

BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the **June**
Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy **2004**

"As June 30th approaches, the enemies of freedom grow even more desperate about the rise of democracy in Iraq."

—George W Bush

Exactly right, George, but haven't you mixed up the actors? —Ed.

ALLIANCE NEWS (Continued on Page 7)

Chapter Calendar

Joint Meeting—"I'll See You There!"

Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy will meet on **Wednesday, June 16, from 7:00 to 9:15 p.m. at Cambridge Friends Meeting house, 5 Longfellow Park (9-minute walk from Harvard Square T station, west on Brattle St.)**

— Agenda —

* **Brazil—India—Europe—and now Boston!** We are the first North American social forum, expecting 5000 people to show up at UMass/Boston July 23, 24, and 25. Read about it on page 7 and in the enclosed brochure. To double your energy input, also attend the Alliance convention July 20, 21, and 22. Register now for each (use enclosed forms).

You can also be a host. Learn more about the Convention and the Forum at this meeting, and how you can help and get connected with interesting people. **Dave Lewit (BCA), Nancy Brown (Seacoast), and NE regional reps Ruth Weizenbaum (North Bridge) and Bill Haff (Mass Bay South)** will be resource persons.

* As with the national Alliance with its more than 20 chapters, we will also discuss how we can get better focus, more participation, and more connection with sister chapters and members in New England and beyond. Come to this meeting!—and pass the word!

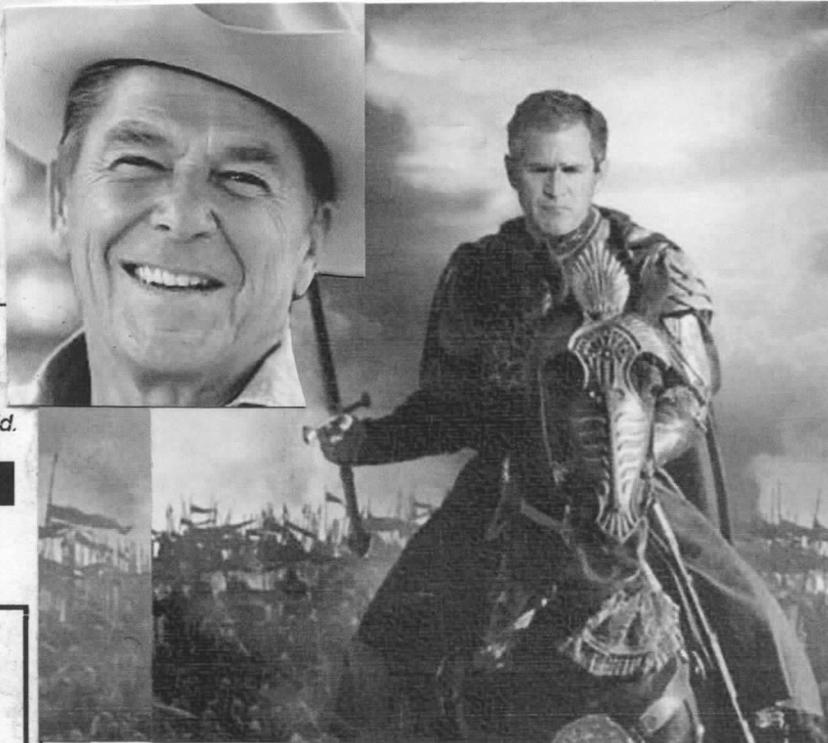
Is Bush F***ing Nuts?

His Erratic Behavior Worries Aides

by Doug Thompson, *Capitol Hill Blue*, 4 June 2004

President George W. Bush's increasingly erratic behavior and wide mood swings has the halls of the West Wing buzzing lately as aides privately express growing concern over their leader's state of mind. In meetings with top aides and administration officials, the President goes from quoting the Bible in one breath to obscene tantrums against the media, Democrats and others that he classifies as "enemies of the state."

Worried White House aides paint a portrait of a man on the edge, increasingly wary of those who disagree with him and paranoid of a public that no longer trusts his policies in Iraq or at home. "It reminds me of the Nixon days," says a longtime GOP political consultant with contacts in the White House. "Everybody is an enemy; everybody is out to (Continued on Page 2 >>)"



Planet Reagan

by William Rivers Pitt, truthout.org, 7 June 2004

*Buffalo Bill's
defunct
who used to
ride a watersmooth-silver
stallion
and break onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat
Jesus
he was a handsome man
and what i want to know is
how do you like your blueeyed boy
Mister Death*

— e.e. cummings

Ronald Reagan is dead now, and everyone is being nice to him. In every aspect, this is appropriate. He was a husband and a father, a beloved member of a family, and he will be missed by those he was close to. His death was long, slow and agonizing because of the Alzheimer's Disease which ruined him, one drop of lucidity at a time. My grandmother died ten years ago almost to the day because of this disease, and this disease took ten years to do its dirty, filthy, wretched work on her.

