

BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the **Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy** February 2006

Q: *Who's the next leader of the opposition who can become President?*

A: *The New York Times won't interview him. He won't get on prime-time television if he looks like a winner... No information is getting through that is useful to the public. No White Knight is going to be acknowledged in the [corporate] press or seen on television.*

—Gore Vidal

CHAPTER NEWS (Continued on Page 8)

Now Rescheduled----

** Democratizing Boston's Budget **

The Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy's next meeting will be on **Wednesday, February 15 at 7:30 p.m.** at **Cambridge Friends Meeting**, 5 Longfellow Park (9-minute walk from Harvard Square west on Brattle St.), Cambridge.

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Boston City Councillor **Chuck Turner** explains how Boston's public money is controlled by corporations and Mayor Menino, and what we folks have been able to do about city spending.

Chuck will be with us in person, after we see the 45-minute video of his presentation to a panel of leading activists and municipal officials on "participatory budgeting", in Burlington VT last September.

Chuck will lead discussion of how the people can take control of city development and finances. Come at 7:30 for the video of his VT presentation, and join Chuck at 8:30 for discussion.

You may read an overview of Chuck's talk on Page 3 of January 2006 Dispatch. Find it at www.NewEnglandAlliance.org.

— Refreshments —

Unrecognized Villages Israel Treats Palestinians as Outcaste

Virginia Pratt, Boston, Alliance for Democracy, 20 Jan 2006

While in Israel/Palestine (12/05-1/06) with the Faculty for Israeli Palestinian Peace (FFIPP) delegation I saw the effects of hypocritical policies for Israelis and Palestinians occupying the same land. Early in the trip, in one of our initial mini-conferences, a Palestinian began his talk with a story about unrecognized villages. He said,

A man wandered into an unrecognized village and didn't know where he was. He walked over to the cemetery and noticed that the age of people in the cemetery was only a few years and that one grave stone said zero years. The man was very puzzled. So he went to talk to people in the village. He stopped a villager and said, "I see that there are many people (Continued on Page 6 >>)



George Washington, with George Will, Midge Decter, and David Brooks dragging

Conservatives Confer at Princeton Since Reagan: Running Out of Ideas?

by Allison Berliner, Princeton Alumni Weekly, 25 Jan 2006

Conservative thinkers gathered at Princeton [University] in December [1-3] to analyze the rise of conservatives in America in the past 40 years and the identity crisis they said the movement now faces.

The three-day conference at the Woodrow Wilson School [of Public and International Affairs], sponsored by [Princeton's] James Madison Program and the Center for the Study of Democratic Politics, featured a number of well-known scholars, political figures, and journalists, including former *National Review* publisher William Rusher, former U.S. education secretary William Bennett, commentator and think-tank leader Paul Weyrich, and columnist George Will.

Journalist Midge Decter used the phrase "happy crisis" to describe the partnership between conservatives and Republicans that, while winning control of the White House and Congress, has led to a recent stagnation in philosophies of governing.

Keynote speaker David Brooks, a *New York Times* columnist, called for new conservative thinking to revitalize a movement that he said has become "intellectually moribund" after years of success at the polls. "Conservatism has had this glorious rise, and is now in power," Brooks said. "It's in the doldrums now, but liberalism is in even worse shape."

The reinvigoration of conservative groups reached a high point in the 1980s as Reagan Democrats converted to conservatism, speakers said. New York (Continued on Page 6 >>)

Wealth Tax—It's Far Fairer Offsets Fed Bites, Empowers Poorer States

by Gar Alperovitz, *CommonDreams.org*, 14 Jan 2006

Many advanced industrial countries tax not only income but wealth—including especially stocks and bonds, the most highly concentrated form of wealth. The United States does not. Is there any way to reverse this situation?

The ownership of financial and business wealth is almost Medieval in nature, so highly concentrated is the picture at the very top: A mere 1% owns just a bit under half of all such wealth in the United States!

Many observers have suggested this situation must ultimately be addressed. Yale Professors Bruce Ackerman and Anne Alstott, for instance, have proposed a 2% tax on wealth, Colgate University professor Thomas Michl has proposed a general net-worth tax, and Hofstra Law professor Leon Friedman has urged 1% tax on wealth owned by the top 1%.

Kevin Phillips and Jeff Gates have also urged that wealth taxation must now be put on the American agenda. Robert Kuttner adds that a wealth tax is "by definition, the most progressive way to raise revenue, since it hits only the very pinnacle of the income distribution." Even Donald Trump a few years ago proposed a one time net-worth tax of 14.25% on Americans with more than \$10 million in assets.

