

Spring 2003

This is what justice looks like

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Issue #25



Linda Wolf

Dear Reader,

Scott Ritter, the former US Marine and United Nations arms inspector who is traveling the globe trying to stop a US attack on Iraq, said something recently that I can't stop thinking about:

"There has been a disturbing tendency among certain nations, Iraq included, to try and make a distinction between the people of the United States and the government of the United States. This is wrong. Ultimately, there is no difference, and indeed there can be no difference between the people of the United States and the government of the United States, because thanks to our constitution, we the people of the United States of America are the government. In America today, we take very seriously the concept of government of the people, by the people and for the people. This represents the very foundation of the democratic way of life we love and cherish."

It struck me as I read this that I have done exactly what Ritter warns against. I have come to think of the US government as something apart from me. Sure, I vote. Religiously. And I read the newspaper and call my elected representatives. But I don't really think they'll listen to me. I have been so distraught at actions taken by the US government that I tend to disassociate—to do exactly the opposite of what Scott Ritter said, and think of the government as an entity apart from me.

This helps me sleep at night. *I'm* not preparing to bomb Iraq. I'm not developing weapons of mass destruction including a new generation of nuclear missiles. I'm not supporting brutal dictators or tossing aside international treaties.

Ritter's statement took away that salve to my conscience and made the unfinished project of democracy all the more urgent. The government is acting in my name, using my tax money, claiming to act in my best interest, and yet I and many other Americans want the government to do things that are very different.

A two-to-one majority of Americans believes that UN weapons inspectors should be given an opportunity to do their work before military action is taken. And 65 percent believe that the US should wait for support from our allies before attacking.

Americans want action taken on climate change, contrary to Bush administration policies. Ninety-seven percent believe the US should increase the use of new technologies that improve fuel efficiency and conserve energy. Sixty-seven percent of us think the federal government should guarantee health coverage for every American. Seventy percent think corporations have too much

power, and 79 percent of us say it should be illegal to sell genetically modified fruits and vegetables without labeling.

Many of the things you and I are passionate about are also passions for large numbers of other Americans—in some cases, for substantial majorities. So what will it take to get a democracy that responds to the will of "we the people?"

This issue of *YES!* suggests some approaches to revitalizing our democracy. It suggests that we have the right to elect officials to represent people rather than dollars, constituents rather than big contributors. We have the right to claim the constitutional protections that the founders of the US created for people—not for corporations. And we have the right to be heard regardless of our gender, color, religion, national origin, race, or belief.

Democracy is an unfinished project. Our challenge today is to include those who have been excluded, to reclaim our precious democracy from the corrupting influence of big money, and to deepen our democratic processes. Instead of dumbing down complex and urgent questions with simple win-lose propositions, we need to find ways to make decisions that draw on our greatest wisdom to serve the common good. The people of Porto Alegre, Brazil, are a special inspiration; ordinary people—rich and poor—decide how city money will be spent and in the process have run corruption out of town and have addressed the human needs of even the poorest. (The ruling party in Porto Alegre is the Workers' Party, whose candidate was just elected president of Brazil.)

Instead of thinking of power as a means to dominate, power can be the generative capacity to make things happen; Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres explore this shift in "The Miner's Canary."

Vandana Shiva tells us about the emergence in India of Earth democracy—the practice of people reclaiming the rights to care for and use the commons of water, land, and seed stock. From Finland, we learn how assuring everyone the right to basic economic security has eliminated poverty, strengthened democracy, and made the country among the most livable in the world. From Seattle, Pramila Jayapal tells about immigrant communities who called a hearing so that their stories of profiling and humiliation could finally be publicly aired.

The Bush administration's push for war especially highlights our nation's desperate need for more democracy. We have yet to have a national dialogue on the sort of relationship we want with the rest of the world. Do we want to be an empire? Could the US instead function as a member of a family of nations? We convened a virtual roundtable on this topic with the hope that it will be just one of many conversations about what "we the people" want for the future of *our* nation. You'll find it on page 49.

Although many of our rights have slipped away in recent months, this is still a democracy, the government is still *us*, and, as Ritter suggests, we'd better start acting like we're in charge.

Sarah

Sarah Ruth van Gelder
Executive Editor



Jason Houston

We are yet capable of being amazed by
unexpected revelations of the great, still
largely untapped human potential for
resistance and hope, for compassion and
grandeur, for courage and visionary self
transcendence—even when pressed against
all the walls that oppression has created.

— *Vincent Harding*



Lani Guinier was nominated in 1993 by President Clinton to be the first black woman to head the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice. Clinton dropped her nomination when she was attacked by conservatives for her perspectives on democracy, voting, and giving voice to minorities. For her most recent work on transformative theories of power, see page 28, "The Miner's Canary," by Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres.

yes!

Winter 2003
Issue #24

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YES! A Journal of Positive Futures (ISSN 1089-6651) is published quarterly for \$24 per year by the Positive Futures Network at 284 Madrona Way NE, Suite 116, Bainbridge Island WA 98110-2870. Periodicals postage paid at Seattle WA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: send address changes to *YES! A Journal of Positive Futures*, PO Box 10818, Bainbridge Island WA 98110-0818.

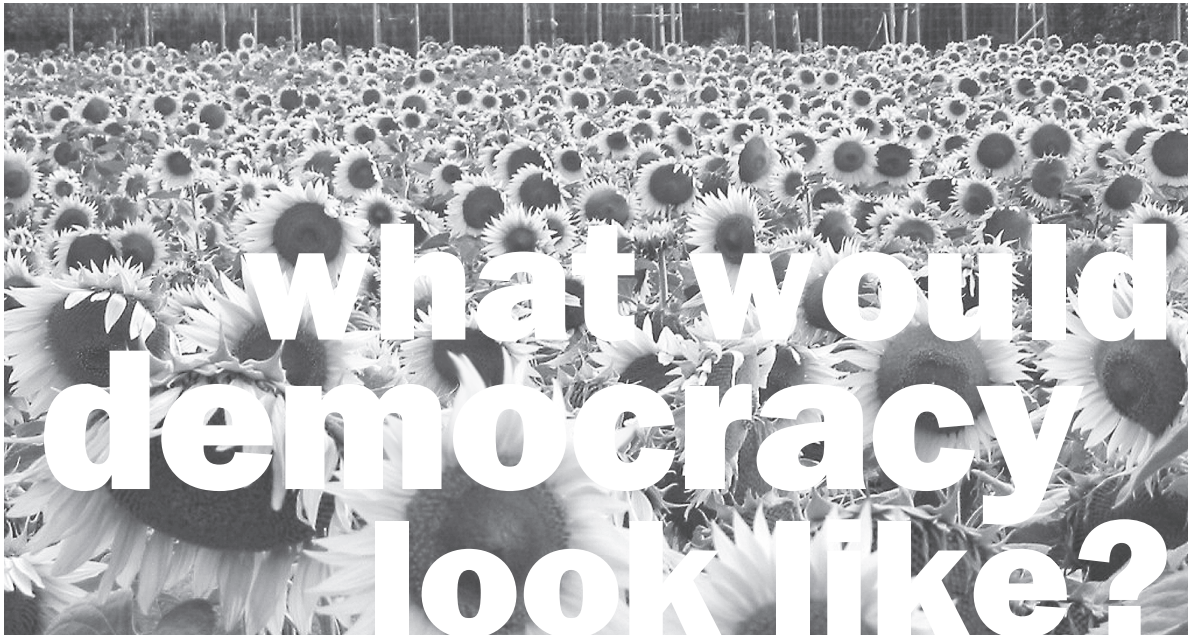
SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$24 per year; Call: 800/937-4451 Monday–Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific; **Subscribe online:** www.yesmagazine.org; or email: subs@futurenet.org

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YES! is printed on New Leaf paper, 100% recycled, 75% post-consumer waste, processed chlorine free paper





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YES! is published by the Positive Futures Network, an independent, nonprofit organization that supports people's active engagement in creating a more just, sustainable, and compassionate world





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READERS' FORUM



Tell us what you think of the ideas, possibilities, approaches you find in *YES!* Or send us news about your own successes or insights about creating positive change

Living Economies

The Fall 2002 issue, *Living Economies*, has so much to commend it. David Korten's answers to the question "How would we live?" are particularly valuable as he so clearly addresses some of the fears of those who resist the changes necessary to achieve the vision of true prosperity for all.

Those of us who have so much fear losing what we have. How wonderful it will be when we realize that there is no peace for any of us without justice for all of us and no justice without sharing. Sharing the resources of our planet with all of its citizens must be the keynote of a positive future.

MAUREEN PERRON
Half Moon Bay, CA

Write us!

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Thank you for the excellent issue on living economies. I was particularly intrigued by the "How would we live?" sidebar to David Korten's article.

But then I got to the part about financing retirement. It's not that I disagree with Korten's suggestions. However, currently even many *YES!* readers are planning retirements based on the stock market. Many of us are heavily invested in large corporations, giving us less incentive to shrink them. How can we change our economy while at the same time betting our retirements on large corporations?

SPENCER HOBE
Dublin, OH

Context of Israeli Actions

Starhawk's account of the real and psychic violence visited upon the inhabitants of the Balata refugee camp ("The Boy Who Kissed the Soldier") is both powerful and moving. Unfortunately,

her readers are never told why the Israelis are in the camps in the first place. Nor does Starhawk give the Israelis' pain the same sympathetic, humanizing treatment.

The Israeli soldiers are searching the camp for bombs—bombs that young Palestinians strap to their bodies and explode in and around crowded Israeli buses and cafes. Where are the human-interest stories devoted to all those, including women and children, traumatized by such horrors?

Similarly, Starhawk offers no explanation—other than gratuitous brutality—as to why the Israelis move through the camps by breaking down interior walls. The answer is self-preservation: more than 30 Israeli soldiers—the ones "barely more than boys"—were gunned down as they moved through the crowded passageways of the Jenin refugee camp last April. What Starhawk characterizes as wanton ransacking is part and parcel of the same desperate search for explosives intended for Israeli civilians.

To omit any mention of why the Israelis feel compelled to be in the refugee camps, or of the suicide bombers incubated and armed there, presents only half the story.

ROSS KAPLAN
Minneapolis, MN

Hyphenated People

I am an elderly woman: African-American, African in America, Black, Negro, colored, and many other names. I answer to all of them. Black was claimed as a political term back in the '60s. It is not the opposite of White as in White people. It is not about color, as many people acknowl-

edge there are no Black, White, Red, Brown, or Yellow people. At one time, all of the oppressed people of the British Empire identified as Black whatever their skin color or race. If I am not mistaken, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people identify as lavender and rainbow people.

Some people pretend that African-American is an ethnic category. During my lifetime, ethnicity had to do with the nation that our ancestors came from. I and most African heritage people don't know what nation our ancestors came from. We probably came from many different (African, indigenous, Asian, and European) nations.

I use 'White' to refer to a term invented by ruling-class White people as one of the tools in the creation of white supremacy, also known as systemic racism or racial oppression. The term European-American reminds me of the White people who have just discovered that there is only one human race and get angry with people of color who identify as Black, Brown, Red, Yellow, White, etc. as being racist. If there are no White people, what does white supremacy refer to?

Until White people (collectively) understand the nature, history, and consequences of racial oppression, I will continue to use both terms to reflect the historical and contemporary racism, as well as the choices that White people have.

I support your personal decision. I wonder how many will join you and how many will seriously take on the challenge of racial and economic justice in the world.

GWEN
via email

Impending Iraq War

In October, the staff at YES! produced a special Web issue about the impending war on Iraq and forwarded a list of "10 Questions Americans Are Asking as the US Government Prepares for War" to an email group. Some of the responses are reprinted here.

Thank you for this email. One wakes up and goes to bed with a heavy heart these days, and it is comforting to know that there are still people living in the US who think rationally and objectively and *without fear!*

When ignorance is combined with power and money, the scenario gets extremely dangerous. This is the case with the US under George W. Bush's rule. The consequences of this kind of an unprovoked war anywhere are disastrous, but even more so in the Middle East. The whole world will burn. Americans don't understand the Arab/Muslim psyche, but I used to grant them more common sense.

SARAH JOHN
via email, Germany

Thank you very much for all the work that went into this excellent compendium. I am circulating it to everyone I know, including a few rightist conservative types. But: Methinks the Question Americans Are Asking is: Why are we trusting George W. Bush and his administration?

JOHN KALBRENER
Minneapolis, MN

Thanks so much for being there in these worst of times. YES! is a consolation, comfort, and inspiration. This country/empire is sinking fast to the bottom of the sea. Even if we revive it, it needs complete overhauling to make it safe and habitable for humanity and all life forms remaining.

FLORENCE WINDELL
via email

Although each of the questions in your email forwarded to me is legitimate and very well-intentioned, I was more struck by the type of questions which were not included, questions such as: "What effect will war have on the ordinary people of Iraq?" "Who will govern Iraq after Saddam Hussein?" "Will this new government be democratically elected and have the support of the people of Iraq?"

The concerns of ordinary Iraqi people just don't seem to register on your list. I would have expected more from educated and informed voices across the pond. As it is, the answers to the three questions above are far more frightening to the ordinary Iraqi people than the consequences of war are, or will ever be, to ordinary American citizens.

Nevertheless, I welcome all efforts to call a halt to this self-serving crusade by George W. Bush and his storm troopers.

OLAN MCGOWAN
Dublin, Rep. of Ireland

More on Kucinich

Studs Terkel, in his article in *The Nation*, did Dennis Kucinich a disservice when he failed to quote all that the Congressman for Peace has to say regarding his position on pro-choice/pro-life.

David Corn, in his article "Deeper Rivers" in the *LA Weekly* (May 10), writes: "[Dennis Kucinich] explains that he represents one of the most Catholic districts in the country and was raised in a Catholic setting: 'I believe in the sanctity of life and that life begins at conception.' But, he adds, he has 'never taken a position that Roe v. Wade should be overturned or that people should be prosecuted for abortion.'"

I suspect that Dennis Kucinich believes as I do. Women's bodies should never have been allowed to become political footballs in the first place. It's a form of insanity that has, and continues to cause, a great deal of heartache.

MADELON ROSE LOGUE
Los Angeles, CA

Peace Persists in Bali

I was in Bali the night of the recent bombing, but 30 km from the site. I can report that the spirit of Bali is intact however. Lt. Col. I Made Murda of the Bali police told us that, although hundreds of shops and restaurants had their windows blown out in the blast, not one single looting has been reported. In Legian there are shops with no windows and doors, all their wares there for the taking, but nobody has stolen a thing.

There were fears of an instant reaction against the Muslim population in Bali, but no such thing has happened. What *has* happened is that there have been peace vigils and prayer meetings all over the island, and Christians, Muslims, locals, and foreigners working hand in hand in the relief effort.

BERNARD LIETAER
via email

Corrections

The name of the author of "Money's Conversations" in issue 23 was misspelled. The correct spelling is Camy Matthay. We regret this error.

It is Wayne Township, PA, not the town of Wayne, PA, that passed the anti-corporate farming initiative described in "12 Things to Do Now About Corporations." (YES! #23)

Readers Take Action continues on page 59, with a report on a visit to Iraq

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Let's talk ... and then act!





INDICATORS



Opposition to Iraq Invasion Builds

Rick Reinhard



On October 26, Washington, DC, saw the largest peace protest since the Vietnam War

Since August, American support for an invasion of Iraq has been slipping steadily, while opposition is growing. In early August, the *Washington Post* found that 69 percent supported war, although that figure dropped to 46 percent if no allies participate. In late October, a Pew Research Center poll found that only 55 percent support invasion and only 27 percent support it without allies. Polls also find support for war dropping dramatically in the event of significant US casualties.

Although the US Congress voted in October to give President Bush sweeping authority to wage war on Iraq, dissent against such a war is mounting throughout the country and the world.

Massive demonstrations called by International ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) on Saturday, October 26 drew hundreds of thousands. In Washington, DC, an estimated 100,000–200,000 people gathered in the largest peace protest since the Vietnam War, organizers and police told *The New York Times*.

A companion march drew 40,000–80,000 in San Francisco, and smaller marches around the country drew significant numbers, from 800 in Austin, to 2,500 in Augusta, Maine, and 5,000 in Seattle. Crowds also demonstrated throughout the world, including 20,000 in Berlin and 20,000 in Rome. A September 28 protest in London drew between 250,000 and 400,000 people.

At the Nobel Peace Prize world summit on October 19–20, the laureates, led by Mikhail Gorbachev, issued a statement rejecting an invasion of Iraq and condemning the Bush administration's new doctrine of preemptive war.

Appearances by Bush administration officials have been increasingly shadowed by anti-war protests. Protests are coming at colleges, such as Middlebury College in Vermont, when alum White House spokesman Ari Fleischer appeared, and Berkeley

just before the war resolution vote. But they are also occurring in more unexpected locations, such as in Cincinnati, where about 4,000 anti-war protesters greeted President Bush on October 7 when he was in town giving a speech urging an invasion of Iraq.

Organizers report that they are seeing diverse crowds at protests now, including many people who don't ordinarily come to protests. According to Peter Lems, Iraq program assistant for the American Friends Service Committee, much of the most vibrant organizing against an Iraq war is happening regionally and locally, in places like Wichita, Kansas, and St. Louis, Missouri.

Protesters who traveled to DC said they planned to hold more protests back home. ANSWER plans another protest for Martin Luther King Day, January 18.

The Internet group MoveOn has been innovative in its use of the Internet to mobilize activism. MoveOn raised funds over the Internet to support members of Congress who were being attacked by challengers for their anti-war vote. In the first two days the group asked for money for these candidates, it raised \$1.25 million, and prior to the election had raised a total of \$2.2 million for candidates.

Before the congressional war resolution vote, MoveOn used its online petition to organize 5,000 anti-war volunteers to meet on August 28 with senators in all 50 states. It uses the same petition to

inform signers of anti-war events in their city or state.

Attention has now shifted to the United Nations. Anti-war groups are putting pressure on the UN Security Council not to endorse an invasion of Iraq. Progressive Portal and Global Exchange have set up a system that allows people to use the Internet to fax members of the Security Council with the click of a mouse.

News reports have suggested that Pentagon officials don't expect to launch an invasion of Iraq until January at the earliest, and perhaps as late as March. Anti-war groups are preparing to continue their education campaigns into the fall and winter.

The Institute for Policy Studies tracked more than 400 anti-war events around the country in October. A new coalition called United for Peace is listing events on its website, www.unitedforpeace.org.

—Jason Mark & Carolyn McConnell

Jason Mark is communications director for Global Exchange, www.globalexchange.org. For more information on anti-war activities, contact International ANSWER Coalition, www.internationalanswer.org, 415/821-6545; MoveOn, www.moveon.org; Not In Our Name Coalition; www.notinourname.net, 212/969-8058; and Peace Action, www.peace-action.org 202/862-9740

California Delivers for Families & the Earth

California became the first state in the nation to guarantee its workers the right to paid family leave when Governor Gray Davis signed Senate Bill 1661 on September 23. Beginning in 2004, the law requires employers to allow employees up to six weeks leave to care for a newborn child or sick relative.

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, a Clinton initiative, ensures that caregivers who take up to 12 weeks off work can return to their jobs. The new California law goes further by

entitling all participating workers to a paycheck of about half their salary—regardless of the size of the company they work for. "This bill will make it easier for Californians to help their loved ones through a health crisis, without going broke in the process," said Davis.

In order to receive the benefit, employees must opt for payroll deductions averaging \$27 a year per worker. According to an analysis by the Labor Project for Working Families, decreased reliance on assistance programs could save the state government \$25 million annually, since workers often turn to public assistance while taking unpaid leave.

Although paid family leave bills in 27 other states have so far failed to become law, Hawaii, Maine, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Oregon have passed bills to research the costs of enacting a paid leave law.

This landmark legislation comes on the heels of two other California laws; one sets unprecedented standards for greener energy and the other reduces global warming emissions.

On September 12, California passed a law requiring retail sellers of electricity to increase their use of renewable resources to 20 percent of sales by 2017. The California Renewables Portfolio Standard Program will nearly double the state's existing wind, geothermal, biomass, and solar energy. Both critics and supporters called it the most ambitious energy policy in the country.

In July, the California Climate Bill became the first law in the nation to limit the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from tailpipes of new cars. Starting with model year 2009, carmakers must comply with new carbon pollution standards to be set by the California Air Resources Board. According to the Sierra Club, some 40 percent of the country's global warming pollution emanates from automobiles. California represents 10 percent of the national auto market.

—Darcy O'Brien

Mayan Justice Returns to Guatemala

In Guatemala, local judges are abandoning the Spanish colonial system that was imposed 500 years ago and returning to Mayan traditions that favor mediation, reconciliation, and personal contact between the victim and transgressor.

"In the official system," says justice of the peace Edgardo Barreda, "there is always a winner and a loser. In the unofficial indigenous system, we want everyone to go away happy. It's based more on community."

In the Mayan system, offenders are often sent to work for the victim instead of to jail, and the council of elders is consulted along with the justices of the peace, who draw heavily on arbitration techniques. These local judges visit the homes and locations where the dispute is taking place and encourage face-to-face discussions between the parties involved.

Cases range from petty theft to spousal abuse and other forms of violence. "There are no small cases," says Judge Juan Jose Regalado Rivas. "Stealing a chicken may seem insignificant, but in many areas it's the only chicken in the village."

The return to traditional ways has been most pronounced in the last five to ten years, the result of both a growing solidarity between the diverse groups of Mayan descendants and a new national law that allows indigenous people the

Mayan religious leaders in Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala





right to return to their own legal systems.

It has been helping to heal a country that was torn apart by a CIA-backed civil war that lasted 35 years, in which the military brutally murdered or "disappeared" 200,000 people, most of them indigenous.

"The people have absorbed the war into their skin," says Barreda. "There is so much violence and hate still left over from it that when someone steals a chicken he may get killed by other people in the village without some kind of intervention."

Guatemala's Mayan descendants comprise 60 percent of the population. The remaining population is mixed race, with a tiny percentage of Europeans.

Increasingly, Latin Americans of European descent are beginning to realize that they can learn from the traditions of the first peoples. "I was all prepared to teach mediation techniques to the Guatemalan judges," says Argentine mediation consultant Monica Lazaro, "Then I found out that they knew more than I did. The Mayans have been using these techniques for a long, long time."

—Lisa Garrigues

Lisa Garrigues is a writer who lives in Argentina

Farmer Gene Latza on his 1,200-acre farm near Letcher, South Dakota. State voters rejected moves to allow corporate farming

South Dakota Backs Family Farmers

South Dakota voters have rejected efforts to allow corporate farming in the state. By 54 percent, voters in June rejected Amendment A,

which would have allowed corporate control of farming and permitted companies to conduct genetic research. The amendment, drafted by the South Dakota Farmer's Union and the state's secretary of agriculture, among others, was well funded and largely endorsed by major media across the state.

While nationwide the number of small family farms has declined dramatically in the past few decades, South Dakota has not witnessed the same rapid shift to large-scale, corporate-controlled agriculture. This is largely thanks to a 1974 statute restricting corporate involvement in farming and recent measures that have further strengthened the ban.

The state's citizens have seen a variety of threats to the Family Farm Act since 1974, including a 1989 attorney general's ruling that exempted several large corporate operations. Citizen anger against this ruling resulted in the approval nine years later of Amendment E to the state's constitution, prohibiting corporations from owning farmland or engaging in farming.

Proponents of the defeated Amendment A have accused voters of moving backward, but a study conducted by Drs. Rick Welsh and Thomas A. Lyson reveals that counties in states with anti-corporate farming laws saw lower unemployment, fewer impoverished families, and more farms realizing cash gains than counties in states without such legislation.

Eight other midwest states have laws restricting corporate control of farms. South Dakota's measures are the strictest of their kind.

—Erin Cusick

corporations accountable for their actions. This victory had to be hard fought, with NGOs lobbying and protesting outside the meeting rooms, and was nearly overturned in a dramatic last-minute struggle.

Many NGOs had made the regulation of corporations their main priority for the summit. They saw the 1992 Rio Earth Summit's failure to regulate corporations as a major setback. In the decade after Rio, transnational corporations grew even stronger and are now disciplining governments for their own interests, instead of governments disciplining them in the public interest.

Agreed to after an intense struggle, Paragraph 45 of the summit's draft Plan of Implementation, directs nations to "Actively promote corporate responsibility and accountability, based on the Rio Principles, including through the full development and effective implementation of inter-governmental agreements and measures, international initiatives and public-private partnerships, and appropriate national regulations, and support continuous improvement in corporate practices in all countries."

This language was approved and, after hours of last-minute negotiations over women's rights and access to health care services, the plan as a whole was finally adopted at 1 a.m. on September 3. The next step forward is for the NGOs, the governments, and the UN to follow up on the paragraph and to take steps toward regulating corporations internationally so as to make them accountable.

—Martin Khor

Martin Khor is the director of the Third World Network, www.twinside.org.sg

Settlement Favors Saipan Workers

Garment workers have won a major settlement with employers in Saipan, where clothing labeled "Made in the USA" has been produced for sub-minimum wages and under loosely regulated

Greg Latza/peoplescapes.com



conditions. Seven US retailers and 23 manufacturers have agreed to a settlement amounting to \$11.25 million, settling claims against them of alleged worker right's violations in the US Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. With the 19 retailers that had settled previously, this closes a three-year legal battle and brings total settlement to over \$20 million.

Some of the 30,000 garment workers on the island stand to gain up to a year's worth of back wages, and those who choose to return to their home countries will be eligible for relocation fees. The settlement also provides for future monitoring of Saipan's garment factories to ensure adequate working conditions such as safe drinking water, hot water, and payment for overtime hours worked, items cited as violations in the lawsuit.

Saipan is exempted from many US labor, customs, and immigration laws under policies set in place in 1991. On the island, the apparel industry can produce clothing that avoids regulations on imports from foreign nations and can be labeled as manufactured in the US.

Workers are often recruited from China and the Philippines, lured by signing bonuses of as much as \$5,000 and promises of high wages. But when the predominantly young female workers reach the remote island, they are trapped by low wages, set at a minimum of \$3.05 per hour, and large paycheck deductions to pay for food, lodging, and recruitment fees.