The dignity and candor of Reagan's farewell letter to the American people was as magnificent a departure from public life as any that has been seen in our history, but the ugly truth of his illness was that he lived on, and on, and on. His family and friends watched as he faded from the world of the real, as the simple dignity afforded to all life collapsed like loose sand behind his ever more vacant eyes. Only those who have seen Alzheimer's Disease invade a mind can know the truth of this. It is a cursed way to die.

In this mourning space, however, there must be room made for the truth. Writer Edward Abbey once said, "The sneakiest form of literary subtlety, in a corrupt society, is to speak the plain truth. The critics will not understand you; the public will not believe you; your fellow writers (Continued on Page 2 >>)"

get him. That's the mood over there."

In interviews with a number of White House staffers who were willing to talk off the record, a picture of an administration under siege has emerged, led by a man who declares his decisions to be "God's will" and then tells aides to "fuck over" anyone they consider to be an opponent of the administration. "We're at war, there's no doubt about it. What I don't know anymore is just who the enemy might be," says one troubled White House aide. "We seem to spend more time trying to destroy John Kerry than al Qaeda and our enemies list just keeps growing and growing."

Aides say the President gets "hung up on minor details," micromanaging to the extreme while ignoring the bigger picture. He will spend hours personally reviewing and approving every attack ad against his Democratic opponent and then kiss off a meeting on economic issues.

"This is what is killing us on Iraq," one aide says. "We lost focus. The President got hung up on the weapons of mass destruction and an unproven link to al Qaeda. We could have found other justifiable reasons for the war but the President insisted the focus stay on those two, tenuous items."

Aides who raise questions quickly find themselves shut out of access to the President or other top advisers. Among top officials, Bush's inner circle is shrinking. Secretary of State Colin Powell has fallen out of favor because of his growing doubts about the administration's war against Iraq.

The President's abrupt dismissal of CIA Director George Tenet Wednesday night is, aides say, an example of how he works. "Tenet wanted to quit last year but the President got his back up and wouldn't hear of it," says an aide. "That would have been the opportune time to make a change, not in the middle of an election campaign but when the director challenged the President during the meeting Wednesday, the President cut him off by saying 'that's it George. I cannot abide disloyalty. I want your resignation and I want it now.'" Tenet was allowed to resign "voluntarily" and Bush informed his shocked staff of the decision Thursday morning. One aide says the President actually described the decision as "God's will."

God may also be the reason Attorney General John Ashcroft, the administration's lightning rod because of his questionable actions that critics argue threatens freedoms granted by the Constitution, remains part of the power elite. West Wing staffers call Bush and Ashcroft "the Blues Brothers" because "they're on a mission from God." "The Attorney General is tight with the President because of religion," says one aide. "They both believe any action is justifiable in the name of God."

But the President who says he rules at the behest of God can also tongue-lash those he perceives as disloyal, calling them "fucking assholes" in front of other staff, berating one cabinet official in front of others and labeling anyone who disagrees with him "unpatriotic" or "anti-American."

"The mood here is that we're under siege, there's no doubt about it," says one troubled aide who admits he is looking for work elsewhere. "In this administration, you don't have to wear a turban or speak Farsi to be an enemy of the United States. All you have to do is disagree with the President."

The White House did not respond to requests for comment on the record. #

will shake their heads."

The truth is straightforward: Virtually every significant problem facing the American people today can be traced back to the policies and people that came from the Reagan administration. It is a laundry list of ills, woes and disasters that has all of us, once again, staring apocalypse in the eye.

How can this be? The television says Ronald Reagan was one of the most beloved Presidents of the 20th century. He won two national elections, the second by a margin so overwhelming that all future landslides will be judged by the high-water mark he achieved against Walter Mondale. How can a man so universally respected have played a hand in the evils which corrupt our days?

The answer lies in the reality of the corrupt society Abbey spoke of. Our corruption is the absolute triumph of image over reality, of flash over substance, of the pervasive need within most Americans to believe in a happy-face version of the nation they call home, and to spurn the reality of our estate as unpatriotic. Ronald Reagan was, and will always be, the undisputed heavyweight champion of salesmen in this regard.

Reagan was able, by virtue of his towering talents in this arena, to sell to the American people a flood of poisonous policies. He made Americans feel good about acting against their own best interests. He sold the American people a lemon, and they drive it to this day as if it was a Cadillac. It isn't the lies that kill us, but the myths, and Ronald Reagan was the greatest myth-maker we are ever likely to see.

Mainstream media journalism today is a shameful joke because of Reagan's deregulation policies. Once upon a time, the Fairness Doctrine ensured that the information we receive—information vital to the ability of the people to govern in the manner intended—came from a wide variety of sources and perspectives. Reagan's policies annihilated the Fairness Doctrine, opening the door for a few mega-corporations to gather journalism unto themselves. Today, Reagan's old bosses at General Electric own three of the most-watched news channels. This company profits from every war we fight, but somehow is trusted to tell the truths of war. Thus, the myths are sold to us.

The deregulation policies of Ronald Reagan did not just deliver journalism to these massive corporations, but handed virtually every facet of our lives into the hands of this privileged few. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat are all tainted because Reagan battered down every environmental regulation he came across so corporations could improve their bottom line. Our leaders are wholly-owned subsidiaries of the corporations that were made all-powerful by Reagan's deregulation craze. The Savings and Loan scandal of Reagan's time, which cost the American people hundreds of billions of dollars, is but one example of Reagan's decision that the foxes would be fine guards in the henhouse.

