

# BCA Dispatch

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

Newsletter of the **March-April**  
**Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy** 2010

*Washington is where principles go to die.*  
—Jonathan Turley

## COMMUNITY NOTES

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

BCA Dispatch is going bi-monthly! But wait—each issue will have double the material. Can you handle that? You'll have an extra month to read it!.. Why? Because your editor and helpers need time to get on with new projects. Read on...

### Common Good

Dave Lewit will soon be editor of a Common Good web site—that's the tentative name of an institute or movement to bring together splintered, specialized movements of the left—health care, labor, women, immigration, globalization, localization, peak oil, climate change, and so on—springing from a shared philosophy. Theologian **John Cobb**, who reads the *Dispatch*, sensed in it the kind of thinking that underlies Process Theology—systemic thinking that is concerned with suffering (hell) and beauty (heaven), diversity and change, striving and realizing, community and reintegration. He and theologian-pastor **Ignacio Castuera**, both of the Claremont CA university community, asked Dave to join them to start the movement, with folks who are potential writers or steering committee members, or can help with technical services. If you are interested, please contact Editor (p.16).

*(Continued on page 16 >>)*

## 9/11 Truth Going Mainstream

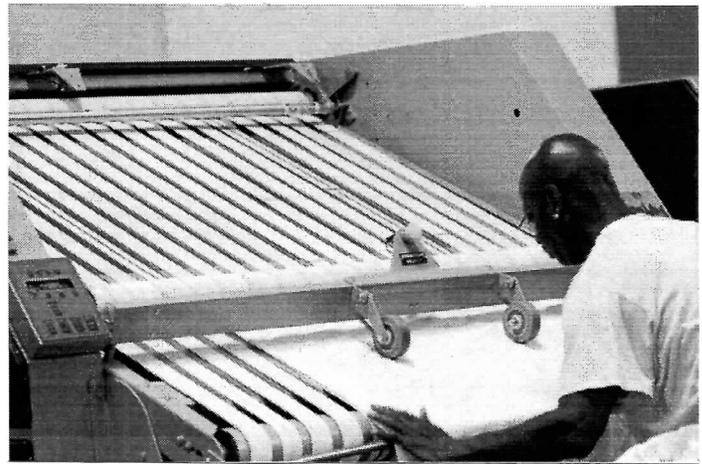
### Europe Watches, US Largely In the Dark

by Elizabeth Woodworth, *globalresearch.ca*, 15 Feb 2010  
*(Excerpts)*

IN THE PAST YEAR, in response to emerging independent science on the 9/11 attacks, nine corporate, seven public, and two independent media outlets aired examinations of the issue, which were all—with the exception of the National Geographic special—reasonably objective, examining the issue as a legitimate scientific controversy worthy of debate (not as "conspiracy theorists" vs. science and common sense). [Note: Since 2001 National Geographic Channel has been a joint venture between National Geographic Ventures and Fox Cable Networks, a right-wing organization. —Ed.]

Eight countries—Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and Russia—have allowed their publicly-owned broadcasting stations to air the full spectrum of evidence challenging the truth of the official account of 9/11.

These developments may reflect a relaxation in the international media following the change *(Continued on Page 6 >>)*



*At Evergreen's industrial laundry — the first of a complex of large co-ops in Cleveland, Ohio*

## Giant Co-ops in Cleveland US Beyond Capitalism and State Socialism

by Gar Alperovitz, Ted Howard & Thad Williamson,

*The Nation*, 11 Feb 2010

SOMETHING IMPORTANT IS HAPPENING IN CLEVELAND: a new model of large-scale worker- and community-benefiting enterprises is beginning to build serious momentum in one of the cities most dramatically impacted by the nation's decaying economy. The Evergreen Cooperative Laundry (ECL)—a worker-owned, industrial-size, thoroughly "green" operation—opened its doors late last fall in Glenville, a neighborhood with a median income hovering around \$18,000. It's the first of ten major enterprises in the works in Cleveland, where the poverty rate is more than 30 percent and the population has declined from 900,000 to less than 450,000 since 1950.

The employees, who are drawn largely from Glenville and other nearby impoverished neighborhoods, are enthusiastic. "Because this is an employee-owned business," says maintenance technician and former marine Keith Parkham, "it's all up to us if we want the company to grow and succeed."

"The only way this business will take off is if people are fully vested in the idea of the company," says work supervisor and former Time-Warner Cable employee Medrick Addison. "If you're not interested in giving it everything you have, then this isn't the place you should be." Addison, who also has a record, is excited about the prospects: "I never thought I could become an owner of a major corporation. Maybe through Evergreen things that I always thought would be out of reach for me might become possible."

These are not your traditional small-scale co-ops. The Evergreen model draws heavily on the experience of the Mondragon Cooperative Corporation in the Basque Country of Spain, the world's most successful large-scale cooperative effort (now employing 100,000 workers in an integrated network of more than 120 high-tech, industrial, service, construction, financial and other largely cooperatively owned businesses).

The Evergreen Cooperative Laundry, the flagship of the Cleveland effort, aims to take advantage of the expanding demand for laundry services from the healthcare industry, which is 16 percent of GDP and growing. After a six-month initial "probationary" period, employees begin to buy into the company through payroll deductions of 50 cents an hour over three years (for a total of \$3,000). Employee-owners are likely to build up a

\$65,000 equity stake in the business over eight to nine years—a substantial amount of money in one of the hardest-hit urban neighborhoods in the nation.

Thoroughly green in all its operations, ECL will have the smallest carbon footprint of any industrial-scale laundry in northeast Ohio, and probably the entire state: most industrial-scale laundries use three gallons of water per pound of laundry (the measure common in industrial-scale systems); ECL will use just eight-tenths of a gallon to do the same job. A second green employee-owned enterprise also opened this fall as part of the Evergreen effort. Ohio Cooperative Solar (OCS) is undertaking large-scale installations of solar panels on the roofs of the city's largest nonprofit health, education and municipal buildings. In the next three years it expects to have 100 employee-owners working to meet Ohio's mandated solar requirements. OCS is also becoming a leader in Cleveland's weatherization program, thereby ensuring year-round employment.

Another cooperative in development (\$10 million in federal loans and grants already in hand) is Green City Growers, which will build and operate a year-round hydroponic food production greenhouse in the midst of urban Cleveland. The 230,000-square-foot greenhouse—larger than the average Wal-Mart superstore—will be producing more than 3 million heads of fresh lettuce and nearly a million pounds of (highly profitable) basil and other herbs a year, and will almost certainly become the largest urban food-producing greenhouse in the country.

A fourth co-op, the community-based newspaper Neighborhood Voice, is also slated to begin operations this year. Organizers project that an initial complex of ten companies will generate roughly 500 jobs over the next five years. The co-op businesses are focusing on the local market in general and the specific procurement needs

of "anchor institutions," the large hospitals and universities that are well established in the area and provide a partially guaranteed market.

Discussions are under way with the "anchors" to identify additional opportunities for the next generation of community-based businesses. Evergreen Business Services has been launched to support the growing network by providing back-office services, management expertise and turn-around skills should a co-op get into trouble down the road.

Significant resources are being committed to this effort by the Cleveland Foundation and other local foundations, banks and the municipal government. The Evergreen Cooperative Development Fund, currently capitalized by \$5 million in grants, expects to raise another \$10-\$12 million—which in turn will leverage up to an additional \$40 million in investment funds. Indeed, this may well be a conservative estimate. The fund invested \$750,000 in the Evergreen Cooperative Laundry, which was then used to access an additional \$5 million in financing, a ratio of almost seven to one.

An important aspect of the plan is that each of the Evergreen co-operatives is obligated to pay 10 percent of its pre-tax profits back into the fund to help seed the development of new jobs through additional co-ops. Thus, each business has a commit-

ment to its workers (through living-wage jobs, affordable health benefits and asset accumulation) and to the general community (by creating businesses that can provide stability to neighborhoods).

The overall strategy is not only to go green but to design and position all the worker-owned co-ops as the greenest firms within their sectors. This is important in itself, but even more crucial is that the new green companies are aiming for a competitive advantage in getting the business of hospitals and other anchor institutions trying to shrink their carbon footprint.

Far fewer green-collar jobs have been identified nationwide than had been hoped; and there is a danger that people are being trained and certified for work that doesn't exist. The Evergreen strategy represents another approach—first build the green business and jobs and then recruit and train the workforce for these new positions (and give them an ownership stake to boot).

Strikingly, the project has substantial backing, not only from progressives but from a number of important members of the local business community as well. Co-ops in general, and those in which people work hard for what they get in particular, cut across ideological lines—especially at the local level, where practicality, not rhetoric, is what counts in distressed communities. There is also a great deal of national buzz among activists and community-development specialists about "the Cleveland model." Potential applications of the model are being considered in Atlanta, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Detroit and a number of other cities around Ohio.

What's especially promising about the Cleveland model is that it could be applied in hard-hit industries and working-class communities around the nation. The model takes us beyond both traditional capitalism and traditional social-

ism. The key link is between national sectors of expanding public activity and procurement, on the one hand, and a new local economic entity, on the other, that "democratizes" ownership and is deeply anchored in the community. In the case of healthcare the link is also to a sector in which some implicit or explicit form of "national planning"—the movement toward universal healthcare—will all but certainly increase public influence and concern with how funds are used.

Whereas the Cleveland effort is targeted at very low-income, largely minority communities, the same principles could easily be applied in cities like Detroit and aimed at black and white workers displaced by the economic crisis and the massive planning failures of the nation's main auto companies. Late in October, in fact, the Mondragon Corporation and the million-plus-member United Steelworkers union announced an alliance to develop Mondragon-type manufacturing cooperatives in the United States and Canada. Says USW's Rob Witherell: "We are seeking the right opportunities to make it work, probably in manufacturing markets that we both understand."

Consider what might happen if the government and the UAW used the stock they own in General Motors because of the bailout to reorganize the company along full or joint worker-ownership lines—and if the new General Motors product line were linked to a plan to develop the nation's mass transit and rail system. Since mass transit is a sector that is certain to expand, there is every reason to plan its taxpayer-financed growth and



Gar Alperovitz

integrate it with new community-stabilizing ownership strategies. The same is true of high-speed rail. Moreover, there are currently no US-owned companies producing subway cars (although some foreign-owned firms assemble subway cars in the United States). Nor do any American-owned companies build the kind of equipment needed for high-speed rail.

