 2001 to No. 15 in 2007 for broadband penetration.

This imbalance is taking its toll economically. A Brookings Institution study found that nearly 300,000 new American jobs are created for every 1 percent increase in national broadband

penetration.

We are falling behind because of a conscious choice made by policymakers on both the state and federal levels — let the free market work its magic and everything will be fine. It is why the Douglas administration still thinks that \$40 million will be enough to make Vermont an "e-state" by 2010.

But there is no free market in telecommunications. The phone and cable companies control the market and vigorously lobby lawmakers at every level of government to force through regulations that protect their market position, close off access to new technology and competitors and increase control over the content that travels over the Internet.

The countries that have moved ahead of the United States in telecommunications have also made a conscious choice — to enact policies to encourage universal, open access.

For example, Japan in 2000 had the same problems as our nation — an Internet industry controlled by a handful of gatekeepers that blocked innovation. Japan's response was to create a highly competitive private sector that did away with proprietary networks. Every phone company had to open their residential lines to wholesale access by other companies. The result was broadband access went from 2.2 percent in 2001 to more than 80 percent by 2004 and nearly every resident today.

While Vermonters struggle to get 1 megabit services, other nations are busy building 100 megabit networks that will transport voice, video and other data at speeds unimaginable to current American Internet users. And both Free Press and the OECD found that countries that have universal and open access policies, like Japan's, have nearly twice the levels of broadband penetration than those who do not.

From rural electrification to the construction of the Interstate Highway System, it has taken a combination of bold and creative political leadership and government money to create the public infrastructure needed for economic growth. The need for a fast, affordable and open Internet is clear, but neither Montpelier nor Washington has a plan or the leadership to do it.

While our international competitors have created this infrastructure, our political leaders seem content to leave America as a digital backwater. This is not acceptable. We need a national broadband policy that will erase the digital divide, foster innovation and create a telecommunication network that's second to none.

It will take a combination of business and government, with plenty of public input, to accomplish this job, particularly in rural areas such as Vermont. The time to begin is now.

The Brattleboro Reformer's executive editor is Tom D'Errico.

Career Civil Servant Refuses to Honor Helms

In North Carolina, a career government official has been forced to take early retirement for refusing to honor the late Senator Jesse Helms. The official, L.F. Eason, spent 29 years at the North Carolina Department of Agriculture. On Monday, Eason instructed staffers at his laboratory to ignore a statewide directive to fly the US and state flags at half-staff in honor of Helms' death last week. Eason was told he could obey the directive or retire early. Eason chose the latter, writing, "I simply do not feel it is appropriate to honor a person whose epitaph of government service was to have voted against or blocked every civil rights issue that came before the US Congress. His doctrine of negativity, hate, and prejudice cost North Carolina and our nation much that we may never regain."

—*Democracy Now!* 10 July 2008

Rights Without Duties

Gandhi's "Eighth Blunder"

by Prof. Joseph Wronka, Springfield College, May 2008

Mahatma Gandhi enumerated Seven Social Sins in Young India, 1925. His grandson Arun Gandhi preferred to call them "blunders" and added an eighth: Rights Without Responsibilities.

Each human right—shelter, medical care, education, and so forth—seems self-evident. But on close examination, human rights are interdependent and every right has a corresponding duty. The right to health care, for example, requires the duty to eat nutritious foods and exercise regularly; the right to food requires the duty to grow food in sustainable ways, and not to over-consume. The right to education necessitates that instructors prepare for class, that students do the readings, and that both engage in creative dialog.

Gandhi, when asked in 1947 for his input to Eleanor Roosevelt's drafting committee on a Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), reiterated the words of his "wise but illiterate mother" who spoke of the importance of doing "one's duties" to the world as a "world citizen".

Human rights are interdependent and indivisible. The right to medical care (UDHR Article 25) can be implemented only if there are educated health workers, which requires implementing the right to education (Art. 26), good jobs at reasonable wages and working conditions (Art. 23), time off for rest so that workers can function adequately (Art. 24), a "just social and international order in which rights can be realized" (Art.28), and "duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of the human personality is possible" (Art. 29).

Human rights entail government obligations. A "just order" can be described as a system that places priority on human need and development rather than profit and monetary gain. Individuals have duties to keep healthy but government and many of the private enterprises it works with, like media, have the public responsibility to create socially just order consistent with the thrust of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

For example, the No Child Left Behind Act emphasizes standardized testing, about which even one of its founders, Alfred Binet, had reservations that it may be used against the poor. That act has resulted in numerous cutbacks in salubrious features of schooling such as recess, music, and art, violating the right to participate in the cultural life of the community (Art. 27). How, then, can our little ones grow up if so constrained by "government, our omnipresent teacher"?—Justice Brandeis.