Ronald Reagan believed in small government, despite the fact that he grew government massively during his time. Social programs which protected the weakest of our citizens were gutted by Reagan's policies, delivering millions into despair. Reagan was able to do this by caricaturing the "welfare queen," who punched out babies by the barnload, who drove the flashy car bought with your tax dollars, who refused to work because

she didn't have to. This was a vicious, racist lie, one result of which was the decimation of a generation by crack cocaine. The urban poor were left to rot because Ronald Reagan believed in 'self-sufficiency.'

Because Ronald Reagan could not be bothered to fund research into 'gay cancer,' the AIDS virus was allowed to carve out a comfortable home in America. The aftershocks from this callous disregard for people whose homosexuality was deemed evil by religious conservatives cannot be overstated. Beyond the graves of those who died from a disease which was allowed to burn unchecked, there are generations of Americans today living with the subconscious idea that sex equals death.

The veneer of honor and respect painted across the legacy of Ronald Reagan is itself a myth of biblical proportions. The coverage proffered today of the Reagan legacy seldom mentions impropriety until the Iran/Contra scandal appears on the administration timeline. This sin of omission is vast. By the end of his term in office, some 138 Reagan administration officials had been convicted, indicted or investigated for misconduct and/or criminal activities.

Some of the names on this disgraceful roll-call: Oliver North, John Poindexter, Richard Secord, Casper Weinberger, Elliott Abrams, Robert C. McFarlane, Michael Deaver, E. Bob Wallach, James Watt, Alan D. Fiers, Clair George, Duane R. Clarridge, Anne Gorsuch Burford, Rita Lavelle, Richard Allen, Richard Beggs, Guy Flake, Louis Glutfrida, Edwin Gray, Max Hugel, Carlos Campbell, John Fedders, Arthur Hayes, J. Lynn Helms, Marjory Mecklenburg, Robert Nimmo, J. William Petro, Thomas C. Reed, Emanuel Savas, Charles Wick. Many of these names are lost to history, but more than a few of them are still with us today, 'rehabilitated' by the administration of George W. Bush.

Ronald Reagan actively supported the regimes of the worst people ever to walk the earth. Names like Marcos, Duarte, Rios Mont and Duvalier reek of blood and corruption, yet were embraced by the Reagan administration with passionate intensity. The ground of many nations is salted with the bones of those murdered by brutal rulers who called Reagan a friend. Who can forget his support of those in South Africa who believed apartheid was the proper way to run a civilized society?

One dictator in particular looms large across our landscape. Saddam Hussein was a creation of Ronald Reagan. The Reagan administration supported the Hussein regime despite his incredible record of atrocity. The Reagan administration gave Hussein intelligence information which helped the Iraqi military use their chemical weapons on the battlefield against Iran to great effect. The deadly bacterial agents sent to Iraq during the Reagan administration are a laundry list of horrors.

The Reagan administration sent an emissary named Donald Rumsfeld to Iraq to shake Saddam Hussein's hand and assure him that, despite public American condemnation of the use of those chemical weapons, the Reagan administration still considered him a welcome friend and ally. This happened while the Reagan administration was selling weapons to Iran, a nation notorious for its support of international terrorism, in secret and in violation of scores of laws.

Another name on Ronald Reagan's roll call is that of Osama bin Laden. The Reagan administration believed it a bully idea to organize an army of Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan to

fight the Soviet Union. bin Laden became the spiritual leader of this action. Throughout the entirety of Reagan's term, bin Laden and his people were armed, funded and trained by the United States. Reagan helped teach Osama bin Laden the lesson he lives by today, that it is possible to bring a superpower to its knees. bin Laden believes this because he has done it once before, thanks to the dedicated help of Ronald Reagan.

In 1998, two American embassies in Africa were blasted into rubble by Osama bin Laden, who used the Semtex sent to Afghanistan by the Reagan administration to do the job. In 2001, Osama bin Laden thrust a dagger into the heart of the United States, using men who became skilled at the art of terrorism with the help of Ronald Reagan. Today, there are 827 American soldiers and over 10,000 civilians who have died in the invasion and occupation of Iraq, a war that came to be because Reagan helped manufacture both Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden.

How much of this can be truthfully laid at the feet of Ronald Reagan? It depends on who you ask. Those who worship Reagan see him as the man in charge, the man who defeated Soviet communism, the man whose vision and charisma made Americans feel good about themselves after Vietnam and the malaise of the 1970s. Those who despise Reagan see him as nothing more than a pitch-man for corporate raiders, the man who allowed greed to become a virtue, the man who smiled rapidly while allowing his officials to run the government for him.