In 2007 public authorities nationwide bought roughly 600 new rail and subway cars along with roughly 15,000 buses and smaller "paratransit" vehicles. Total current capital outlays on vehicles alone amount to \$3.8 billion; total annual investment outlays (vehicles plus stations and other infrastructure) are \$14.5 billion.

The Department of Transportation estimates that a \$48 billion investment in transit capital projects could generate 1.3 million new green jobs in the next two years alone. There are also strong reasons to expedite the retirement of aging buses and replace them with more efficient energy-saving vehicles with better amenities such as bike racks and GPS systems—the procurement of which would, in turn, create more jobs.

President Obama has endorsed a strategy for making high-speed rail a priority in the United States. In a January 28 appearance in Florida he announced support for rail expansion in thirteen corridors across the nation based on an \$8 billion "down payment" for investments in high-speed rail included in last year's stimulus package. The administration plans an additional \$5 billion in spending over the next five years. Interest at the state level is also strong; in November 2008 voters in California approved a \$10 billion bond to build high-speed rail.

Even more dramatic possibilities for a new industry organized on new principles are suggested by experts concerned with the impact of likely future oil shortages. Canadian scholars Richard Gilbert and Anthony Perl, projecting dramatic increases in the cost of all petroleum-based transportation, have proposed building 25,000 kilometers (about 15,000 miles) of track devoted to high-speed rail by 2025. Along with incremental upgrades of existing rail lines to facilitate increased and faster service, they estimate total investment costs at \$2 trillion (roughly \$140 billion each year for fifteen years).

All of this raises the prospect of an expanding economic sector—one that will inevitably be dominated by public funds and public planning. In the absence of an effort to create a national capacity to produce mass-transit vehicles and high-speed-rail equipment, the United States in general, and California and other regions in particular, will likely end up awarding contracts for production to other countries. The French firm Alstom, for example, is likely to benefit enormously from US contracts. The logic of building a new economic sector on new principles becomes even more obvious when you consider that by 2050 another 130 million people are projected to be living in the United States; by 2100 the Census Bureau's high estimate is more than 1 billion. Providing infrastructure and transportation for this expanding population will generate a long list of required equipment and materials that a restructured group of vehicle production companies could help produce—and, at the same time, help create new forms of ownership that anchor the economies of the local communities involved.

As reflection on transportation issues and the current ownership structure of General Motors suggests, the principles implicit in the nascent Cleveland effort point to the possibility of an important new strategic approach. It is one in which economic policy related to activities heavily financed by the public is used to create, and give stability to, enterprises that are more democratically owned, and to target jobs to communities in distress.

The model does not, of course, rely only on public funds; as in Cleveland it serves a private market and hence faces the "discipline" of the market.

We are clearly only on the threshold of developing a sophisticated near-term national policy approach like that suggested for transportation—to say nothing of the fully developed principles of a systemic alternative. The Cleveland experiment is in its infancy, with many miles to go and undoubtedly many mistakes to make, learn from and correct. On the other hand, as New Deal scholars regularly point out, historically the development of models and experiments at the local and state levels provided many of the principles upon which national policy drew when the moment of decision arrived. It is not too early to get serious about the Cleverlands of the world and the possible implications they may have for one day moving an economically decaying nation toward a new economic vision.

*Gar Alperovitz is Professor of Political Economy at the University of Maryland and author of America Beyond Capitalism: Reclaiming our wealth, our liberty, and our democracy (2004), and most recently of Unjust Deserts: How the rich are taking our common inheritance and why we should take it back (2008). He is our expert on democratic regional economies.*

## BOOK REVIEW

### Reality TV, Porn, Happy Teams, Elite The Ugly Underside of The System

**Chris Hedges.** *Empire of Illusion: The end of literacy and the triumph of spectacle.* Nation Books, 2009. 232 pp.

*Review by Dave Lewit, Alliance for Democracy, February 2010*

**C**HRIS HEDGES IS ONE OF THE HARDEST-HITTING WRITERS of the opposition. Having grown up among sensible folk in northern New England, having been a Harvard seminarian working in the inner city, and having been a foreign area reporter for prestigious newspapers and a lecturer at Ivy League universities, Hedges is prepared to express a comprehensive critique of our system. *Empire of Illusion* is an eye opener and goad to taking action to reverse our decades-long drift toward corporatist oblivion.

In five sections Hedges elaborates the numbing and bending of American minds into a state of ignorance, distraction, and finger-crossing concern for our future. The last section details the derailing of American government and its consumption by mega-corporations, with the likely emergence of fascism and/or feudalism. The first four sections take you into several pervasive illusion mills, bringing you face to face with producers, actors, and consumers.

The first is the world of "reality" television, shocking to me who long ago gave up watching TV. This genre generates expectations of winning—with fame and fortune—in a bleak world with only a few hot spots of great successes. By prepping ordinary people to be stars—or clowns or fools—for a moment of public exposure, viewers can identify with winners and spend their days dreaming of success while they suffer the marginal wages and emasculation of losers. I am reminded of the cruel fate of the protagonist in *The Blue Angel*, a 1930 German film in which a star-struck teacher is reduced to a pathetically squawking rooster at the hands of the glamorous Marlene Dietrich.

Hedges' second illusion mill—the "illusion of love"—is the pornography industry. He takes you behind the scenes and up close to porn stars (female and male), producers, and customers—and the "action" in vagina, anus, mouth, and face. Some

female porn stars make \$100,000 a year including their high-priced prostitution take, but pay a heavy price in ripped organs, degradation, drugs, emotional isolation, and medical bills. In perspective, Hedges' says:

There are some 13,000 porn films made every year in the United States, most in the San Fernando Valley in California. According to the Internet Filter Review, worldwide porn revenues, including in-room movies at hotels, sex clubs, and the ever-expanding e-sex world, topped \$97 billion in 2006. That is more than the revenues of Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo!, Apple, Netflix, and EarthLink combined. Annual sales in the United States are estimated at \$10 billion or higher. There is no precise monitoring of the porn industry. And porn is very lucrative to some of the nation's largest corporations. General Motors owns DIRECTV, which distributes more than 40 million streams of porn into American homes every month. AT&T Broadband and Comcast Cable are currently the biggest American companies accommodating porn users with the Hot Network, Adult Pay Per View, and similar themed services. AT&T and GM rake in approximately 80 percent of all porn dollars spent by consumers.

With the "illusion of wisdom" we're getting closer to the heart of the system—the elite university system as promoter of corporatism and preserver of the elite classes in America. Liberal arts colleges have largely passed away in favor of career-oriented schools within universities, abandoning education in critical thinking while cranking out narrowly manipulative functionaries. With more and more trustees from the business sector, university administrations are run like corporations beholden to profit-oriented corporate donors, rather than supporting communities of imaginative learning. Thus, in Hedges' opinion, "Don't expect them [elite graduates] to save us. They don't know how. They do not even know how to ask the questions. And when it all collapses, when our rotten financial system with its trillions in worthless assets implodes and our imperial wars end in humiliation and defeat, the power elite will be exposed as being helpless, and as self-deluded, as the rest of us."

A Princeton graduate myself, I am a bit uncomfortable with Hedges' sweeping condemnation of elite private universities (as well as the elite University of California at Berkeley). Born into a comfortable but far from elite family, I had the good fortune of relating to social psychologist Hadley Cantril as my teacher and undergraduate thesis adviser. Father of public opinion research, his mind and works spread wide and deep over politics, sociology, history, psychology, optics, and philosophy. Perhaps I wound up a sort of independent elitist, forever questioning authority and wanting to reframe issues. Still, I have long been aware of the tyranny of grant availability's shaping research, whether directly corporate from foundations or indirectly from corporate-influenced government. And I have been aware of departmental management, hiring, and promotions as influenced by cooperation with—or subordination to—corporate-driven university values.

Hedges lives in Princeton and taught there decades after my experience there. Maybe things had changed academically, especially with the displacement of the manufacturing economy by the globalizing finance economy. But most likely he focused on its text assignments, dominant social groupings, and job placements rather than the occasional broadly thinking professor. He does see America divided between a literate minority and a non-reading majority, led by an intolerant corporatist elite.

Back to illusions—"the illusion of happiness" is next. Here Hedges scorches the "quack science" of "positive psychology"

and it's proponents in industry and academia, sometimes in service to the military and secret government agencies. It calls for individual mental bootstrapping using the corporate model rather than critical thinking and experimentation in free consultation with unspecified others. Only believe (with anxiety-based group support) and happiness (as well as compliance) is yours (and theirs). The application of "positive" theory is akin to industrial quality circles, fraternity initiation, religious cults, and Chinese thought reform as well as ideological social movements. Ever the pessimist, Chris Hedges emphasizes the corporate-control side of people's wishes to be both free and secure. Truth is, we are both blessed and damned by having to live in society.



Chris Hedges

With regard to despised organization development exercises, Hedges fails to go one step beyond the individual trait model of man (or the employee)—to propose using the same group framework to develop conceiving and building new organization and societal forms: a structural rather than personality and group approach. Actually both approaches are used in some business schools such as MIT's Sloan School of Management, though their highly rewarded application is almost always with giant corporations, national government, and the military establishment.

*Empire of Illusion's* long, final chapter deals with the US corporate empire writ large. Hedges eulogizes Sheldon Wolin, also drawing from John Ralston Saul's historical perspective on bureaucracy and Seymour Melman's comprehensive assessment of costs and alternatives to the war economy. Wolin develops a concept of "inverted totalitarianism" wherein anonymous business leaders in Constitutional and pseudo-scientific garb replace the shouting, charismatic dictator of fascist and ancient imperial times. They control information through media (including movies and books), schools, and public relations, making "natural" their agenda and "truths". In detail, Saul likens today's bureaucrats, editors, and lobbyists to "courtiers" of past empires, now working for the corporate elite.

Melman (whose name Hedges consistently misspells) shows how a defense-industry economy turns the notion of competition and free markets on its head. Content with excoriating corporatism, Hedges fails to feature Melman's emphasis on conversion from wasteful military production to socially invigorating green development. How can he miss the constructive teachings of Melman as well as of Karl Polanyi, whose social economics he also features? Hedges complains that the opposition "has no coherent and realistic plan". Why then does he not speculate on the means of change—of both persons and their system? Instead, in his final two paragraphs, he inexplicably leaps to a symbolic solution: Love.

Trained in theology, Hedges asserts that love will absolutely prevail over the massive corruption and institutionalized corporatism that our children have grown up with. He offers us love as a magical potion, though earlier he had ridiculed magical potions offered by positive psychologists. Love is not spelled out. Is love the *illusory* holy grail? Gandhi is nowhere mentioned. Gandhi had not only developed systematic defiance of the imperial system, but had emphasized and tried constructing and living an alternative system based on love and sacrifice.