A notable attempt at emphasizing duties in human rights discourse is the *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities* proposed in 1997 by the InterAction Council, comprised of 25 former heads of state—Jimmy Carter, Helmut Schmidt, etc.: "The concept of human obligations serves to balance the notions of freedom and responsibility—while rights relate more to freedom, obligations are associated with responsibility. The two are interdependent... Without a proper balance, unrestricted freedom is as dangerous as imposed social responsibility. Great social injustices have resulted from extreme economic freedom and capitalist greed, while at the same time cruel oppression of people's basic liberties has been justified in the name of society's interests or communist ideals."

Thus responsibilities for persons and government mirror millennia of global collective wisdom—Eastern and Western—to do our duties to our neighbor. ●

Sen. Obama supported it, just like Clinton.

When the Supreme Court, in a rare exception to a rash of reactionary rulings in the past few weeks, overturned a state law authorizing the death penalty for the rape of a child, Obama stood up for the death penalty, saying that he thought states should have the right to kill anyone who would sexually abuse a child. I guess he must think the states should be able to kill people convicted of killing someone too, since murder has to be at least as nasty as child rape. Another Clinton position. Never mind that most of the people who get the death penalty are persons of color, and that almost all the 4000 people on America's bulging death rows are either poor, desperately poor, retarded or simply insane. Never mind that rape is one of the most likely crimes to lead to wrongful convictions.

Barack was out there dissing black dads, too, charging them, as a class, with abandonment of their children, even though studies show that black fathers are no less likely to abandon their kids than are white dads. Okay, that's not really a Hillary position. It's more akin to Bill Clinton's attacks on prominent blacks like Jesse Jackson or Sister Soulja during his campaigns for higher office.

It's getting harder and harder to see any light between Obama's and Hillary's positions on the Iraq War too, what with Obama backing away from his earlier campaign pledge to end the war within 16 months of taking office and saying instead that he would "listen to the generals" and that withdrawal would depend upon the situation on the ground.

Finally, Obama, after showing a remarkable ability to inspire tons of small donations and support from individuals, and to fund a huge national campaign without much in the way of corporate support, is greedily slurping from Hillary's cesspool of corporate backers, now that she's out of the way. Soon, he'll be wallowing in tainted cash from Wall Street commercial and investment banks and hedge funds, telecom companies, defense contractors, Big Pharma companies, the HMO industry, and the entertainment industry. He'll be owned like just about every other politician in Washington.

The transmogrification of an upstart people's candidate for 'change' into just another front man for the corporatocracy will be complete.

Hillary will have won, but in the corporal form of Barack Obama.

The joke, of course, is that this evocation by Obama of his inner Clinton is not going to win him many votes, and may in fact lose him far more than he gains. Being Clinton, after all, didn't win it for Hillary Clinton. It was Obama's differences from Clinton that won him the primary votes.

Clintonian positions didn't really win the presidency for Bill Clinton either. It was Ross Perot who won the 1992 election for Clinton, by stealing enough votes from George Bush Sr. to let Clinton win with a mere plurality of the votes cast. There won't be any Ross Perot this year, though, so Obama can't hope to squeak by with a minority of the votes cast the way Bill did. In fact there will be at least two candidates—a Green Party one [Cynthia McKinney] and Ralph Nader—who will be picking off some of the people Obama's imitation of Clinton will turn off sufficiently for them to abandon him. There will also be a Libertarian candidate running, whose outspoken opposition to the war will attract disillusioned erstwhile Obama backers. Many more voters may just stay home in disgust. (It was also Al Gore's decision to run a Clintonesque campaign or triangulation and pursuit of those elusive "mainstream" voters that made his run against Bush in 2000 close enough for the election to be

stolen.)

Meanwhile, those Hillary primary voters Obama seems intent on pursuing at the expense of the progressive vote—the pro-Israel hawks in New York and Florida, the “hard-working whites” of the West Virginia hollers, the Pennsylvania hills and the flatlands of Ohio and Indiana aren’t going to vote for him just because he adopts Hillary’s positions. They’ll want the real deal, not just a front man posing as a front woman, so they’ll go for John McCain (just as they would have in November had Hillary won the nomination).

You gotta ask why a guy who had it all going for him is suddenly making such incredibly bad strategic decisions. It has to be either that he’s brought on board too many Clinton backers, or that his own strategists have lost confidence in their own game plan. In his bid for Democratic Party “unity” Obama has sold whatever soul he once had. He has met the enemy, and he has become her.