In the final analysis, however, the legacy of Ronald Reagan—whether he had an active hand in its formulation, or was merely along for the ride—is beyond dispute. His famous question, "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?" is easy to answer. We are not better off than we were four years ago, or eight years ago, or twelve, or twenty. We are a badly damaged state, ruled today by a man who subsists off Reagan's most corrosive final gift to us all: It is the image that matters, and be damned to the truth. #



Nancy Tunnell, right, a member of Veterans for Peace (VFP) smooths the sand at a memorial dedicated to American soldiers killed in Iraq Sunday, April 4, 2004, in Santa Barbara, Calif. In silent protest every Sunday, VFP groups in Santa Barbara, Santa Monica, Calif., and Oceanside, Calif., erect white wooden crosses on the beach for every American serviceman killed in Iraq. (AP Photo/Ric Francis)

Vote For A Man, Not A Puppet A True Conservative Plumps for Kerry

by Charlie Reese, formerly *Orlando Sentinel*, 21 May 2004

Americans should realize that if they vote for President Bush's re-election, they are really voting for the architects of war—Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz and the rest of that cabal of neoconservative ideologues and their corporate backers.

I have sadly come to the conclusion that President Bush is merely a frontman, an empty suit, who is manipulated by the people in his administration. Bush has the most dangerously simplistic view of the world of any president in my memory.

It's no wonder the president avoids press conferences like the plague. Take away his cue cards and he can barely talk.

Americans should be embarrassed that an Arab king (Abdullah of Jordan) spoke more fluently and articulately in English than our own president at their joint press conference recently.

John Kerry is at least an educated man, well-read, who knows how to think and who knows that the world is a great deal more complex than Bush's comic-book world of American heroes and foreign evildoers. It's unfortunate that in our poorly educated country, Kerry's very intelligence and refusal to adopt simplistic slogans might doom his presidential election efforts.

But Thomas Jefferson said it well, as he did so often, when he observed that people who expect to be ignorant and free expect what never was and never will be.

People who think of themselves as conservatives will really display their stupidity, as I did in the last election, by voting for Bush. Bush is as far from being a conservative as you can get. Well, he fooled me once, but he won't fool me twice.

It is not at all conservative to balloon government spending, to vastly increase the power of government, to show contempt for the Constitution and the rule of law, or to tell people that foreign outsourcing of American jobs is good for them, that giant fiscal and trade deficits don't matter, and that people should not know what their government is doing. Bush is the most prone-to-classify, the most secretive president in the 20th century. His administration leans dangerously toward the authoritarian.

It's no wonder that the Justice Department has convicted a few Arab-Americans of supporting terrorism. What would you do if you found yourself arrested and a federal prosecutor whispers in your ear that either you can plea-bargain this or the president will designate you an enemy combatant and you'll be held incommunicado for the duration?

This election really is important, not only for domestic reasons, but because Bush's foreign policy has been a dangerous disaster. He's almost restarted the Cold War with Russia and the nuclear arms race. America is not only hated in the Middle East, but it has few friends anywhere in the world thanks to the arrogance and ineptness of the Bush administration. Don't forget, a scientific poll of Europeans found us, Israel, North Korea and Iran as the greatest threats to world peace.

I will swallow a lot of petty policy differences with Kerry to get a man in the White House with brains enough not to blow up the world and us with it. Go to Kerry's Web site (www.johnkerry.com) and read some of the magazine profiles on him. You'll find that

there is a great deal more to Kerry than the GOP attack dogs would have you believe.

Besides, it would be fun to have a president who plays hockey, windsurfs, ride motorcycles, plays the guitar, writes poetry and speaks French. It would be good to have a man in the White House who has killed people face to face. Killing people has a sobering effect on a man and dispels all illusions about war.

O Israel, Where Is Your God's Wrath? Israeli Tankmen Wreck Children's Zoo, Lie

by Chris McGreal, *The Guardian* (UK), 22 May 2004

Ask to be directed to the latest wave of Israeli destruction in Rafah's al-Brazil neighborhood and many fingers point towards the zoo.

Amid the rubble of dozens of homes that the Israeli army continued yesterday to deny demolishing, the wrecking of the tiny, but only, zoo in the Gaza Strip took on potent symbolism for many of the newly homeless.

The butchered ostrich, the petrified kangaroo cowering in a basement corner, the tortoises crushed under the tank treads - all were held up as evidence of the pitiless nature of the Israeli occupation.

"People are more important than animals," said the zoo's co-owner Mohammed Ahmed Juma, whose house was also demolished. "But the zoo is the only place in Rafah that children could escape the tense atmosphere. There were slides and games for children. We had a small swimming pool. I know it's hard to believe, looking at it now, but it was beautiful. Why would they destroy that? Because they want to destroy everything about us."

The systematic demolition of homes was revealed yesterday as Israeli forces partially pulled out of al-Brazil on the fifth day of an operation officially to hunt down Palestinian fighters and weapons-smuggling tunnels running under the border from Egypt.

More than 40 people have been killed in the assault, about a third of them civilians, besides targets of the operation such as the Hamas military commander in al-Brazil who was hit by a missile.

About 45 buildings were razed by the army in the area it pulled back from yesterday, some of them two or three stories high and housing several families.