Like Noam Chomsky, Chris Hedges builds a seductive and fact-laden case against corporatism, but it is left to us make our social, cultural, and political revolution. ■

## Europe Leads

### More Productive, Democratic Than US

by Steven Hill, *social-europe.eu*, 18 January 2010

**I**N RECENT MONTHS, EUROPE HAS LEARNED SOME HARD LESSONS about its transatlantic partner. President Barack Obama triggered great hope when he replaced George W. Bush at the American helm. But a year later, especially following Obama's failure to produce anything of substance at Copenhagen, Europeans are realizing that Obama is going to have a difficult time delivering on a new American agenda.

Why is Obama so unable to match his lofty speeches with concrete deeds? There are two major reasons.

First, despite his inspiring rhetoric, Obama is no social democrat or even a Franklin Roosevelt. He is a pragmatic Democrat with some progressive sympathies, but like Bill Clinton he will not allow his progressive leanings to get in the way of his pragmatism. Second, and partly the cause of his pragmatism, he needs votes from 60 out of 100 senators to get any major policy passed—meaning that the 40 Republican senators (who represent only a third of the nation), joined by a single conservative Democrat, can halt everything. It's the worst form of 'minority rule', and as a result America can't even get right something as basic as health care.

Obama is probably the best leader America can produce; yet even he can't deliver because the American political system, rooted in its 18th century origins, is too antiquated and backward. This situation will not change anytime soon due to the difficulties of amending the US Constitution.

So the US will remain by far the largest per capita polluter in the world; it will continue to foot drag over re-regulation of the global financial system that it caused to melt down; it will resist badly needed domestic reform that would make it a manufacturing nation again instead of remaining a debtor nation; America's leaders will continue to refuse to give families and workers the support and security they deserve; and they will continue to spend money the nation can ill afford on military escapades in the Middle East, as Obama prods Europe to join him in his folly. This is Obama's America.

But Obama's failures only continue the American slide that began at the start of the decade. A gradual shift in geopolitical power has been occurring, which some have called the "post-American world". Even US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has acknowledged that American primacy is over and the world is suddenly multipolar. The United States is still a strong power, but this shift has been a shock to Americans, some of whom are still in denial.

So what should be Europe's strategy in this post-American world? First and foremost, Europe must remain the beacon of social democracy, which can be defined as the attempt to harness the dynamic, wealth-creating engine of capitalism so that its prosperity is both broadly shared and ecologically sustainable. I refer to this as the European Way, a development model that is the most humane in history. If the European Way didn't exist, we would have to invent it.

But as the world stares into the face of the twin challenges of the current economic crisis and global warming, the fate of this European Way hangs in the balance. To defend it, Europe needs to know what is precious about it, and what is worth defending.

First, the European Way is founded on a 'social capitalism' that has produced the world's largest trading bloc, nearly a third

of the world's economy, almost as large as the US and China combined, with more Fortune 500 companies than even the US. Yet unlike America's 'Wall Street capitalism,' Europe's brand provides real support for families and workers. Hardly a 'welfare state,' Europe's social capitalism is an ingenious 'workfare' framework that better supports families and individuals to help them stay healthy and productive in an age of global capitalism that, left to its own devices, would turn us all into internationally disposable workers.

A key to Europe's harnessing of the capitalist engine has been regulations fostering a measure of economic democracy and control over corporations, resulting in practices like co-determination, works councils, cooperatives, public-private partnerships, and a vibrant small business sector, which provides two-thirds of all jobs in Europe. In addition, the European Way is founded on pluralistic political institutions that have fostered a vibrant multi-party democracy, including proportional representation, public financing of campaigns, free media time for parties, universal voter registration, a robust public broadcasting sector, and other important democratic advances. It has fostered the 'green economy,' deploying widespread use of conservation and renewable energy technologies, which has produced an 'ecological footprint' that is half that of the United States, even as it has created hundreds of thousands of new jobs.

These 'fulcrum institutions' are the very foundations of the European Way, and I am sometimes struck by how many Europeans take them for granted, apparently unaware of their uniqueness and value. Europe must defend them and not allow anti-democratic forces to wear them down. Despite all its own imperfections and inconsistencies, and its soul-searching and doubts, Europe must recognize that it is now the key leader among multiple leading nations of the world. Europe now is what Ronald Reagan once called America—"the shining City on the Hill", pointing the way amidst the darkness of the storm.

It is Europe's time to lead. Europe, are you ready?

*Steven Hill is director of the Political Reform Program at the New America Foundation. His latest book, published this month, is Europe's Promise: Why the European Way Is the Best Hope for an Insecure Age.*

## Germany: 1, US: 0

### Who's Afraid of Big Bad Socialism?

by Thomas Geoghegan, *Harper's Mag*, March 2010 (excerpt)

**A**LL MY LIFE AS A LABOR LAWYER I have read the same thing in *The Economist*, about the United States and its wonderful labor-market flexibility. What they mean is: Unlike the Germans, U.S. working people are completely powerless. But it's precisely because of our labor-market flexibility that we can't compete.

Our workers have been flexed right out of their high-wage, high-skill jobs and into low-wage, low-skill jobs. That's bad for the workers, of course, and it's also bad for the economy. The German model—with worker control built into the very structure of the firm—keeps bosses and workers in groups, rubbing elbows with each other, and sometimes just elbowing. It creates a group interaction that over time builds and protects what economists like to call human capital, especially in engineering and quality control. It's precisely this kind of valuable capital that our atomizing "flexible" labor markets are so good at breaking up and dispersing.

Yes, there's much to like about the U.S. model. In global com-

petition, the United States has almost every comparative advantage over Germany. We spend vastly more on basic research than the Germans do. We have much more land, more labor, more capital, much higher levels of formal education. But with our flexible labor markets we cannot develop human capital or knowledge to wean ourselves away from turning out crap and leaving the high-skill manufacturing to the Europeans.

The one great comparative advantage of Germany is that it is a social democracy. Germany has its problems, and I take them seriously. But I'm also sure that German companies will lead the next industrial revolution, the "green" one, while we in the United States will merely watch.

If you ask most Democrats and their think-tank minions how to help our powerless middle class, they have no answer except to send even more of them to college, where with luck they get out being only \$50,000 or so in debt. As for high school graduates who make up the base of the party, we effectively tell them: You're finished. There's no role for high school graduates in our version of the global economy. In Germany, these same high school graduates could be sitting on a corporate board. Skeptical readers will say: Oh, but that's Europe, it's socialism, something like that is not possible here. I think it's quite possible.

I now have stopped underlining and re-reading Wolfgang Streeck's great 1996 essay, "German Capitalism: Does It Exist? Can It Survive?" Still, I recall his central, disheartening point that the German model, with its works councils and the rest, was simply too hard to replicate in other countries. In the end, global capitalism would force Germany itself into our simpler, top-down Anglo-American model.

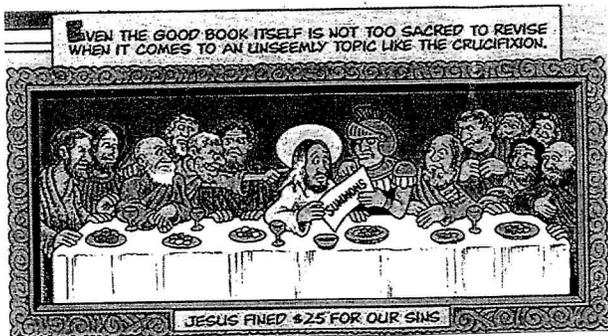
But it turns out, at least in the European Union, that other countries are now keen on experimenting with co-determination and works councils.\* "Co-determination is our biggest export," a former official in the German government told me. As it spreads through Europe, we may come to understand the German model as not just a rival but a better form of capitalism. It only takes a change in law. Maybe we'll decide one day, simply out of patriotism, that we have no other choice.

Is it likely? No. Is it possible? Yes. At any rate, it's just nonsense that "Europe's way" and "our way" can never be the same. We may have messed up our part in globalization, but we still have time to fix things. It may be even easier in this wired world to exercise our greatest privilege as Americans—to astonish ourselves by *being* American and making a European idea of democracy our own.

\* Co-determination: By law, workers elect 50% of board members. Shareholder's chosen CEO can break a tie vote.

Works council: By law, worker representatives can veto management decisions; hence, they cooperate.

Wage-setting institutions: By law, multi-employer bargaining equalizes wages across sector. ■



in the US and British leaderships.

These developments definitely reflect, in any case, the fact that scientists in the 9/11 Truth Movement have recently succeeded in getting papers, such as the nano-thermite paper, published in peer-reviewed journals.

These developments surely also reflect the general professionalism of the 9/11 Truth Movement, as exemplified by the emergence of not only Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth but also Firefighters, Intelligence Officers, Lawyers, Medical Professionals, Pilots, Political Leaders, Religious Leaders, Scholars, and Veterans for 9/11 Truth.

These developments seem to reflect, moreover, an increased recognition of the importance of the 9/11 Truth Movement, which is demonstrated by two honors given to its most influential member, Dr. David Ray Griffin, that would have been unthinkable only a few years ago: the choice by Publishers Weekly of one of his books as a "Pick of the Week," and his inclusion in the New Statesman's list of the most important people in the world today.

This more open approach taken in the international media—I could also have included the Japanese media – might be a sign that worldwide public and corporate media organizations are positioning themselves, and preparing their audiences, for a possible revelation of the truth of the claim that forces within the US government were complicit in the attacks—a revelation that would call into question the publicly given rationale for the military operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

The evidence now being explored in the international media may pave the way for the US media to take an in-depth look at the implications of what is now known about 9/11, and to re-examine the country's foreign and domestic policies in the light of this knowledge.

Below are summaries of three of the 18 cases located by the author:

**Case Study 1: The Dutch TV Mock Trial of Osama bin Laden, 25 Apr 2009**

On April 8, 2009, a popular TV program called "Devil's Advocate" held a mock trial of Osama bin Laden with lawyers arguing before a politically balanced civil jury of five people.