The garment worker's union UNITE and other anti-sweatshop groups filed the suit on behalf of the island's workers against retailers, including Tommy Hilfiger, The Gap, Target, Liz Claiborne and Calvin Klein. The settlement does not include admission of misconduct. Defendant Levi Strauss has denied the settlement's allegations and has discontinued its purchase of products from Saipan's factories.

The anti-sweatshop movement has also gained momentum with two new union-labor garment companies. In Los Angeles, the

new worker-owned garment label sweatX, produced by teamX, inc, was started by Ben Cohen (of Ben & Jerry's) and Pierre Ferrari (head of Cohen's Hot Fudge Venture Fund) to offer clothing produced by workers receiving a living wage under decent working conditions.

For now, the label fills only wholesale orders for its products. Jim Hightower's Rolling Thunder Democracy Tour featured sweatX festival t-shirts, and Patagonia has contracted some private-label work from the company.

In Newton, Massachusetts, anti-sweatshop activists have launched No Sweat Apparel, which will sell union-made clothing over the Internet.

—Erin Cusick

For more information, visit www.nosweatapparel.com and www.sweatx.coop

Unocal Can Be Sued for Atrocities, says Judge

In a landmark decision, a federal appeals court ruled on September 18 that Unocal can be sued in US court on claims that the California-based oil giant's joint pipeline project with the Burmese military regime used forced labor. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed that Unocal could be held liable for aiding and abetting the Burmese military's abuses surrounding the project, which include forced labor, destruction of villages in the pipeline region, and other human rights violations.

This case will be the first to go to trial among a number of lawsuits brought by labor advocates in the US against transnational corporations for aiding or benefiting from human rights abuses overseas. Most are proceeding under the 1789 Alien Tort Claims Act, which allows foreigners to sue one another in US courts. Since a successful case brought under the law in 1979, human rights lawyers have used the law to hold multinational firms accountable for human rights violations, according to *The Nation*.



Courtesy of Pacific Magazine

The case has the potential to force major change in corporate conduct, Christine Rosen, an associate professor at UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business told the *Los Angeles Times*. If the case succeeds, "companies will not be able to go abroad and take advantage of the much looser regulatory environment or the corruption of the government to treat their workers in an inhumane way," Rosen said.

The International Labor Rights Fund, which brought the suit against Unocal, is also suing ExxonMobil for its involvement in Indonesian military atrocities, including murder and torture, against villagers in connection with a joint Indonesian government-Mobil natural gas project. However, this summer the US government asked a judge to dismiss the case against ExxonMobil on the grounds that it could hamper the war on terrorism by alienating the Indonesian government.

Earlier this year, a federal judge ruled that a case could go forward against Shell for human rights abuses by the Nigerian military against opponents of a Shell pipeline.

Last year, lawyers for a group of Ecuadoreans suing Texaco for environmental violations filed a complaint with the US Securities and Exchange Commission, arguing that Chevron's application to merge with Texaco failed to disclose its potential liability in the case. Similar suits under the 1789 law have also

Garment workers in Saipan won settlements totalling \$20 million from retailers, including The Gap, Tommy Hilfiger, and Target



been filed against Coca-Cola, Del Monte, DynCorp, and the Drummond Company.

—Carolyn McConnell

Grocery Chain Goes Green

With 2,300 stores and annual revenues of \$38 billion, Albertson's is one of the largest retail food and drug chains in the US. It has now become one of the nation's largest recyclers.

Self-interest drove the shift.

According to John Bernardo, Albertson's resource conservation manager, "The typical grocery store has a profit margin of less than 5 percent. To increase revenues, we have two choices: increase food sales or reduce operating costs.

"We'd been recycling cardboard since the 1960s, but the sustainability idea came later," Bernardo told Greenbiz.com. "In the 1990s, we began looking at waste reduction: What can we recycle? That led to the next logical question: Why do we have to generate waste in the first place?"

Albertson's has retrofitted 90,000 light fixtures, instituted a recyclable plastic tote system for shuttling items between distribution centers and stores, and tried scores of smaller experiments, many of them suggested by employees.

One of the more imaginative efforts involves a plant in Boise, Idaho, where Albertson's makes several different kinds of ice cream every day. In the past, some ice cream was lost during flavor changes because it was a mix of two flavors. Today, compatible flavors are produced back-to-back, packaged under the name "Odds & Ends," and sold or donated locally. One in-store deli has taken the soybean oil used to fry chicken, filtered the breeding out of it, and recycled it to fuel a hot water heater. The store saves both on waste disposal and energy consumption.

The company also worked to develop new boxes made of recycled corrugated cardboard to

replace the totally unrecyclable, paraffin-coated produce boxes. The containers can also be used for in-store display, reducing handling and labor costs, decreasing the number of truck trips necessary to transport produce, reducing product damage, and increasing recycling revenues.

—Jill Bamburg

Report calls GMOs a "Disaster" for Farmers

Confirming concerns about genetically modified food crops, a British report calls GM food "a practical and economic disaster" for North America.

In preparation for the British government's upcoming decision on whether to allow GM crops to be commercially grown in the United Kingdom, the Soil Association issued *Seeds of Doubt*, which says of GM crops, "In complete contrast to the impression given by the biotechnology industry, it is clear that they have not realized most of the claimed benefits. Widespread GM contamination has severely disrupted GM-free production including organic farming, destroyed trade, and undermined the competitiveness of North American agriculture overall." Three-quarters of the world's GM food is grown in the US and Canada.

According to the report, non-GM farmers are finding it difficult or impossible to grow GM-free crops. Food processing and distribution have had costly and disruptive contamination incidents. As a result of contamination, a number of farmers have even been accused of infringing company patent rights. Monsanto sued for \$400,000 a non-GM farmer in Canada whose crop was contaminated by GMOs.

The problems have led many US farm organizations to urge farmers to plant non-GM crops this year. A number of US and Canadian agriculture groups and more than 200 other groups are lobbying for a

ban or moratorium on the introduction of the next major proposed GM food crop, GM wheat.

The most recent development in genetic engineering of food is the cloning of animals for milk and meat. Milk from cloned cows and meat from the offspring of cloned cows and pigs could show up on grocery shelves as early as next year under the plans of livestock breeders who are already raising clones on American farmsteads. A recent National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report on these developments did not find conclusive evidence of harm to environment or consumers, but called for additional studies.

One concern for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is that breeders going to the expense of cloning may also attempt genetic modification of the animals, perhaps to make them leaner or improve milk production. Such genetic manipulation poses far more potential problems than mere cloning does, and the agency would likely require extensive proof that the gene-altered animals are safe to eat.

A few cloned cows scattered around the country are already producing milk. Farmers and companies have held off selling it only because of informal requests from the FDA. Absent compelling evidence of a problem, it's not clear the FDA or any other government agency would have the legal power to keep cloned animals out of the food supply.

The Humane Society has asked the Food and Drug Administration to block sales of products from cloned farm animals, their byproducts, and offspring due to concerns that large-scale cloning will lead to widespread animal suffering related to higher mortality rates during pregnancy and immediately after birth.

—Rik Langendoen

For more information on GM foods, see www.gefoodalert.org and www.thecampaign.org



The Page That *COUNTS*

Known varieties of apples lost between 1903 and 1983: 86.2%
of lettuce: 92.8%
of asparagus: almost 98%¹

Number of gallons of water required to produce one car: 105,000
Number of gallons of wastewater produced by computer manufacturers in the US each year: 79 billion
Number of gallons of bottled water sold in the year 2000: 22.3 billion
Tons of plastics used by the bottled water industry each year: 1.5 million²

Photovoltaic energy generation worldwide in 1980: 6.5 megawatts
In 2001: 390.5 megawatts
Wind energy generation worldwide in 1980: 10 megawatts
In 2001: 24,800 megawatts³

Estimated increase in US prescription drug spending between 1998 and 2000: 40%
Best-selling category of prescription medicines in 2000: antidepressants⁴

Difference in student test scores between classrooms with the most daylighting compared to those with the least: 7% to 18%⁵

Increase in per capita higher education spending in Texas from 1980 to 2000: 37%
Increase in prison spending: 401%
Three states with highest increases in prison spending: Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas⁶

Percentage of women in the US who will have one abortion by age 45: 43
Percentage of abortions worldwide that are performed illegally: 43⁷

Percentage of gay/lesbian couples who split up during a 12-year comparative study of 84 couples: 20
Of straight couples: 40⁸

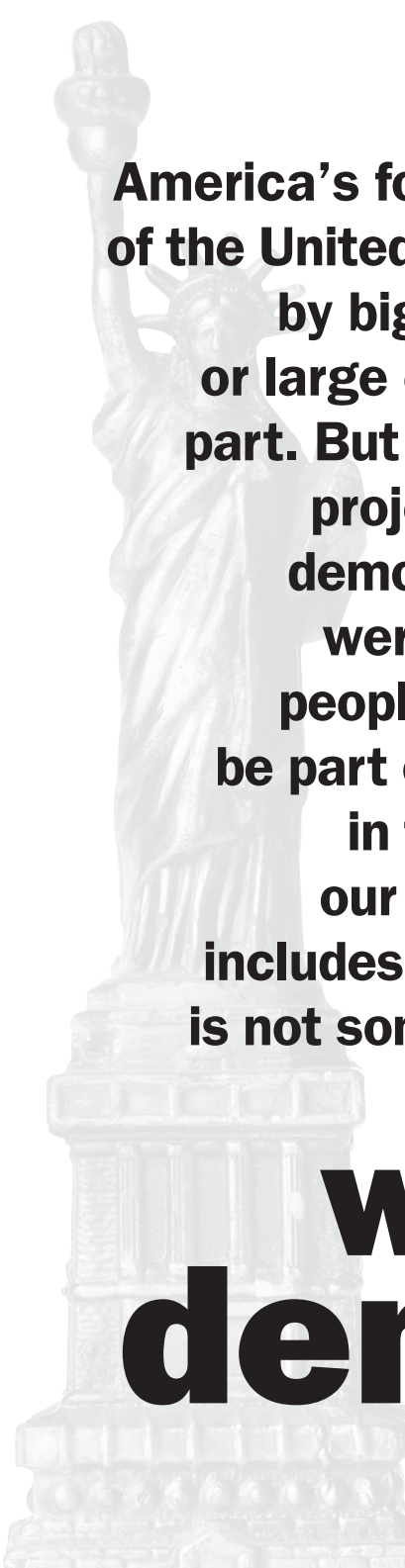
Number of cigarettes consumed in industrial nations in 1962: 1,546 billion
In 2001: 2,201 billion
Number of cigarettes consumed in developing nations in 1962: 625 billion
In 2001: 3,186 billion⁹

Rank of the year 2000 among years from 1968 to 2000 for accidental oil spills: lowest
When spills from deliberate attacks on tankers, oil fields, and pipelines are included: highest¹⁰

Increase in memory retention of gum-chewers over non-chewers during testing: 35%¹¹

Sources: 1. Andrew Kimbrell, *Fatal Harvest*, Foundation for Deep Ecology, 2002, pp59,75,79 2. Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke, *Blue Gold*, The New Press, 2002 pp8,142, 143 3. "Energy," Trends Datasets Index, Signposts 2002: Envisioning the Future, Worldwatch Institute 4. Future survey, v23, no6, June 2001, p15 5. Daylighting Initiative Condensed Report, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, 1999, p4 6. Debt to Society, www.motherjones.com/prisons/atlas.html 7. Facts in Brief: Induced Abortion, The Alan Guttmacher Institute, Feb. 2000, http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html 8. Jerry Large, *Seattle Times*, April 14, 2002, seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/northwestlife/134436124_jdl14.html 9. "Population and Health," Trends Datasets Index, Signposts 2002: Envisioning the Future, Worldwatch Institute 10. Vital Signs 2002, Worldwatch Institute, p68 11. Chewing your way to a Better Brain, Northumbria News and Events, March 2002 http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/whats/news/news_archive/gum_0302.htm





America's founders designed the Constitution of the United States to resist tyranny, whether by big government, powerful churches, or large corporations. They succeeded—in part. But democracy remains an unfinished project. What if we took the project of democracy seriously? What if elections were untainted by big money? What if people of all races and all classes could be part of it? We can have real democracy in the US—democracy that draws on our best wisdom and intelligence, and includes everyone at the table. Democracy is not something we inherit. It is something every generation must re-create.

**what would
democracy
look like?**





what would democracy look like?

Vandana Shiva is a physicist and an organic farmer, an instigator of India's historic "tree-huggers" movement, and a renowned author. She speaks internationally on the perils of globalization, while mobilizing fellow citizens to reclaim their rights to life itself

an interview with Vandana Shiva

earth democracy



Linda Wolf

Sarah Ruth van Gelder: Tell me about the Earth Democracy movement. Where did that notion come from, and what form is the movement taking?

Vandana Shiva: The notion comes from a very ancient category in Indian thought. Just like Chief Seattle talked about being in the web of life, in India we talk about *vasudhaiva kutumbkam*, which means the earth family. Indian cosmology has never separated the human from the non-human—we are a continuum.

When the issue of the patenting of life emerged, for example, there were two levels of response from those opposing this practice in India. The one level was resistance: "This is immoral. Life is not an invention. Life cannot be a monopoly. You cannot sell us the seeds you stole from us, and you cannot charge us royalties for the product of nature's intelligence and centuries of human innovation."

The second level was the reclaiming of democracy: people claimed the right to look after their biodiversity and use it sustainably. This came out of discussions among the movements we've been building at the grassroots.

I remember one meeting of 200 villagers who had been involved in seed saving and seed sharing with *Navdanya*, the trust that I founded to save seeds and promote organic agriculture. These 200 villagers gathered on World Environment Day in 1998 and declared sovereignty over their biodiversity—not sovereignty to rape and destroy, sovereignty to conserve. These 200 villagers, gathered in a high mountain village near a tributary of the Ganges, said, "We've received our medicinal plants, our seeds, our forests from nature through our ancestors; we owe it to them to conserve it for the future. We pledge we will never allow their erosion or



what would democracy look like?

their theft. We pledge we will never accept patenting, genetic modification, or allow our biodiversity to be polluted in any form, and we pledge that we will act as the peoples of this biodiversity.”

These discussions in villages all over India, in many different languages, led to amazing actions. Some wrote letters to Mike Moore, director-general of the WTO saying, “We noticed you have passed a law called ‘Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights.’ We also notice that under this law you want to monopolize life forms. Unfortunately, these are resources over which you have no jurisdiction, and you have overstepped your boundaries.”

Similar letters went to the prime minister of India: “You are the prime minister of this country, but *we* are the keepers of biodiversity. This is not your jurisdiction. You cannot sign away these rights. They were not given to you. We never delegated them to you.”

But the ones that were the most beautiful were crafted literally under the village trees and addressed to Ricetec, Inc., which patented Basmati rice, and to the Grace Corporation, which patented the name. The letters said, “We’ve used Basmati for centuries. ... Now we hear you’ve got a patent number for this, and you claim to have invented it. This kind of piracy and theft we know happens. There are people who steal in our village, and we treat them with understanding. We call them and ask them to explain what is the compulsion that led them to steal. So we invite you to come to our village and explain to us the compulsion that made you steal from us.”

These communities started in years past by saving locally bred seeds and saving biodiversity. Now they are seeking self-governance over food systems, water systems, and biodiversity systems.

If you think of the fact that corporate globalization is really about an aggressive privatization of the water, biodiversity, and food systems of the Earth, when these communities declare sovereignty and act on that sovereignty, they have developed a powerful response to globalization. Living democracy then is the democracy that is custodian of the living wealth on which people depend.

Sarah: Is the same language being used elsewhere to counter corporate globalization?

Vandana: There is, I think, a spontaneous resurgence of thinking that centers on protection of life, celebrating life, enjoying life as both our highest duty and our most powerful form of resistance against a violent and brutal system that globalizes not just trade, but fascism, and denies civil liberties and freedoms.

There isn’t any one coordinated language for this movement, and that’s the beauty of it. The WTO-related

events in Seattle created the first experience of a rainbow politics—a successful pluralistic politics, without the working of a master mind, but with the currents and beauty that come out of free thinking. In the new politics, people have different ways of talking, but I feel the core will be living democracy and living economies [see *YES!* Fall 2002], and that it will include both taking personal responsibility to make change and being part of national and international movements for change.

Sarah: You’ve written about four types of insecurities—ecological, economic, cultural, and political—and how each results in violence. Could you say something about why you consider each of these forms of insecurity?

Vandana: The ecological crisis is a severe form of insecurity, especially in conditions of poverty when rivers are polluted and you have no clean drinking water, when groundwater is exhausted and you’re forced to migrate. There couldn’t be a deeper insecurity than this. Many conflicts within Third World countries are related to the practice of exploiting resources faster than nature can renew them or diverting them away from where people need them. Dams in every society have become major sources of conflict. As water scarcity grows, neighbors, families turn against each other.

Sarah: Many people assume that scarcity has always been part of the human condition and that scarcity is closely related to population increases.

Vandana: In my 25 years of work on resource and environmental issues, one thing I have learned is that different parts of the planet are endowed in different ways. There may be little rainfall in the deserts of Rajasthan, but the culture of Rajasthan evolved to manage that amount of rainfall, and they have developed miraculous technologies for harvesting and storing what rain they get. They have sophisticated underground storage systems and water-harvesting systems so that not a drop is wasted. These technologies still sustain cities like Jodhpur and Jaipur. They have enough drinking water because they’ve developed a conservation culture, and they grow crops that don’t need much water. The moment you think the desert of Rajasthan should be growing rice paddy or cotton, you create scarcity.

Scarcity is not a result of uneven endowments—that is diversity. Scarcity is having a mismatch between a culture and nature’s giving. Cultures have evolved cultural diversity to mimic the biological diversity of climates and ecosystems. It’s when that relationship is disrupted that you get unsustainable population growth.





what would democracy look like?

There is no society in which you've had so-called population explosions as long as societies have lived within the context of their rights to the resources and the ability to conserve those resources for the future. Just look at two situations. In England, the population explosion started with the enclosures of the commons—when peasants were uprooted from the land and had to depend on selling their labor. In India, 1800 is the watershed for the consolidation of colonial regimes. For centuries before 1800 our population had been stable. When you depend on the land, you know there are five people who can be supported. You work your society out so you have five. When you are selling your labor power on an uncertain basis, in an unstable wage market, you know that having ten is better than having five. So dispossession from the Earth's natural wealth is at the root of instability and population growth.

Sarah: So economic insecurity is actually created?

Vandana: Instead of leaving seeds in the hands of the peasants who co-evolve them in partnership with nature, seeds become a monopoly in the hands of five or six global corporations. Instead of water belonging to millions of local communities, water too is to be controlled by five or six global water giants. These are recipes that use economic systems to appropriate for the few the base of survival of the majority. The 80 percent who are dispossessed of the wealth of nature move into economic insecurity, because their livelihood as peasants, as fishermen, as farmers, as tribals, as forest dwellers, all depend on having the fisheries, the land, the forest, to make a living. When those rights are taken away, they become economic refugees—they become disposable people.

This economic model rested on the assumption that the favored 20 percent would gain security as a result of these policies. But recent events on Wall Street show us that this model creates economic insecurity both for the 80 percent who rely on natural wealth and for the 20 percent who rely on *virtual* wealth, because virtual money is a construct, and that construct can disappear as easily as it is created.

Either way, economic insecurity is the legacy of a finance-driven, capital-driven, corporate-driven economic model that is destroying our natural capital and the resilience of local economies.

Sarah: The third type of insecurity is cultural. You've made a connection between globalization and the rise of nationalist violence and right-wing repression. What kind of evidence have you seen that there are links?

Vandana: Well I'm a physicist, not a social scientist. But as a citizen of India, I have had to suffer the violence and brutality that comes with rising fundamentalism, and I've asked myself how a society that is the cradle of peace, the land of Gandhi and Buddha, could be reduced to one of the most volatile societies in the world.

One incident that contributed to my understanding of these links was the violence that erupted in the Punjab in the 1980s. As the magic of the Green Revolution started to disappear, as subsidies were removed and an artificial system of prosperity started to decay, the Punjab became the birthplace for anger and discontent. When you look at why people were fighting, you find they were fighting for their rivers, for fair prices, for a say on when dam waters should be released. None of this was decided locally or regionally—it was all decided from the capital, Delhi. So the discontent was against centralized regimes in which people had no share in shaping their future.

More recently there have been clear indicators of how fundamentalism is growing out of the economic insecurity of globalization. Let me just give you two examples. In the late 1990s, because of the pressures of globalization, onion prices went up from 2 rupees to 100 rupees. The ruling party lost what became known as "the onion elections" of 1998 because they allowed this price increase. The opposition parties used the onion as the symbol of their fight against globalization, and they won in every state. Immediately after that we saw a round of fundamentalist violence.

There is a resurgence of thinking that centers on protecting life, celebrating life, enjoying life as both our highest duty and our most powerful form of resistance against a violent and brutal system

In Gujarat, we had another set of regional elections, and the WTO, agriculture, and farmers' survival were the major issues. Farmers said they were being destroyed by globalization policies, and they voted the ruling party out of power. Immediately after that the fundamentalist wave erupted, the genocide and warmongering started, and while public attention focused on the violence, the globalization agenda was pushed further.

As decision making is centralized away from local communities to national governments—and ultimately to corporate board rooms, financial markets, institutions like the World Bank, IMF, and WTO—





what would democracy look like?

representative democracy loses its base in economic democracy. As local and national governments lose control over economic resources and priorities, elected leaders can no longer build a political base by championing programs responsive to family and community needs.

Political demagogues of the far right emerge to fill the void by channeling the anger and insecurity created by empire's program of scarcity, injustice, and exclusion into an *us-versus-them* politics that blames particular

lives as close as possible to where people are and to where they can take responsibility. If a river is flowing through some communities, those communities should have the power and the responsibility to decide how the water is used and whether it is to be polluted. The state has no business giving to Coca-Cola the groundwater of a valley in Kerala, resulting in rich farmland going totally dry. Communities need to take back sovereignty and delegate trusteeship to the state only as appropriate.

What we have now is a regime of absolute rights in the hands of corporations with zero responsibility for the environmental and social devastation and the political instabilities they are creating. If we want to reactivate and rejuvenate democracy, we have to bring back the economic content.

A combination of deep passion and deep detachment allows me always to take on the next challenge because I don't cripple myself, I don't tie myself in knots

national, racial, culture, or religious groups. The rise of the LePens in France, the Fortuyns in Netherlands, Haiders in Austria, and the Narendra Modis in India is a result. So there is a strong affinity between the forces of empire and a politics of hate that justifies policies of domination and exclusion. So long as people's attention is focused on fear and hatred of foreigners or members of a particular religious group, such as Muslims, they are distracted from organizing to deal with the system of institutional domination and exploitation that is the real source of their insecurity.

Sarah: That certainly sounds like what is happening in the United States also.

Vandana: Absolutely. It's a vicious cycle, and we need instead to create virtuous cycles that allow economic democracy to feed political democracy, cultural identities, and cultural diversity.

It comes back to deepening of democracy. What we have at this moment is democracy reduced to the rule of lies—lies in the way the popular will is being counted, as we saw in Florida in 2000, and lies in the way the people's wealth is being counted, as we see in today's accounting scandals. That false wealth is influencing who will rule—it's all just too false now.

Our system of food security is being destroyed in the name of economic growth and economic liberalization, and people don't have enough food to eat. Our farmers are being ravished by seed companies, being pushed into debt, and committing suicide. This system is going to cost lives even in the US, where people don't know how they'll pay for their health or retirement.

The way out of this violent cycle is to deepen democracy—to bring decisions that directly affect people's

Sarah: Let me wrap up with a personal question. Every time I've heard you speak or met you, you've had so much energy, not only intellectual energy, but personal or spiritual energy. I'm just wondering, what keeps you so alive?

Vandana: Well, it's always a mystery, because you don't know why you get depleted or recharged. But, this much I know. I do not allow myself to be overcome by hopelessness, no matter how tough the situation. I believe that if you just do your little bit without thinking of the *bigness* of what you stand against, if you turn to the enlargement of your own capacities, just that in itself creates new potential.

And I've learned from the Bhagavad Gita and other teachings of our culture to detach myself from the results of what I do, because those are not in my hands. The context is not in your control, but your commitment is yours to make, and you can make the deepest commitment with a total detachment about where it will take you. You want it to lead to a better world, and you shape your actions and take full responsibility for them, but then you have detachment. And that combination of deep passion and deep detachment allows me always to take on the next challenge because I don't cripple myself, I don't tie myself in knots. I function like a free being. I think getting that freedom is a social duty because I think we owe it to each other not to burden each other with prescription and demands. I think what we owe each other is a celebration of life and to replace fear and hopelessness with fearlessness and joy.

Vandana Shiva's books include: *Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution, and Profit*; *Stolen Harvest, the Hijacking of the Global Food Supply*; *The Violence of the Green Revolution: Third World Agriculture, Ecology and Politics*; *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge*; and many others.





what would democracy look like?

The National Archives and Records Administration



Thom Hartmann

american rebellions

They covered their faces, massed in the streets, and destroyed the property of a giant global corporation. Declaring an end to government-backed global trade that was destroying local economies, this small, masked minority started a revolution with an act of rebellion later called **the Boston Tea Party**

On a cold November day, activists gathered in a coastal town. The corporation had gone too far, and the two thousand people who'd jammed into the meeting hall were torn as to what to do about it. Unemployment was exploding and the economic crisis was deepening; corporate crime, governmental corruption spawned by corporate cash, and an ethos of greed were blamed. "Why do we wait?" demanded one at the meeting, a fisherman named George Hewes. "The more we delay, the more strength is acquired" by the company and its puppets in the government. "Now is the time to prove our courage," he said. Soon, the moment came when the crowd decided for direct action and rushed into the streets.