The military says the houses were wrecked by Palestinian bombs planted to attack Israeli forces, or accidentally by tanks turning in the street. But Palestinians consistently gave similar accounts of armored bulldozers arriving at the door and giving the residents just minutes to get out, at best.

"The bulldozer started hitting the house," said Juma Abu Hammad sitting on the remains of his eight-bed-roomed home that housed two families with 15 children. "I grabbed the children. We did not take a single thing with us, even very important documents like birth certificates. I was just worried about the lives of the children."

Aziza Monsour, 54, pointed to the remains of a yellow taxi tossed by a bulldozer on the top of what remained of a neigh-

boring house. "That taxi was our only living," she said. "My husband drove it. It provided for everyone who lived in this house."

But there is no house any more.

"The blade of the bulldozer hit the room we were sitting in," said Mrs Monsour. "I waved my white headscarf at the soldiers as we pleaded with them to let us go. We were running between the tanks and the shooting and counting the children as we went to make sure they were all still with us. This is revenge, absolute revenge, for the seven Israeli soldiers killed in Rafah."



A Palestinian youth holds a badly injured racoon after pulling it from the rubble of the destroyed zoo in the Brazil section of the Rafah refugee camp, southern Gaza Strip, Friday, May 21, 2004. Many of the animals at the small zoo either escaped or died in the destruction, the owner said. Israeli troops pulled back from two neighborhoods in this sprawling Palestinian refugee camp Friday, leaving behind dozens of demolished and damaged homes, torn up roads and flattened cars. (AP Photo/Kevin Frayer)

None of the homes left destroyed yesterday is close to the "Philadelphi road" security strip under Israeli control along the Egyptian border, and is therefore un-likely to have been used to dig weapons-smuggling tunnels.

It is unclear whether other homes, next to the border, have also been demolished as Israeli forces retain control of that part of al-Brazil.

The army said that after five days of searching, "the beginnings of a tunnel" had been found, although not in the area of the mass demolitions. The military also denied it had deliberately destroyed homes.

"We did not destroy any houses in al-Brazil," said a spokeswoman who identified herself as Eli. "There was damage to buildings from fighting. The terrorists activate explosive devices under the road or next to the buildings. These bombs that destroy tanks can easily destroy a house."

But, aside from the accounts of Palestinians who fled their homes, the destruction is not consistent with individual explosions. Off al-Imam road, nearly 20 houses in a row were wrecked. There was no sign of a massive explosion, such as a crater in the road or damage to houses standing next to the wrecked buildings.

Opposite, bulldozers had torn up an olive grove belonging to a well-known family in the area, the Qishtas.

The demolitions in al-Brazil are the third time the Israeli army has misrepresented its actions in Rafah this week.

On Tuesday the military dismissed accusations that an Israeli sniper shot two children in the head, claiming they were blown up by a Palestinian bomb. But the bodies of both children were later

shown to each have only a single bullet wound to the head.

On Wednesday the army said armed men made up the majority of 10 people killed when an Israeli tank fired into a peaceful demonstration. In fact half of the victims were children and television footage showed no weapons among the demonstrators.

The army also initially denied that soldiers deliberately wrecked the zoo that provided Rafah's children with virtually their only contact with live animals, even ordinary ones such as squirrels, goats and tortoises.

Among the zoo's more popular exhibits were kangaroos, monkeys and ostriches, which children could sit on.

The destruction was comprehensive. The fountain and its tiles were a jumble of rubble in one corner. There was no sign of the swimming pool.

One of the ostriches lay half buried in the rubble. Guinea fowl and ducks were laid out in a row. Goats and a deer struggled with broken legs.

Some of the animals were still on the loose, if not buried under the debris. One of the two kangaroos was missing; the other was cowering in the basement. A snake and three monkeys were unaccounted for. Mr Juma accused Israeli soldiers of stealing valuable African parrots.

The army's explanation evolved through the day. At first it said it had not destroyed the zoo, then it said a tank may have accidentally reversed into it.

By the end of yesterday, the military said its soldiers had been forced to drive through the zoo because an alternative route was booby-trapped by Palestinian explosives.

Finally a spokesman said the soldiers had released the animals from their cages in a compassionate gesture to prevent them being harmed.

EDITORIAL

Will We Be The BioTerrorists?

When I arrived at the city council chambers at 4pm on April 20th, the place was packed and 30 or 40 people were hanging out in the corridor to hear testimony on Chuck Turner's bill to stop the BU bioterror lab. Boston University, the contractors, the mayor, and several of our state senators were deaf to our pleas to be left alone in safety.

This corporate intransigence cannot continue. Of course the immediate danger of neighborhood deaths is obvious---what insurance company would not exclude this source of liability? In fact, if we are "so safe", why not press for legislation for Boston or Massachusetts to guarantee life insurance coverage from this source for all residents of the city and suburbs?

But the greater danger is to all humankind. This lab will generate new strains of deadly germs which military people—who are contractors—will surely use offensively. Then we, all 6 billion of us, are endangered. More virulent than depleted uranium, release of such germs would impact our ecosphere in irrevocable ways, and perhaps speed us on our way to being a dead planet. Is BU's profit and Boston's surge in fame worth this? Or will we, the people, as with the Boston Tea Party, persist in blocking this perversity to our everlasting credit?