The case against bin Laden was argued by two real-world opponents: former American correspondent Charles Groenhuijsen, and Dutch-American Glenn Schoen of a US security firm. Real-world lawyer Gerald Spong acted as bin Laden's defense attorney.<sup>20</sup>

Spong presented new evidence from a videotape of Professor Emeritus of Islamic Studies Gernot Rotter, saying that the American translators who transcribed the bin Laden tapes of the November 9, 2001 "confession video" have "clearly added things in many places – things that are not there even when listening multiple times."<sup>21</sup>

Spong won. Although the jury found bin Laden to be a terrorist, it said there was no proof that he had ordered the 9/11 attacks.

Through this method, this program on AVRO—the Dutch public broadcasting organization—presented evidence, not previously seen in the major media, against the likelihood that bin Laden ordered the attacks.

On April 15, Fox News reported the Dutch jury findings in a long and unusually balanced article, in which former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani was quoted six times, saying that bin Laden's exoneration sent a "disturbing message" to the world and fueled conspiracy theories. Giuliani variously called this message "bizarre," "dangerous," "aberrational," "irrational," and "unfortunate."<sup>22</sup>

However, referring to Spong as a "well-known yet controversial attorney," Fox mentioned him 10 times, and more substantively, reporting his evidence that the bin Laden videos seemed inauthentic, as well as his point that the FBI has not indicted bin Laden for the attacks.

Concluding Comment: (AVRO is publicly owned, but Fox News is

corporate.) Neither of these two mainstream treatments of doubts about the official story was broadcast on the customary anniversary date, and both reached millions of people.

### Case Study 8: Dr. Niels Harrit on NRK1's "Schrödinger's Cat," 10 Sep 2009

NRK1 is the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation's main TV channel. Its program "Schrödinger's Cat", which is about scientific research and technology, comes on every Thursday following the evening news. It has won several awards, and averages 487,000 viewers.

For the September 10 program, Dr. Harrit was interviewed for about ten minutes in his office and laboratory at the University of Copenhagen Nano-Science Center, where he demonstrated the magnetic quality of a WTC dust sample. He also showed videotape of molten iron flowing from the upper South Tower, which was iron, not aluminum (which melts at a much lower temperature than steel or iron). Emphasizing that an office fire, even if fed by jet fuel, could not possibly get hot enough to melt steel, thereby producing iron, he concluded that the flowing iron had to have been caused by something such as nano-thermite, which produces "an enormous amount of heat", and molten iron is created in the process, with a temperature of 4530 F.

Although Harrit did not know who placed the explosives, he said, he had no doubt that a crime had occurred.

In the final third of the program, three other people were asked for comments. Two of the people tried to cast doubt on Harrit's conclusions, but their comments were weak, even absurd. An architect argued that the energy from the airliners brought the Twin Towers down and then Building 7 came down because the collapse of the towers acted like an earthquake to weaken the ground. American buildings are weak, he explained, because they don't use reinforced concrete.

Finally, Dr. David Ray Griffin has stated that "for scientists and people who study the facts, the official story about the Twin Towers is completely ludicrous, but for the general public it has seemed plausible. Jet fuel fires—they seem so hot. Jet fuel's just kerosene."

Concluding Comment: (Public). This prime-time coverage by Norway's largest TV channel was quite a turnaround from the earlier NRK radio coverage in May. Most of the time was given to Drs. Harrit and Griffin; the content was groundbreaking; and the opposing views were obviously insubstantial. Considering Norway's NATO membership and military participation in the US-led operations in Afghanistan, the program could prove to be significant.

### Case Study 15: German Federal Judge Dieter Deiseroth Questions the Official 9/11 Investigation, 15 Dec 2009

Heinz Heise is a German publishing house, which publishes Europe's most popular computer and technology journals. It also owns Heise Online (heise.de), which is a top-50 site in Germany, and a top-1000 website in the world as a whole.

On December 15 2008, Heise Online carried an interview with German Federal Judge Dieter Deiseroth on the legality of the Afghanistan war and the question of whether the attacks were adequately investigated in the US.<sup>51</sup>

In his response, Deiseroth made the following points:

The 9/11 Commission consisted of Bush Administration officials who were very close to the military industrial complex.

Now, over eight years after 9/11, no independent court has applied legal procedures to review the available evidence on who was responsible for the attacks.

It is not acceptable for a constitutional state to dispense with the necessary steps in identifying suspects and instead to declare war, bomb

a foreign country where suspects reside, and place it under military occupation.

Having made the claim that bin Laden was responsible for the terrorism of 9/11, the United States was under burden of proof, and yet America's own FBI admits that it has no evidence presented in court of Osama bin Laden's responsibility for the 9/11 attacks.

Concluding Comment: (Corporate). This "top-50" online journal exposed many German people to the illegal and unconstitutional responses to the 9/11 attacks—which were the underpinning for the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—and even to questions about the truth of the official account of 9/11 itself.

*Elizabeth Woodworth is a retired professional health sciences librarian, and a freelance writer. She is the author of two published books and many articles on political and social justice issues.*

## Our Trees, Our Watershed

### The Quabbin Chainsaw Massacre

by Eric Chivian, *Boston Globe*, 27 December 2009

WITH ONE HAND, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is working to protect our land in perpetuity by encouraging people to take out conservation easements that prohibit development and restrict destructive forestry practices like clear-cutting. With the other, it is sending out its loggers—with their chainsaws, skidders, and trucks—to clear-cut and sell large swaths of state forests.

In recent years, thousands of acres have been leveled, and DCR (whose motto is "It's your nature") has plans to cut and clear thousands more. This degradation of our public lands is not at the hands of some greedy developer, but by the very officials we have entrusted to protect them.

When you are altering natural landscapes on such a scale by cutting down healthy, well-established forests teeming with life,



*MA gov allows clearcutting (snowy areas) at Quabbin Reservoir*

you had better be certain you have considered and understood all the critically important environmental and public health implications of what you are doing. I am convinced, tragically, that DCR has not done so.

These clear-cuts have been justified by the belief that they create diverse forest habitats that are healthier both for the forests and the wildlife that live there. But many leading biologists—including professor Stuart Pimm of Duke University—strongly disagree, as do countless scientific studies.

In the Quabbin Reservoir watershed alone, which purifies Boston's drinking water, DCR has clear-cut many hundreds of acres, including one healthy forest on a slope near the east branch of the Swift River (one of the main sources of water for

the Quabbin), removing majestic hundred-year-old oak trees and leaving deep muddy ruts alongside a beautiful public scenic road.

But clear-cuts are not just an aesthetic disaster. They:

- Encourage erosion and lessen watershed protection, as the root systems of a living forest hold soils together and filter out nutrients and other pollutants that foul drinking water.
- Reduce the capacity of forests to filter and detoxify air pollutants, including nitrogen oxides that can trigger heart attacks and worsen chronic respiratory diseases such as bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma. These purifying processes take place on the surfaces of leaves.
- Threaten countless animals, plants, and microbes by destroying their habitats.
- Increase populations of white-footed mice, which can thrive in these degraded areas, by wiping out some of their predators and competitors. White-footed mice are the main host for the bacteria that cause, and the ticks that transmit, Lyme disease. When forests are fragmented, people at the edges of these forests are at greater risk of getting Lyme, which can cause serious long-term health problems.

But most important, at a time when we are trying to increase every possible sink for capturing carbon dioxide so as to lessen the consequences of climate change; when we need to plant more forests, not cut down those we already have; when leading physicians and medical academies the world over are calling climate change "the greatest public health threat of the 21st Century;" and when the nations of the world just met in Copenhagen and struggled to figure out how to reduce its catastrophic impacts, the DCR, however well intentioned, is contributing to the crisis.

The science that the DCR is relying upon to justify its clear-cutting is selective, incomplete, and debatable. Until an independent and comprehensive scientific review by leading experts can show that these practices are not harmful to the environment and do not threaten public health, there needs to be a moratorium on all clear-cutting in Massachusetts state forests. As the owners of these forests, the people of Massachusetts should expect the Commonwealth, which just lost its coveted Forest Stewardship Council "green certification" because of its destructive forestry practices, to do nothing less.

*Dr. Eric Chivian, director of the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School, is co-editor and lead author of Sustaining Life: How Human Health Depends on Biodiversity.*

## **US Suicide Bomber—Not "Terrorist"?** **After All, It's Not A Democratic Government**

*by Paul Craig Roberts, OpEdNews, 22 February 2010*

**J**OSEPH STACK, FRUSTRATED AMERICAN, flew his airplane into an Austin, Texas, office building. He was one of the 79 percent of Americans who have given up on "their" government.

The latest Rasmussen Poll indicates that the vast majority of Americans are convinced that "their" government is totally unresponsive to them, their concerns, and their needs. Rasmussen found that only 21 percent of the American population agree that the U.S. government has the consent of the governed, and that 21 percent is comprised of the political class itself and liberals. Rasmussen concludes that the gap between the

American population and the politicians who rule them "may be as big today as the gap between the colonies and England during the 18th century."

Indications are that Joseph Stack was sane. Like Palestinians faced with Israeli jet fighters, helicopter gunships, tanks, missiles and poison gas, Stack realized that he was powerless. A suicide attack was the only weapon left to him.

Stack targeted the IRS, the federal agency that had gratuitously ruined him. He flew his airplane into an office building occupied by 200 members of the IRS. This deliberate plan and the written explanation he left behind segregated him from deranged people who randomly shoot up a Post Office or university campus.

The government and its propaganda ministry do not want to call Stack a terrorist. "Terrorist" is a term the government reserves for Muslims who do not like what Israel does to Palestinians and the U.S. government does to Muslim countries.

But Stack experienced the same frustrations and emotions as Muslims who can't take it any longer and strap on a suicide vest.

"Violence," Stack wrote, "not only is the answer, it is the only answer." Stack concluded that nothing short of violence will get the attention of a government that has turned its back on the American people.

Anger is building up. People are beginning to do unusual things. Terry Hoskins bulldozed his house rather than allow a bank to foreclose on it. The local TV station conducted an online survey and found that 79 percent of respondents agreed with Hoskins' action.

Perhaps the turning point was the federal government's bailout of the investment banks whose reckless misbehavior diminished Americans' retirement savings for the second time in eight years. Now a former head of the most culpable bank is campaigning to cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid benefits in order to pay for the bailout. President Obama has obliged him by creating a "deficit commission."

The "deficit commission" will be used to gut Social Security, just as the private insurance health plan is paid for by cutting \$500 billion out of Medicare.

It could not be more clear that government represents the interest groups that finance the election campaigns.

Conservatives used to say that Washington's power should be curtailed in behalf of state and local governments that are "closer to the people." But of course state and local governments are also controlled by interest groups...