That is how I tell the story of the Boston Tea Party, now that I have read a first-person account of it. While striving to understand my nation's struggles against corporations, I came upon a first edition of *Retrospect of the Boston Tea Party with a Memoir of George R. T. Hewes, a Survivor of the Little Band of Patriots Who Drowned the Tea in Boston Harbor in 1773*, and I jumped at the chance

to buy it. Because the identities of the Boston Tea Party participants were hidden (other than Samuel Adams) and all were sworn to secrecy for the next 50 years, this account (published 61 years later) is the only first-person account of the event by a participant that exists, so far as I can find. As I read, I began to understand the true causes of the American Revolution.

I learned that the Boston Tea Party resembled in many ways the growing modern-day protests against transnational corporations and small-town efforts to protect themselves from chain-store retailers or factory farms. The Tea Party's participants thought of themselves as protesters against the actions of the multinational East India Company.

Although schoolchildren are usually taught that the American Revolution was a rebellion against "taxation without representation," akin to modern day conservative taxpayer revolts, in fact what led to the revolution was rage against a transnational corporation that, by the 1760s, dominated trade from China to

what would democracy look like?

“Fifteen hundred Thousands, it is said, perished by Famine in one Year, not because the Earth denied its Fruits; but [because] this Company and their Servants engulfed all the Necessaries of Life, and set them at so high a Rate that the poor could not purchase them.”

India to the Caribbean, and controlled nearly all commerce to and from North America, with subsidies and special dispensation from the British crown.

Hewes notes: “The [East India] Company received permission to transport tea, free of all duty, from Great Britain to America...” allowing it to wipe out New England-based tea wholesalers and mom-and-pop stores and take over the tea business in all of America. “Hence,” he told his biographer, “it was no longer the small vessels of private merchants, who went to vend tea for their own account in the ports of the colonies, but, on the contrary, ships of an enormous burthen, that transported immense quantities of this commodity ... The colonies were now arrived at the decisive moment when they must cast the dye, and determine their course ...”

A pamphlet was circulated through the colonies called *The Alarm* and signed by an enigmatic “Rusticus.” One issue made clear the feelings of colonial Americans about England’s largest transnational corporation and its behavior around the world:

“Their Conduct in Asia, for some Years past, has given simple Proof, how little they regard the Laws of Nations, the Rights, Liberties, or Lives of Men. They have levied War, excited Rebellions, dethroned lawful Princes, and sacrificed Millions for the Sake of Gain. The Revenues of Mighty Kingdoms have entered their Coffers. And these not being sufficient to glut their Avarice, they have, by the most unparalleled Barbarities, Extortions, and Monopolies, stripped the miserable Inhabitants of their Property, and reduced whole Provinces to Indigence and Ruin. Fifteen hundred Thousands, it is said, perished by Famine in one Year, not because the Earth denied its Fruits; but [because] this Company and their Servants engulfed all the Necessaries of Life, and set them at so high a Rate that the poor could not purchase them.”

After protesters had turned back the Company’s ships in Philadelphia and New York, Hewes writes, “In Boston the general voice declared the time was come to face the storm.”

The citizens of the colonies were preparing to throw off one of the corporations that for almost 200 years had determined nearly every aspect of their lives through its economic and political power. They were planning to destroy the goods of the world’s largest multinational corporation, intimidate its employees, and face down the guns of the government that supported it.

The queen’s corporation

The East India Company’s influence had always been pervasive in the colonies. Indeed, it was not the Puritans but the East India Company that founded America. The Puritans traveled to America on ships owned by the East India Company, which had already established the first colony in North America, at Jamestown, in the Company-owned Commonwealth of Virginia, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi. The commonwealth was named after the “Virgin Queen,” Elizabeth, who had chartered the corporation.

Elizabeth was trying to make England a player in the new global trade sparked by the European “discovery” of the Americas. The wealth Spain began extracting from the New World caught the attention of the European powers. In many European countries, particularly Holland and France, consortiums were put together to finance ships to sail the seas. In 1580, Queen Elizabeth became the largest shareholder in The Golden Hind, a ship owned by Sir Francis Drake.

The investment worked out well for Queen Elizabeth. There’s no record of exactly how much she made when Drake paid her share of the Hind’s dividends to her, but it was undoubtedly vast, since Drake himself and the other minor shareholders all received a 5000 percent return on their investment. Plus, because the queen placed a maximum loss to the initial investors of their investment amount only, it was a low-risk investment (for the investors at least—creditors, such as suppliers of provisions for the voyages or wood for the ships, or employees, for example, would be left unpaid if the venture failed, just as in a modern-day corporation). She was endorsing an investment model that led to the modern limited-liability corporation.



what would democracy look like?

After making a fortune on Drake's expeditions, Elizabeth started looking for a more permanent arrangement. She authorized a group of 218 London merchants and noblemen to form a corporation. The East India Company was born on December 31, 1600.

By the 1760s, the East India Company's power had grown massive and worldwide. However, this rapid expansion, trying to keep ahead of the Dutch trading companies, was a mixed blessing, as the company went deep in debt to support its growth, and by 1770 found itself nearly bankrupt.

The company turned to a strategy that multinational corporations follow to this day: They lobbied for laws that would make it easy for them to put their small-business competitors out of business.

Most of the members of the British government and royalty (including the king) were stockholders in the East India Company, so it was easy to get laws passed in its interests. Among the Company's biggest and most vexing problems were American colonial entrepreneurs, who ran their own small ships to bring tea and other goods directly into America without routing them through Britain or through the Company. Between 1681 and 1773, a series of laws were passed granting the Company monopoly on tea sold in the American colonies and exempting it from tea taxes. Thus, the Company was able to lower its tea prices to undercut the prices of the local importers and the small tea houses in every town in America. But the colonists were unappreciative of their colonies being used as a profit center for the multinational corporation.

Boston's million-dollar tea party

And so, Hewes says, on a cold November evening of 1773, the first of the East India Company's ships of tax-free tea arrived. The next morning, a pamphlet was widely circulated calling on patriots to meet at Faneuil Hall to discuss resistance to the East India Company and its tea. "Things thus appeared to be hastening to a disastrous issue. The people of the country arrived in great numbers, the inhabitants of the town assembled. This assembly, on the 16th of December 1773, was the most numerous ever known, there being more than 2000 from the country present," said Hewes.

The group called for a vote on whether to oppose the landing of the tea. The vote was unanimously affirmative, and it is related by one historian of that scene "that a person disguised after the manner of the Indians, who was in the gallery, shouted at this juncture, the cry of war; and that the meeting dissolved in the twinkling of an eye, and the multitude rushed in a mass to Griffin's wharf."

That night, Hewes dressed as an Indian, blackening his face with coal dust, and joined crowds of other men in hacking apart the chests of tea and throwing them into the harbor. In all, the 342 chests of tea—over 90,000 pounds—thrown overboard that night were enough to make 24 million cups of tea and were valued by the East India Company at 9,659 Pounds Sterling or, in today's currency, just over \$1 million.

In response, the British Parliament immediately passed the Boston Port Act stating that the port of Boston would be closed until the citizens of Boston reimbursed the East India Company for the tea they had destroyed. The colonists refused. A year and a half later, the colonists would again state their defiance of the East India Company and Great Britain by taking on British troops in an armed conflict at Lexington and Concord (the "shots heard 'round the world") on April 19, 1775.

That war—finally triggered by a transnational corporation and its government patrons trying to deny American colonists a fair and competitive local marketplace—would end with independence for the colonies.

The revolutionaries had put the East India Company in its place with the Boston Tea Party, and that, they thought, was the end of that. Unfortunately, the Boston Tea Party was not the end of that. It was only the beginning of the power of corporations in America.

The birth of the corporate "person"

Fast forward 225 years.

The American war over corporate power is heating up again. A current struggle centers on the question of whether corporations should be "people" in the eyes of the law.

In October 2002, Nike appealed a lawsuit against it to the Supreme Court, asking it to rule that Nike's letters to newspapers about treatment of workers in Indonesia and Vietnam are protected by the First Amendment.

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what would democracy look like?

In Pennsylvania, several townships recently passed laws forbidding corporate-owned farms. In response, agribusiness corporations threatened to sue the townships for violation of their civil rights—just as if these corporations were persons.

Imagine. In today's America, when a new human is born, she is instantly protected by the full weight and power of the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Similarly, when papers called articles of incorporation are submitted to governments in America (and most other nations of the world), another type of new "person" is brought forth into the nation.

The new corporate person is instantly endowed with many of the rights and protections of personhood. It doesn't breathe or eat, can't be enslaved, can live forever, doesn't fear prison, and can't be executed if found guilty of misdoings. It is not a human but a creation of humans. Nonetheless, the new corporation gets many of the Constitutional protections America's founders gave humans to protect them against governments or other potential oppressors. How did corporations become persons?

After the Revolutionary War, Thomas Jefferson proposed a Bill of Rights with 12 amendments, one of which would "ban commercial monopolies," forever making it illegal for corporations to own other corporations, to do business in more than one specific product or market, and thus forever preventing another oppressive commercial juggernaut like the East India Company from arising again in North America to threaten democracy and oppress the people.

But Jefferson's amendment failed and the corporations fought back. Now those corporations use the club of the amendments that did pass to influence elections and legislation favoring them—in the name of their rights as persons.

An historic goof?

What most people don't realize is that this is a recent agreement—and it is based on an historic error. Only since 1886 have the Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment been applied explicitly to corporations. For 100 years people have believed that the 1886 case *Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad* included the statement "Corporations are persons." But looking at the actual case documents, I found that this was never stated by the court, and indeed the chief justice explicitly ruled that matter out of consideration in the case.

The claim that corporations are persons was added by the court reporter who wrote the introduction to the decision, called "headnotes." Headnotes have no legal standing.

It appears that corporations acquired personhood by persuading a court reporter and a Supreme Court judge to make a notation in the headnotes of an unrelated law case. In *Everyman's Constitution*, legal historian Howard Jay Graham documents scores of previous attempts by Supreme Court Justice Stephen J. Field to influence the legal process to the benefit of his open patrons, the railroad corporations. Field, as judge on the Ninth Circuit in California, had repeatedly ruled that corporations were persons under the 14th Amendment, so it doesn't take much imagination to guess what Field might have suggested Court Recorder J.C. Bancroft Davis include in the transcript, perhaps even offering the language, which happened to match his own language in previous lower court cases.

Alternatively, Davis may have acted on his own initiative. This was no ordinary court reporter. He was well-connected to the levers of power in his world, which in 1880s America were principally the railroads, and had, himself, served as president of the board of a railroad company.

Regardless of how it happened, an amendment to the Constitution, designed to protect the rights of African Americans after the Civil War, passed by Congress, voted on and ratified by the states, and signed into law by the president, was re-interpreted in 1886 for the benefit of corporations. The notion that corporations are persons has never been voted into law by the people or by Congress, and all the court decisions endorsing it derive from the precedent of the 1886 case—from Davis' error.

Other legal errors have been corrected with time. The notions that women aren't persons under the law, (affirmed, for example, in the 1873 *Bradwell v. State* case) and that blacks aren't entitled to equal protection (decided in the *Dred Scott* and *Plessy* cases) were superseded by court cases affirming the full rights of African Americans and women under the law. The establishment of corporate personhood, on the flimsy foundation of a court reporter's insertion of a phrase into a legal summary, may be the next mistake to be corrected, particularly if grassroots efforts continue to challenge the legitimacy of corporate personhood.

Adapted from *Unequal Protection: The Rise of Corporate Dominance and The Theft of Human Rights* by Thom Hartmann. Published by Rodale, Inc. Available at 800/754-2914 or at www.UnequalProtection.com. Thom Hartmann is the author of *Last Days of Ancient Sunlight* and other books and has been an entrepreneur, international relief worker, director of a school for emotionally disturbed children, psychotherapist, marketing consultant, editor, and reporter.



what would democracy look like?

The people of Porto Alegre, Brazil, get to decide how to spend their city's budget, and the benefits are evident in neighborhoods rich and poor. This experiment in a city run by the Workers' Party could be a preview of things to come now that the party's candidate, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, has been elected president

Porto Alegre's budget of, by, and for the people

David Lewit



Democracy is thriving as citizens gain competence in talking with the mayor, specialists in agencies, and fellow citizens of different means.

The participatory budgeting cycle starts in January of each year with dozens of assemblies across the city designed to ensure the system operates with maximum participation and friendly interaction. One study shows that poor people, less well-educated people, and black people are not inhibited in attending and speaking up, even though racial discrimination is strong in Brazil.

One experienced participant described the dynamic as follows: "The most important thing is that more and more people come. Those who come for the first time are welcome. We let them make demands during technical meetings—they can speak their mind and their anxieties. We have patience for it because we were like that once. And if a person has an issue, we set up a meeting for him, and create a commission to accompany him. You have the responsibility of not abandoning him. That is the most important thing."

Power and learning

Each February there is instruction from city specialists in technical and system aspects of city budgeting. Regular folks learn fast because what they are learning empowers them to change conditions that limit or extend their lives. This is perhaps an extension of the teachings of Paolo Freire, the Brazilian educator who enabled peasants to quickly learn to read by making use

How would you like to distribute 200 million dollars to your fellow citizens? That's the amount of money the city of Porto Alegre spends in an average year for construction and services—money not committed to fixed expenses like debt service and pensions.

Fifty thousand residents of Porto Alegre—poor and middle class, women and men, leftist and centrist—now take part in the participatory budgeting process for this city of a million and a half people, and the numbers involved have grown each year since its start in 1989. Then, only 75 percent of homes had running water. Today 99 percent have treated water and 85 percent have piped sewage. In seven years, housing assistance jumped from 1,700 families to 29,000. In 12 years, the number of public schools increased from 29 to 86, and literacy has reached 98 percent. Each year the bulk of new street-paving projects has gone to the poorer, outlying districts. In addition to these achievements, corruption, which before was the rule, has virtually disappeared.





what would democracy look like?

Andrew Stern



In 1989, only 75 percent of homes had running water. Today 99 percent have treated water. In 12 years, the number of public schools increased from 29 to 86, and literacy has reached 98 percent. ... In addition to these achievements, corruption has virtually disappeared

of materials about power, landlords, and politics, and by a learning process of liberation as well as deliberation.

In March there are plenary assemblies in each of the city's 16 districts as well as assemblies dealing with such areas as transportation, health, education, sports, and economic development. These large meetings—with participation that can reach over 1,000—elect delegates to represent specific neighborhoods. The mayor and staff attend to respond to citizen concerns.

In subsequent months these delegates meet weekly or biweekly in each district to acquaint themselves with the technical criteria involved in requesting a project be brought to a district and to deliberate about the district's needs. Representatives from the city's departments participate according to their specialties. These intermediary meetings come to a close when, at a second regional plenary, regional delegates prioritize the district's demands and elect councillors to serve on the Municipal Council of the Budget.

The council is a 42-member forum of representatives of all the districts and thematic meetings. Its main function is to reconcile the demands of each district with available resources, and to propose and approve an overall municipal budget. The resulting budget is binding—the city council can suggest changes but not require them. The budget is submitted to the mayor who may veto it and remand it to the Municipal Council of the Budget, but this has never happened. If there are residual problems, the council works out changes, returning to their neighborhoods for feedback.

The internet provides an ongoing vehicle for involvement in participatory budgeting, which the city now extends to city planning features like land use and long-term major investments. The city posts progress reports, budget updates, and a calendar of all meetings.

An important by-product of the participatory budgeting process is a burgeoning of civic activity. As participatory budgeting developed, the numbers of political, cultural, and neighborhood groups has doubled, especially in poorer districts where results of self-generated new city expenditures are remarkable. People in wealthier districts also like what's going on. The value of their properties in poorer districts is rising. A new city “energy of accomplishment” spawned a campaign to get property owners to pay their taxes, and it worked.

A livable city

Porto Alegre is one of the most livable cities in Brazil. The experiment has spread to more than 100 cities in Brazil and also to Montevideo, Uruguay and Ciudad, Argentina. Here are the words of participant Luis Carlos Pereira about the changes he's seen in his neighborhood: Before participatory budgeting, “there was no sewer, school, health clinic, or transportation. Now, a reservoir has been built with 6 million liters of water, the streets have been paved, and a school opened.”

Eloah dos Santos Alves, a white-haired woman from the Leste region of the city, says “I have participated in the participatory budgeting process since 1989. In general, 85 percent of the needs have been met. We have a recycling warehouse, schools, day cares, and medical clinics. And I would like to let everyone know that I have never been treated differently for not being part of the PT”—the Workers' Party, whose candidate, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was elected president of Brazil on October 27, 2002.

David Lewit is co-chair of the Alliance for Democracy campaign on Corporate Globalization & Positive Alternatives, see www.thealliancefordemocracy.org/globalization. See also Gianpaolo Baiocchi in *Politics & Society*, 29, 2001.



what would democracy look like?

The election of 2000 shocked the nation into realizing we have a serious problem with running elections. But beyond the Florida election flaws are other questions—like how to reclaim our elections from well-heeled special interests and ensure all voices are heard

Micah Sifry

clean elections

In 48 states, the skyrocketing cost of campaigns shows no sign of slowing down. The money chase has gotten so bad that Congress does little work on Mondays or Fridays and most evenings of the week, as members have to devote precious hours to dialing donors for dollars.

But it doesn't have to be this way. In two states, Arizona and Maine, campaign finance reform is opening the election process to newcomers and helping to break the lock wealthy special interests have on the legislative process. In both states, candidates for state offices win public financing on condition that they raise and spend no private money (including their own) and abide by stringent spending limits. To qualify, these "Clean Elections" candidates have to raise a large number of \$5 contributions from voters in their district (the opposite of the system in most states, where candidates raise a small number of large contributions from a tiny, wealthy elite). Candidates who choose to run clean get public funds, and, if they are outspent by a privately financed opponent, additional matching funds are available.

In 2000, both states had maiden runs of Clean Elections, with promising results. A third of Maine's legislators were elected running "clean," as were about one-fifth of Arizona's legislators. In 2002, these numbers were way up. In Maine, observers predicted that three quarters of the state senate and more than half of the state house would be made up of incumbents free of direct dependence on private donors. In Arizona, it was clear that six of the nine statewide offices would be held by candidates who ran "clean," because all of the contenders for those offices participated in the Clean Elections system. Participation cut across party lines, with



AP/Wide World Photos

free airtime for political candidates

Paul Taylor

Will Rogers once quipped that "it costs so much to run for office, most people can't even afford to lose."

Will didn't live to see the half of it. Nowadays it costs about \$1 million to win a seat in the House of Representatives, \$10 million for a Senate seat. About half of this campaign money goes to buying airtime on broadcast television.

As the 2002 session of Congress came to a close, Senators John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Russell Feingold (D-Wisc.) introduced a bill that would require all television and radio stations to air a minimum of two hours a week of programming centered on the election, each election cycle. The bill would also require stations to provide a limited amount of free advertising time to qualified candidates. The free airtime bill is expected to be the next major battle in the campaign finance reform wars when Congress reconvenes in 2003.

Proponents believe the free airtime bill would open up the political process to those without the wealth and access to large contributions now needed to get on television.

Paul Taylor is the founder and President of the Alliance for Better Campaigns, a nonprofit group that organized the Free Airtime Coalition, www.freeairtime.org.

what would democracy look like?

about seven out of 10 Democrats running 'clean' in both states, and 53 percent of Republicans in Maine and 38 percent of Republicans in Arizona joining in. Independents, Greens and Libertarians also used the system. And both states experienced a substantial increase in the number of contested primaries. Clean Elections is changing both the nature of campaigning and the dynamics of governing.

By requiring candidates who choose to run clean to collect large numbers of \$5 contributions, politicians are forced to spend more time with average voters. "When I ran for attorney general [in 1998], I sat in my office for five or six hours a day asking people for money," Janet Napolitano told *The Arizona Republic*. But her campaign for governor this year has been different. After turning in over 6,000 qualifying contributions last summer, she said, "It's been a great grass-roots Phase I of the campaign. You don't have to come to a \$250-a-plate dinner to take part. Most people can afford \$5."

Legislators from Maine and Arizona who participated in Clean Elections in 2000 say that the experience caused them to run campaigns that were more grass-roots oriented, and it has changed life in the state-house. Beth Edmonds, the chair of the senate's labor committee, recalls the debate over a bill to require that truckers receive overtime pay for long hours. "All the trucking companies were in my committee room. The truckers themselves weren't there. But I know I haven't taken a penny from the companies and they know that too. None of them have any ownership of me."

It is too soon to say that money no longer talks in either state capitol, but it clearly doesn't swagger as much. Last year, the Maine legislature passed a bill creating a Health Security Board to devise a detailed plan for a single-payer health care system for the state. The bill wasn't everything its sponsor, Rep. Paul Volenik, wanted, but he did feel its passage represents real progress toward a universal health care system. Two years earlier, only 55 members of the House of Representatives (out of 151) voted for the bill. This time 87 did. "The bill moved dramatically further, and a portion of that is due to the Clean Election system," Volenik said.

Under a little-noticed provision of the McCain-Feingold Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, the General Accounting Office is conducting a study of the campaign systems in Maine and Arizona. As Congress examines what steps to take to further reform the federal election finance system, this study is one more sign that Clean Elections will be a big part of the national debate.

Micah Sifry is Public Campaign's senior analyst. For more information, contact Public Campaign, 202/293-0222, www.publiccampaign.org.

let every voice be heard

Steven Hill

Signs of a spreading voting revolution are sprouting up around the country in the most unlikely places—especially in George W. Bush's old stomping grounds, the state of Texas. In May 2000, in response to a voting-rights lawsuit, Amarillo, Texas, switched to the voting system known as cumulative voting for its school board elections. Under the old system, no blacks or Latinos had been elected to Amarillo's seven-member school board in more than two decades, although Latinos and African-Americans make up more than 20 percent of the city's population.

Cumulative voting had an immediate impact: both a black and a Latino candidate won seats. Minority voters all over the city suddenly had representation, and voter turnout increased more than three times.

Under the traditional "winner-take-all" system, minority voices might never prevail—because they are by definition in the minority. Under cumulative voting, voters cast as many votes as there are contested seats. But unlike in winner-take-all systems, voters are not limited to giving only one vote per candidate. Instead, they can give multiple votes to one or more candidates. This allows a minority voter to express a strong preference for a candidate.

More than 100 jurisdictions in the US have adopted such alternative voting systems to resolve voting rights lawsuits. Cumulative voting and limited voting have been used in Alabama, Illinois, New Mexico and South Dakota. More than 50 localities have adopted cumulative voting in Texas alone.

Cumulative voting is just one method

for allowing voters to make their voices heard. In March 2002, San Francisco voters supported instant runoff voting (IRV) for citywide elections by an impressive 55 to 45 percent margin, while citizens at over 50 town meetings across Vermont overwhelmingly voted to urge state lawmakers to adopt instant runoff voting for statewide elections.

The instant runoff allows voters to select their runoff candidates at the same time as their top choice. Voters indicate their choices by ranking them on their ballots, 1, 2, 3, and so on. If no candidate wins a majority of first-choice votes, the votes for the candidates with the fewest votes automatically go to those voters' second choice candidates—an instant runoff. With IRV, candidates have incentive to court other candidates' supporters, asking for their second or third rankings. Successful candidates are usually those who build coalitions and emphasize issues, not those who rely on negative campaigning. With IRV there are no spoiler candidates or wasted votes.

Studies have demonstrated that these alternative voting systems boost turnout and increase minority and female representation.

To learn more about alternative voting procedures, visit the website of the Center for Voting and Democracy, www.fairvote.org. Steven Hill is the author of *Fixing Elections: The Failure of America's Winner Take All Politics* (Routledge, www.FixingElections.com) and western regional director of the Center for Voting and Democracy. He was campaign manager for San Francisco's instant run-off initiative.



what would democracy look like?

Photos by Kerttu Barnett



One day in the early 1990s a friend of mine—a long-term servant of the United Nations—bluntly remarked, “It is better, Hilikka, that you keep quiet about the Nordic welfare society. It is such a luxury of the rich, the poor countries cannot even dream about it.”

Hilikka Pietilä

women, citizenship, and the end of poverty

This remark annoyed me immensely. Intuitively I felt that it was not true, but I did not have a good answer. So I began to study the history of emerging wealth in Finland and the other Nordic countries. These countries are located far to the North in a harsh climate where nature does not permit more than one harvest a year. Furthermore, the Nordic countries never had colonies, from which most of the world's other rich countries have extracted wealth for centuries. Yet, according to the United Nations, the Nordics are among the world's wealthiest and most equal and democratic countries. Finland has gone from being a poor country early in the 20th century to ranking tenth in the world in life expectancy, education, and income.

The common belief is that a country must first become rich, and then it can provide welfare for its people. The history of the Nordic societies tells a different story; here, wealth has been built by building welfare for people.

This success was built on a notion of welfare entirely different from welfare as understood in the United States. In the US “being on welfare” is humiliating, and welfare benefits often depend on the recipient's relationship to something or someone else. What is radically different

about the Finnish system is that here welfare benefits and services are rights that everyone living permanently in the country is individually entitled to. Finnish people have economic, social, *and* political citizenship.

For women, it has proved particularly important that social benefits and services belong to everyone without distinction as to sex, marital status, employment, race, or nationality. Thus Finnish women are entitled to enjoy their social entitlements whether or not they are married or employed.

This social welfare system is based on a long heritage of democracy, social justice, and equality, and a sense of collective responsibility for the well-being of the people. The workers' movement has been strong in the Nordic countries since the beginning of the 20th century. But ever since 1906, when Finland became the first country in the world to grant women the vote and full political rights, the most important force in building the welfare system has been Finnish women.

what would democracy look like?



In 1899, when the majority of Finns were living in poverty, a group of women established the Martha Organization to advance the country's economic and cultural life. The strategy was to mobilize educated women—often teachers and home economists—who volunteered to visit women in their rural homes and teach them about childcare, cooking, housekeeping, handicrafts, raising animals, growing vegetables and fruits, using berries, mushrooms, and wildlife from the forests, and fish from the thousands of lakes.

The movement helped women earn their own income; otherwise, the husband often held the family finances totally in his hands. As the skills, knowledge, and income of rural women grew, their status, self-confidence, and respect rose.