Women Rebel against E-voting National Board Unlikely to Reverse Stand

by Rachel Konrad, Associated Press, 10 June 2004

We think the league has in some way failed us. I can't remember an issue that has gotten members so upset." A battle over electronic voting is threatening the cohesion of the nonpartisan League of Women Voters, whose national leadership is refusing to endorse demands by hundreds of members for a paper trail to guard against fraud, hackers and malfunctions.

Some local chapters are so angry that they are flouting regulations and planning to speak against the national stance Friday and Saturday at the league's biennial convention in Washington. They're threatening to nominate new board members and a new candidate for president who would rescind the league's support for paperless voting systems.

"We think the league has in some way failed us," said Genevieve Katz, 74, a member of the Oakland, Calif., chapter who has collected more than 700 signatures from members upset with the league's national stance on paperless terminals. "I can't remember an issue that has gotten members so upset."

The 130,000-member nonpartisan organization, a champion of social reforms and voting rights since 1920, weighed in on the e-voting controversy last year. Leaders said paperless terminals, which about 30 percent of the electorate will use in the November election, were reliable.

They had "no reason to believe" computer terminals would "steal your vote," the league said officially.

That infuriated hundreds of members from chapters around the country -- particularly in Silicon Valley -- who argue that the systems jeopardize elections. Legitimate recounts are impossible without paper records of every vote cast, they say.

League bylaws stipulate that local chapters must act "in conformity" with the national organization's stances. Individuals who take contrary positions cannot identify themselves publicly as league members.

League president Kay Maxwell says paperless computers, which can be equipped with headsets and programmed in multiple languages, make voting easier for the blind and illiterate, and for people who don't speak English.

Furthermore, she said, demanding a paper trail so close to the presidential election would require hundreds of counties that have installed electronic systems to spend millions of dollars on printers, paper and technical upgrades at the last minute.

Maxwell said the league could reverse its stance, but that was unlikely -- particularly before November.

"We'll continue to look at this issue and others and take our stances based on where we think the facts lead us, not being concerned about anything else except being as honest as we can be," Maxwell said.

Founded by gutsy suffragettes, the league rarely shies from controversial subjects and has a history of vigorous internal debate.

Despite overwhelming support among members for the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the league took no national stance. Outraged

members demanded systemic changes, and by 1974 the league amended its bylaws to give the national organization more power to advocate social reform.

For current members, Maxwell said, voter registration problems and dismal turnout -- particularly among minorities -- should be bigger worries than potential hackers.

"From a voting rights perspective, we care a great deal about the openness of the system and access to the system, that everyone eligible be able to participate freely," Maxwell said. "But simply printing out a piece of paper will not, in our opinion, address all the security concerns. People are talking about a simple solution to a complicated issue."

Despite the league's official support for paperless voting systems, the technology has been questioned after a series of failures in elections across the nation.

Barbara Simons, 63, past president of the Association for Computing Machinery, is running for league president on a paper trail platform.

The league's endorsement is out of touch with younger, computer-savvy voters who "know computers are risky," she said. The average age of league members is above 50.

Marian Beddill, 68, recently resigned her position as second vice president for the chapter in Bellingham, Wash., because of the league's position on e-voting. "It was pretty severe, but I'm passionate about protecting our votes and our ability and competence in having our votes counted correctly," she said.

Beddill doesn't plan to stop paying dues -- yet -- but worries that others might drop out. "I have serious concerns that this issue could jeopardize the league in the future," she said.

Note: The Boston Chapter also supports a paper trail. —Ed.

Sunday Breakfast with Stan Radio Picks You Need To Hear

Our own Stan Robinson is on radio every Sunday from 6am to 10am at WZBC 90.3 FM---Boston College's No-U-Turn Radio. You will hear recorded interviews with stalwart dissenters like Noam Chomsky and Frances Moore Lappe, and with lesser known experts such as Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed who knows a great deal about the Middle East and US behavior, speaking in an upbeat British accent with media activist David Barsamian.

The program's originator, Martin Voelker, will yield full-time to Stan on July 1, when Martin and his family move to Boulder CO where Bettina will teach and Martin work with Barsamian. Martin also started actma.org, providing peace & justice radio listings daily, and Stan's taping instructions.

If your radio is nowhere near the Newton MA transmitter, tune in the show on your computer---<http://zbconline.com> streaming online. WZBC is mostly music students love, but Stan's tapes will keep you up-to-date and in-depth politically. To introduce various hours of the show, he may read to you a paragraph of hot commentary, such as Seymour Hirsch's investigations of war crimes at the US-run Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. In the quiet of next Sunday morning's coffee hour, try it!

CHAPTER AND ALLIANCE NEWS

Crisis of Legitimacy?

If Bush wins, might we have a general strike? History professor **Jim Green** of UMass/Boston was BCA's guest on April 14th, discussing "Striking Back at the Empire". The closest thing to a general strike in post-civil-war US was on 1 May 1886 when 500,000 workers in US cities refused to go to work and marched in "May Day" parades, in order to promote the 8-hour day. "Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest and eight hours for what you will."