*[Here, Roberts details cases in Florida where the state's Department of Environmental Policy privileges developers at the expense of local Inlet Beach property owners—not especially relevant to the Stack suicide bombing case. —Ed.]*

Joseph Stack, Terry Hoskins, and 79 percent of the American population came to the realization that government does not represent them. Government represents monied interests for whom it bends the rules designed to protect the public, thus creating a legally privileged class.

In contrast, as at the West end of Inlet Beach, ordinary citizens are being driven into the ground.

This is what we call "freedom and democracy."

*Paul Craig Roberts, a former Assistant Secretary of the US Treasury and former associate editor of the Wall Street Journal, has held numerous academic appointments. He has been reporting shocking cases of prosecutorial abuse for two decades. See new edition of his book, The Tyranny of Good Intentions. ■*

## Wehrmacht Penis Envy

### US Prizes Failed German Military

by William J. Astore, TomDispatch.com, 18 Feb 2010

"Why do people have a fixation with the German military when they haven't won a war since 1871?" —Tom Clancy

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN THE GERMAN MILITARY, especially the Wehrmacht of World War II. As a young boy, I recall building many models, not just German Panther and Tiger tanks, but famous Luftwaffe planes as well. True, I built American tanks and planes, Shermans and Thunderbolts and Mustangs, but the German models always seemed "cooler," a little more exotic, a little more predatory. And the German military, to my adolescent imagination, seemed admirably tough and aggressive: hard-fighting, thoroughly professional, hanging on against long odds, especially against the same hordes of "godless communists" that I knew we Americans were then facing down in the Cold War.

Later, of course, a little knowledge about the nightmare of Nazism and the Holocaust went a long way toward destroying my admiration for the Wehrmacht, but—to be completely hon-



est—a residue of grudging respect still survives: I no longer have my models, but I still have many of the Ballantine illustrated war books I bought as a young boy for a buck or two, and which often celebrated the achievements of the German military, with titles like Panzer Division, or Afrika Korps, or even Waffen SS.

As the Bible says, we are meant to put aside childish things as we grow to adulthood, and an uninformed fascination with the militaria and regalia of the Third Reich was certainly one of these. But when I entered Air Force ROTC in 1981, and later on active duty in 1985, I was surprised, even pleased, to discover that so many members of the U.S. military shared my interest in the German military. To cite just one example, as a cadet at Field Training in 1983 (and later at Squadron Officer School in 1992), I participated in what was known as "Project X." As cadets, we came to know of it in whispers: "Tomorrow we're doing 'Project X': It's really tough ..."

A problem-solving leadership exercise, Project X consisted of several scenarios and associated tasks. Working in small groups, you were expected to solve these while working against

the clock. What made the project exciting and more than busy-work, like the endless marching or shining of shoes or waxing of floors, was that it was based on German methods of developing and instilling small-unit leadership, teamwork, and adaptability. If it worked for the Germans, the "finest soldiers in the world" during World War II, it was good enough for us, or so most of us concluded (including me).

Project X was just one rather routine manifestation of the American military's fascination with German methods and the German military mystique. As I began teaching military history to cadets at the Air Force Academy in 1990, I quickly became familiar with a flourishing "Cult of Clausewitz." So ubiquitous was Carl von Clausewitz and his book *On War* that it seemed as if we Americans had never produced our own military theorists. I grew familiar with the way *Auftragstaktik* (the idea of maximizing flexibility and initiative at the lowest tactical levels) was regularly extolled. So prevalent did Clausewitz and *Auftragstaktik* become that, in the 1980s and 1990s, American military thinking seemed reducible to the idea that "war is a continuation of politics" and a belief that victory went to the side that empowered its "strategic corporals."

#### War as a Creative Act

The American military's fascination with German military methods and modes of thinking raises many questions. In retrospect, what disturbs me most is that the military swallowed the Clausewitzian/German notion of war as a dialectical or creative art, one in which well-trained and highly-motivated leaders can impose their will on events.

In this notional construct, war became not destructive, but constructive. It became not the last resort of kings, but the preferred recourse of "creative" warlords who demonstrated their mastery of it by cultivating such qualities as flexibility, adaptability, and quickness. One aimed to get inside the enemy's "decision cycle," the so-called OODA loop—the Air Force's version of *Auftragstaktik*—while at the same time cultivating a "warrior ethos" within a tight-knit professional army that was to stand above, and also separate from, ordinary citizens.

This idolization of the German military was a telling manifestation of a growing militarism within an American society which remained remarkably oblivious to the slow strangulation of its citizen-soldier ideal. At the same time, the American military began to glorify a new generation of warrior-leaders by a selective reading of its past. Old "Blood and Guts" himself, the warrior-leader George S. Patton—the commander as artist-creator-genius—was celebrated; Omar N. Bradley—the bespectacled GI general and reluctant soldier-citizen—was neglected. Not coincidentally, a new vision of the battlefield emerged in which the U.S. military aimed, without the slightest sense of irony, for "total situational awareness" and "full spectrum dominance," goals that, if attained, promised commanders the almost god-like ability to master the "storm of steel," to calm the waves, to command the air [and space!].

In the process, any sense of war as thoroughly unpredictable and enormously wasteful was lost. In this infatuation with German military prowess, which the political scientist John Mearsheimer memorably described as "Wehrmacht penis envy," we celebrated our ability to *Blitzkrieg* our enemies—which promised rapid, decisive victories that would be largely bloodless (at least for us). In 1991, a decisively quick victory in the Desert Storm campaign of the first Gulf War was the proof, or so it seemed then, that a successful "revolution in military affairs," or RMA in military parlance, was underway.

Forgotten, however, was this: the German Blitzkrieg of World War II ended with Germany's "third empire" thoroughly thrashed by opponents who continued to fight even when the odds seemed longest.

What a remarkable, not to say bizarre, turnabout! The army and country the U.S. had soundly beaten in two world wars (with a lot of help from allies, including, of course, those godless communists of the Soviet Union in the second one) had become a beacon for the U.S. military after Vietnam. To use a sports analogy, it was as if a Major League Baseball franchise, in seeking to win the World Series, decided to model itself not on the New York Yankees but rather on the Chicago Cubs.

### The New Masters of Blitzkrieg

Busts of Clausewitz reside in places of honor today at both the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, and the National War College in Washington, D.C. Clausewitz was a complex writer, and his vision of war was both dense and rich, defying easy simplification. But that hasn't stopped the U.S. military from simplifying him. Ask the average officer about Clausewitz, and he'll mention "war as the continuation of politics" and maybe something about "the fog and friction of war"—and that's about it. What's really meant by this rendition of *Clausewitz for Dummies* is that, though warfare may seem extreme, it's really a perfectly sensible form of violent political discourse between nation-states.

Such an officer may grudgingly admit that, thanks to fog and friction, "no plan survives contact with the enemy." What he's secretly thinking, however, is that it won't matter at all, not given the U.S. military's "mastery" of *Auftragstaktik*, achieved in part through next-generation weaponry that provides both "total situational awareness" and a decisive, war-winning edge.

No wonder that George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, and Donald Rumsfeld were so eager to go to war in Iraq in 2003. They saw themselves as the new masters of *Blitzkrieg*, the new warlords (or "Vulcans" to use a term popular back then), the inheritors of the best methods of German military efficiency.

This belief, this faith, in German-style total victory through relentless military proficiency is best captured in Max Boot's gushing tribute to the U.S. military, published soon after Bush's self-congratulatory and self-adulatory "Mission Accomplished" speech in May 2003. For Boot, America's victory in Iraq had to "rank as one of the signal achievements in military history." In his words:

"Previously, the gold standard of operational excellence had been the German blitzkrieg through the Low Countries and France in 1940. The Germans managed to conquer France, the Netherlands, and Belgium in just 44 days, at a cost of 'only' 27,000 dead soldiers. The United States and Britain took just 26 days to conquer Iraq (a country 80 percent of the size of France), at a cost of 161 dead, making fabled generals such as Erwin Rommel and Heinz Guderian seem positively incompetent by comparison."

How likely is it that future military historians will celebrate General Tommy Franks and elevate him above the "incompetent" Rommel and Guderian? Such praise, even then, was more than fatuous. It was absurd.

Throughout our history, many Americans, especially frontline combat veterans, have known the hell of real war. It's one big reason why, historically speaking, we've traditionally been reluctant to keep a large standing military. But the Cold War, containment, and our own fetishizing of the German Wehrmacht changed everything. We began to see war not as a human-made disaster but as a creative science and art. We began to seek "force multipliers" and total victory achieved through an

almost Prussian mania for military excellence.

Reeling from a seemingly inexplicable and unimaginable defeat in Vietnam, the officer corps used Clausewitz to crawl out of its collective fog. By reading him selectively and reaffirming our own faith in military professionalism and precision weaponry, we tricked ourselves into believing that we had attained mastery over warfare. We believed we had tamed the dogs of war; we believed we had conquered Bellona—that we could make the goddess of war do our bidding.

We forgot that Clausewitz compared war not only to politics but to a game of cards. Call it the ultimate high-stakes poker match. Even the player with the best cards, the highest stack of chips, doesn't always win. Guile and endurance matter. So too does nerve, even luck. And having a home-table advantage doesn't hurt either.

None of that seemed to matter to a U.S. military that aped the German military, while over-hyping its abilities and successes. The result? A so-called "new American way of war" that was simply a desiccated version of the old German one, which had produced nothing but catastrophic defeat for Germany in both 1918 and 1945—and disaster for Europe as well.

### Just Ask the Germans

Precisely because that disaster did not befall us, precisely because we emerged triumphant from two world wars, we became both too enamored with the decisiveness of war, and too dismissive of our own unique strength. For our strength was not military élan or cutting-edge weaponry or tactical finesse (these were German "strengths"), but rather the dedication, the generosity, even the occasional ineptitude, of our citizen-soldiers. Their spirit was unbreakable precisely because they—a truly democratic citizen army—were dedicated to defeating a repellently evil empire that reveled fanatically in its own combat vigor.

Looking back on my youthful infatuation with the German Wehrmacht, I recognize a boy's misguided enthusiasm for military hardness and toughness. I recognize as well the seductiveness of reducing the chaos of war to "shock and awe" *Blitzkrieg* and warrior empowerment. What amazes me, however, is how this astonishingly selective and adolescent view of war—with its fetish for lightning results, achieved by elevating and empowering a new generation of warlords, warriors, and advanced weaponry—came to dominate mainstream American military thinking after the frustrations of Vietnam.