This “Martha method” improved the health and well-being of children and families, and helped to build the early foundations for the welfare society. The results showed, for instance, in rapidly declining birth rates and infant mortality and rapidly rising life expectancy.

But the change wasn't only social and economic. Before and after the constitutional reform in 1906, the Martha movement played a vital role in training women to use their political rights. The result was that in Finland's first modern parliamentary elections in 1907,

19 women were elected to the 200-member parliament. Many of these women supported efforts to improve women's social conditions.

The movement persists today. Membership peaked in the 1960s with almost 100,000 women as active members, falling to 55,000 in 1997. In recent decades the Marthas have also shared their skills and experiences with their sisters in Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and most recently in Burkina Faso.

The social progress in Finland in the early 1900s proves that empowering women and strengthening their competence to help themselves is the way to eradicate poverty. It is social policy from below, building self-reliant and sustainable well-being for the whole nation.

This progress paved the way for the creation of the welfare system after World War II. Finland was not a wealthy country in the 1940s and 1950s. We had just survived two devastating wars from 1939–1944, first fighting against the Soviet Union and then fighting to drive the Germans from our country. We lost about 15 percent of our territory, and the whole of northern Finland was burned down by the Germans.

Almost half a million people moved from the lost territory and were resettled in the rest of the country (about 13 percent of the 3.6 million population). Enormous reconstruction of the country was necessary, and we were obliged to pay heavy war indemnities to the Soviet Union. But because Finland wished to stay out of the Cold War, we refused offers of aid under the Marshall Plan.

Despite its poverty, Finland began to create one of the world's most generous social welfare systems. The aim was to build the economy while eradicating poverty. The aims supported each other: the growing well-being of people provided a healthy and well-trained labor force, and the economic growth was redistributed to people as social benefits.

As Finland's economy grew, the welfare system grew, so that today, everyone is entitled to a minimum salary or unemployment benefit, child-support allowances for all children, paid parental leave for 44 weeks, pensions, free education up to university level, free school meals to all pupils in public comprehensive schools, highly subsidized public health services, day care services for all children under school age, and subsidized care for the aged.

The government also provides good public transport, free universities in 10 cities around the country, high-quality public primary and secondary schools and vocational training, a comprehensive adult education system, excellent public libraries all over the country, and highly subsidised theatre, music, and arts in all cities. The welfare system here is a lifelong social insurance, a guarantee that whatever may happen, children

what would democracy look like?

will not lose access to education, people will not be left at the mercy of relatives or charity organizations, no one will be abandoned in case of illnesses, accidents, unemployment, or bankruptcy, and everyone will have old-age income and care no matter what. Open poverty and misery are almost nonexistent.

The public welfare services create a huge public sector that employs hundreds of thousands of people in caring for, educating, serving, and transporting other people. People who work in the social sector have meaningful jobs and spend their incomes on housing, clothing, food, services, and so on. This money keeps rotating, creating other jobs, demand, and consumption, and thus supports the economy.

These benefits go to all, yet in practice they—along with easy access to reproductive health services—are most important for women, who are able to enjoy their social, economic, and political rights equally in all walks of life. The welfare system has the effect of “making visible the female world,” says researcher Anneli Anttonen.

Finland has financed its welfare system mainly through highly progressive taxation on salaries and wages. Taxes can be as high as 50–60 percent of salaries and wages for those who earn the most. In addition, Finland put in place a strong financial regulatory system. The government has regulated transactions to adjust the terms of international trade and provide legal protection to Finnish industry and agriculture.

As the result of decades of systematic policies and work for welfare and equality, Finland is one of the wealthiest countries in the world—and, at the same time, has a highly equal distribution of wealth. Income disparities have in the last 25 years declined not only between people but also between regions. Finland is the most equal society in the world, with regard to both class and gender, according to UN statistics.

I am a product of Finnish welfare society. I was born in an ordinary country village, and without the free school system and other social services I wouldn't have been able to attend university far away from home. I received a low-interest loan for living expenses during my student years and also to buy my first apartment. Using good public transportation services all my life, I have avoided the need to own a car. And now that I am aging, I enjoy the benefits of public health services. The welfare society has allowed me to choose my work and way of life freely.

Encountering globalization

Despite its successes, this welfare and service society is now under threat. At the beginning of 1995, Finland became a member of the European Union. In order to qualify for membership, the government introduced

austerity measures. In the late 1980s capital transactions were liberalized. Private companies gained new leverage, and Finland increasingly had to open its economy to international competition. The recession and the requirements of the European Economic and Monetary Union have served as excuses for further austerity measures and gradual dismantling of the welfare state.

Power has been internationally centralized within the EU and increasingly is transferred to undemocratic commercial structures. The power balance between corporate employers and trade unions has also shifted. The corporations derive strength from their international capital base and expansion of their operations, which make workers more vulnerable to threats that their jobs will leave the country. Trade unions can retain only defensive positions. The earlier arrangements are eroding.

Women especially have seen this shift as a backlash against equality and democratization. The cuts have hit women especially hard, both because women and children especially use the social services and because many of the public service jobs are held by women. Austerity measures continue, even though the economy has until lately been growing at record rates. It would seem that Finland has become so rich that it can no longer afford the welfare society, even though we could afford to build it when we were poor.

However, the welfare system is deeply rooted in Finnish society, and the people strongly defend it. Strong support for retaining and even improving the welfare society shows up regularly in public opinion polls, election campaigns, and protests against austerity measures.

When plans were announced to close branches of the public library in some Helsinki suburbs, for example, a strong local uprising succeeded in keeping the libraries open. In many places, people have been fighting for years to retain their schools, when the government has wanted to close the small schools and collect all children into massive centralized institutions.

After decades of developing a well-functioning welfare society, there is a deeply rooted sense in Finland that communities can create well-being for their members. And since we know this is possible, we believe that people have a right to it. It may be that this insight will help us fight off the neoliberal agenda and push the welfare society to a more mature stage instead of dismantling it.

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what would democracy look like?

the miner's canary

Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres

Power is a many-layered thing, exercised not just in who wins and loses, but in the rules of our games and the stories we tell about our losses and victories. What if we could find a new kind of power, one that changes the rules, gives us new stories, and allows everyone to win?



University of Texas at Austin

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Race, for the two of us, is like the miner's canary. Miners often carried a canary into the mine alongside them. The canary's more fragile respiratory system would cause it to collapse from noxious gases long before humans were affected, thus alerting the miners to danger. The canary's distress signaled that it was time to get out of the mine because the air was becoming too poisonous to breathe.

Those who are racially marginalized are like the miner's canary: Their distress is the first sign of a danger that threatens us all. We watch the canary, seeking to improve the air quality in the mines, and to reconnect individual experiences to democratic faith, to social critique, and to meaningful action that improves the lives of everyone in the mine. To produce meaningful change, however, we must also understand power and its uses.

In the summer of 1998, one of us observed a golf-ball relay race involving children, ages nine to eleven, at a going-away party. The two teams were organized by



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gender: Boys against the girls. The object of the race was to carry a golf ball on a teaspoon for a specified distance and then transfer the spoon to the next child, without either dropping or touching the ball. Both times the children played the game, the girls won. They “kept their eyes on the ball,” according to the analysis of the adults present. Slow and steady. The boys instead assumed that raw speed would get them to the finish line first.

The adults watching the race, many of them academics, then began to deconstruct the game. The initial interpretation was that the game illustrated conventional views of contemporary gender dynamics. Girls possess superior fine motor skills. Girls are more people-oriented and value their relationships more highly. As with all first impressions, however, a lot more lay beneath the surface.

The grandmother of one of the children, a high-school English teacher now in her early 80s, observed the game with the other adults. She interrupted the conversation to ask, “Who designed the game?” As the official hosts of the party, the girls did. The girls designed the game to play to their strengths, and the boys mistakenly assumed that the game (like most games involving physical activity) favored their strengths. The girls enjoyed a preferred position from which they could defend or promote their particular skills, and they did so in a way that allowed them to dominate their opponents and consistently defeat them in a game in which someone had to lose in order for another to win—a characteristic traditionally associated with males.

In this game, the girls subverted traditional gendered norms of power in order to prevail. Conventional ideas about power suggest that it invariably involves control, domination, or force. But power occupies and functions in different spheres. John Gaventa, Steven Lukes, and others who have explored theories of power articulate three dimensions of power as it is conventionally conceived.

The first dimension, focusing on direct force, is the most obvious. It can be directly observed by simply watching who wins and who loses in an arena of conflict. The second dimension involves manipulating the underlying rules and structures that play to the strengths of the winners. The third dimension makes use of a cultural narrative that the powerful develop in order to “sell” the underlying rules and structures to the powerless. This over-arching story elicits the cooperation and ultimately the passivity of the powerless by convincing those who lose that they “deserve” their lot in life. When given a chance, the losers are told, they simply came up empty-handed. In short, there are winners, there is a bias in the rules that defines winning, and there is a story that justifies both the winners and the rules by which they win. All three dimensions are variations on

a theme of power as control. Those with control maintain control because they set the agenda. With no voice in the process that distributes power, those out of power have a hard time wresting control. And they become further isolated and alienated because the stories that the winners tell the losers make the losers feel as though they deserve their condition and do not have a legitimate right to complain. The occasional exception merely confirms the neutrality of the underlying story.

These three dimensions of power are closely inter-related, but each dimension reveals different ways in which the powerful and powerless understand and respond to the conventions of power.

Within each dimension, one group’s benefit comes at another’s expense. Nothing is gained across the system, and thus, the whole transaction is ‘zero-sum’; someone has to lose for another to win. When a person or group possesses power in a zero-sum world, it means they gain control of a bounded “thing” that is then denied to others. Power becomes necessarily something one has over either others or oneself, and thus we will refer to this zero-sum conception of power as *power-over*.

Returning to our relay race, we see that the girls exercised all three dimensions of power. They prevailed in a competitive, winner-take-all struggle (the first dimension); that is, they exercised power directly: they won, the boys lost. They constructed the rules in their own favor (the second dimension) by devising a game with requirements that favored them, and they disguised the built-in preference of the game for finesse rather than speed by calling it a “relay race.” When the girls consistently won the game that they themselves had structured, they proceeded to exercise their power as winners to determine the next game; they used prevailing cultural assumptions—“to the winners go the spoils” and “the majority rules”—to assure themselves continued dominance (the third dimension). The boys, though grumbling, nonetheless acquiesced. The boys were unhappy because they lost in the direct conflict (first dimension), and they had no opportunity to participate in defining or changing the terms of engagement (the second dimension). The boys’ sense of their own relative powerlessness also led them to feel alienated as they submitted to the story being told by the girls (the third dimension). By manipulating cultural symbols and rules, the powerful convinced the powerless it was not only futile to resist, but somehow illegitimate, as well.

Why play the game?

Two weeks before the relay race, at a faculty meeting in an elite law school, adults played their own version of the golf-ball relay race. The person running the

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meeting was outlining his strategic plan, which included a role for members of the faculty through advisory committees. Several faculty members then raised their hands to inquire about the process. One of the inquiring faculty members—we'll call her Martha—teaches civil procedure and is well known for her scholarly explorations of deliberation and difference. Martha asked: Why should she or other professors invest time and energy in any of the proposed advisory committees? Why should she, in other words, "play this game"? The person running the meeting turned to Martha and said, "I know you are a process person." Martha quickly interrupted to correct him: "I am a power person."

We can interpret Martha's response three ways, in light of the three dimensions of power. In the first dimension, she wanted to change the vocabulary from process to power to gain authority for herself and thus improve her chances of winning within the existing game.

In the second dimension, she recognized the power that resides in the process itself. That is, the person who controls the agenda controls the outcome. Just as the child's grandmother observed in the context of the relay race, the design of the game determines who can play and the terms of play, either of which often determines outcomes.

In the third dimension, Martha saw the powerful manipulating the less powerful by providing empty opportunities for formal participation and through this process constructing a story, to which the powerless meekly subscribe. Thus, she wanted some assurance that the less powerful would enjoy real power through their formal participation, rather than merely giving sanction to a process structured to exclude or ultimately ignore them.

Winner-take-all or all win?

Most liberal strategies for social change are premised on the idea that all power is power-over. They focus their energy almost exclusively on changing who wins in first-dimension contests. Hierarchy—that is, a pyramid-like structure of permanent winners and losers—is seen as a normal and necessary outcome. Within hierarchy, upward mobility is a good thing. The goal of these strategies is to repopulate hierarchies of winner-take-all power to include more people of color or women. Conventional strategies for social change proceed as though a change in who administers power fundamentally affects the structure of power itself. Putting the girls in charge of designing the games will make the outcomes fairer, they imply. Previous outsiders, once given a chance, will exercise power differently. Who is included at the top of the hierarchy makes a difference not just to the individuals involved or to others for whom the involvement

is symbolically significant (most notably their fellow minority group members) but also to substantive outcomes.

However, token participation may not properly account for the second dimension, in which less visible rules are more important to the allocation of power than are more visible individuals. It tends to ignore as well the third dimension, in which a story can legitimate the status quo and discourage others from acting in their own self-interest. As happened in the relay race, those who win also get to dominate the next game, and the winners explain the outcome in ways that justify, and ultimately exploit, their success.

Furthermore, the access of outsiders to an existing hierarchy stiffens the resistance of those already in power, who typically see the claims of outsiders as threatening. A zero-sum paradigm, in which someone must lose if someone else wins, strengthens the impulse to exclude. As well, cosmetic diversity, which focuses on providing opportunities to individual members of an underrepresented group, diminishes the possibility that unfair rules will be challenged. As long as there is equal access for a few, rules that exclude the many will remain intact. Finally, the existing hierarchy disciplines newcomers who, although they look different from traditional incumbents, learn to exercise power in the same old ways.

Strategies of cosmetic diversity pit potential allies against one another. The third dimension of power is a divide-and-conquer strategy: It disguises points of collective engagement and separates logical allies. But when groups engage with one another explicitly around questions of how to define power, they may discover that the hierarchy of power itself is their common antagonist, rather than one another.

An experiment

Sociologist Jose Calderon tells a story about racial and ethnic hierarchy in the early 1990s in the Alhambra School District in California. At that time the district served a student population that was 51.2 percent Asian, 39 percent Latino, 8.1 percent white, and 0.7 percent black. As the demographics of the community continued to shift from what was once a white majority, tensions mounted and numerous racial incidents involving Latino, Asian, and Anglo students occurred. In 1991 protests were organized when the school district asked the district attorney's office to file charges against Vietnamese students involved in a fight with an Anglo student whose father was a local policeman. When the Asian Coalition complained, the district attorney's office responded by filing charges of battery on school property against Latinos who had been involved in a



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previous fight that same year.

At first, the Asian and the Latino communities organized their own coalitions of parents, educators, and bilingual social workers. Although professionals dominated both groups, the groups initially mistrusted each other. The competing ideologies and separatist inclinations were neutralized when the leadership in both coalitions succeeded in reframing the question away from a competition between groups to a challenge of the status quo in the school district. The separate coalitions evolved into one coalition, the Multi-Cultural Association. Instead of channeling their separate grievances into a claim to integrate the schools' decision-making elite, the coalition used their common experience of being marginalized to challenge the exclusionary power held by those in authority. They resisted the conventional hierarchy and experimented with something new.

They discovered that Latinos had an unusually high expulsion rate and comprised 56 percent of all student dropouts in the school district, a pattern that had been going on for 20 years. The Multi-Cultural Association organized the various ethnic groups to oppose and eventually abolish a tracking system that grouped Latino students at lower academic levels. They also pushed for adoption of a policy requiring all principals to develop school-wide plans for "creating an environment which allows all persons to realize their full individual potential" and to promote conflict-resolution techniques that included a voice for the students in the process. Previously, the school district had resorted to expulsions, arrests, and policing to deal with increased tensions at the high school.

Rather than exploiting cultural and class differences, the multiethnic coalition united around efforts to identify the structural foundations of conflict in the high school. Calderon concludes that the real problem was the traditional top-down hierarchy of decision-making in the school.

The hierarchy of power that is most effective in separating potential allies in the United States is race. Tackling the role that race plays in our social institutions is a way not just to improve the lot of people of color but to confront the ways in which power operates and circulates throughout our society and culture.

The brawls that led to police involvement and the expulsion of so many Latino students in Alhambra were symptoms of flawed school policies that, among other things, over-emphasized external punishment to control internal racial tensions. The Multi-Cultural Association was able to reduce the racial disparity by challenging the way school administrators wielded

power. Even more, the coalition improved the over-all learning environment to benefit everyone because they addressed the source of the problem, not just its symptoms. But without an awareness of the symptoms, the problem itself would have remained hidden.

Attention that focused initially on the canary's vulnerability enabled the coalition to see the less visible but no less dangerous toxins in the mine's atmosphere. In other words, race often reveals inequities that disable the miners as well as the canary within our various social institutions—in employment opportunities, educational chances, medical care, and democratic representation. But race can be more than a diagnostic tool.

Power-with

The Multi-Cultural Association discovered that power could be gained, not at some other group's expense, but to everyone's benefit. Their work shows the potential for a different kind of power: *power-with*, rather than *power-over*. Power-with is the psychological and social power gained through collective resistance and struggle and through the creation of an alternative set of stories.

The English word "power" derives from the Latin "posse," meaning "to be able." Power does not always require control or domination. When the educator Seth Kreisberg asked a group of tenth graders to express their images of power, power-over words predominated, but terms such as "life" and "happiness" were also mentioned, as were images of the sun and the earth. This power is generative, it involves sharing something or becoming something, not just giving or demanding or consuming. It expands in its exercise. It finds a way to call on people to connect with something larger than themselves.

We urge those committed to progressive social change to watch the canary. Progressive change can be measured by whether the most vulnerable among us enjoy a space to experiment with democratic practice and discover their own power. Even though the canary is in a cage, it continues to have agency and voice. If the miners were watching the canary, they would not wait for it to fall off its perch, legs up. They would notice that it is talking to them. "I can't breathe, but you know what? You are being poisoned too. If you save me, you will save yourself. Why is that mine owner sending all of us down here to be poisoned anyway?" The miners might then realize that they cannot escape this life-threatening social arrangement without a strategy that disrupts the way things are.

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what would democracy look like?

The media should be democracy's backbone. But with newspapers, television, radio, record labels, and Internet providers owned by a few giant corporations, only a narrow spectrum of voices get heard. Here's what Americans are doing

to reclaim the power to speak out

talking back: media for the people



Courtesy of Speak Out

play your own tune

Ricardo "Kool Aid" Chavez

From left:
La Paz members
DJ Sloe-Poke,
Kool-Aid,
and Dez

Music is like a force of nature. It's as basic to the human condition as anything else in the natural world. But like nature, it can be productive or destructive. Fire can keep you warm, but it can also burn down the house.

I've been a hip-hop/rap artist since I was 15 years old, and my music has always reflected the issues around me. I was raised in the United Farm Workers Union because my parents were cofounders. I grew up pretty poor, pretty aware. Everything from sexism to environmental racism occupies my mind space. That's who I am, that's what I sing about. But record companies wanted me to compromise my lyrics. Their attitude was this: "If you want to get played, you should rap about sex, drugs, and violence. You should be more mainstream."

In the '80s, when there were more than three record labels and the industry was less corporate, hip hop artists

had more control over the content of their music. Back then, you had groups like Public Enemy, Digable Planets, X-clan. What is all that other stuff the media plays? It is selfishness. It's spoon-fed. It's insulting to your intelligence to listen to 20 minutes of "I want to take off all my clothes." It's hip-hop, but it's what the corporations are pushing, and it's just one side of the spectrum.

La Paz, the group that I'm a part of, is on the other side of that spectrum. We want people to feel respected—and challenged. We didn't sign with a major record label and discovered that to be a blessing because we realized we could do it ourselves. We sing and rap about our experiences—and we don't hold anything back. At one point in my life, no doubt, I had teenage dreams of being a superstar. But now I think I'm much happier being what I am, because I'm free.

We're not on the charts, but we're having a great time. We started off performing for community events, benefits, and fundraisers all over our hometown in L.A. We sing about how women are the backbone of any society; how women are our mothers, grandmothers, and sisters. We rap about how we don't have a car with rims and a booming system, but can say, "Hey, I'm cool, I got skills, I can get on this mic and make any clown clap." Some kid might rethink selling drugs for money just to impress somebody else with material wealth. Maybe he'll know he could just be cool and be creative. *You can be yourself.* You don't have to play to anybody else's tune. You can march to your own drum.

Even though we talked about issues related to L.A., we started taking our message across the country, even to communities that aren't exposed to the same inner-city issues every day. People tell us all the time that they feel validated and represented, and even "awakened." If the American public were to wake up and see their interdependence and coexistence with the rest of the world, I think this corporate regime would topple. Something like the 1960s might happen—but for real, without drugs messing it all up.



what would democracy look like?

digital storytellers **Desiree Evans**

The rural, rocky landscape of Big Mountain, Arizona, is the site of a land battle between the Peabody Coal Mine Company and the Hopi and Diné nations. In the midst of this struggle, 12-year-old Walees Crittledern, who is Diné, has seen her brother arrested for trespassing on expropriated tribal lands and her home demolished as part of a forced relocation scheme by the mining company. And for a long time, no one heard her story.

But six months ago, Walees and 19 other youth from 20 different organizations nationwide were given a digital camera, a computer, and a chance to record their experiences. In late August, they gathered in Oakland, California, for a three-day workshop, where they learned how to turn their footage into documentaries. On the following Saturday, 300 activists from around the country gathered to watch these digital stories.

The digital storytelling conference was co-sponsored by Third World Majority (TWM), a collective made up of women of color who provide training in new media and access to equipment.

"TWM started its work as a response to the exclusion of people of color in mainstream media and technological fields," said director Thenmozhi Soundararajan. The collective's goal is to get people to create their own digital stories from the found material in their lives—art, oral history, creative writing, photographs, music, news clippings—using digital video, the Web, graphic design, sound engineering, and animation. "People learn to communicate their own truths in their own voices," said Soundararajan. "This isn't just about telling stories. It's about reclaiming histories."

Communities of color, and poor or indigenous communities historically have had little control over how technology is used. Recording devices in these communities are more likely to be used for policing, war, colonial ethnography, and jails than for telling the stories of the people, Soundararajan said. "It's no accident that the most common image young people have of themselves is through surveillance cameras and unhealthy MTV images."

To involve people who have a legacy of trauma with technology, TWM developed mobile training programs. They travel throughout the country armed with nine Macintosh laptops, cameras, recorders and other equipment providing digital storytelling training in homes, barns, churches, and community centers. "In all of this work, we are conscious of how our presence



Cherrise Domingo

as young women of color, teaching and producing media and technology, models a positive vision for the communities we want," said Theeba Soundararajan, director of Web and Graphic Agitation for TWM.

For the youth at the digital storytelling conference, like most, this was their first time working on video production. But the workshop turned out to be more than technology training. The group shared their movies, laughing, crying, and embracing over issues such as immigrant rights, failing schools, homophobia, and street life. Young activists working on gentrification connected with activists working on police accountability, homelessness, and the criminalization of youth.

Once back in their own communities, many participants use their digital stories for teaching and outreach. Underground Railroad, a youth group that organizes hip-hop events in the Bay Area, will screen their digital story in community centers to educate the public on how music can effect social change. Walees Crittledern is using her film and skills as part of Indigenous Action Media's campaign to gain community support in the struggle against Peabody.

"This is the kind of response we're trying for," said Thenmozhi. "When people reclaim their stories and reconnect to what is important to them in their communities, that's where the real empowerment begins."

For more information, visit www.thirdworldmajority.org.

Desiree Evans is an activist and journalist and has written for *AlterNet.org*, *Wiretap Magazine*, *In These Times*, and the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*.

Third World Majority youth check the sound on their documentary film

what would democracy look like?

watching the watchers

Megan Rowling



Photos: Steve Dietz

Bill Brown of
Surveillance
Camera Players
performs Amnesia
in Times Square

It's a sunny Friday evening in central London. Three women and a man, dressed in black and carrying white placards, meet outside Tottenham Court Road tube and then head off down Oxford Street. They weave through the crowd of weary shoppers and office workers, attracting bemused glances. Suddenly they stop and point in the air. Others look up to see what all the fuss is about. It's a surveillance camera. Then the white boards spring into action, silently announcing the day's events for the benefit of passersby, as well as those monitoring the cameras: "The Surveillance Camera Players Present" ... "It's OK, Officer" ... "Going Shopping" ... "Getting Something to Eat" ... "On Your Way Home."

The messages on the boards are reinforced by drawings of stick people saluting a camera. The Surveillance Camera Players (SCP) mimic the images with hands on temples; they repeat this performance at the next camera positioned just a few yards away.

People stop and watch. Busloads of passengers strain to read what's written on the boards. They smile and nudge their friends. They're curious. At the end, they're handed leaflets explaining what's going on. For this series of performances, the Surveillance Camera Players travelled all the way from New York to alert Britons to the fact that they're one of the most highly monitored nations in the world—1 million cameras watch 60 million people. By performing street plays adapted for the cameras, the group highlights the erosion of privacy and the targeting of people of color. The simple skits are street entertainment with a political twist.

The SCP's strategy has become especially relevant with the US government's intensified surveillance of the civilian population, especially immigrants, political refugees, and militant activists, in the wake of September 11. In fact, according to Bill Brown, cofounder of SCP, these events have propelled the debate around privacy versus security into the mainstream media.

"Now there is more of a context for what we do," he said. "People are more familiar with the issues we are

raising—privacy, the militarization of the police, face recognition software."

The SCP is based in New York and, according to Brown, New Yorkers are "sympathetic to the idea of retaining privacy," and have been supportive of the group's work since the World Trade Center attacks. The SCP has increased its membership, mainly through their "walking tours," in which the group roams neighborhoods to point out surveillance cameras.

As surveillance issues have become more controversial, so have the group's activities—at least in the eyes of the authorities. The SCP says the number of visits to its website by various branches of the US military has increased to as many as 20 per day. The group's response is to document each visit by a military organization, ranging from the US Air Force and Navy to the Defense Information Systems Agency. By documenting the information, the SCP is applying a tactic of "watching the watchers" (or at least letting them know you know you are being watched), the same tactic used in the plays.