Without strike funds, for 5 years they planned the strike. Eight-hour days were won with a number of employers, and May Day spread throughout the world to be almost universally institutionalized. But a pall was cast over the movement in the US by the violence around continuing gatherings on 3 May 1886, in Chicago at Haymarket Square. The US government established, in 1894, Labor Day in September, eschewing May Day. It was not until 1916 that the 8-hour day became federal law, but only for railroad workers. Only in 1938 did the federal government extend the 8-hour day to all workers, along with certain other working conditions, and now that has been eroded.

Jim doubted a "crisis of legitimacy" for the Bush administration. But in the ten ensuing weeks more chinks have appeared in the Bush armor. Corporations may eschew obligations and be bailed out by Congress or bankruptcy law, but most citizens would never challenge government "debt". Your editor thinks it may take another military draft to produce a "great refusal" like the anti-Vietnam-policy mobilization, proof of massive ballot tampering, or another Watergate revelation or Monica scandal to force a Bush resignation.

Federalism may be at issue. Strikes have been successful sporadically—local or industrial—but the US government appears too vast and distant from voters to change any time soon, either installing non-establishment officers or changing government structure. In 2000 Ralph Nader failed to build national populism, but today local or regional populism may have a chance.

Can We Link with Youth?

BCA's meeting on May 19th challenged us to try harder. Of the five young people asked to tell what they wanted—for a better system—only one was over 30. To illustrate one thing she didn't like about the present system, **Stacey Cordeiro** held aloft a necklace used at mardi-gras-type festivals to force women to bare their breasts. A talisman of a system she would like was a Resource Guide from JP Mutual Aid which she helped to produce—a handbook on housing-sharing, food processing, barter ads, trash composting, and co-ops generally. **Ernesto Arroyo** showed the current *Boston Herald*—negative, and system-concerned city councilor Felix Arroyo's (his father's) campaign pin—positive. **Thad Williamson's** "negative" was the *NY Times* and even the progressive mag *American Prospect*, while his "positive" was "Who Owns Capital?", an article in the *Boston Review* (Mar 1999) by Gar Alperovitz (online in archives at www.bostonreview.net). A doctoral student in government, Thad is principal author, with Alperovitz, of *Making A Place For Community*, Routledge, 2002.

The two young women who also came to the meeting yielded their turns to older participants, some not much older and some very much older. Two of the latter read passages to illustrate their

negative or positive systems, which proved a bit tedious. One particularly dramatic participant may have put some others off, as may have **Stan Robinson's** characterization of the present US establishment as "fascist" although his "positive" was a windmill, allowing us to "turn our backs on corporate control".

Expressing their disappointment with loss of focus on youth, the two young women were invited to take control of the meeting. They seemed to be uncomfortable with the process of the meeting, but didn't say or show what process they might prefer. Maybe something more informal. The result was that the four youngest people left the meeting early, with Ernesto calling for another try. This is greatly appreciated, because the systemically unhappy, if not oppressed, in this country need to unite—young and old—to prevail.

AfD Convention & Boston Social Forum

Register! Register! *Pre-register!* Save the dates: July 20-22 and July 23-25. Both in Boston at Simmons College and UMass/Boston respectively. Preregistering provides money to publicize and maximize attention. Please use the enclosed fliers to register, or call AfD at (916) 921-9000 or (916) 359-5687 (Vikki Savee); and BSF at (617) 338-9966 or www.bostonsocialforum.org.

For the Forum, **Ruth Weizenbaum** and **Dave Lewit** have been organizing panels, workshops, and other presentations in the areas of Democracy, Environment, Localization, and Strategic Nonviolence. There will be more than 30 such areas (including water anti-privatization—**Ali Hebshi** of CT Water Allies, with AfD), plus entertainment and various interactive events besides workshops and Q&A. To draw delegates from the Democratic National Convention and the general public, **Amy Hendrickson** is spearheading a special Peoples' Convention at Faneuil Hall on July 27, 10am–2pm.

The Alliance convention will be largely concerned with improving our organization for greater involvement, focus, impact, and fun. The tendency is toward regionalization and sharing. On July 21, 7:15pm, **Dave Lewit** will moderate a panel on "Contesting a Stolen Election: Before & After Bush=Kerry 2004", with software engineer **Alice Copeland Brown**, voting-rights organizer **Stuart Comstock-Gay**, AfD founder-writer **Ronnie Dugger**, lawyer **Ben Scotch**, and exit-polling activist **Jonathan Simon**. Satirical singer **Tom Nielsen** will entertain and inspire. Free and open to the public.

"October Surprise" Poll

The April *Dispatch* asked for your "October Surprise" nominations—some contrived news Bush&Co will spring to tilt voters to keep him in office. None of our 300+ readers responded. Oh, well! Now comes **Dennis Burke**, tour manager for **Doris "Granny D" Haddock**, now 94½ and going like a house afire. (She will open the AfD convention in Boston on July 20th.) Dennis has set up an October Surprise web site, which you can click on and "vote" when you go to www.grannyd.com. Some Day#2 results: 83% of 149 respondents think that Bush will dramatically lower gasoline prices shortly before the election; 88% believe his agents will tilt voting machine results in his favor.