Dave Lindorff's most recent book is "The Case for Impeachment" (St. Martin's Press, 2006). His work is available at www.thiscantbehappening.net.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

We Need Real Change

Give Autonomy A Chance, Bit By Bit

So “what is to be done?” The easiest non-action would be dreaming that Obama, once in office, would progressively reverse each Clintonian assertion, substituting the right thing. No. Even if his heart—or some compassionate advisers—told him to do that, he has already laced himself into a corset of corporate and zionist strategists if not ideologues. So the best we can expect is an opportunist government which will reward at least the establishment people around him and support the establishment institutions. Oh yes, we may get a Department of Peace and Nonviolence—a bone to Dennis Kucinich fans—but the Departments of Defense and of Homeland Security will go on, fulsomely funded.

Another fantasy is that Obama is another Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Under adversity—FDR’s was depression, segregation, and rising fascism; Obama’s will be depression, militarism, international scorn, and ecological disaster—FDR yielded in substantial manner to progressive voices, and “saved capitalism from demands for socialism”. FDR’s social-democratic advances became established—until the triumph of the Trilateralists in the mid 1970s—because of The Good War: we were definitely the good guys fighting the really bad guys. WWII devastated Europe, released its colonies, and put the USA on top.

Currently we have a Bad War: we are the Lying Guys—the fake democrats of the world stealing others’ resources and undermining democratic movements, and in the process undermining domestic democracy with emergency presidential orders and a shadowy Security & Prosperity Partnership embracing all of North America. (Damn! Those South American commies are making out!)

So that leaves us at Square One. Carry on! Except that we need to redirect our energies from street marches and Saturday rallies on the Common to conceiving alternative systems and moving into boardrooms and TV studios. Electoral politics? Yes, we must punish the corrupt politicians, like Nancy Pelosi, who took telecommunication corporations’ money and gave them immunity from prosecution for—however it’s phrased—treason: using the anti-spying Fourth Amendment for toilet paper.

But electoral politics is the heart of the system, perpetuating “representative government” which is systemically corrupted and

entirely inappropriate for a constituency of three hundred million people to have a single “decider”—or even a constituency of up-to-twenty million people to be represented by two senators. Winner take all.

The 1880s’ Robber Barons—rising megacorporations, really—were enabled by the Social Darwinian notion of Corporate Personhood, and it’s been downhill ever since. Through electoral politics the giant corporations killed the brave Populist movement, went on to co-opt regulatory agencies, and conditioned industrial unions by the straw man of “communism” to negotiate selfish, short-term issues—union as corporation.

The giant corporations have used money not only to finance presidential candidates and to bribe our “representatives” to revise the law in their favor, but to lull the public into accepting the rotten system by their buying the television and radio networks and making millionaires of their right-wing propagandists—Ronald Reagan, for one. And after his dotage to give him a royal funeral.

State socialism has failed. State corporatism (fascism) repeatedly fails. “Free-market” corporatism proves to be insane, killing its mother Earth and eating its young (consumers with less and less money to support the corporations). True (risk-) capitalism exists only on paper. Representative republics fall to corporate subsidies through electoral bribery, and the revolving door of board membership and contracts.

What’s left? Perhaps forms of governance yet unheard of. I’ll suggest one example: a government where the total budget is divided among parties according to each party’s vote count (rather than winner-take-all) where parties implement their favorite programs—their senate being a sort of forum for reconciling varied programs.

But maybe the basic problem is the hypertrophy—cancerous bloating—of nationalism. An age-old solution, practiced widely, is break-up of the nation—autonomy (partial independence) or secession (full independence). The South tried secession, and Lincoln’s army wouldn’t have it. But to achieve regional autonomy, nibbling away may work—a method corporations know. And the small polity, with less than fifteen million people, can make green development, participatory budgeting, and other democratic forms work while mustering nonviolent methods of policing and defense.

The difference between the corporate way and the civil way may be that as they nibble the corporations grow fatter. When civil societies gain independence through economic self-reliance, for example, they grow leaner—but healthier. It may take defiance of the federal supreme court, and courage facing military threat—both of these institutions currently have partisan axes to grind. But as Mother Nature’s shadow grows closer, leaner and more democratic may prove better.

—Dave Lewit

Medical Tourism

...refers to the outsourcing of medical surgeries, just as major firms have been outsourcing both factory and white-collar work to low-wage nations. “More and more insurance companies are paying patients to go to places like India for hip and knee replacements, bypass surgery, and other operations,”... There were 150,000 medical-tourist operations last year. It started with cosmetic surgery, but now medical tourism has really expanded because insurers can pay just 1/10th or 1/20th the cost they do here. —Roger Bybee

Preventive health care, anyone? It's "local".

ACTION ALERT

Deadline for New 9/11 Investigation

Be A Hero This Weekend In New York !

by David Ray Griffin (viewed 20 July)

Although I was not able to be present at the rally either in person or by telephone, I wanted to express my strong support for the NYC 9/11 Ballot Initiative.

There has never been a better time to get such an initiative on the ballot, because the 9/11 Truth Movement's case against the official account of 9/11 is now extremely strong---much stronger than it was just two years ago.