The prospect of new surveillance technologies, including face recognition software already being tested on crowds at sports events, has only strengthened the need for such reverse scrutiny.

"The future of our group is unlimited," says Brown. "It would be nice to know there was an endpoint. But there's so much money going into surveillance technology that the SCP may have to continue forever."

Surveillance is also proliferating in other parts of the world, and the group is gaining recognition abroad. Cities in continental Europe are ideal places for performances, says Brown, because surveillance cameras are only just being introduced and the issues are fresh. Following its tour of the United Kingdom last year, the group also visited Germany, Spain, and Austria, and an SCP-style group has formed in Bologna, Italy.

For more information on the SCP, visit www.notbored.org/the-scp.html or netartcommons.net. Megan Rowling is a freelance journalist who lives in London.



what would democracy look like?

voices from the valley Jonathan Lawson

Several years ago, the INS began cracking down on undocumented farm workers in south central Washington state, staging raids in local communities during the busy harvest season. After each raid, a new group of workers would be recruited from other towns to fill jobs left vacant by the detentions. More raids would follow.

The staff of a local Spanish-language radio station, concerned for the workers and their families, devised a subtle but effective form of resistance. Whenever it got word that a raid had begun in a given town, it would air a song about *la migr*a (the Immigration and Naturalization Service), dedicating it to nearby Toppenish, Grandview, or whatever town was being raided. "People understood our unspoken message," said the station's general manager Gabriel Martinez.

KDNA, called *Radio Cadena* (Radio Network)—nicknamed *La Voz del Campesino* (the Voice of the Farm Worker)—began operations in the small town of Granger in 1979 to serve a growing Spanish-speaking population. Since becoming a lush farming region in the 1950s, the crescent-shaped valley between Yakima and Richland has become home to the fourth-largest migrant farm worker population in the US. Some 60,000 Spanish speakers make up 30 percent of the population during harvest season—the majority employed as farm workers. Language barriers, poverty, and fear of *la migr*a have kept farm workers virtually powerless—and voiceless.

Ricardo Garcia (now KDNA's executive director) and other Chicano activists in the mid 1970s realized that farm workers and others in the Spanish-speaking community would need to be in communication if they were to create change in their community's living and working conditions.

"Many farm workers do not read," Garcia said. "We decided that radio was a natural means of communication." At that time, there was only one Spanish-language radio station, according to Garcia, and it aired on weekends and broadcast only music and advertising.

"Farm workers needed information about housing, health, pesticide exposure, education for children and parents," said Garcia.

Now, more than 20 years since its founding, KDNA has become a hub for the Latino community. Call-in talk shows are a staple of KDNA's programming addressing health education, immigrants' rights, women's and children's issues, unemployment, labor conditions, and more. Cesar Chavez appeared several



Courtesy of KDNA

times as a guest in the '80s, speaking about the movement to organize farm workers. State and local government officials have addressed current issues on KDNA as well. And the farm workers themselves frequently host shows.

KDNA hasn't shied away from controversy, although Martinez recalls they sometimes worried about the community's reaction. Before launching an AIDS-education radio drama in 1989, programmers worried about whether older listeners would accept the frank discussions about sexuality and AIDS. Audience responses were positive, however, and Spanish-language stations across the US are rebroadcasting the program.

Martinez says that KDNA's boldness has strengthened its reputation, increased listener loyalty, and provided a sense of community and safety. The programs have made a point of responding to community needs. Ninfa Gutierrez' *Entre Amigas* (Between Girlfriends), began broadcasting in response to requests for more women's voices on the air.

"*Entre Amigas* is for women who have no resources at all," says Gutierrez, "It's for women who speak only Spanish, and in many cases are homebound or trapped in abusive relationships." The program has since inspired regular in-person *Entre Amigas* conversation groups in two towns.

"People arrive here, particularly from Mexico," Gutierrez says. "They land in this valley, can't find employment, can't speak the language, have no family. KDNA lets them know that they're not alone."

KDNA is radio of, by, and for the Spanish-speaking population of central Washington state. Many of its listeners and producers are farm workers

More on KDNA can be found at www.radiokdna.org.

Jonathan Lawson is a Seattle-based writer and editor and co-founder of the Cascadia Media Alliance, which advocates for media democracy in the Pacific Northwest.

what would democracy look like?

broadband democracy **Jeff Chester and Gary O. Larson**



The American Civil Liberties Union recently declared open, competitive Internet access to be “one of the key free speech issues of the early 21st century,” adding that “the Internet’s potential for free expression, civic involvement and economic innovation” are at stake.

Initially, that potential seemed secure, as the Internet evolved from a small, government-funded network in which purely commercial transactions were forbidden, into a thriving community of ideas, goods, and services.

More recently, however, the Internet’s traffic patterns have begun to resemble those of network television, with a handful of new-media giants (led by AOL Time Warner, Microsoft, and Yahoo), armed with restrictive digital copyright policies, that threaten to dominate the World Wide Web. Bowing to the pressure of the communications and entertainment industries, the Federal Communications Commission is in the process of dismantling long-standing media ownership safeguards, among them rules that will extend the cable television giants’ control of broadband Internet service. Cable is destined to become the dominant Internet access platform. Little wonder the ACLU is worried.

The defining characteristic of the Internet has been “open access”: the ability to choose your ISP, receive any content, and transmit any information. Media democracy advocates’ concern is whether open access will continue under the broadband revolution. Will the local cable broadband networks ensure open access and nondiscriminatory transport of all online content, including that of nonprofit and community groups as well as commercial competitors? Or will tiered levels of transport fees for streaming media services be prohibitive for alternative voices? Technology has made it possible to allocate slower connections to those that might not have a close financial tie to the monopoly owner; citizens could unwittingly lay blame for poor service on the Website or the ISP. While DSL is still a

broadband option, many suspect that telephone companies will soon be relieved of their line-sharing requirements, giving them the same local Internet monopoly status that cable companies currently enjoy.

Even as the mass media becomes more massive, there are a number of things that local activists can do to help their communities create an electronic commons and to protect their rights to a democratic media. Cable franchise agreements, which come up periodically for renewal or ownership transfer, provide opportunities for local organizations and municipal officials to work together to strengthen the local communications infrastructure. Such agreements determine the vital “public-interest dividend”—financial support, production facilities, and network capacity—that communities are legally permitted to demand in return for the cable franchisee’s use of local rights-of-way. While these agreements can be complicated, the public is often successful in negotiating for such basic public-interest requirements as: 1) financial support for local public-, education-, and government-access channels; 2) set-asides of digital bandwidth for various non-commercial community uses; and 3) designation of a portion of the cable company’s fiber-optic architecture for the creation of local high-speed intranets (I-nets), connecting municipal agencies, schools, public libraries, and other community resources. More importantly, once the agreement with the cable operator is signed, local media activists can shift their attention to the local franchise authority itself, the agency designated by the city government to operate the municipal cable communications infrastructure. No longer limited to scrolling text announcements, endless re-broadcasts of city council meetings, and amateurish “Wayne’s World” variety shows, public-access television in the digital age can encompass a wide variety of old- and new-media services, including broadband Internet access. For examples of what savvy negotiations and community activism can produce, take a look at Grand Rapids, Michigan’s Grandnet, www.grandnet.org, and Chicago Access Network Television, www.cantv.org, whose public access broadcast, media training, and online resources are triumphs of public-interest media.

It is never too late to campaign for local media services, but action is especially important now, as we make the transition from analog media to new digital systems.

For more on this topic, visit www.democraticmedia.org. Jeff Chester and Gary O. Larson are with the Center for Digital Democracy (CDD), based in Washington DC.



what would democracy look like?

Sikhs, Somalis, Arabs, Latinos, people whose lives have changed since September 11, 2001, gather in Seattle to tell their stories of fear and humiliation—stories that echo the Japanese internments

speaking for justice **Pramila Jayapal**

My name is Mouhamed Hamoui. I came to America in 1992 from Syria, seeking asylum. On February 22, 2002, something happened that I never thought possible; after all, this is America. At 7 a.m. that morning, seven INS and FBI agents dragged my parents and my sister out of bed with guns and flashlights. ... Since then, they have all been suffering in detention. ... My sister thinks that Arab Muslims are no longer welcome in this country, and it breaks her heart that a country she loves and has called home since she was nine years old is making her go through this.

Thirteen-year-old Mouhamed Hamoui's parents and sister, who have been in detention for over eight months, are among the casualties of Attorney General John Ashcroft's Alien Absconder Apprehension Initiative, under which 6,000 men from "al Qaeda-harboring countries" were the first to be targeted for apprehension.

Mouhamed was one of those who testified on September 21, 2002, in Seattle at a landmark public hearing called Justice For ALL: The Aftermath of September 11, 2001. The hearing marked the first time that immigrants targeted by the Bush Administration's post-September 11 crackdown have come forward in public to speak about the impacts on their lives of these policies and the repercussions of the hate crimes, racial profiling, and discrimination that have become part of everyday life.

On the first anniversary of the September 11 attacks, President George Bush said that "freedom and respect for human rights are owed to every human being, in every culture." He also said that throughout history, freedom has been threatened by war and terror. But many



Nadeem Ud Din





what would democracy look like?

Photos: Nadeem Uddin



Above: Young and old, they told their stories of life post-September 11

Previous page: Pramila Jayapal, founder and director of The Hate Free Zone Campaign, which led a coalition of more than 100 local and national groups in planning and implementing the hearing

civil liberties and immigrant rights groups believe it is the actions of the Bush administration that pose one of the greatest threats to our freedom as Americans.

In the year following the September 11 attacks, the Bush administration successfully pushed forward a series of actions that erode fundamental constitutional rights, with the burden falling disproportionately on immigrants. Post-September 11 policies allow people to be detained without charge or access to legal counsel and allow hearings to be held in secret. The TIPS program seeks to turn our mail carriers and truck drivers into a cadre of citizen spies. Our system of justice, which presumes that individuals are innocent until proven guilty, has been turned on its head.

The domestic struggle is, of course, intimately linked to the international struggle for power (read: oil). The quelling of public dissent that was seen with the attempts to silence anti-globalization protestors has spilled over. What is at stake as each of us decides whether or not to be involved in the struggle is nothing less than what it means to be free.

Speaking out

The idea for the public hearing emerged in the basement of the Wing Luke Asian Museum at a meeting called by the Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington, a nonprofit organization serving communities targeted in the wake of the September 11 attacks. Approximately 30 people from Somali, Sikh, Arab, Latino, Muslim, and Japanese-American communities came together that July evening to discuss how to commemorate September 11 and its aftermath. Although we in the Hate Free Zone Campaign had been working with all these communities for the past year, most had never met each other. As each spoke, it became clear that they had in common a terror of speaking out and a sense of being isolated and unwelcome in America.

Devon Abdallah, an Arab-American, and Jasmit Singh, a Sikh, said they didn't want a *kum ba yah* event. "We need to stand up and talk about what is really going on." These words unleashed a fury of assent. *This* was what the group wanted: to speak out together. But how?

The answer came from Karen Yoshitomi, of the Japanese American Citizens League, who suggested we hold a hearing modeled on those held in the early 1980s on Japanese internment. Individuals from different communities would testify before a commission of high-level officials about their personal experiences of discrimination and profiling since September 11. "Let's not wait 40 years this time," Yoshitomi said passionately.

Magic entered the room.

The meeting became the first of many organizing sessions, held every week and attended each time by 20 to 30 people from different ethnic communities. In the end, more than 100 people from 30 organizations worked with a consuming energy and excitement.

The magnitude of what we planned to do was tremendous—first, because drawing together a coalition of such diverse communities is a true feat, and second, because we were asking people to take a huge risk by coming forward to testify. Many feared that testifying would worsen their situations. Many had been targeted and questioned by the FBI and did not want to draw more attention to themselves. And those who had been the victims of violent crimes did not want to relive those experiences.

The Hate Free Zone Campaign along with the Arab-American Community Coalition, the Sikh Coalition, and various Somali groups began collecting testimony. Multiple work groups were formed. The venue would be Seattle's Town Hall, and our goal was to have 600–800 people in attendance.

We had less than two months to pull it together.

The week before the hearing, we were still collecting testimonies, which had to be translated and transcribed. Organizing logistics seemed endless: securing buses to bring immigrants without cars; printing a preliminary report with all the testimonies; coordinating media releases, interviews, and volunteers, including a peace-keeping force of over 35 people. Somalis, Arabs, Muslims, and Sikhs were still fearful of coming forward. It had also been difficult to secure the commissioners; we heard unofficially that several invited officials felt it would be "too controversial" or that they





what would democracy look like?



Center: Jasmit Singh, education director of the Sikh Coalition translates for Kulwinder Singh, a taxi driver: "A passenger started screaming at me, 'You are a terrorist, Osama! You have ruined us and blown up America!' I reached for my phone. They grabbed my arm. I jumped out of the cab and both of them grabbed me. They tore part of my beard and knocked my turban to the side. ... This event has broken my heart. I live in anguish, pain and fear."

did not believe that immigrant communities of color could pull this together.

Our panel in the end included US representatives Jay Inslee and Jim McDermott, both from districts in Washington state, as well top officials from the Department of Justice, INS, FBI, and state and local elected officials. The forum would be moderated by Washington state Supreme Court Justice Charles Z. Smith, a highly respected African American with a long history in civil rights.

The last group meeting was five days before the hearing. When we finished discussing all the last details, I looked around the room at the 40 tired, but resolute, faces. We all felt the miracle of what we had accomplished even before the hearing had taken place. Working together, we had seen the possibility of creating a new world that honored all hands and hearts, races and religions. Now, only one question remained: Would people come?

Freedom

September 21 was sunny and gorgeous. By 8 a.m. Town Hall was bustling. The video crew was there. Fifty-some volunteers had their instructions. The peacekeepers were standing guard. A local television news crew and reporters from the *Seattle Times* and the *Washington Post* arrived. The commissioners arrived. Ahmed—a Somali grocer disqualified from and then reinstated into the USDA's Food Stamp program in what appeared to be a case of ethnic/religious discrimination—was calling every 10 minutes on my cell phone with updates on the Somalis who were on their way.

Yes, they came. Over 1,100 people attended, filling Town Hall with one of the most diverse audiences Seattle has ever seen. Progressive European Americans came in support and because they understood that this hearing was about the rights of all of us. Somali women in *hijab* arrived in hundreds. Sikh men wearing colorful turbans arrived. Japanese Americans, Cambodians, Muslims, and Arab Americans. All of them came in, tentatively at first. But then, as they looked around at the packed room and listened to the testimonies, they sat taller. They became

defiant. They radiated beauty. "We want to testify, too," they started whispering to us. "I had no idea we could be heard like this! I want to tell my story!"

Those on stage testified about FBI harassment, about hate crimes, about discrimination: A Sikh taxi driver who was beaten for looking like Osama bin Laden; children ranging from the ages of five to fourteen who had been bullied and beaten in schools; women who had been denied jobs because they wore *hijab*; Latino airport workers who had been swept up in raids on airport workers; and the lawyer for a Tunisian man who has been in detention for one year based simply on the statement of a woman who claimed to have heard him say he was going to blow up the Tacoma Narrows Bridge.

The final testimony came from Mako Nakagawa, who had lived through the Japanese internment camps herself. "We have been through this all 60 years ago," she said, her voice breaking with tears. "Our community keeps saying, 'Not again! Please, not again.' Haven't we learned anything?"

As I watched, I wept. I wept because I saw the fear and the courage of those who came and those who testified. The hearing was not just about safety or harassment or discrimination. It was about freedom, freedom these communities were ready to stand together and fight for.

The commissioners listened for almost two and a half hours. Then they each had a chance to respond. Washington state Senator Adam Kline said: "That these stories have happened right here in America is a national embarrassment."

Bruce Miyake, assistant US attorney for western Washington (whose office is directly responsible for carrying out many of DOJ's policies), told the crowd that "Part of me doesn't want to be here because I don't want to be identified with [the stories I have heard today]. But we have to be accountable. We have to hear the effects of the policies that are being enacted. ... I intend not only to brief the US attorney for western Washington but also to send a letter to President Bush and to Attorney General John Ashcroft about what we have heard today." The crowd broke into a roar of applause.





what would democracy look like?

Some commissioners were defensive. "You have to understand that we are government servants," said Dorothy Stefan, head district counsel for the INS. "We just carry out the policies."

Congressman Jim McDermott urged people to hold hearings such as this across the country. "My colleagues in Congress [need to] listen to what we've heard today."

When Justice Charles Smith stood to offer closing comments, he reminded the crowd of what America stands for. In a voice cracking with tears, he quoted the Emma Lazarus poem inscribed on the Statue of Liberty:

*"Give me your tired, your poor
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me
I lift my lamp beside the golden door."*

As tears rolled down his face, Justice Smith asked the audience to join hands in celebration.

Taking power

One reporter who covered the event said this on the air: "In Seattle, over 1,000 people that we often take for granted are showing us that democracy works."

We believe that while this was an incredible beginning, it was not the end. We will know that democracy works when we see real changes in policies.

Meanwhile, we hope to replicate the hearing in states around the country, and to take the hearing directly to Congress and the attorney general.

The people who told their stories in spite of tremendous fear, did so not only for themselves and their communities but for all of us. They spoke out because they love America and they believe that public debate is essential for a functioning democracy. They spoke out for freedom for their children and for all of our children. They spoke out because they know that ultimately, the erosion of their rights can summarily be applied to all of us. As Benjamin Franklin said, "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

What happened in Seattle was people power. We did not wait to be invited to participate. We did not wait to be given power, knowing that marginalized communities rarely are given such power. We took it. Those who believe that these communities can be ignored will have to think again, for these communities have discovered the power of action, of standing together, of creating a new world that does not pit *us* against *them*.

As we continue in this struggle to reclaim what it means to be American and what it means to live in America, we raise our voices together in pride to say this to each American: Alone, each one of us can make a difference; together, we are unstoppable.

Pramila Jayapal is founder and director of The Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington and author of *Pilgrimage to India: A Woman Revisits Her Homeland*, Seal Press, 2001.

Erosion of Liberty Since September 11

Sept. 20, 2001: Department of Justice (DOJ) allows detention without charges in the event of "emergency or other extraordinary circumstance."

Sept. 21, 2001: Chief Immigration Judge allows deportation hearings to be closed to public.

Sept. 24, 2001: President Bush declares National Emergency; orders executive agencies to stem the flow of money supporting terrorist organizations throughout the world.

Oct. 26, 2001: Congress passes and the president signs USA Patriot Act, vastly expanding government power to monitor, target, and apprehend immigrants and US citizens.

Nov. 9, 2001: Attorney General (AG) directs FBI to interview 5,000 Arab/Muslim men.

Nov. 13, 2001: President issues Executive Order authorizing military tribunals to try non-citizens allegedly involved in international terrorism.

Nov. 16, 2001: DOJ refuses to release names and locations of 9/11 detainees (now estimated at more than 1,200, almost all Arab and Muslim men).

Dec. 4, 2001: AG testifies at Senate hearings that those who question and resist his policies are "aiding and abetting terrorism."

Jan. 25, 2002: DOJ announces Alien Absconder Apprehension Initiative, which will first target 6,000 men from "al Qaeda-harboring countries" for apprehension.

Feb. 26, 2002: DOJ reports on interviews of 5,000 Arab/Muslim men: 2,261 were interviewed; less than 20 were taken into custody; 3 were charged with crimes unrelated to 9/11. No evidence was found to link any to terrorism.

March 19, 2002: DOJ announces interviews of another 3,000 Arab/Muslim men.

April 2002: INS conducts raids on airports throughout the US. 366 immigrants are arrested.

June 26, 2002: President declares US citizens Jose Padilla and Yassar Hamdi "Enemy Combatants" but refuses to release actual order. No criminal charges filed against either. President says they can be held indefinitely without access to attorney or federal courts.

July 26, 2002: AG issues rule that requires certain immigrants to provide a change of address to the INS within 10 days. Failure to do so is a criminal violation and can trigger deportation.

Aug. 12, 2002: AG orders non-citizens from 25 Arab and/or Muslim countries to be fingerprinted and photographed.

Sept. 2002: More than 200 college administrators are asked by the federal government to provide information on their Middle Eastern students.

Compiled by Ann Benson, directing attorney, Washington Defenders' Immigration Project.



what would democracy look like?

advanced democracy

Democracy isn't just about voting once every few years. It's about deepening our collective understanding and finding better solutions by drawing on everyone's wisdom

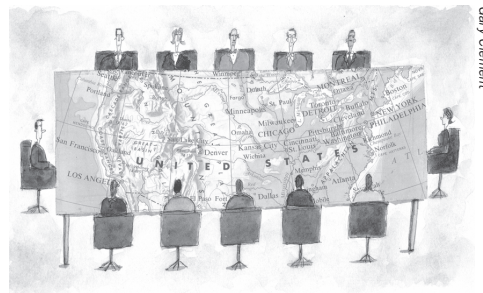
deliberation day **Carolyn McConnell**

My roommate and I walk to the church that's our polling place. I nearly forgot to vote. If she hadn't come home to remind me, I would have forgotten, even though I'm a person of passionate political opinions. As we walk, I flip through the voter's guide. On the big issues and candidates, I know how I stand. But I'm new to Seattle, and toward the back of the book, I have no idea. She tells me what judges to confirm, who to support for the port authority and board of education. Alone in a tiny cubicle, I scratch in marks in a line of bubbles and then it's over. My duty as a citizen, done in five minutes. That's it? I think.

Voting is the bottom line of democracy. To many, voting is all that democracy is. And yet, by itself, casting a vote is fleeting and hollow, and in an odd way, lonely. It doesn't feel like an act of participation in a greater whole.

In the 19th century, John Stuart Mill worried that the secret ballot, then just emerging, would encourage voters to choose the politician who most pandered to their private interests, rather than voting on behalf of the public good. Mill's worry was trumped by the growing realization that voters could not vote freely if ballots weren't secret. Yet now, with polling and advertising honed to a science, politicians have the tools to pander exquisitely. Cynicism builds, voting rates decline, and some call this a good thing—who wants ill-informed voters choosing on the basis of the last ad they saw—or their roommates' directives? But what if we believe in democracy? How might we create citizen engagement in a shared public dialogue?

Bruce Ackerman and James Fishkin propose "Deliberation Day." Instead of standing alone, voting day would be preceded by a national holiday to be held one week before major national elections. Voters would be called together in neighborhood meetings to discuss the central issues of the campaigns. Each voter would be paid \$150 for the day's work, on condition of actually voting the next week. All other work, except the most essential services, would be prohibited on that day.



Gary Clement

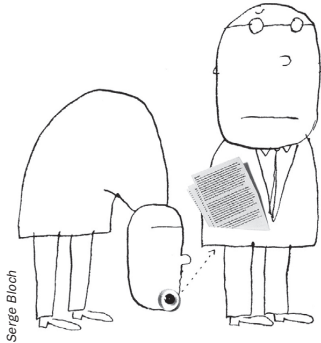
Their proposal draws on Fishkin's work on the "deliberative poll," in which respondents don't simply answer questions out of the blue, but come together in small groups to discuss issues. They are thrust into a situation where they must offer reasons for their opinions and listen to those of others, each having real voices in a real group. In some versions, experts are brought in for the group to question. Only after this process do they secretly fill out the poll. It turns out that the process matters; after discussion, those polled are much better informed. And their opinions change.

One of the more dramatic uses of deliberative polling occurred in Australia just before the national referendum on whether it should become a republic and have a president head of state rather than the Queen of England. Several hundred randomly chosen Australian voters gathered for a weekend to confer with experts and politicians and among themselves. Initially most could not correctly answer basic questions about their constitution or the referendum. By the end of the weekend, they got 80 to 90 percent of the questions right. And support for the referendum shifted from 50 percent to 73 percent.

Ackerman, a Yale Law School professor, and Fishkin, a professor of government at the University of Texas, say Deliberation Day could reshape the quality of campaigns, since politicians would know their messages would have to stand up to a full day of discussion. It would open the possibility for more complex ideas to enter campaigns, they argue.

"Deliberation Day aims to remind voters that voting is not an occasion for expressing consumer-like preferences, but a crucial moment in which they are confiding ultimate coercive power to representatives who will be speaking for them on matters that may determine the fate of billions of their fellow inhabitants of the planet Earth," say Ackerman and Fishkin.

what would democracy look like?



study circle democracy **Cecile Andrews**

A nation can be maintained only if, between the state and the individual, there is interposed a whole series of secondary groups near enough to the individuals to attract them strongly in their sphere of action and drag them, in this way, into the general torment of civil life.

—Emile Durkheim

Not long ago, I gave a presentation to an environmental group about simplicity study circles, a small-group, peer-led form of education and social change. When I finished, a man spoke up: “Your ideas are all well and good, but most people out there are intellectually challenged!”

My spirits dropped. “Yes,” I thought, “this is one reason a lot of us don’t get actively involved in environmental organizations, even though we care about the planet.” We’re afraid that people will think we’re stupid.

But if you’re working for social change, people are all you have. Perhaps you favor a benign dictatorship? If there’s one lesson from history, it’s that power must be shared, and democracy is the only hope.

But to believe in democracy, you need to believe in the power of people to find answers to the problems they’re facing. You must commit to the idea that people have the wisdom they need. Our job as activists is to help them discover that wisdom.

In my work as an educator, I’ve discovered certain basic truths: First, facts are not enough. We need to set people’s spirits on fire. We must enliven as well as enlighten. We must inspire and motivate people to care about the common good. Second, we want people to learn to trust their own judgment and speak out, to refuse to be silenced and intimidated by those who claim to be authorities and experts. Third, we want to help people think critically—to spot the sham, manipulation, and false promises that undermine the greater good. Finally, people need the ability to work with others in a cooperative, collegial manner to bring about change.

I’ve found I can best pursue these goals through the

study circle—a method of adult education and social change popular in Sweden, where study circles are referred to as “education by the people, for the people, and of the people.” Sweden has been called a study circle democracy. Studies have found that people who participate in study circles are more apt to be civic minded, no matter what the topic of the circle.