Unlike a devastated and demoralized Germany after its defeats, we decided not to devalue war as an instrument of policy after our defeat, but rather to embrace it. Clasp Clausewitz to our collective breasts, we marched forward seeking new decisive victories. Yet, like our role models the Germans of World War II, we found victory to be both elusive and illusive.

So, I have a message for my younger self: Put aside those menacing models of German tanks and planes. Forget those glowing accounts of Rommel and his Afrika Korps. Dismiss *Blitzkrieg* from your childish mind. There is no lightning war, America. There never was. And if you won't take my word for it, just ask the Germans.

*William J. Astore (wastore@pct.edu), a retired lieutenant colonel (USAF) and TomDispatch regular, teaches history at the Pennsylvania College of Technology. To catch him in a Timothy MacBain TomCast audio interview discussing the U.S. military's fascination with the Wehrmacht, go to:*  
<http://tomdispatch.blogspot.com/2010/02/american-blitzkrieg.html>

(Continued on next page >>)

## THREE SOLDIERS

Jim! Welcome home! We press your civvies,  
give you the car. You switch on the lights,  
rev to 60, head downtown.

Along the strip our world salutes—  
Century Realty, Gallagher's Coach House,  
Danny's Liquor, Gulf Supreme—familiar as  
the scale on your night-vision goggles.

Keys in pocket, you enter a gallery,  
rev up a game—demolish the bad guys,  
rack up the score... In the din of the bar

Lisa and Linda flash yellow garters, ask for  
a password— SPEED? DEATH?

But the girls have to wait—the Patriots  
almost score...

In your living room Linda straightens her dress—  
you nod on the couch. The TV comes up Africa  
this side of the Gulf, featuring skeletal children  
and gospel/food missions.

You dream not of magical landscapes  
or of homesick soldiers, but of patriots  
pressing downfield, scoreboard lighting up.

Count Ciano was the first modern soldier.  
He'd bank his 'plane high above Sheba's  
landscape, spread like a checkered towel  
over ravioli squares, and watch his  
bombs descend, shrink like black bugs  
into their holes, to puff back magical  
blossoms—bright orange, black-fringed.  
Afterward, he'd level his 'plane and glide  
toward the base where his wife would  
toast his éclat and aproned schoolgirls  
offer up antipasti.

Odysseus' sergeant knew the world,  
the numbness of exile, his soldiers' lust  
for bucklers of gold, their longing for  
their sisters—Adriana, Ariadne, Aurelia.  
He knew the aging shepherd, took milk  
of the ewe with praise. He knew  
the boatman's prayers in local tongue,  
threw dice with him, washed with him.

He knew the whack of sword-blow  
severing at the neckbone, how to  
fetch the family priest to bless the dead  
and the living. He knew the strength  
of merciful winds on the wine-dark sea,  
the luck of finding his home intact,  
his sons alive and kneeling  
to his song.

— Dave Lewit

**Ed. Comment:** *This infatuation and objectification of war-making isn't just within the US Defense Department. As Astore confesses, it's in the boyish hearts of all who play war-simulating computer games, or in my generation, see war movies and, as children, trade bubble-gum cards of the Japanese war against China. This cultural phenomenon is of the essence in the survival of our people as well as our "enemies". Why? Just think about the diversion of a trillion dollars of our tax money from our civil necessities to the endless wars of corporate empire that 9/11 has us locked into—almost locked.*

*But there's something out of joint. As to military concerns, the US officer corps accepts blitzkrieg for the initial assault on any third-world country (maybe even Iran) followed by prolonged "low intensity" warfare to win not only governmental command, but to "win hearts and minds"—something that failed in Vietnam and is failing in Iraq Afghanistan, and Pakistan. But it is questionable whether the US public—many in solidarity with ordinary people abroad—will continue to support foreign policy based on military force, especially as our friends in NATO countries become disaffected and drop out. As corporate lobbyists coopt congressmembers (and presidents!), election campaigns become more disingenuous. We are entering a period of unfreezing of relationships with our government institutions. Incrementally over decades, the Administration has seized "emergency" powers and the authority to declare emergencies with little constraint. Our military establishment is moving toward a silent coup.*

*In the Pentagon's and the US Chamber of Commerce's battle for the hearts and minds of Americans, the line that Islam—or fundamentalist-nationalist Islam—is our "enemy" is a fraud. Most Americans know this but are afraid—or too disorganized and busy with staying afloat—to speak out. They know that the Arabs and the Afghans and the Pakistanis are fighting defensively, while the Americans (and our Israeli "allies") are the aggressors—invading, digging in (400 large and small bases in Afghanistan alone), and trying to set up puppet governments. Growing numbers realize that 9/11 is a fraud—an inside job, though it's hard to back-pedal after all this expenditure of blood and treasure, and no coherent idea of what we can put in place of war as a national effort for the common good.*

*We have not been invaded since the British burned Washington DC in 1814, unless you want to count the wave after wave of peaceful immigration which almost everyone understands as necessary—after slavery—as a workforce to expand Westward and up to 1975 to expand industry, and to enable poor people to escape poverty brought on by colonialism in its old and new forms. Now that the replacement "financial service economy" has collapsed (only to be buoyed up with guarantees we are supposed to pay if Wall Street fails again), folks may be ready to resolve the cognitive dissonance of "we support our troops" and turn away from giving the military everything the generals (and corporate leaders and their congressional beneficiaries) want.*

*We will need a cultural shift, wherein folks pay more attention to the social gospel and less to bombastic talk show hosts, fundamentalist preachers, and corporate-tied "experts". We will need to go to bat for school children, defiantly divert some of our taxes to public education funds, teach the truth about America and the real children and adults of the world, get healthy, connect with nature, and find ways to honor and be honored other than through bruiser sports and sexiness. We need to create government not in response to our gullibility but in response to the love in our hearts. ■*

## Uproar Over Corp "Speech" Even Republicans Reject Court Ruling

by Jim Hightower, *AlterNet*, 25 February 2010

**A**S YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD, CORPORATIONS ARE NOW "PEOPLE"—humanoids that are equivalent to you and me. This miraculous metamorphosis happened on Jan. 21. Accompanied by a blinding bolt of lightning, and a terrifying jolt of thunder, five Dr. Frankensteins on the Supreme Court threw a judicial switch that endowed these pulseless paper entities with the human right to speak politically.

Never mind that inanimate corporate constructs have no tongue, brain, heart or soul—the five judicial fabricators breathed unprecedented legal life into corporations, decreeing that the vast wealth held in their corporate treasuries is their voice. With a cry of "Shazam!" the court ruled that, henceforth, every corporation—from Wal-Mart to Wall Street—is entitled to "speak" by spending unlimited sums from their treasuries to elect or defeat candidates for any and all public offices in our land, from city council to the presidency.

By a bare five-to-four majority, the justices created an artificial, uber-wealthy, political monster that will overpower everyone else's voices. For example, just the 100 largest corporations have assets totaling more than \$13 trillion. No combination of human people's political organizations can amass even a tiny fraction of that spending power.

With their ruling, five unelected guys in black robes have subverted our people's sovereignty with a semantical perversion that twists special-interest things into "people" and money into "speech." In so doing, the Supreme Five have substituted their personal political views for the clearly-expressed wisdom of America's founders, every Congress since Teddy Roosevelt's time, 22 states, dozens of cities, the court's own precedents and the People themselves.

Bizarrely, the five court corporatists seemed to think that their sneak attack on America's democratic ideals was so cleverly done that it would be meekly accepted by the public and even widely applauded. Hardly. The ink of their signatures on this absurd opinion wasn't dry before the justices were pelted with ridicule. "Hey," demanded one blogger, "it's time to reinstitute the draft."

Others raised an intriguing constitutional conundrum that the Court obviously failed to contemplate. Since the 13th Amendment bans slavery, which is the ownership of a person, the newly born corporate "persons" cannot legally be bought and sold. Thus Wall Street -- now a slave market—must be shut down! Let us all join hands and march for this new civil rights cause, chanting, "Free the Corporate Slaves!"

Meanwhile, Americans of all political stripes have risen in overwhelming opposition to the court's contortion of both the Constitution and common sense. In a Washington Post-ABC poll published last week, 85 percent of Democrats, 81 percent of independents and—get this—76 percent of Republicans reject this act of gross judicial overreach.\*

So, with eight of 10 Americans decrying the decree and nearly as many demanding that it be reversed, we can expect swift and decisive action from Congress. Right?

Uh ... no. First, Republican leaders (who've consistently proven to be tail-wagging kowtowers to corporate power) flatly say they will oppose any legislation to restrict the ruling. Second, Democrats have designated Sen. Chuck Schumer to

lead their effort to undo the decision. Schumer is a notorious CEO-hugging Democrat who serves as the party's chief shaker of the corporate money tree, so sending him into this battle is like going lion hunting with a flyswatter.

Sure enough, Schumer has started by declaring that he wants a reform that can get "bipartisan support" in the Senate, and he is not even considering anything as bold or effective as a constitutional amendment to force these corporate behemoths out of our elections. Instead, he's lamely offering a patchwork of regulatory fixes designed to cover up this theft of political power from actual people—fixes that corporate lawyers and lobbyists will riddle with loopholes.

To get remedies that work, We the People will have to take direct grassroots action. Already, three major national coalitions have formed to retrieve our democratic authority from the court and its corporate clients: [MoveToAmend.org](http://MoveToAmend.org), [FreeSpeechForPeople.org](http://FreeSpeechForPeople.org) and [FixCongressFirst.org](http://FixCongressFirst.org). Let's get connected and get moving.

\* Washington Post-ABC News poll, reported 17 February 2010, *Washington Post*.

*Jim Hightower is a national radio commentator, writer, public speaker, friend of The Alliance for Democracy, and author most recently of Swim Against the Current: Even a dead fish can go with the flow.*

## Flip Corporate Personhood Voila: "Personal Corporatehood"!

by Randall Amster, *CommonDreams.org*, 23 Jan 2010 (excerpt)

**T**HERE PREVIOUSLY HAD EXISTED A FOUNDING PRINCIPLE that "natural persons" and "artificial persons" were separate and distinct entities under the law, with the former holding historical priority in our constitutional framework. By now, that distinction has been blurred to such an extent as to be effectively meaningless, as evidenced by a 2008 Federal District Court ruling in which it was proclaimed by the judge that "Blackwater is a person...."