For example, new evidence has been brought forth to show that the official account of the destruction of the Twin Towers and WTC 7 cannot possibly be true. The NIST Report has been shown to be completely inadequate, and a former employee of NIST has spoken out to verify what we already suspected---that NIST has become totally politicized, so that its scientists are little more than "hired guns."

Besides the fact that the NIST Report has been discredited, so has The 9/11 Commission Report. Philip Shenon's book has made public what we in the movement have long known, that the 9/11 Commission was controlled by a man, Philip Zelikow, who represented the Bush-Cheney White House. Shenon even shows that Zelikow had outlined the whole report before the Commission's staff had begun its work.

Moreover, some central pillars of the official account have been demolished by the FBI. It has said it has no hard evidence that Osama bin Laden was responsible for the attacks, that there were no cell phone calls from passengers to relatives from any of the planes, and that Barbara Olson's famous phone call from Flight 77 to her husband, Solicitor General Ted Olson, never happened.

Equally important, there has been a tremendous influx of professionals with relevant kinds of expertise in the movement---military officers, pilots, CIA and other intelligence officials, architects, and engineers. A few years ago, critics ridiculed our claims about the World Trade Center by saying that these claims were not supported by any architects and engineers. But in the past year, some 400 architects and engineers have signed Richard Gage's petition for a new investigation.

Accordingly, if there IS a new investigation, and if it is this time a GENUINE investigation, there can be little doubt what the outcome will be. As I argued in *Debunking 9/11 Debunking*, the evidence that 9/11 was an inside job is overwhelming. The only task is to get people to look at the evidence.

I hope, therefore, that many dozens of people make the commitment to go out in the next few weeks to gather signatures. We know from polls that close to 50% of residents of NYC were already suspicious of the official story several years ago. There are, accordingly, more than enough people out there willing to sign the petition. All that is necessary is enough people to commit themselves to work enough hours to gather those signatures.

If you help get this initiative on the ballot, your name will surely be included in the universe's list of heroes.

DIRECTIONS: Call Les Jamieson or Doug Wight at (718) 492-2192 immediately or email Doug: wellness15@yahoo.com to make arrangements to go down to NYC to help out---collecting signatures, or to transcribe collected signatures afterward, right here in Boston. **ONE-DAY ROUND-TRIP:** Buses from

South Station: \$15 and 4 hours each way. **OFFICIAL DEADLINE:** July 31. **DETAILS** at www.nyc911initiative.org/. **IN SUM:** The NYC 9/11 Ballot Initiative Campaign is committed to a thorough, transparent, and non-partisan examination of the facts surrounding the crimes of September 11, 2001, to be accomplished through the creation of an independent, investigative body, a Citizen's Commission, with subpoena power. The Commission, staffed by competent, professional individuals of the highest caliber, will be mandated to search for the truth, wherever that search leads, without prejudice or preconception, and to recommend the best course, as they see it, to achieve justice for all those involved in, and affected by, the 9/11 terror attacks. The full ballot initiative would appoint 15 people, including former Alaska Senator Gravel, former Rhode Island Senator Lincoln Chaffee, activists, and representatives of 9/11 victims' families. The commission would rely on private financing, with a budget of \$10 million a year.

CHAPTER NEWS (Continued from Page 1)

(Dave had attended a meeting of NH trade activists including commission members **Arnie Alpert** and State Rep **Susie Nord** on 25 June.) Vermont Asst Attorney General **Elliot Burg** explained to the commissioners how Vermont's trade commission used hearings and legal handholds to affect pro-corporate US trade agreements. The NH commission proceeded to set up their first hearing... Meanwhile, a MA commission waits on the passage of our Globalization Impact Bill, which will not emerge from Rules Committee this legislative session, and will depend on our activist efforts beginning in January. Meantime, we need to consult with Rep. **Byron Rushing** to improve/update the bill.

Returning from a 4th of July event in Vermont, Cynthia Ritsher and Dave Lewit dialoged with VT state police **Sgt Morton** about Democracy Protection. He stressed how Homeland Security uses \$\$ for local staffing to entice police reluctantly into Homeland Security work... Meanwhile Dave is spanning bureaucratic hurdles in dealing with Boston police and ACLU...

TO PARTICIPATE: Call **Barbara Clancy:** 781-894-1179.

JOIN THE BCA

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

Please help us as we fight to make a better future for ourselves and our children --- Join the Boston/Cambridge Alliance for Democracy. (Cut out or copy this form and send it to Dave Lewit, 271 Dartmouth St. #2h, Boston, MA 02116.)

- BOSTON-CAMBRIDGE ALLIANCE for DEMOCRACY PLEDGE
- ___ \$26/Year - "Count me in!"
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