Here’s how a study circle works as I’ve tried it: First, the circle must be small, between five and seven people, so that acceptance and caring can develop. Let’s say that the evening’s session is on the topic of community. We begin by asking the question, “When in your life have you experienced community?” Everyone has a story, and we proceed around the circle, listening to each person’s experience. In telling their stories, people learn to trust their own voice instead of just listening to the voice of the experts.

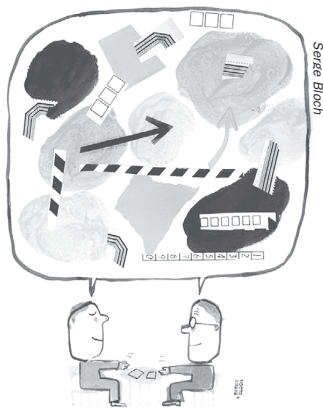
Next, we ask the question, “What in our society is undermining community?” At this point participants learn to think critically about unsustainable and unjust forces in the larger society and about what policy changes are needed.

Finally, we ask, “What small thing can you do this week to create more community in your life?” By making a public commitment—maybe something as simple as bringing one’s neighbor some cookies—people learn that change is possible. Too often we slip back into our old ways, but when we know someone is waiting to hear our story, we are more likely to take action.

Then, the following week we return to the group and report. If things didn’t go well, there’s brainstorming about more effective approaches and thoughtful insights about why something failed. There is always encouragement and support. Too often we neglect this act of reflection, but it not only helps us think more clearly, it’s also lots of fun.

Thus, people in a study circle link personal and political change, they begin to learn to trust their own judgment, they learn to think critically about the broader society, and they learn to take action. Ultimately they begin to believe in themselves and to feel inspired to continue to work for broader democratic change. Study circles are a way for people to take back their education as well as rekindle deliberative democracy.

Cecile Andrews is the author of *The Circle of Simplicity*. For more information, go to www.cecileandrews.com and www.simplicitycircles.com.



citizen panels Tom Atlee

During the week of June 18–21, 2001, eighteen randomly selected Minneapolis/St. Paul citizens did a careful study of solid waste problems in their region.

After cross-examining state and county officials, consultants, waste management companies, and a neighborhood group—including both advocates and opponents of various proposals—they concluded that three-quarters of their municipal waste could and should be recycled, composted, or just prevented within 10 years.

They didn't stop there. They recommended government packaging standards to reduce packaging, labeling products with re-use suggestions, removing subsidies for materials that compete with recycled and reusable items, and other creative, sophisticated proposals. They were a citizens' jury, a form of deliberative council, and they have been producing wise common sense around the world for 30 years.

Citizens' juries have been held around the world. Illiterate poor farmers in India deliberated development policy. Suburbanites in Australia figured out how to stop the destruction of their beaches by pollution and erosion. A randomly selected panel of Britons told health authorities to provide chiropractic care.

Most citizens' juries are commissioned by agencies who want dependable, useful input from diverse citizens without divisive public hearings or fickle public opinion polls.

Citizens' Juries were created in the US in the early 1970s by Ned Crosby. Meanwhile, a similar form of deliberative councils, "planning cells," were being organized by Peter Dienel in Germany.

Many often wonder if officials follow the recommendations of such citizen panels. Some officials do and some don't. In England, some innovative consultants require that agencies wanting a citizens' jury agree

what would democracy look like?

to follow its recommendations or else hold a public press conference explaining why they aren't.

But no one has gone as far as Denmark in making such citizen deliberative councils official. An office of the Danish Parliament, the Danish Board of Technology, involves citizens in technology policy issues being considered by parliament. Among their tools is the "consensus conference," made up of about 15 citizens selected as a microcosm of the Danish population. They study an issue such as genetic engineering of food, cross-examining competing experts in an open public forum. They then craft a consensus statement of policy recommendations, which they report to parliament in an open press conference.

While citizen deliberative councils have been institutionalized as an official government activity only in Denmark, Danish-style consensus conferences have been used successfully in more than a dozen other countries, including the US. In "Citizen Policy Works," (*YES!* #3), organizer Richard Sclove demonstrated that consensus conferences work as well in large diverse societies like the US as in small, more homogeneous ones like Denmark. Citizen panelists often end up knowing more about their issue than legislators who vote on it.

Ned Crosby is working to put forward state-level ballot initiatives that would establish Citizens' Juries to examine every ballot initiative and offer an official deliberative public judgment to balance the torrents of special-interest advertising. Crosby and University of Washington Professor John Gastil also propose randomly selected citizen panels to interview and evaluate a wide range of candidates. Evaluation scores could even be listed on the ballot.

An entire democracy could be grounded in citizen deliberation. Consultant Jim Rough proposes that annual Wisdom Councils of randomly selected citizens be held at all levels of governance. Citizen deliberative councils could provide not only guidance on specific issues, candidates, and proposals, but vision and oversight for the entire political process.

Rough points out that our current political system is crippled by the absence of anything that accurately represents the thoughtful, integrated insight of "we, the people." A natural, sensible approach would be through convening a cross section of the population in high-quality dialogue, with full access to whatever information is vital to their deliberations, and helping them find common ground, and then publicizing their work to the public and its representatives.

Tom Atlee is founder and co-director of the nonprofit Co-Intelligence Institute, www.co-intelligence.org

what would democracy look like?

the talking circle

Manitonquat (Medicine Story)

How can we re-learn respect, understand the gifts of creation, and break the cycle of violence? In prisons, a Native American democratic tradition brings healing and new possibilities



In the 1960s I joined the protests against the war and for the rights of women, Native people, and African Americans. But I wondered more and more what was the cause of all this oppression and violence. Study of history, psychology, philosophy, and the world's religious and mystical traditions gave no answers that satisfied me. I returned to the elders of my own Native traditions and asked them what had gone wrong with this society. They said that human beings have forgotten their instructions.

Black Elk said, "In the old days, when we were a strong and happy people, all our power came from the sacred hoop of the nation, and as long as that hoop remained unbroken, the people flourished." Now many of our people are seeking to mend that hoop and return to the ways that worked for us and made us happy.

For me this mending began in 1974 when I visited the Brotherhood of American Indians incarcerated in a federal prison. Here I discovered a group of dear and valuable Native men who had been torn from their families and left to rot forgotten in this white man's dungeon. I reflected on the reasons for their transgressions, the alcohol and the conquerors' destruction of the sacred hoop. Before they came, our people had no need for cages for human beings.

I made a commitment to bring the way of the circle to people in the prisons. When my friend Slow Turtle first set up prison circles in New England 20 years ago, he stipulated that, as our elders taught, these are human being ways, not Indian ways, so all people should have access to our circles.

I now go to 10 circles in New England prisons and have witnessed their healing power. Here the men have found the only time in their week where they are treated like human beings, treated with respect, which we teach is not something that must be earned but should be accorded to all equally. Respect is the first of the Original Instructions for human beings. We are told to respect all of Creation, the Earth, and all beings on it. To respect the elders, the young, the women, the men, and all people

no matter what their differences, and to respect ourselves. When that instruction is adhered to, the circle works miracles. When it is not, the circle may break down.

The circle begins with thanksgivings to Mother Earth, to all our relations here on Earth and in the great circle of the universe, and to the Creator. The elder then takes the talking stick and speaks on what is on his mind, and then the stick passes around for each to reflect on what has been said, or to speak from his heart about his life, his thoughts and feelings. As the prisoners hear each other, they feel connected through similar experiences. They open up as they feel the bond that grows among them, and they reach out and support each other. They begin to remember their childhood and to understand the forces that brought them to prison. They learn that they are good men contending with bad circumstances, and this helps them to deal with that on the outside. They learn that everyone is suffering, and this changes how they understand other prisoners, prison staff, relatives, and others outside.

I have seen wonderful changes in the men who have stayed in our circles. Through the circle they became human beings again, learning to trust and love, to seek their gifts and make their give-aways. They are so grateful that they say the circle has saved their lives and they want to give back. They want to start circles themselves in the prisons and on the streets and in schools to keep young people from the same traps. More than 100 men I worked with have left prison, and I am aware of only six who returned—all but one for minor parole violations, not crimes.

So my proposition is simple. Too simple? I don't think so, of course. I see that this Creation is complex, but the laws that govern it everywhere are simple. And if all we are doing is not working to give us a life that is truly human, should we not consider the ways that did work for us, the ways of our ancestors passed to us through the oral traditions of the elders—the Original Instructions?

Manitonquat, an elder of the Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation, is the author of several books, including *Ending Violent Crime* (Story Stone, 187 Merriam Hill Road, Greenville, NH 03048, or www.mettanokit.org)



what would democracy look like?

What will it take to energize our work for change? Linda Stout, who spent years organizing poor people in the rural South, polled fellow organizers around the US and has this to say about what it will take to win

put some heart into it Linda Stout

Many powerful movements for justice have brought us to where we are today: the women's, labor, peace, civil rights, environmental, and other movements. All have had a major impact. All of our lives have been changed because of them.

But we are in a different time today. Our movements have become more fragmented and, despite all our victories, it sometimes feels that things are getting worse. Looking at the state of the world today can create a sense of despair. Some of us have gotten tired, and some have left the movement. Others keep doing the work, even though we may be filled with a sense of hopelessness.

In Cornell West's new book, *Restoring Hope*, he makes a passionate argument that hope—not to be confused with optimism—is essential for social change: “Only a new wave of vision, courage, and hope can keep us sane and preserve the decency and dignity requisite to revitalize our energy for the work to be done.”

So what will it take to give us the hope to re-energize our work for social change?

I have been on a journey for several years—a journey I will probably continue for the rest of my life—to discover answers to building a winning movement for transformational social change. The journey took me from my home and organizing work in rural North Carolina to a small progressive foundation called the Peace Development Fund. While there, we conducted a national survey called the Listening Project. We asked activists, “What do we need to do to build a winning movement for change? What's missing now?”

Out of the Listening Project findings, information gathered from other research reports, and structured conversations with activists, I was moved to start Spirit in Action, a movement-building organization focused on positive vision, connecting spirit to social justice, healing divisions, and taking action for individual, collective, and social transformation.

Here are the three key themes I heard consistently from activists working for social change across many issues and many constituencies:



Bernd Klumpp

- We must create a vision of what we are trying to build. People will not join us if all they see us talk about is what we are against, not what we are for.

- We need to learn new ways to communicate and connect with each other. We often re-create the competitive and distrustful environments that we are trying to work against. Racism, classism, and other oppressions affect how we work together, and we often look at each other with the most critical eye, rather than paying attention to each other's best gifts.

- The third thing folks talked about was what I call “spirit” or heart connection—a connection to something greater than ourselves, a connection to each other, to the Earth, to the ancestors, and to our deepest self. Many activists talked of being drawn to social justice work from deeply held heart-values or spiritual beliefs. Yet there is little time for paying attention to spirit in our political work, and many people feel this lack especially when they need something to sustain them through difficult times. People also felt this lack kept us from connecting with each other as deeply as we should.





what would democracy look like?

So how do those of us in the movements for social change go about addressing these issues?

We at Spirit in Action believe activists need to create a collective vision of what kind of world we want to live in—not a utopian fantasy, but a vision based on what we know is possible. What kind of government do we want and how could we make it truly representative? What kind of educational system? What kind of economic system? Justice system? In all of these areas there are examples of what is possible, but if we focus too much on the problems we can't see the possibilities.

We must develop and move toward positive visions of the future. To do that we have to create compelling images that will draw us toward them. And we must act as if the world we are trying to create already exists. Mahatma Gandhi said, "Be the change you want to see in the world." We must create experiences and models so people can feel and understand what it is we want to build.

When I visited Nicaragua in the 1980s, I saw how things looked, sounded, and tasted when poor people lead a movement to transform society. It was the first time that I, as a young woman raised in poverty, began to understand the power poor people had when we don't work from a place of shame. It transformed my life.

Taking time for community

We have to learn better ways to work together. We need to build a new culture among us and learn to function as a community. We often think we lack the time to build community because the issues we're struggling for take priority. But the truth is if we don't take the time, we will not be successful in achieving our goals.

Over the past three years, Spirit in Action organized three gatherings of media activists in which we spent at least a third of the time on building trust and community. Initially, some members were concerned that we spent too much time on this instead of getting to the work at hand. But at the end of gatherings, participants expressed delight and surprise at how much we were able to accomplish.

The more time we put into creating community—listening to each other, celebrating together, and really understanding one another—the more successful our work will be. There are no short cuts to this. It requires time and courage, and it makes some people in our change movements uncomfortable. But it is the only thing that will allow us to be successful.

We also need to look at ways we get separated by systemic issues such as classism, racism, sexism, ageism, and so on. We need to learn to deal with oppression in ways that do not make people go to a defensive or shame-

filled place. Where I've seen the most profound understanding and change has been when people talk and listen to each other, understand what happens to others when they are oppressed, and learn how to be allies.

Sustained by spirit

The third thing we need to do is bring spirit into our work for change. My own connection to spirit has sustained me in the face of impossible odds. When I first began organizing, my background as a Quaker led me repeatedly to a passage in a Quaker guidebook that said social change has always happened because one person or a few people had a vision and set about to make it happen. It was my spiritual path that gave me the courage to start working for change, even when I didn't believe I could. It was what helped me find my own voice and overcome all the messages that said I wasn't smart enough or good enough to make a difference. And it's what allows me to walk continually into unknown territory and take risks.

But as we all know, bringing in spirituality or religion can be very complicated. Religion has long been a source of inspiration and unification but it has also been a source of division and repression. How do we bring in spirit in a way that honors all people's beliefs and practices? In our Circles of Change program, which brings together diverse groups of activists in small groups across the country, we open our gatherings by asking each person to call on spirit in the way they understand it. One person prays to God, another to the ancestors, one speaks to the spirit of the Earth, one calls for a moment of silence, and another leads us in song. Everyone's way of connecting is brought forward without any one way taking priority.

Singing, celebrating, and doing ceremony together are all powerful ways to bring spirit forward. Inspired by her experiences in Circles of Change, one public school counselor simply lit a candle at the beginning of meetings and asked students and parents to reflect on their vision of what they wanted to accomplish and how they wanted to be with each other in the process.

We must begin to lead with our hearts and have the courage to break out of old ways of doing things for real transformation to happen.

Linda Stout is founder and director of Spirit in Action in Belchertown, MA. She is past director of the Piedmont Peace Project and the Peace Development Fund. Stout is author of *Bridging the Class Divide and Other Lessons for Grassroots Organizing* and winner of the Freedom Fighter Award. Learn about Spirit in Action, Circles of Change, and Progressive Communicators Network at www.spiritinaction.net



what would democracy look like?

resources for democracy

Rik Langendoen & Darcy O'Brien

Lars Torres



join the dialogue

AmericaSpeaks facilitates "21st century town meetings," pictured above, combining face-to-face interaction with communication technologies to allow citizen groups of 500-5000 to develop shared agreements for future action. In July, AmericaSpeaks gathered over 4,000 New Yorkers to help shape the redevelopment of lower Manhattan and the creation of a permanent memorial to the victims of the September 11 attacks. www.americaspeaks.org, 202/299-0570.

From the Four Directions provides coaching, networking, and resources for citizen leaders to start conversation circles and connects local circles into a global force for change. www.fromthefourdirections.org, 801/377-2996

Search for Common Ground works for conflict resolution in 12 countries through methods such as mediation, facilitation, and radio soap opera and TV production. www.searchforcommonground.org, 202/265-4300

The Dialogue to Action Initiative is a web-based resource center for organizers, researchers, and facilitators of intergroup dialogue. www.thataway.org/dialogue, 802/254-7341

The Study Circles Resource Center helps people to engage in dialogue and problem solving on critical social and political issues

using study circle programs. The SCRC works with communities to improve the process for organizing large-scale community dialogue that leads to action and change. www.studycircles.org, 860/928-2616

Consensual Democracy helps grassroots citizen groups identify and achieve the civic renewal they desire through providing community-building tools and training, workshop facilitation, written materials and networking with other communities. www.consensualdemocracy.org, 207/729-4024

Accurate Democracy, an e-book, offers explanations of various democratic voting methods for elections and meetings, a glossary of electoral concepts, and an educational computer simulation game. www.accuratedemocracy.com

The Co-Intelligence Institute makes available innovative practices, ideas, experiments, organizations and references for building wiser democracies. Many of the resources presented here were found on its Innovations in Democracy web page. www.co-intelligence.org

The Democracy Collaborative sponsors programs to strengthen democracy and community, through teach-ins, work with citizen groups, and training teachers. www.democracycollaborative.org, 301/405-9266

The **Loka Institute** works to make science and technology more responsive to social and environmental concerns by expanding opportunities for public-interest group, everyday citizen, and worker involvement in science and technology decision-making. www.loka.org, 301/585-9398

transform institutions

The **Center for Voting and Democracy** offers an online library promoting instant runoff voting and forms of proportional representation; provides reports on all 50 states and information on pending legislation; and operates a full election consulting service to help groups select and implement electoral systems and technology for their goals. www.fairvote.org, 301/270-4616

Healthy Democracy promotes structural reforms including the Citizens Initiative Review and the Citizen Election Forum methods, clean elections, term limits, proportional representation, instant runoff voting, a unicameral legislature, and empowered deliberative democracies. Website also provides a link to the Jefferson Center, responsible for developing the citizen jury process. www.healthydemocracy.org

The **International Simultaneous Policy Organization** proposes a range of legislative measures to be implemented by all nations simultaneously to regain control of global financial markets and transnational corporations. www.simpol.org

The **National Civic League**, a 107-year-old non-profit, non-partisan organization, provides technical assistance, training, publishing, research, and the All-America City Awards, toward strengthening communities. www.ncl.org, 303/571-4343

The **Center for Constitutional Rights**, founded to defend civil rights activists in the Jim Crow South, is a legal and educational organization that defends and advances constitutional rights. Projects include litigation against supermax prisons,

defense of immigrant rights, and fighting post-September 11 erosion of civil liberties. www.ccr-ny.org, 212/614-6464

expand civic literacy

Civic Practices Network exchanges "best practice" guides and provides practical tools for public problem solving—including manuals, a civic dictionary, and sample course syllabi. Website map feature allows user to search for stories, case studies, and essays by geographic region. www.cpn.org, 617/736-4890

Campaign Finance Reform, a section on the Public Agenda Online website, provides facts, public opinion data, policy news updates, competing perspectives, and comprehensive resource lists on the role of money in US elections. www.publicagenda.org

Demos: A Network for Ideas and Action performs research on state-level US democracy; builds coalitions between activists, advocates, and scholars; and tracks legislative developments and democratic reform efforts. Website offers free access to Demos publications, bi-weekly e-mail issue briefings, and an extensive links page of pro-democracy organizations in every state. www.demos-usa.org, 212/633-1405

Project Vote Smart provides information on over 13,000 elected offices and candidates locally and nationally. Offers candidates' background information, issue positions, voting records, campaign finances, and performance evaluations by various special interest groups; a toll-free Voter's Research Hotline; and a Young Voters Program that allows voters to instantly compare candidates' positions. www.vote-smart.org, 888/868-3762

reclaim the media

FAIR, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, is a national media watch group that offers well-documented criticism of media bias and censorship. www.fair.org, 212/633-6700

The **Pew Center for Civic Journalism** helps print and broadcast news



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organizations reconnect to their communities and engage citizens in problem-solving dialogue and shares the results through outreach programs. www.pewcenter.org, 202/331-3200

become an activist

ACORN, Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, conducts grassroots campaigns on voter registration and education, election reform, and city council redistricting, and promotes ballot initiatives to empower low- and moderate-income families. Contact David Swanson at 202-547-2500 for information about ACORN organizing in your city or state. www.acorn.org

MoveOn and Progressive Portal are large nationwide networks of online activists providing busy citizens with information and tools for democratic participation. www.progressiveportal.org and www.moveon.org

read all about it

Bridging the Class Divide and Other Lessons for Grassroots Organizing, by Linda Stout, with an introduction by Howard Zinn, is a moving personal story that shows how to make a movement truly inclusive. Beacon Press, 1997

Beyond Left and Right, Breaking the Political Stalemate, by A. Lawrence Chickering, is an attempt to find common ground between liberals and conservatives. Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1993

Building A Win-Win World, by Hazel Henderson, calls for a world founded on cooperation, not domination. Berrett-Koehler, 1997

By Popular Demand: Revitalizing Representative Democracy Through Deliberative Elections, by John Gastil, tackles two important issues—increasing political participation and restoring trust in government—that are critical to the future of American democracy. University of California Press, 2000

The Change Handbook: Group Methods for Shaping the Future, edited by Peggy Holman and Tom

Devane, details group/organizational practices that can empower our public life. Berrett-Koehler, 1999

Citizens as Partners: OECD Handbook on Information Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making, by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, is a practical guide for informing and engaging citizens in policy making. OECD, 2001

Collaborative Leadership: How Citizens and Civic Leaders Can Make a Difference, by David Chrislip and Carl Larson, discusses using collaboration to generate civic will to solve tough community problems. Jossey-Bass, 1994

Creating a World that Works for All, by Sharif Abdullah, presents a possible solution to the inequalities in the world. He outlines three simple tests—for “enoughness,” exchangeability, and common benefit—to guide people as they transform themselves and the world. Berrett-Koehler Publications, 1999

Creating Community Anywhere, by Carolyn Shaffer and Kristin Anundsen, presents tools for creating community within the many spaces we occupy. Perigee, 1993

Defying Corporations, Defining Democracy: A Book of History & Strategies, edited by Dean Ritz and produced by the Program on Corporations, Law and Democracy (POCLAD, www.poclad.org), calls citizens to take back power from corporations. The Apex Press, 2001

Democracy at Risk, Rescuing Main Street from Wall Street, by Jeff Gates, is a manifesto for spreading wealth and creating a truly democratic society. Perseus Publishing, 2001

The Democracy Reader, by Sondra Myers, is a comprehensive tool for understanding democracy and the central role that citizens play in making democracy work. International Debate Education Association, 2002

Doing Democracy, The MAP Model for Organizing Social Movements, by Bill Moyer with JoAnn MacAllister, Mary Lou Finley and Steven Soifer, shows how to build powerful change movements that

uphold values like honesty, democracy, fairness, compassion, and protection of the environment. New Society Publishers, 2001

The E-Democracy E-Book: Democracy is Online, by Steven Clift, discusses the many ways telecommunications technology affects—or could affect—democracy. www.publicus.net/ebook/

Governing is an online monthly magazine that, among other topics related to democracy, includes a discussion regarding consensus councils that bring together the full diversity of stakeholders around a contentious issue to agree on recommendations to policy-makers. www.governing.com/2assess.htm

Manufacturing Consent, The Political Economy of the Mass Media, by Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, shows how the news media defend the economic, social, and political agendas of privileged groups. Pantheon Books, 2002

The Quickening of America, by Frances Moore Lappe and Paul DuBois, discusses how millions of Americans are learning “the arts of democracy,” redefining self-interest, and getting creative in their democratic citizenship. Jossey-Bass, 1994

Recreating Democracy, by Lloyd Wells and Larry Lemmel, provides practical guidelines for citizens to create contexts for political conversation and action. Center for Consensual Democracy, 1998

Civic Literacy: How Informed Citizens Make Democracy Work, by Henry Milner, examines the civil societies of various cultures to compare the effectiveness of their democratic institutions. Milner posits that the level of a population’s political comprehension is the single best predictor of its level of political participation. University Press of New England, 2002

A Time for Choices: Deep Dialogues for Deep Democracy, by Michael Toms, engages a wide range of leading thinkers in an effort to reinvigorate democracy’s core values of “dialogue and dissent” in post-September 11 America. Includes interviews with Paul Hawken, Susan Griffin, Noam Chomsky, Joanna Macy, Vicki Robin, Anita Roddick, Thomas Moore and others. New Society Publishers, 2002

Disobedience and Democracy: Nine Fallacies of Law and Order, by Howard Zinn, lays out a case for civil disobedience. South End Press, 2002

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GLOBAL SHIFT

The new Bush Doctrine sets a stance for the US that has many of the qualities of empire. An attack on Iraq may be just the first in a series of first strikes, unilateral actions, and “regime changes” envisioned by this doctrine. But what if the American people chose a different path? What if we chose not to assume the mantle of empire?

Instead of Empire: What Future for the United States?

Michael Wloschnow



Sarah Ruth van Gelder

outside its purview), then there might well be an American majority for a “military solution” in Iraq. But none of these conditions exists, and the common sense of the American people still has a chance to prevail.

As to the essence of your question, the threats are palpable, but they have been enormously enhanced by the behavior of the US government. To the extent our government uses overwhelming power to bypass and belittle people who might otherwise be our friends and supporters, we’ll engender reluctance and sabotage. Our government is alienating these potential members of the Club of Democracies with a fatal mixture of arrogance and neglect. In the past few months I have come to believe that the objective threats to US security pale by comparison to what our government is doing to arm our enemies and disarm our friends.

Presiding Episcopal Bishop Frank T. Griswold: I think the real threat to the US is fear itself. We seem to be developing a paranoia that ultimately will poison the spirit of the nation, making us all suspicious and overly defensive.

The truth is, there is no such thing as absolute security. Life by its very nature puts us in a stance of vulnerability. You cannot protect yourself against everything, and no amount of government surveillance or police security or training people to be on the watch for suspicious people will ultimately protect us. The myth of security is itself dangerous. Having said that, obviously there are steps that nations take to ensure the security of the populace.

With respect to the real sources of threats, I think our department in the world creates the greatest expo-

To explore possibilities for an alternative to empire America, we invited five people to shed the light of their experience, spiritual leadership, and knowledge of world affairs. This is not a debate on whether we should go to war but an exploration of what might happen if the US chose a path that is neither the Clinton-promoted future of corporate globalization, nor the Bush Doctrine of endless war. Each of them responded to questions sent them by *YES!*

The primary concern that seems to drive the willingness of Americans to go to war is the sense that we are not safe, especially since 9/11. What are the sources of threats to the US, and what could we do to increase our security?