If Blackwater is a person, I want out. Indeed, this suggests a strategy that "natural persons" might take in embracing the implications of this unrestricted corporate world. If a corporation can become a person, then by implication a person can become a corporation. I am thus advocating a new doctrine of "personal corporatehood" in which we should all avail ourselves of the enhanced rights granted to "artificial persons" in our system. People should begin taking steps to incorporate themselves immediately. (I personally am pursuing a nonprofit option, which matches my earning capacity quite well anyway.) Lest you think this is arising as a response to an outlandish Supreme Court ruling, in fact the sign I held during the FTAA protests in Miami in 2002 read: PERSONAL CORPORATEHOOD.

Just imagine the benefits. When someone asks you for a favor, you can off-puttingly reply: "I have to check with my Board of Directors at next month's meeting; someone will get back to you then." When you want to meet with your Congressperson on matters you feel strongly about, the receptionist will announce, "Senator, a corporation is here to see you," which will likely get you instant access. If you go public, you can sell shares in yourself and make a tidy sum (just be sure to retain a controlling interest). If someone irritates you or has something you want, you can likely get the Marines sent

in to deal with them. You can avoid having to appear personally at court hearings, sending your hired-gun attorney instead. And you can't be thrown in jail, since a corporation itself cannot be imprisoned. See?

At the end of the day, us "natural persons" can try and fight city hall on this one, or we can get in the game and embrace the benefits of artificiality. In a world of surfaces, where profiteering masks as politics and gerrymandering as justice, this may well be the best of all strategies for survival. In fact, let's abolish altogether any outmoded notions of corporealism vis-a-vis "the body" in favor of cutting-edge views of corporatism as an expression of "the company." Whereas our individual bodies have served us well up to now, things will run much more smoothly overall if we are all bade to serve the companies instead. This is at least as rational as the logic of the Supreme Court in opening the floodgates for complete commercial control of governance under the guise of freedom.

*Randall Amster, J.D., Ph.D., teaches Peace Studies at Prescott College, and is the Executive Director of the Peace & Justice Studies Association. His most recent book is the co-edited volume Building Cultures of Peace: Transdisciplinary Voices of Hope and Action (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).*

## Varieties of Participatory Budgeting Report: International Conference in Berlin

Josh Lerner, *Participatory Budgeting Project*, 28 Feb 2010

ON JANUARY 21<sup>ST</sup> AND 22<sup>ND</sup>, BERLIN HOSTED a coming-out party for participatory budgeting in Germany. After years of smaller seminars and local experiments in PB, around 200 politicians, public employees, practitioners, and scholars gathered for an International Conference on Participatory Budgeting Models. They discussed experiences from diverse cities in Europe, Africa, Latin America, and North America, bringing to light many differences in how PB is practiced and understood. Four particularly interesting debates and questions emerged from these discussions, revolving around the roles of vision, deliberation, decision-making, and change.

First, the different experiences had very different visions of the purpose of PB. What kind of world should it help bring about? Most of the Germany experiences were seen as tools for modernization, while the African experiences were more about good governance and the Spanish and UK ones more oriented towards social justice and empowerment. The vision behind the respective PBs has in turn shaped their practice, as described below. Do these diverse visions just represent the rainbow of different approaches PB, or do some of them arc off in fundamentally different directions? PB gained fame around the world largely because of its ability to redistribute resources towards populations with the greatest needs. If social justice is not part of the vision, could this sap the energy and popular support from PB?

Second, the PB processes included very different roles for deliberation. In Germany, there are relatively few face-to-face forums for deliberation, with many PBs allowing citizens to vote online without any deliberation. In Spain, deliberation is often about not only budget projects, but also about the criteria for evaluating these projects. These deeper deliberations aim to steer discussion towards the public interest, by asking people to evaluate projects through the lens of broad public priorities. In Africa, many deliberations consider not only allocations, but

also budget revenues, searching for new ways to raise public funds. The processes that emphasize deliberation benefit not only from better spending decisions, but also from citizen learning and capacity-building, and from community-building.

Third, decision-making took many different forms, depending on who decided, about what, and whether these decisions were binding. Many experiences allowed ordinary citizens to decide on allocations, but most of the German ones deferred decision-making to city staff and politicians. In many Spanish cities, citizens could decide not only on budget spending, but also on the rules of the process, criteria for evaluating projects, and grading of projects according to these criteria. These decisions were generally binding, while in Germany the decisions were more often presented as recommendations to the city.

Finally, there were many concerns about change. Some German cities were wary of launching PB before they had found the perfect process, but as several of the international guests advised, the only way to move towards perfection is to start experimenting. PB processes are constantly changing, and many of the most durable ones have incorporated change as a regular part of the process. Every year or every other year, participants evaluate the process and make changes. Change is inherently part of PB and a result of PB ? each year it inspires new and better ways of organizing the process. Hopefully the rich discussions in Berlin will encourage more cities to adopt PB, and to continue making the process more democratic, participatory, and empowering.

For more information: [www.participatorybudgeting.org](http://www.participatorybudgeting.org)

## While You Sleep

### IP Controls Your Info, Songs, Medicine, &c.

by Rodney Gedda, *computerworld.co.nz*, 2 February, 2010

INCOMPLETE LAWS AND INTENSE LOBBYING from the software industry are contrary to the values of free software, and continue to pose a threat to its existence, says independent technology consultant Colin Jackson. Wellington-based Jackson says people who infringe copyright are often compared with hardened criminals, but in some cases so-called intellectual property infringements may not be against the law.

In a presentation at last month's Linux.conf.au open source conference in Wellington [New Zealand], Jackson said free software remains under threat from the expansion of copyright, misguided software patents, the desire to control the internet by companies whose business model it threatens and the secretive Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) treaty.

[ACTA has been under negotiation since 2006 among trade representatives of US, EU, Switzerland, and Japan—extended recently to a dozen or so other countries. ACTA provides confidential access to negotiations by 27 firms and business associations such as Monsanto, Intel, Generic Pharmaceutical Association, and Recording Industry Association of America. Leaks indicated that it covers software and drugs, spying by Internet service providers, border searches, criminal liability, and a possible new international oversight agency. See *Wikipedia under ACTA*. —Ed.]

During his presentation Jackson asked the fundamental question "what does IP [intellectual property] mean"? He also said the media and the legal profession continue to peddle vague definitions for the variety of things "IP" can mean, including the concepts of copyright and patents. "We need to

push back, as the term is meaningless and it can provide a limited monopoly over some things," he said.

"We have a good specification for property ownership, but it is completely debatable about what the law should say about IP [and] it's not clear what the law says about ownership of IP." Jackson said laws governing IP rights often get extended in favour of the rights holder, as there is no natural specification for IP law, and "you get endless extensions because you are arguing over a grey area".

"Almost all software is built on what has come before," he said. "We have the endless expansion of copyright, which can monopolise what we now regard as commons."

He sees the law as an "operating system", because the law sets the framework of how society operates. "The law defines what we all do, particularly with copyright and free software, but the law is not naturally clear."

Jackson said in some countries copyright infringement can be an offence, but not a crime. "Even if it was a crime, we have a situation where we are being lied to." He said the ACTA treaty has a chapter about the internet, including a recommendation for mandatory imprisonment for infringement.

"What bothers me about the treaty is it is being negotiated in secret and everyone that sees it must enter into an NDA [non-disclosure—confidentiality] agreement."

Jackson also chided the Australia-US Free Trade Agreement, which he said has resulted in Australia giving away a lot of IP restrictions. "Let's hope that doesn't happen here," he said, of New Zealand's desire for a free trade treaty with the US.

Jackson recommends people lobby for the details of ACTA to be made public. "I 'm not against trade agreements, but we need to decide what we want to give away."

## Single-Payer Med Advances Kucinich Strategy in Seven States

by David Swanson, *afterdowningstreet.org*, 17 February 2010

**A** BILL TO CREATE SINGLE-PAYER HEALTHCARE IN CALIFORNIA has passed that state's senate for the third time now. Californians just need to persuade a governor to sign it. Single-payer healthcare bills are advancing in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Minnesota, Massachusetts, and a growing list of states, including New Mexico, where State Senator Jerry Ortiz y Pino, a long-time supporter of single-payer healthcare, is running for Lieutenant Governor.

Now North Carolina house candidate Marcus Brandon has pledged to introduce a bill to create single-payer healthcare in that state. Brandon, whom I know and like and who worked for Congressman Dennis Kucinich's 2008 presidential campaign, is a candidate in North Carolina House District 60. That's near Greensboro, where I can just picture Marcus sitting at a lunch counter and refusing to be provoked.

Brandon has promised that if he is elected, the first piece of legislation he will introduce will be the "North Carolina Healthcare Act" which will provide universal single-payer healthcare to every citizen of the state.

Brandon says that he remains a supporter of national single-payer healthcare and will continue lobbying for passage of HR 676, Congressman John Conyers' bill: "The HR 676 fight is definitely not over, but we must now strategically shift the focus to the state level. When other states see that

we can cut the cost of healthcare, streamline our medical industry, and still provide universal coverage to all North Carolinians, then all of the sudden, single-payer health care doesn't look so bad."

Brandon argues that a single-payer system could save over \$1.5 billion per year in reduced bureaucracy in the state of North Carolina alone. And he speaks confidently about making this happen: "North Carolina is poised to be the first state to adopt single-payer, once I am able to introduce it. North Carolinians are ready for real solutions to healthcare. North Carolina has the third highest healthcare cost of any state, while it sags at 37th in average income. This is a disparity that most North Carolinians feel when they have to think about healthcare. Every day, as I am knocking on doors to talk to voters, I hear stories of people who cannot afford insurance and become victims of this for-profit industry."

Brandon says his bill is similar to other states' initiatives such as the "Minnesota Health Act" or the "California Universal Healthcare Act." Brandon points to these two bills as excellent examples of how a single payer healthcare system could be both fiscally sound and provide full coverage.

Brandon served in 2007 and 2008 as Dennis Kucinich's National Finance Director and Deputy Campaign Manager. He says that Kucinich inspired him: "Dennis urged me to run for office so we could build a state-by-state grassroots movement for single payer and other progressive issues. My campaign for the North Carolina House is an extension of the work I did with Dennis Kucinich."

While Kucinich has struggled unsuccessfully thus far to pass federal legislation facilitating the state creation of single-payer healthcare systems, states are pressing ahead and will deal with lawsuits from "health" corporations when and if they arise.

Brandon has a primary on May 4th. Those who want a real healthcare system in this country would be wise to pour money into his campaign and those of other state leaders across the country.

Alternatively we could keep putting all our eggs in the basket of fantasies about the United States Senate getting its act together.