LETTERS

Corporate vs. Independent Bookstores

Just out!—Regime Change Begins At Home, by **Charles Derber**, AfD stalwart, professor of sociology at Boston College. Reviews are great, and people are scrambling. You can get the book at half price (\$10+shipping) if you order from www.Amazon.com no later than June 20. "Jeff" and some other folks complained that Amazon is a megacorporation and hurts small, local bookstores. Here is Charlie's response:

...I think each of you and your organizations should decide what is the best way for you to publicize my book and the event. The issues Jeff raises are very important in a world of horrifically corporatized publishing and distribution.

We are building the tour on the foundation of your own efforts and organizations—and with the maximum possible participation of independent book stores. Virtually all my bookstore appearances are in indys rather than the chains. The preservation of indie bookstores seems incredibly important to me—and Jeff is right that they are being hurt by Amazon and, of course, even more by the chains like Barnes and Noble.

Yet as Nancy and others pointed out, independent publishers are also extremely important to preserve along with independent bookstores—and Amazon keeps many of them alive. Berrett Koehler is a small independent anti-corporate publisher that works very closely with independent book stores. Many independent book publishers can't survive without Amazon—that offers their books a distributional outlet and often surprising visibility that they need... The Amazon sale for my book, in two days, has already had a dramatic impact on its visibility and circulation...

We are anti-corporate in message and in our medium – since I am publishing with an independent publisher whose mission is anti-corporate and we are overwhelmingly distributing through independent bookstores. I am hoping that this core anti-corporate foundation will promote our values, reinforce our message and help build a non-corporate book world and larger non-corporate society... #

Influence Local Groups, Measure, Publish

I like your no-nonsense approach to shaping the future of AfD, and I think it applies to many other groups as well. I especially like your introducing the idea of influencing local groups and measuring their effect, and on choosing a complementary role rather than duplicating.

I would suggest that measuring the effect of various efforts will tell us not only where we've been successful, but also where the problem has grown rather than diminished, to point us to where the work needs to be done. And this information needs to be coupled with an assessment of the consequence of success or failure on these issues, to help us focus our limited time on issues where the consequences are most far-reaching.

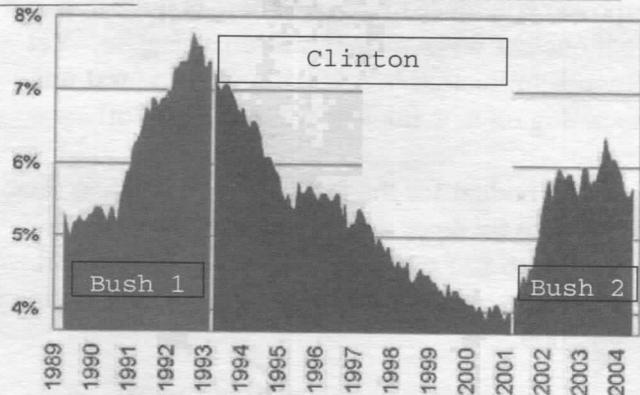
And these results should be published, in letters to the editor, articles, etc., to give people both within and outside the group a sense of empowerment.

Arden Buck, Nederland, CO

Mountain Forum for Peace; Global Response

(in response to Dave Lewit's column in *Alliance Alerts*, Spring 2004, p.5)

Unemployment & Presidents



ACTION ALERTS

Mon-Thu, 5-9pm daily, Cambridge. Phoning for Boston Social Forum. Volunteer now! Help meet budget quota! Contact Susie Husted at 617-338-9966, or simply show up after 5pm at 12 Elliot Street, Harvard Square.

Fri-Sun, 25-27 June, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY. Understanding Money, Building Local Economies, Renewing Community, an E. F. Schumacher Society Conference. Register NOW at www.localcurrency.org or 413-529-1737. Ride available: jake.sterling@comcast.net.

Sat, 26 June, 1-4pm, Boston Common, bandstand. "Bring the Troops Home Now!" Rally and march around Boston. Speakers, performers and a memorial for all those killed in this catastrophic war. Info: ujpcoalition@yahoo.com or 617-625-0211.

JOIN THE BCA

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

Please help us as we fight to make a better future for ourselves and our children -- Join the Boston/Cambridge Alliance for Democracy. (Cut out this form and send it to:

Dave Lewit, 271 Dartmouth St. #2h, Boston, MA 02116.)

BOSTON-CAMBRIDGE ALLIANCE for DEMOCRACY PLEDGE

___ \$26/Year - "Count me in!"

___ \$52/Year - "Contributor" (We need to average this amount.)

___ \$104/Year - "Sustainer" (Helping us thrive.)

___ \$208/Year - "Community Steward"

___ \$500/Year - "Realize the vision!"

___ What's fair for YOU? _ \$ _____

Name : _____ Date: _____

Street, No./Box/Apt: _____

Town and Zip: _____

Phone: Day _____ Night: _____

E-mail: _____

COLOPHON

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