Former US Ambassador to NATO Harlan Cleveland: I have to start by quarrelling with the question. “The willingness of Americans to go to war” is not at all clear to me. If it’s easy (as it won’t be); if it’s short on American casualties (a dubious assumption); if we have plenty of help and don’t have to go it alone (the Bush team may have blown the potential of a real coalition, in the UN or





sure to anger and terrorist attack. We need to examine our relationships with other nations, particularly those parts of the world suffering from hunger, poverty, and violence. How do our policies, ordered to our own interests, affect other nations? How does the export of our culture, often at its worst, undermine the identity and values of other societies? By addressing these and other questions, and not simply arming ourselves, we can protect ourselves most effectively and most authentically.

Rabbi Michael Lerner: There are two basic theories about how to get security in the world. One says you get security by having enough physical strength and power to scare off or dominate everyone else who might threaten you. The other says that security comes from loving connection and mutual recognition with others. Both have strong historical bases, and it usually makes sense to have some kind of balance between the two. Unfortunately, the US is out of balance. We've tilted way too far toward domination and way too little toward loving connection with others.

Institute for Policy Studies Fellow Phyllis Bennis: Threats to the US have to be defined to clarify if we are speaking of threats to the traditionally defined "national interest"—usually meaning corporate wealth, military

The US still has a chance to be a “city on a hill”—just so the hill is defined not as megatonnage of weaponry but as an aspiration for progress and equality

strength, and diplomatic power—or threats to the *people* of the US. Americans are threatened by virtue of living in the center of the most powerful empire that has ever existed. There is no reason to think that the contemporary US empire will engender less antagonism or last longer than earlier empires.

The single biggest threat to Americans' safety lies in US foreign policy, which has caused impoverishment and political disempowerment of nations and peoples across the world. There is an understandable tendency to blame Americans for the actions of their government or their military. While American citizens have not been routinely singled out for attack by international terrorism, that could soon change as our foreign policy becomes more aggressively committed to the extension of US military power around the world.

Protecting American lives can best be accomplished by creating a new internationalist movement in which Americans participate with (some) governments and (many) civil society organizations from around the world to counter the power-driven blandishments of empire that currently define the US global superpower.

The US spends about the same amount on the military as the next 20 military powers combined, including our allies. Does the world need the US to act as an empire in order to keep the peace? What might a world without empire look like?

European Union Futurist Marc Luyckx: When the astronauts came back from their trip in space and showed us that this blue planet is such a fragile gift, we collectively entered a new era.

We have to recognize that the industrial, hyper-rational, patriarchal, top-down values, which were successful for getting the US to the moon, can't provide satisfactory answers to the urgent global question of our collective survival.

We need a new set of values: more feminine values, more inclusive values of connectedness with nature and the cosmos. We need to give priority to the common good of humanity, over national or particular interest.

In defense matters the same paradigm shift is underway. The latest treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe, signed by the US, puts forward a brand new concept. Instead of being based on the classical concept of “balance of forces,” it is based on “mutual vulnerability.” Rather than relying on secrecy, this new treaty relies on transparency. Indeed, as Harlan Cleveland has been warning us since 1984, in the knowledge society, information always leaks. It is impossible to base future strategies on secrecy.

What to do with the terrorists? Should we employ the same violent strategies as the terrorists themselves? This is what Bush's strategies propose. Or should we seek the common good for the whole of the planet? The most urgent need may be to invent a new Marshall Plan for the whole world.

Bennis: What the world needs to keep the peace is not an empire lording over the rest of the world, but a democratic international system based on law, global institutions, and the UN Charter. The vast disparities of income within countries and between North and South, the disempowerment of peoples around the world whose repressive governments rely on US financial, political, and military backing—these are the real threats to the peace, and a US empire does not make any of us safer.





needed for
photo below



Rabbi Michael Lerner, founding editor of *Tikkun*, author of *Politics of Meaning and Spirit Matters*



Geoff Hartmann

Phyllis Bennis, a fellow with the *Institute for Policy Studies* & the *Transnational Institute*



Angelen Weir, Anne Weir

The Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold, presiding bishop and primate the *Episcopal Church, USA*



Harlan Cleveland, political scientist, editor, executive, diplomat, academic dean, university president, and author



Sarah R. van Gabel

Marc Luyckx, futurist, formerly with the *European Union*, and a *Brussels-based consultant*

A world without an empire would not be a utopia; it would simply allow nations around the world a chance to build better lives for their people and allow people around the world a chance at gaining human rights.

Empires are an old story, really—the story of a strategically unchallenged dominion, at the apogee of its power and influence, rewriting global rules. Two thousand years ago, Thucydides described the conquering of the island of Mylos by the Greeks in order to ensure stability for the Greek Empire’s “democratic” golden age. The Melians asked, “What about democracy?” And the Athenians responded, “For *us* there is democracy; for *you* there is the law of empire.”

The Roman empire did the same, creating one set of laws for Rome’s own citizens, imposing another on its far-flung possessions. The British empire did much the same thing. And then, at the end of the 20th century, having achieved once unimaginable heights of military, economic, and political power, it was Washington’s turn. It remains for us, in this country, to bring an end to empire and a beginning of a search for real democracy in its stead.

Cleveland: If military power is used to dominate, the result won’t be peace: too many people will express their resentment and their desire to be free in ways that make military force as we have known it irrelevant. Imperial ambitions would produce a widespread messiness that wouldn’t resemble peace, but also wouldn’t resemble war as we have known it. It would resemble in the international arena what we have already seen in the so-called “failed states”—anarchy, warlordism, constantly changing loyalties—opposition to the empire-builders being the primary glue that holds disparate groups together.

As an alumnus of both the Marshall Plan and NATO, I am convinced that there is a different, and more effective, way to wield great power. That’s to use it

to help build societies that share our historic beliefs in pluralism (being different together), tolerance (of others’ beliefs, race, and cultural histories), and authority (derived from the governed). Working in this direction speaks to the most basic feelings of almost everyone. The US still has a chance to be a “city on a hill”—just so the hill is defined not as megatonnage of weaponry but as an aspiration for progress and equality in which, sooner or later, all people can share if they work at it.

A number of people have made a link between Iraq having the world’s second largest oil reserves and the US interest in invading the country. US dependence on imported oil is increasing. What options does the US have apart from using military might to ensure access to oil?

Bennis: US interest in Middle East oil is not primarily about making sure we can get the oil we need. The US doesn’t import that much from the region (although the amount is indeed rising)—we have a wide range of alternative sources.

The oil issue during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis and today is far more subtle and far more linked to US imperial design. The key aspect of oil policy has to do not only with direct control of the oil fields, but in continuing to act as guarantor of oil access for US allies in Europe and Japan who are far more dependent on Middle East oil. Playing that role ensures not only a means to satisfy the US corporate-bloated appetite for oil, but gains the US power vis-à-vis our allies, preserving the US role as a “hyper-power” with global reach.

Our key option is to diminish our dependence on imported oil by decreasing our dependence on *all* oil—meaning we should reinvest money and research into serious alternative fuels. We must reject the view first put forward by President Jimmy Carter who called the Per-





sian Gulf's petroleum, half a world away from us, "our oil," and recognize instead that we have no more right to other countries' oil than anyone else. And we must diminish the power of US-based oil companies in domestic US politics—which means that we must undermine the influence of this petro-administration in the White House. We need regime change in Washington!

Luyckx: Is this policy the right one in a pre-hydrogen era? If you listen to the Rocky Mountain Institute, soon we will have hydrogen fuel cars, with zero pollution.

Perhaps many in the US find war attractive partly because it provides a sense of being part of a powerful effort with a transcendent purpose. Apart from war, where do you think Americans could find a sense of national purpose?

Cleveland: Not all wars have "the power of creating a sense of unity and national purpose." The war in Vietnam was, in the end, so divisive that it eroded the American sense of unity and induced millions of Americans to question our national purpose. France's war in Algeria had a similar impact in French politics. A unilateral "preemptive" attack on Iraq will not be widely regarded as serving a "transcendent" purpose. Even if it's instantly successful, its long-running aftermath will likely come to be seen as a quagmire.

Apart from World War II, America in my lifetime has found a transcendent sense of purpose in four sustained government initiatives. One was FDR's New Deal (1933), focused on poverty, unemployment, and public works. Another was the Marshall Plan (1948), soon followed (and bracketed in the public mind with) the North Atlantic Alliance (1949). Yet another was the civil rights movement, culminating in the legislation of the 1960s. And another was the early phases of the space program, highlighted by JFK's 1961 promise to put a man on the moon before the end of that decade. There is an opportunity now for a different kind of "Marshall Plan" for the Middle East.

Lerner: First, let the US become the major force in the world committed to eliminating hunger, homelessness, disease, inadequate health care and inadequate schooling. Let it do so by becoming the major force in the world committing its resources to redistributing wealth globally so that everyone can live at a level of material well-being comparable to that of the American middle class today, and let this be accomplished in a way that is ecologically sustainable.

Second, let the US become the major force rectify-

ing the damage done to the Earth by 150 years of ecological irresponsibility, instead of being perceived as the major force limiting serious ecological reform.

Third, let the US become the world champion of a new definition of productivity, efficiency, and rationality, so that they become measured not only by the extent to which any given institution or social practice maximizes money and power, but also to the extent that that institution or social practice tends to produce loving and caring human beings who are morally, ecologically, and spiritually responsible, and who respond to the universe with awe and wonder at the grandeur of creation.

To help fund these steps, let the US take the entire \$1.5 trillion that George Bush allocated for tax cuts and let that be dedicated to financing these three directions.

Griswold: In the gospel it is reported that when Jesus was arrested, the enmity that had existed between Pilate and Herod was overcome, and on that day they became friends. This story has repeated itself over the ages as a sense of common purpose has been achieved through the identification of a common enemy. In our own day, the disparate elements of our nation have been gathered up and given a sense of national unity through the use of demonizing rhetoric, the language of paranoia, and a personally focused object of evil, namely Saddam Hussein.

One of the most disconcerting elements of our present national ethos is the sense—sometimes spoken and sometimes not—that God holds the United States in special favor and blesses our policies. Indeed some unthinking patriotism is rooted in that perspective. As God's blessing is claimed for our national purposes, we would do well to remember that being in relationship with God means yielding one's perspectives to the larger perspective of God rather than seeking to enlist God's approval for one's own points of view. Praying is not simply about putting forth our petitions but about having our own attitudes and opinions enlarged by those of God, who embraces the whole world, seeks the well being of all persons, and looks upon the people of all nations with compassion and love.

I believe our national leaders are bound to call us to live out of our better natures, our deepest aspirations to make meaning, live in peace, and be mindful of the suffering and injustice both here and around the world—rather than out of fear and the ensuing clutch on what serves our self-interest. Since we declare ourselves as one nation "under God," might we not look for a new sense of national unity based on a larger vision of the common good: one that takes us beyond our borders and unites us with the struggles, sufferings, and aspirations of the world.





COMMUNITY

What happens when young activists inherit a fortune? Some of them have come together to find ways to use their wealth to bring about a world in which wealth is shared

Young, Wealthy, Committed

Jacqueline Pratt



The conference center is nestled in the woods of rural Connecticut. This weekend the guests are mostly in their 20s. Some go wading in the creek, some improvise modern dance or stay up all night talking by the fire. They are typical of their age in many ways—except for the hundreds of millions of dollars collectively held in their names.

These 70 rich kids have gathered to talk about wealth, but the conversations aren't about BMWs or shopping sprees. Instead, the young people gathered at the Making Money Make Change conference discuss how to take responsibility for the money that has been entrusted to them.

For people committed to social change, wealth can be both a powerful resource and a difficult challenge. In progressive circles, "rich" is often a dirty word, and many youth hide their wealth. Some never consider the power of their resources until they discover this new network of young donors. But once they link up, many come to terms with their wealth and become effective social change philanthropists.

During this fall weekend conference, participants hear presentations on environmental justice, socially responsible investing, racial diversity in philanthropy, money and relationships, and the difficult question, "How much is enough?"

Some people advocate giving it all away. Karen Pittelman, at age 23, turned her \$3 million trust fund into a new foundation run by and for low-income women, keeping just \$15,000 for herself. Others are interested in using their money to spearhead projects or leverage other fundraising. Some simply want to explore how to live and invest responsibly.

Many participants find themselves taking a different approach to philanthropy than their parents. One traditional form of philanthropy improves the lives of the wealthy through support for the opera or their *alma*

mater. Another form helps those in need but does not change the underlying economic system that creates the need, such as support for homeless shelters or the Red Cross. A third form—and that which interests many of the participants at this conference—strives to eliminate unjust economic hierarchies, including those surrounding race, gender, sexuality, religion, and nationality.

Why do these young people want to change a system that—at least on the surface—benefits them? Each person who attended the conference has a unique story about family wealth and personal activism. Three young donors agreed to be interviewed for this article.

"Outside my comfort zone"

Ian Simmons, age 26, is the grandson of an insurance executive and son of international development workers. His travels with his family allowed him to meet people from many different circumstances, such as truck factory workers in Moscow and women running a cooperative in Oaxaca.

Simmons remembers the social activists his parents brought home for dinner. "I saw them as some of the happiest people," he said. "I was brought up to believe that our lives are interconnected. When other people are getting mistreated, I take it personally."

Simmons says he was embarrassed as a child to bring friends home because of the size of his house. Now he is more open about his wealth.

His education included working in an elevator parts factory and as a construction worker. When he got electrical shocks from the machinery, he discovered the consequences of not having OSHA regulations. "I kept placing myself in situations outside of my comfort zone, challenging myself," he said.

He worked on the Harvard Living Wage campaign not only for the benefit of the workers, but also because "the folks who get educated at Harvard are some of the

From left to right: Jamie Schweser, Gita Drury, and Ian Simmons at a recent gathering of Making Money Make Change





folks who will make decisions about the world economy.” Simmons raised \$30,000 from Harvard alumni to place a critically timed political ad in the *Boston Globe*. He co-sponsored grants for students to do activism during the summer. The campaign was one of the greatest successes in Harvard labor history, raising the benefits to low-income workers by \$4 million a year.

Reconciling contradictions

Gita Drury, age 28, inherited money from her grandfather's entrepreneurship in one of the world's largest waste companies. Drury's mother was an active community member and philanthropist, and Drury herself became politicized when she interviewed women in prison. “It led me to understand that people, especially women, are put in prison for economic crimes rather than violent crimes,” she said.

“The current distribution of wealth is not sustainable,” she said. “It's not in anyone's interest.”

Drury began her financial education at a young age but had no peers with whom she could discuss the many challenges. For Drury, these challenges include “reconciling the many contradictions,” including those involving the source of her money, which comes from a corporation with one of the worst environmental records.

She co-founded the Active Element Foundation, which connects donors, artists, and other activists, and is involved in four other donor-organizing groups.

“Justice is more important”

Jamie Schweser, age 29, received money from his parents when they sold their business three years ago. Schweser attributes his inspiration to his “fabulous, loving, supportive parents” who taught him what it

means to be a good human being.

“It's more important to do what's right than what supposedly benefits me,” he said. “As a Jew, I have to think of the Holocaust, how that situation would have looked different if people had done what was right. ... Justice is more important than me.”

In high school he entered politics by protesting the Gulf War, and after reading *No More Prisons*, he got involved in prison activism. Then he unexpectedly received an inheritance.

“Initially I was gung-ho and ready to do things [with the money], but I didn't realize how much I needed to learn,” he said. The inheritance “opened up so many new options, I had trouble knowing where I wanted to go.”

Asked why he wanted to use his money for social change, Schweser said, “It's important to challenge the idea that inequality benefits me. There are ways in which my soul is wounded every day that I look around and see so much pain and need. And then I look closer at myself and see so much excess.”

Staying connected with other young donors is important for Schweser, not only to be an effective agent for peace and change, but also for emotional support. “I had many questions and fears about being an activist and suddenly having a lot of money,” he said.

“I am blessed to know brilliant and understanding people. But most of my peers can't relate to activist work around money. It is isolating.”

Then he adds, “There are a million reasons to have interpersonal challenges. Money is just one of them.”

Schweser used his money to start a group called Cheddar for Change in which youth from different class backgrounds give grants to local grassroots projects. His Peace through Justice donor circle at the Making Money Make Change conference raised \$90,000 last year for an array of grassroots organizations.

Drury, Simmons, and Schweser are only three people among 70 each year at the Making Money Make Change conference. The number of young people entering the movement is growing, although they are a small fraction of the country's young and wealthy. Social change philanthropy constitutes less than 3 percent of all philanthropy nationwide.

Regardless of the scale or quantity of money, Schweser points out the personal value in giving: “No amount of money can outweigh the benefits of doing what's right and acting in alignment with your beliefs.”

Jacqueline Pratt, age 24, is a masters student of sustainable tropical agriculture at Stanford University. She lives in an intentional community, works for indigenous rights, and is writing a magical realism novel about mental illness and capitalism.

Want to learn about the young donors' network?

Check out: Active Element Foundation: www.activeelement.org

Adventure Philanthropy: www.adventurephilanthropy.net

Reciprocity: www.creatingreciprocity.org

Resource Generation: www.resourcegeneration.org

Self Education Foundation: www.selfeducation.org

Third Wave Foundation: www.thirdwavefoundation.org

Young Donor-Organizing Alliance: www.ydoa.org

Read: *Money Talks. So Can We. Resources for People in their 20s*, by Tracy Hewat & Lynn Gerber. Available from www.resourcegeneration.org.

“The Cool Rich Kids Movement” from *No More Prisons*. By Billy Wimsatt. Available from www.adventurephilanthropy.net.

Meet other progressive young people with wealth: Contact Resource Generation, www.resourcegeneration.org.

Find out about Making Money Make Change: www.tidesfoundation.org/mmmc

—Alison Goldberg





IN REVIEW



The Theft of Our Commons

SILENT THEFT: The Private Plunder of Our Common Wealth

by David Bollier
\$26.00, Routledge,
260 pages, 2002

When our times finally come to rest in the history texts, I think they will be called the Age of Enclosure—the age of privatization. It is a time when everything has become a commodity, and everything is for sale.

The opinion establishment was in raptures over the resulting money gush. Now that the party's over, they pine for a return. Yet as the concept of the market comes to define all human experience, so too does the market's central paradox: the way it creates scarcity even as it produces abundance.

A market requires scarcity. You can't sell what people already have, or feel they can do without. Thus, for example, health becomes scarce—or at least dear—as it becomes attached to a commoditized system of expert interventions and pills. More broadly, we feel a scarcity of that which the market displaces and degrades—of restfulness and peace, of unspoiled open places, of neighborliness and human interaction, of clean air to breathe and honest food to eat.

Most of us are aware of this at some level, I suspect. We experience it as a vague, chronic gnawing, a sense of being under siege, a nemesis without a name. We see our civic spaces turn into ads for corporations, childhood



turn into a marketing free-fire zone. We see the basic elements of life—water, seeds, the genetic code—turn into commodities like pop-tarts and beer, subject to the same corporate contrivance and hype.

We can see the aggressor. But what exactly is the thing aggressed upon? How can we defend it, if it is a hundred different things, and not one thing we can name?

In *Silent Theft*, David Bollier provides that name, and with it a narrative from which a defense might grow. What appear to be a multitude of separate issues, he says—global warming here, the patenting of seeds over there, the looming destruction of the public library a bit further off—are really part of one big issue. It is the

destruction of the commons, the pillaging and commandeering of that which belongs to all of us—if belong is the word—for private and usually corporate gain. This is not the government or public sector. It is the diminishing space that lies outside the government and the market both.

The commons has been under attack for centuries, ever since the British parliament enclosed the common lands and forced peasant farmers into cities where they became an impoverished labor force. (China is doing the same thing now on behalf of industrialized agriculture.) Today, thanks largely to technology, the process is exceeding all previous bounds. The ability to manipulate genetic material makes it possible to



own it, for example. The internet, which was supposed to liberate information, instead has provided a chilling means of owning and charging for it.

At the same time, the rise of market fundamentalism as the established state religion has greased the way for such developments and turned the media into an approving choir. The result has been an orgy of enclosure, and Bollier documents the major ones. There are chapters on the giveaway of public assets, such as broadcast airwaves and mineral deposits on public lands; the enclosure of computer code and the internet; the privatization of culture and public spaces; and the corporate takeover of academia and the quest for knowledge, among numerous others.

It's a broad swath, but with a simple theme. As the title suggests, this is a book about takings, a kind perpetrated by the very interests that complain about takings when done against themselves. In fact, Bollier shows that the government these interests complain about has been their loyal accomplice. It is the government that gives away the public airwaves and mineral rights to public lands; the government that has expanded the copyright and patent laws far beyond Jefferson's intent, thus setting the stage for the emerging oligopolies of the mind—and the ownership of life itself.

And of course, it is the government that created the legal fiction called the corporation that perpetrates most of these takings in the first place. There's a lesson here in what used to be called "political economy." Those who complain about government the most, use it the most for their own ends.

For many readers, the mere mention of the commons will call to mind the notion of tragedy. That's because of an essay called "The Tragedy of the Commons," written in the 1960s by the biologist Garret Hardin. The so-called "tragedy thesis" has hung like a pall over the concept ever since. It is a rote recital in the economics texts.

Basically it says that commons are prone inevitably to over-use, and that the only answer is a regime of private property rights. Turn the common lands into real estate and everyone is better off.

Bollier shows that the tragedy thesis is a myth, embraced by economists because it suits their preconceptions. In practice it has become a "Procrustean rack," he observes. "Circumstances that do not fit its premises must be stretched or slashed to fit, or ignored." What's ignored is that commons work often and wonderfully—the piazzas (public squares) of Italy, for example, and the community gardens of Manhattan. "The New York City community gardens thrive precisely because they are not governed either by the market or the government."

All that's needed, in most cases, is a structure of law or custom that enables the commons to flourish. The market can't work without rules, and a commons can't either.

In fact, often it's enclosure that invites the tragedy. Academic research flourished when it operated as a commons, for example. Academics published their work openly in professional journals. Reward came from the respect of one's peers, not patent claims and money. Pioneers like Jonas Salk, who discovered the original polio vaccine, did not seek patents for their work. They thought science should serve human kind, not gouge it.

Today, by contrast, academia is in a patent frenzy, prompted by corporate research dollars and a new cash-grabbing ethos. The result has been an atmosphere of suspicion and paranoia. Researchers practically need a patent lawyer by their side as they negotiate a growing minefield of competing patent claims. Scientific research is "ratcheting itself towards paralysis," Bollier observes, from the very thing—property rights—that is supposed to serve as "incentive" for discovery and innovation.

The point here is not that the commons somehow could replace the market. It is, rather, that the commons is a parallel realm of freedom, resource, and endeavor—one that the market itself depends upon and that is equally in need of government protection and support. Bollier offers numerous examples of a new commons movement, from Linux—the computer operating system developed through a commons on the World Wide Web—to service barter networks and land trusts.

The concept of the commons has large political potential. It is the missing link between the ecosystem and the social system, between the destruction of species and the destruction of languages and cultures, between cyber space and open space, between the depletion of the ozone layer and the depletion of our peace and quiet. If this does indeed become known as the Age of Enclosure, then *Silent Theft* will go down as one of the crucial texts that helped the age to see itself and thus pointed the way out.

Jonathan Rowe is a fellow at the Tomales Bay Institute, a regular contributor to YES! and contributing editor for Washington Monthly.

MAKING A PLACE FOR COMMUNITY: Local Politics in a Global Era

by Thad Williamson, Gar Alperovitz, and David Imbroscio
\$29.95, Routledge, 400 pages, 2002

Making a Place for Community begins by squarely confronting conventional wisdom, as summed up in a 1980 report requested by President Jimmy Carter. *A National Agenda for the Eighties* concludes that federal efforts "concerned principally with the health of specific places will inevitably conflict with efforts to revitalize the larger economy."

This has it precisely backwards,

the three authors of *Making a Place* argue, and they marshal a prodigious amount of evidence to make their case. A healthy larger economy rests on and depends on the presence of many healthy smaller economies.

The first part of the book makes the argument that community is beneficial not only because it makes us feel good but because it makes us act better and live better. Rootlessness, whether of capital or people, threatens community and undermines the possibility of healthy economies. The book investigates the “triple threat” to community: globalization, the movement of capital and goods within the United States, and suburban sprawl.

Fascinating factoids are sprinkled throughout. Such as Robert Putnam’s mathematical equation explaining the relationship between mobility and community. Each additional ten minutes in daily commuting time cuts involvement in community affairs by 10 percent. Or the remarkable fact that federal spending on regional and community development was cut by 60 percent between 1980 and 1990 under conservative Republicans and then was cut another 10 percent in the 1990s by liberal Democrats.

The final two-thirds of the book are prescriptive. The authors discuss an astonishing array of strategies: employee stock ownership plans, municipal enterprises, community development corporations, micro-enterprise funds, community sustained agriculture, land trusts, co-operatives, job training, transition aid. It is a dizzying tour of possibilities.

The book does suffer one serious shortcoming. It doesn’t address the dark side of strong communities. It may be a myth that close-knit communities are inevitably racist and reactionary, but there is abundant evidence that they are parochial, xenophobic, and resistant to change. They often display a disappointing unwillingness to share with other

communities and a disconcerting tendency, if given the power, to demand uniformity of behavior by their inhabitants. The authors argue for diverse communities but often, if given the choice, people opt for homogeneous communities. Witness the rise of gated communities and homeowner associations. How does one encourage diversity, protect the rights of minorities, and persuade communities to succor their weak and needy?

The modern world seems to equate mobility with progress. We measure the health of our economies by the distances traveled by our goods and services. Community, when policy makers think of it at all, is viewed as an obstacle to prosperity or, at best, as a place where we might find temporary reprieve from the slings and arrows of the real world. And we are creating, at the international level, a series of institutions, processes, and standards that will make it ever-more difficult to reverse this perspective.

Making a Place for Community is one of a growing number of books arguing that we should reverse this trend. What makes it stand out is that it also offers strategies to help us do so. That it avoids some of the deeper questions about the relationship between community, justice, and freedom does not diminish this achievement—or the fact that community is a deep human need.