## LETTERS

### 9/11 Truth Advances

David Griffin will be speaking here at Pilgrim Place in mid-January. His morale seems high. He is quite amused by, but also proud of, having been identified as one of the fifty most influential people in the world by a British magazine [*The New Statesman*]. That shows that censorship of 9/11 truth is not as effective elsewhere as in the U.S. Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth is growing rapidly, about a thousand have signed on, due to the absurdity of the NIST [National Institute of Standards & Technology] explanation of the collapse of the third building [Bldg 7, World Trade Center]...

—John B. Cobb, Jr., Claremont CA

### Corporate Speech

To the editor [Lawrence Eagle-Tribune, published 16 Feb.'10]: Your January 22 editorial praising the recent Supreme Court decision in *Americans United v FEC* shows just how far astray this newspaper has gone in its near fanatic support of anything that might favor Republicans. This decision grants near total First Amendment rights to corporations as if they were people. However, they most emphatically are NOT. They are synthetic

entities created by law for the sole purpose of making money for their investors.

Bit-by-bit, corporations have used their money to corrupt "our" political system and grab more and more power for themselves. It started in the 1850s with the removal of the requirement to have their charters periodically renewed by proving that they served a public good. Then came the 1886 Santa Clara County v Southern Pacific Railroad decision that a court clerk (who also just happened to be a railroad lawyer) interpreted as giving corporations constitutional rights under the 14th Amendment. Strangely, this became generally accepted. Then came the 1976 Buckley v Valeo decision that money is speech (meaning that those with more money get more speech).

Finally, this travesty of a decision outdoes them all. It will open the floodgates of corporate spending to sway elections in their favor and frighten legislators into supporting corporate-friendly policies for fear of being campaigned against.

However, there is still hope for our civil society. A movement has begun to pass a constitutional amendment that takes away the fiction of corporate personhood and allows only natural born people to have constitutional rights.

Of course, we must remember where this newspaper's viewpoint comes from. It is, after all, ... a corporation.

—Michael Bleiweiss, Methuen MA

## Green Energy Hawaii To Become Model for the Nation

by Alana Semuels, San Francisco Chronicle, 15 Feb 2010

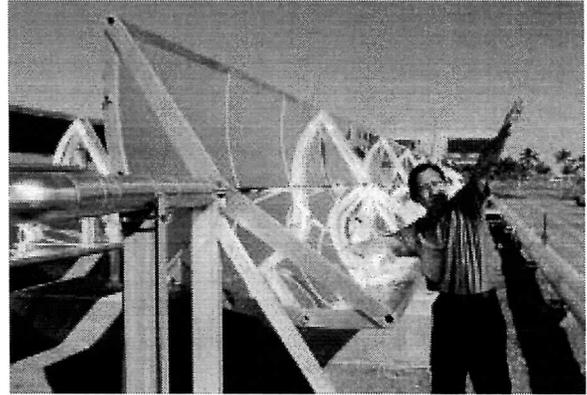
TAKE A RIDE IN RON BAIRD'S PICKUP TRUCK along the volcanic shore of Hawaii's Big Island and he'll show you an inventor's wonderland. On one parcel of this government-created energy laboratory, rows of mirrors shine white-hot in the sun, turning heat into energy. On another, brown water tanks harbor strands of algae that will be made into fuel. Nearby is a wind turbine whose blades spin parallel to the ground. "It's an awesome amount of things going on here," said Baird, chief executive of National Energy Research Laboratory of Hawaii Authority, which is helping to nurture 42 green private-sector businesses on 877 acres in Kona.

Tiny Hawaii is gunning for the title of the nation's green energy capital. It's aiming to obtain 70 percent of its total energy needs from clean sources within 20 years. That ambitious target blows the solar panels off California's mandate to get one-third of its electricity from renewables by 2020. But Hawaiian officials have concluded their state has little choice.

This tropical paradise is an energy beggar that depends almost solely on oil to fuel its vehicles and stoke its power plants. That's left the state, which doesn't produce a drop of crude, vulnerable to spills, price swings and geopolitics. Hawaii residents already pay the highest pump prices and electricity rates in the country. The state imports around 51 million barrels of oil costing billions annually, according to government figures. "We really are the canary in the coal mine," said Jeff Kissel, chief executive of the Gas Co. of Hawaii. "What's happening to us with oil is going to happen to the rest of the country as ... supplies diminish."

More worrisome is global warming. The threat of rising seas and pounding storms linked to climate change has put Hawaii

on a collision course with Mother Nature. While Hawaii's efforts to green itself won't make much of dent in the world's carbon emissions, environmentalists hope the state can prove what's possible. The goal is to transform the nation's most energy-dependent state into its cleanest and most sustainable. "We're adopting policies and technologies here that can serve as a model for the rest of the globe," said Jeff Mikulina, executive director of the Blue Planet Foundation, a Hawaii clean energy advocacy group.



Aiming for 70pct green energy by 2030

The state this year began requiring all homes be built with solar water heaters. Hawaii is working with Palo Alto electric transport firm Better Place to build a network of recharging stations to jump-start mass use of electric vehicles on the islands. Meanwhile, the state's public utilities commission is devising a compensation system to encourage homeowners and businesses to go solar by paying them to generate green electricity. The policies stem from an agreement Hawaii signed with the Department of Energy in 2008.

The state pledged to obtain 70 percent of its total energy needs by 2030—40 percent from renewable electricity generation and the remaining 30 percent from energy efficiency. Known as the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative, that agreement has since been strengthened with binding legislation that exceeds California's mandate to get 33 percent of its electricity from renewables by 2020 (though Hawaii has an extra decade to get there).

About 6.5 percent of Hawaii's electricity came from renewable sources other than hydroelectric power in 2007, according to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. That's about half of what California—the nation's solar champion and a major player in wind and geothermal—has achieved so far. But experts said Hawaii's small size and unique geography could prove advantageous in the race for energy independence. With just 1.3 million inhabitants, energy consumption is small. The islands are blessed with abundant solar, wind, geothermal and wave resources. And Hawaiians are less likely to object to the cost of renewables because they already pay high energy prices. "It's easier for Hawaii to pull this off than anyone else," said Alison Silverstein, an independent consultant and one-time energy regulator. "They know how bad things can get, and they are highly motivated ... to take action."



Have you read Page 1? Wanna get behind the photo?  
For short video on Evergreen Coops: [www.blip.tv/file/2749165](http://www.blip.tv/file/2749165)

**FLASH!**

## Burlington VT Repeals I R Voting

by BCA Dispatch review of news, 5 March 2010

INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING WAS VOTED DOWN by 52 percent of Burlington voters in a March 2 city election, despite campaigning for it by League of Women Voters, Vermont PIRG, former VT Governor Howard Dean, and US Senator Bernie Sanders, a former mayor of Burlington.

Apparently the current mayor, Bob Kiss—who like Peter Clavelle before him was elected and re-elected through the IRV procedure—was widely unpopular largely because of his bungled handling of city finances to help city-owned Burlington Telecom. BT, chartered in 2005 and providing telephone, cable internet and TV services, did not expand as expected, and recently failed to get sufficient private bank loans.

Repeal of IRV was one of five ballot questions, the other four passing by much larger majorities even though they endorsed substantial payments for fire fighting, schools, etc. Turnout was 23 per cent of registered voters. Former city councilor Kurt Wright campaigned heavily in the city's conservative Ward 7 against IRV and won back his seat on the city council as well as achieving a 2-1 victory on IRV repeal. The repeal carried in that and one other of the city's 7 wards.

Anti-IRV citizens carried on heated commentaries to justify the vote the morning after, responding by email to the online news. Most were easy personal attacks, but in the 36 hours following the posting of election results, very few defended IRV. Possibly the "Progs" and "lib/commies" do not take to these public attack-chat interchanges.

But on WCAX.com one commentator, frequently lecturing on the internet on fair voting processes, addressed the nature of IRV which might foster improved voting techniques:

*...Most people who support IRV are not aware that it does \*not\* find majority winners because it eliminates all voters who weren't lucky enough to rank the two finalists from participating in the final retabulation round, and that IRV does \*not\* solve the spoiler problem whenever there are three strong candidates, as happened in the Burlington mayoral contest.*

*IRV violates the US constitution because it treats voters' votes unequally, counting the 2nd choices of some voters, but not others when their 1st choice loses, and eviscerates election verifiability because it is not precinct summable.*

*It's too bad that all the disinformation told by IRV proponents like Fairytale] Vote of Maryland, has fooled so many people and turned people off to considering other alternative voting methods that are equitable and fair...*

—Kathy Dopp, Park City, Utah

### COMMUNITY NOTES (Continued from Page 1)

Scores of young people—and some older—turned out on 20 February for an all-afternoon planning session on the **US Social Forum**, to take place in Detroit MI on June 22-26. After informative and rousing talks, breakout groups discussed what the Forum could do for their own movement groups in Massachusetts, what they and their groups could do for the Forum, and logistical considerations. Participants at the Roxbury venue were largely people of color and vigor, ready to move ahead on issues of general concern—racism, militarism, climate, economy, education, and so forth—well informed and arful. Among the organizers were **Suren Moodliar** and **Eli Beckerman** of Mass Global Action and Encuentro-5. Contact

them by visiting [www.massglobalaction.org](http://www.massglobalaction.org) . Take part in organizing at [www.ussf2010.org](http://www.ussf2010.org).

### Amend the Constitution

In the wake of the US Supreme Court's decision to open the flood gates of corporate money into the election process, the national Council of the Alliance for Democracy has voted to make amending the US Constitution a top priority. For us that means denying corporations the rights of persons—as in the first Ten Amendments and other parts and amendments of the Constitution. This may also be the opportunity to ensure the rights of Nature—vital for ecological survival. AfD has joined with other organizations in the Campaign to Legalize Democracy See the AfD home page at [www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org](http://www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org) where you can access the Alliance's statement, and see a video with lawyer **Ben Manski** (a "graduate" of AfD) and **Lisa Graves** tell a crowd in front of the Wisconsin State House why they should unite and fight for this cause—informative and stirring! Also there is a link to [www.MoveToAmend.org](http://www.MoveToAmend.org) .



Doris "Granny D" Haddock on her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, with an award presented by Lew Hammann, AfD co-chair. They celebrated with a crowd of admirers at the NH State House.

## 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.)

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- \_\_\_ \$33/Year - "Count me in!"
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- \_\_\_ \$500/Year - "Realize the vision"
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### COLOPHON

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