David Morris is co-founder of the Minneapolis and Washington, DC-based Institute for Local Self-Reliance. He is the author of a number of books, including *Neighborhood Power*; *Self-Reliant Cities*, and most recently, *Seeing the Light: Regaining Control of Our Electricity System*. He directs ILSR’s *New Rules* project, www.newrules.org.

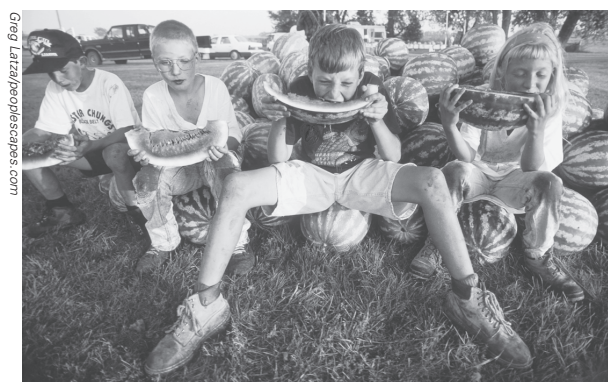
FOOD POLITICS: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health

by Marion Nestle
\$29.95, University of California Press, 457 pages, 2002

In a country where activists must fight for Americans’ right to know what we are eating, it’s not exactly news that diet is a political issue. We can no longer be certain, after all, that our organic produce has not been adulterated with genetically modified organisms. Certain potatoes are now classified as pesticides, and hazardous waste is used as fertilizer. Such is the state of the “free market” in food today.

Marion Nestle’s *Food Politics* explores the impact of the food industry on the nation’s health from another perspective: Why is the richest nation in the world eating itself to death? Her answer: Follow the money.

According to Nestle, who is chair of New York University’s Nutrition



Greg Latta/peoplescapes.com

Taking a break after a day of gathering watermelon near Forestburg, South Dakota



Department, the US produces twice as much food as it needs: about 3800 calories per capita. Rather than compete with each other, she says, food companies encourage people to eat more, even though the key health issues facing Americans are degenerative diseases like diabetes and cancer, which require that we eat less. "Dietary recommendations for prevention of disease have hardly varied for the past half-century," she writes, "but the consistency of such advice is a well-kept secret."

Nestle knows about that secrecy first-hand. Her first day at work at the Public Health Service, when she edited the Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health, she was given her marching orders: The report could not suggest restricting food of any kind, research be damned.

The book is especially good on the politics behind America's dietary

guidelines, the shocking economics of soda pop in the schools, and how junk food is disguised as health food. Nestle is at her most brilliant when dissecting the politically correct—and purposely misleading—language of the dietary guidelines that make up the infamous food pyramid. She says 13 states have instituted food libel laws. A South Dakota law specifically prevents people from saying that generally accepted agricultural practices (such as the use of pesticides) might make food unsafe.

Something I did not know: Nestle reveals that the US does not produce enough fruit and vegetables for each of us to eat 3 to 5 servings per day, the minimum recommended. But she has an excellent suggestion for remedying this situation: subsidize fruit and vegetable producers, just as we subsidize the producers of everything else that we eat, including sugar.

Nestle's analysis falls short in the

latter part of the book when she blames the nutritional supplement manufacturers—whoever they are, whatever products they represent (she never says)—for creating the political and regulatory environment in which multinationals can market food as healthy, even when it is of questionable or even detrimental value. On the one hand, she says that Europe does not allow companies to market as many supplement products as the US does, without the scientific research to back up their efficacy and safety. True enough. But she then goes on to claim that such supplements have been allowed in the US due to a culture of "believers" who disregard "science."

Not entirely true. Many of those she classifies as "believers"—I am one—rely on scientific studies from Europe or other parts of the world. Indeed, as sophisticated as Nestle is about the politics of nutrition, she displays a remarkable naivete when it comes to the politics of medicine—and the repression of medical research in the US. The issue is not believers versus non-believers; it is good science versus bad. To her credit, Nestle has demonstrated that corporate America does not have a monopoly on the former.

Food Politics is hardly complete—it does not address the array of issues mentioned at the beginning of this review, nor does it delve into the politics behind controversial nutritional subjects like pasteurization and irradiation. But it is packed full of magnificent tables and charts. The result is devastating, especially for mainstream readers who still trust the experts. Even seasoned activists will certainly learn a trick or two.

An investigative reporter who has written for publications as diverse as Forbes and motherjones.com, Ellie Winninghoff practices good nutrition as an alternative cancer patient. She serves on the board of Slow Food Seattle.

—Carolyn McConnell

In brief...

WATER WARS

by Vandana Shiva

\$14.00, South End Press, 156 pages, 2002

BLUE GOLD: The Fight to Stop the Corporate Theft of the World's Water

by Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke

\$25.95, The New Press, 278 pages, 2002

Control over water is fast turning into one of the most important battles of the new millennium. One of the last commons, water is being targeted for privatization by multinational corporations. But citizens around the world are fighting back, as both these books, by savvy activists and thinkers, detail. Shiva lays out the history of communal water rights, while Barlow and Clarke focus on the current struggle.

WEBS OF POWER: Notes from the Global Uprising

by Starhawk

\$17.95, New Society Publishers, 269 pages, 2002

Starhawk has made a place for herself as the literary voice of the anti-corporate globalization movement. In her new book, she collects postings from the movement's protests—Seattle, Genoa, Prague, Quebec City—as well as offers a theory of "third-road activism" beyond traditional theories of protest, non-violent and violent. She's not only a lifelong activist, but a novelist too, and it shows. Many of these essays originated as web postings, and yet they hold up. This is literature by Tom Wolfe's definition—news that has stayed news, poignant and compelling years after it is broadcast from the trenches.



In Iraq, Waiting for War

In late September, as the Bush administration continued its deployment of weaponry and military personnel to the Middle East, I traveled with seven other Americans on a fact-finding mission to Iraq. How do the people of Iraq view the threat to invade their country? How has this threat affected their lives? And how will they be affected if there is an invasion? These are some of the questions I brought with me as I talked with Iraqi parents and children, shopkeepers, teachers, doctors, and artists.

Quassem Alsabti, a man who has moved comfortably in Iraqi literary and artistic circles for decades, stands in the center of his lawn among a group of international friends, Italian, French, American. In front of him, a table spread with Middle Eastern appetizers and drinks beckons. "This is what I love," he says, "bringing people together to eat and drink and laugh, and to talk about art and life." Later, in private, he apologized for the small turnout. "People are not going to gallery openings or receptions now. They are preoccupied with war."

"I have an exhibit of paintings opening in three weeks," he continues. "I am not going to stop my work. But let me tell you something. If the US invades, I will send my family to Jordan and sit here in my yard with my gun and wait."

The Bush administration portrays itself as acting on behalf of the Iraqi people, characterizing its military plans as a "war of liberation," but Quassem Alsabti isn't alone in opposing a US-led invasion. Salah Dinar, a music store owner, says, "We want to be independent, to control our own resources, to live in peace." Some people, like Waleed Mohammed, are more blunt. "Leave us alone. It is our problem."

Zainab Fartous, an English teacher and mother of four with a

quick smile and lively eyes, knows firsthand the grave consequences of war. As I step through a crowd of children into her home, she lifts her expressive face and says, "Welcome! Welcome. This is your home." There is no furniture. For two hours, we sit on the floor. Children come and go. The concrete walls amplify our laughter and the voices of children. Throughout, Zainab is a gracious hostess—arranging for tea and pillows, smiling, answering questions—and an attentive mother, playing, comforting, responding. Then, in one private and unexpected moment, she drops her guard. Turning an intense, wide-eyed face toward me, she asks, "What is the mood in the US. Do you think they will attack?" My response eclipses the light in her face.

On January 25, 1999, a US warplane fired a guided missile that exploded in Zainab's neighborhood in Basra, killing five children including her 7-year-old son, Heider, and permanently injuring her other son, Mustafa. The block she lives on is now referred to as "Missile Street," because so many houses were damaged or destroyed in the explosion. An Air Force spokesperson informed me later that year that the "missile went off course" The "problem," he added quickly, "has been corrected." But Zainab knows well that if there is war, other bombs will stray, other children will die.

I ask Zainab what she needs. "We need clothes for the children, especially coats for winter, and shoes. We need food and medicine." Daily life under sanctions remains a battle for survival that war will only intensify. As a school teacher, Zainab earns less than \$5 per month, and food prices in Iraq are volatile. We give Zainab money our delegation collected in the US for her family and for a neighborhood emergency fund. We renew our

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friendship and promise to return to the US and continue to oppose the war. "Inshala," she says anxiously, "God willing."

People in Iraq have lived through two decades of war, beginning with the Iran-Iraq conflict and continuing to this day with the warfare of economic sanctions and no-fly-zone bombing, which Iraqis view as a continuation of the Gulf War. They are, without question, weary. "You have to understand," said Mohammad, a taxi driver who fought in the Iran-Iraq war. "Every day we live not knowing what tomorrow will bring. If my car breaks, can I repair it? Will there be medicine for our children when they are sick? And now, will there be an invasion? We do not want more war. We want peace."

I met with Iraqi people privately, away from government minders, in a wide variety of situations. No one I spoke with welcomes an invasion by American forces. It is not only the need to heal that prompts their opposition to war against their country, but also a sense of justice. In their minds, a preemptive attack is clearly unjust. They are frightened, angry, and aggrieved. They know innocent civilians will bear the brunt of this war.

DAVID SMITH-FERRI
Ukiah, CA



Keep Moving On



Linda Wolf

It's easy to get really down these days. We watch our top officials proclaim the rules of empire to justify war when all around we hear the desperate cries for healing—of the planet, of our communities, of our children.

Can we hold the terrible reality of war in our hearts and still move on? I'm hearing from lots of you that you're finding it hard. Me too. But then I hear a voice that says, Wait—we're resilient people. We can be the future we want. We're big enough to hold the terrible and the possible in our hearts at the same time.

Let me share a couple of stories of people doing just that.

In October at the Fetzer Institute in Michigan, we held our seventh State of the Possible retreat. One of our par-

The forum participants were drawn from all over the city and beyond. Over half lived or worked in Lower Manhattan. A third had been at or near Ground Zero on the fateful day of the attacks.

They sat at over 400 tables of 10 people each in the mammoth Jacob Javits Center in New York. With conversation, computers, and keypads, they voiced their views. Everyone wanted a memorial fitting to the immensity of the tragedy and the magnitude of the heroism.

But they wanted more than a memorial. They wanted a living community. They wanted retail businesses and places for theater and art, for playing in a park, and for walking along the river. They wanted housing that accommodated poor people, rich people, and everyone in between. They wanted convenient public transportation and streets that connected rather than separated the neighborhoods. As one participant put it, we want "to build a new heart for New York City." Public officials have listened and are re-drafting plans to incorporate the key elements voiced at the forum. They're now open to more public input.

Most of the forum's participants had the horror of the attacks deeply etched in their lives. Yet in less than a year they were ready to envision a revitalized community—one more lively, more inclusive, more connected

than what had been before. They—and the remarkable coalition of government, academic, business, and civic organizations of New York that sponsored the conversation—were ready to move on.

Here's another story. We all know the current US administration backed out of the Kyoto agreement on global warming. Adding insult to injury, in June of this year the Environmental Protection Agency issued a report saying, Yes, it's true, global warming is real. It's caused by human activity, the US is the biggest polluter, and the effects will devastate our coastal areas and mountains, as well as much of the whole world. But, sorry, it's too late; there's little we can do about it. That message, from people who are supposed to be our leaders, can be discouraging to the point of paralysis.

The folks in San Francisco didn't let that stop them. A group of visionaries dreamed big. They put to the voters a \$100 million bond measure to be used to save energy, shift to solar and other renewable energy sources, and shut down dirty generating plants. They mounted an incredibly smart campaign. Can you imagine the Chamber of Commerce, the Sierra Club, and a coalition of local labor unions all endorsing the same measure? That's what happened. And last November, the voters passed the bond by a whopping 73 percent. Already the

We're big enough to hold the terrible and the possible in our hearts at the same time

ticipants was Carolyn Lukensmeyer, founder of AmericaSpeaks (see Resource Guide, page 47). Carolyn is passionate about democratic dialogue and knows a lot about how to make it happen. She told of facilitating an extraordinary conversation among over 4,000 people in New York City last July. The topic? How to rebuild Ground Zero and the neighborhoods surrounding it.

money is being used to retrofit the city's big Moscone Center for energy efficiency and solar power.

Recently I spoke with David Hochschild, one of the leaders of San Francisco's bond campaign. He told me that since the measure's passage, officials from more than 15 cities have called to learn more about taking similar steps—places like San Diego, Honolulu, Salt Lake City, New York. The opportunity to spread San Francisco's model prompted David to found a new organization to help other cities follow San Francisco's lead (see votesolar.org).

Those visionaries in San Francisco didn't let the bad news from the top of our government stop them. They laid down a pathway to change, and now others are walking it.

We can all do that. You have your own stories of vision and resilience. You read them in *YES!* Without question, in the days and months ahead there will be much to resist. And resist we must. But we must also keep moving on. We can be the future we desire.



Fran Korten
Executive Director

Events & Announcements

David Brower Youth Awards

Six environmental and community leaders won this recognition for activists ages 13–22, sponsored by Earth Island Institute.

Winners: **Jessian Choy**, 21, for founding the University of California–Santa Cruz Student Environmental Center; **Max Harper**, 20, for developing a model sustainable living house; **Stefanie Lacy**, 17, for establishing a recycling program in Bandera, TX; **Amir Nadav**, 17, for activism to pass legislation reducing student exposure to diesel exhaust; **Ethan Schaffer**, 21, for creating Organic Volunteers, a national program for sustainability and organic food systems; **Nathan Wyeth**, 17, for co-founding Student Action on the Global Economy in response to the environmental threats posed by corporate globalization.

MLK Day Anti-War March

International ANSWER plans an anti-war march in Washington, DC, for Martin Luther King Day, January 18, 2003, to highlight the same connections between an Iraq war, poverty, and civil rights as King did on Vietnam. See www.internationalanswer.org or call 202/332-5757.

Buy Nothing Day

On November 29, unofficial “opening day” for Christmas shopping, Adbusters is organizing its annual Buy Nothing Day, an event which aims to promote simple living and time with family as an alternative to holiday overconsumption. For campaign details, see www.adbusters.org/campaigns/bnd/.

Nonprofit Career Fairs

The same people who brought you www.idealists.org, the online job-matching directory, have launched a series of nonprofit career fairs where organizations, job-seekers, and Career Service professionals can meet face-to-face.

- Minneapolis, MN: February 11
- Pittsburgh, PA: February 14
- Phoenix, AZ: February 26

For a complete listing of fair locations, see www.idealists.org.

YES! Nominated for Award

YES! has again been nominated for an Utne Independent Press Award. Last year *YES!* magazine was nominated and won the Utne Alternative Press Award in the category of “cultural/social coverage.”

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

1. Publication Title: *YES! A Journal of Positive Futures* 2. Publication No.: 0018-219 3. Filing Date: September 27, 2002 4. Issue Frequency: Quarterly 5. No. of Issues Published Annually: 4 6. Annual Subscription Price: \$24.00 7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: 284 Madrona Way NE Ste 116, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110-2870 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: 284 Madrona Way NE Ste 116, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110-2870 9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: Publisher-Frances Korten, Executive Director, PO Box 10818, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110-0818; Editor-Sarah Ruth van Gelder, PO Box 10818, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110-0818, Managing Editor-Connie Kim, PO Box 10818, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110-0818 10. Owner: Positive Futures Network, PO Box 10818, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110-0818 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1% or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None 12. Tax Status: The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes has not changed during the preceding 12 months 13. Publication Title: *YES! A Journal of Positive Futures* 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: Fall 2002—Issue #23 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation: a. Total Number of Copies: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 37,370; Actual No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 48,005 b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation—1. Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541: 17,315; 21,745 2. Paid In-County Subscriptions: 60; 0 3. Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution: 3,421; 4,518 4. Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS: 2,649; 967 c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 23,445; 27,230 d. Free Distribution by Mail: 647; 308 e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail: 6,281; 3,625 f. Total Free Distribution: 6,928; 3,933 g. Total Distribution: 30,373; 31,163 h. Copies not Distributed: 6,997; 16,842 i. Total: 37,370; 48,005 j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 78%; 88% 16. This Statement of Ownership is printed in the Winter issue of this publication 17. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete: Frances F. Korten, Executive Director.

SUSTAINABLE LIVING



Troubled by the difficulties of a clean & green existence?

*Whipsawed by confusion because you want
to live sustainably but don't know how?*

Don't worry—Ask Yes! But How?

YES! ... But How?

How can I have ready access to a computer without owning a piece of soon-to-be-obsolete toxic waste? Is leasing an option? Do any manufacturers take back old computers for reprocessing?

Perplexed

via e-mail

I too have been thinking about buying a personal computer (PC) since 1989 but so far, I've gotten by with a manual typewriter and the use of friends' and employers' computers. During my term at *YES!*, however, I came to rely on the computer for monitoring mainstream and alternative news, doing research, and communicating with almost everyone but Wendell Berry. Now I am reconsidering PC ownership.

Environmentally, PCs still rate poorly despite ongoing improvements. Computer manufacturing releases dioxin (a carcinogen and hormone disruptor), halogens and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)—ozone depleting and global warming gases—lead, mercury, and other pollutants. Some manufacturers are producing equipment without some of these toxins, with recycled-content glass and plastics, or with easily removable parts to facilitate recycling. The Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition (www.svtc.org)

prepares an annual environmental report card for computer manufacturers, and the Northwest Product Stewardship Council offers a Guide to Environmentally Preferable Computer Purchasing (www.productstewardship.net, follow links to EPP Guide). If you do not need state-of-the-art gear, obtaining a used or rebuilt PC may be the easiest "green" strategy, especially if you can choose an energy-efficient model.

According to a study by the Lawrence Berkeley National Labs, computers and Internet equipment use 2 percent of US electricity. Replacing old machines with "Energy Star" rated ones will save electricity, and turning computers off when not in use will save 75 percent of computer energy bills, according to the US Department of Energy. Flat screens are more energy efficient than CRTs (cathode ray tube—the TV-style monitors), and laptops use only a tenth the energy of desktop models.

Finally, computer disposal remains a serious problem, particularly because a new machine has only a two-year life expectancy. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, 20 million computers were taken out of service in 1998 alone. Of these, 12 percent were recycled, an estimated 75

percent are stored in closets, garages, etc., and the rest were trashed. Electronics in landfills leach toxins into groundwater; incinerated ones pollute the air.

In October 2001, the European Union passed the Waste Electrical and Electronics Directive that requires manufacturers to take responsibility for their products at the end of use. Hence, in Europe, old PCs can be returned to their makers. In the US, while some manufacturers have take-back agreements with their corporate clients, individual consumers bear the burden of seeking out responsible means of disposal.

A National Directory of Computer Recycling Programs is available at www.microweb.com/pepsite/Recycle/recycle_index.html. Visit specific manufacturers' websites for their take-back policies—HP and IBM now accept old equipment for a \$25–\$30 recycling fee.

Meanwhile, although it has taken several visits, I've been able to do all the research, typing, and e-mailing for this piece at the public library. True, users are limited to one hour of computer time per day, but this may be as much as you want.

—Pamela O'Malley Chang,
Editorial Fellow Emerita



How can I de-clog a bathroom drain with nontoxic products?

Paula
via e-mail

Drain cleaners often contain corrosive toxic chemicals such as sodium hydroxide, hydrochloric acid, and petroleum distillates. First of all, our old friend the toilet plunger is a good long-term de-clogger. If the plunger doesn't work, pour 1/2 cup baking soda, then 1/2 cup white vinegar or lemon juice down the troubled drain. Wait for the fizzy chemical reaction and flush with boiling water after 15 minutes.

Aside from the cost-effective baking soda and vinegar recipe, there are a number of natural drain cleaner products on the market. These contain enzymes that dissolve clogging agents such as grease, oil, and soap residue.

If these strategies prove ineffective, you may want to try cleaning out the trap underneath the sink. Inquire about this at your local hardware store, or check out any hardware how-to website (<http://doityourself.com/plumbing/index.htm>). One of the easier home plumbing projects, this is less expensive than calling a plumber.

Clog prevention is also important. Make sure that all of your drains have a "hair snare" or strainer on the drain hole and that it is cleaned out regularly. Pour boiling water down the drain once a week, and be sure not to pour coffee grounds, grease, oil, or paint down the drain.

—Erik Neumann and Beth Balderston

How do we deal with bees' and/or hornets' nests around our house? I don't want to use gas or poison, but I don't want to leave them there either. Quite a few are getting inside the house.

Terry
via e-mail

Usually, people can agreeably

share a large outdoor area with bees and hornets. Thousands of amateur and professional beekeepers maintain hives on their properties for pleasure, education, or profit. But when these insects settle in high human- and pet-traffic areas, particularly as uninvited house guests, problems arise.

You're right in not wanting to use gas or poison, not only because of their harmful effects on the environment and your property, but also because they usually don't destroy insects immediately. When exposed to gases or other artificial chemicals, stinging insects become aggressive.

Colonies of bees and hornets can number up to 80,000 members so removing a nest yourself is not advised. Instead, contact your county extension agent for a referral to a local beekeeper. There's usually a nominal charge involved, but it's well worth your safety.

If the bees on your property are honeybees, you are not allowed to destroy them. Honeybees are protected by federal law because of their value to the ecosystem and agriculture. A mite problem that has wiped out 80 percent of honeybees nationwide since the mid '80s has also garnered extra protection for the bees. Many beekeepers will agree to collect and relocate the insects if you simply ask. Hornets and other stinging insects aren't as economically valued and beekeepers will usually opt for poison to rid them from property.

If the bees or hornets are in the walls of a house, it's important to call an expert immediately. Established honeybee nests, for example, can contain over a hundred pounds of honey, pollen, and beeswax. You may have to call a carpenter and a beekeeper so that both the hive and bees are removed. Without bees to fan and cool the nest, honey may seep out, causing damage to walls and ceilings. The fermenting nest could also attract such unwanted pests as rodents, moths, and other in-

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sects. After the bees and hive have been removed, make certain to cover any possible entryway to avoid admitting other colonies.

Non-chemical traps can also be made or purchased to attract hornets and bees and can be effective when used correctly and in the right areas. These inexpensive traps can be purchased at most major lawn and garden stores. In addition, the EPA has an online manual for pest control in schools that includes instructions for making a homemade trap, using food to lure the insects. It's available at: <http://www.epa.gov/region09/toxic/pest/school/index.html>.

You may also allow nature to take its course (if the insects do not present an immediate threat), removing the nest when it slows down for the winter. Worker bees and hornets are killed by frost, and fertilized females (future queens) hibernate in sheltered places until they begin new nests in the spring.

—Connie Kim and
Beth Balderston

Do you have a question for Yes! But How? Send it to:

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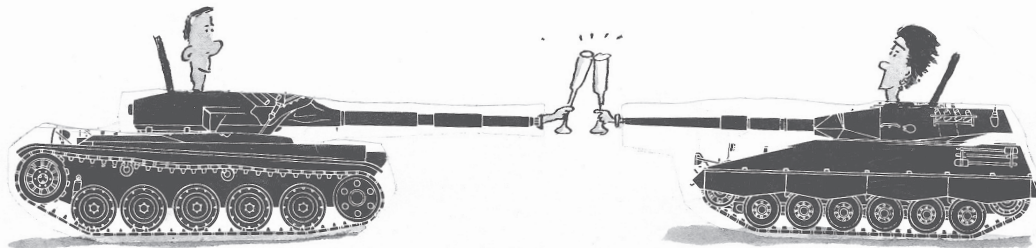
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NO COMMENT



Gary Clement

Belgium Leads Push for U.S. Regime Change

Spurred by reports of an aggressive military buildup and failure to rein in corporate terrorists, Belgium is pressing for a preemptive strike against the regime of George W. Bush.

"We cannot sit idly by and eat our delicious chocolates while the United States government engages in a policy of harassment," Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt said in a nationally televised address to the Belgian people. "Now is the time for action. We cannot waffle."

Belgian intelligence sources indicate that the US is in possession of weapons of mass destruction—chemical, biological, and nuclear. "We know that the United States has nuclear weapons and that they have actually used them in the past," said the prime minister. "There is no reason to think they won't use them in the future."

Verhofstadt is insisting that United Nations weapons inspectors be given "unfettered access to the massive stockpiles" of weapons and that they be destroyed immediately.

"We stand at the crossroads," said Verhofstadt. "Either the United States agrees to our demands, or we will be forced to put down our delicious chocolates and lead the way for per-

manent regime change. Remember, the current clique in Washington was elected in direct contravention of the will of the American people. Regime change will be welcomed by their citizens."

Reaction to the speech throughout Europe was swift. "We stand with our Belgian brothers," offered French President Jacques Chirac. "France is willing to commit 35 troops and many cases of fine champagne to the cause. We cannot stand on the sidelines enjoying our tasty baguettes while our comrades from Antwerp go it alone. Let me assure the dear prime minister. France is with you, almost."

Russian President Vladimir Putin did not mince words. "Again, it is the powerful Belgians who must lead the world against aggression and American hegemony. Russia stands with her European allies and insists that the United States disarm unilaterally. I only wish we too had delicious foods."

Following the speech, the mood at the White House was one of defiance. "Let the Belgians make their empty threats," said White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer. "We are urging Hershey, Mars, and other

Belgian intelligence sources indicate that the US is in possession of weapons of mass destruction—chemical, biological, and nuclear.

fine American chocolate makers to increase their output by 200 percent. We intend to break up the evil-doing Belgian chocolate cartel once and for all."

Phil Lebovits

Vice President Dick Cheney was even more bellicose. Speaking directly underneath Karl Rove from an undisclosed underground bunker, the vice president warned of dire consequences should Belgium make a preemptive strike.

"We are prepared to strike back with alarming force," said Cheney. "The Belgians cannot bully us. We here in America have God on our side. To hell with their chocolate."

Back in Washington, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice were trying hard to persuade President Bush that there is indeed a country named Belgium.