Economist Edward Wolff points out that European practice offers a range of practical options—with most imposing a tax between 1 and 2.5 percent and all exempting a reasonable amount of wealth for those not among the top groups. One recent estimate is that if the upper range of such taxes were implemented in the United States, they might yield up to \$450 billion a year.

The real question is how to put the issue on the political map, and then move it forward, step by step over time. The obvious way to do so is to begin at the state level, and lay groundwork, state by state, in a manner that both helps solve state fiscal problems and simultaneously establishes precedents for future national action.

Currently the only state with a wealth tax (which it calls an "intangibles tax") is Florida, along with certain counties in Pennsylvania and Kansas. However, many states have used such taxes in the past—including Connecticut, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, and West Virginia.

A sense of what might be possible is suggested by research recently undertaken in Washington state by the Economic Opportunity Institute. This estimated that a 0.5% tax on wealth in that state (after exempting the first \$1 million) would yield \$477 million in annual revenue. If the exemption were lowered to \$30,000, revenues would rise to an estimated \$1.2 billion.

There are reasons to believe that taxes which sharply delineate between the vast majority and privileged elites at the very top are becoming increasingly viable politically—especially given the fiscal

problems facing many states. In November 2004, for instance, California voters overwhelmingly approved tax increases for people making more than \$1 million, and earmarked the proceeds for mental health programs.

New Jersey has also enacted legislation taxing those making more than \$500,000—and allocated the revenues to offset property taxes that fall disproportionately on the middle class and the poor. In Connecticut, a recent poll found 77 percent of voters, including 63 percent of Republicans, in favor of a tax on those making more than \$1 million.

Even more interesting is a 2006 proposed initiative in California which would tax the top 1 percent (individuals making more than \$400,000 and couples making more than \$800,000) and would allocate the revenues to pay for quality preschool for all four-year-olds.

State wealth taxes which also target those at the very top (and could benefit up to 97-99 percent of the population!) simply take this populist trajectory to the next logical stage. They could be put forward as tax proposals on their own, or in a manner which linked the revenue produced to other important programs.

We rarely pause to reflect on the fact that for the most part the only wealth we tax directly in America is real property—in the main home ownership, the wealth holding that is common to the vast majority. Taxation of real estate, moreover, is based upon the value of the asset in general—not the value of an individual's equity: An owner of a \$200,000 home will be taxed on the full value of the asset, even if her actual ownership position (with a mortgage debt of, say, \$190,000) is only one-twentieth this amount. Meanwhile we do not tax stocks and bonds directly.

One way to think about wealth taxes is that they are simply a property tax applied to all forms of property—including the kind of property which is heavily concentrated among the elites. Accordingly, a particularly interesting strategy might be to use the proceeds of state wealth taxes to directly help offset property taxes on low and moderate income families.

Although wealth taxes are constitutional in virtually all states and can be put on the agenda immediately, some conservatives have suggested that a federal wealth tax might be unconstitutional. It is worth noting, accordingly, that the legal issues involved have been effectively answered in major studies by Yale's Bruce Ackerman and others.

Even if a conservative Supreme Court were ultimately to rule against such a tax, however, as in the case of the current income tax (which was once deemed unconstitutional), the fight for change could help reinvigorate progressive politics—starting at the grass-roots level and building forward, state by state, to establish foundations for ultimate longer term system-wide change.

Gar Alperovitz, Lionel R. Bauman Professor of Political Economy at the University of Maryland, is author most recently of America Beyond Capitalism: Reclaiming Our Wealth, Our Liberty and Our Democracy.

NH Protest Targets Justice Souter Nonviolent Strategy Would Take His House

by Kathy McCormack, Associated Press, 22 January 2006

Angered by a Supreme Court ruling that gave local governments more power to seize people's homes for economic development, a group of activists is trying to get one of the court's justices evicted from his own home. The group, led by a California man, wants Justice David Souter's home seized to build an inn called the "Lost Liberty Hotel."

They submitted enough petition signatures—only 25 were needed—to bring the matter before voters in March. This weekend, they're descending on Souter's hometown, the central New Hampshire town of Weare, population 8,500, to rally for support.

"This is in the tradition of the Boston Tea Party and the Pine Tree Riot," Organizer Logan Darrow Clements said, referring to the riot that took place during the winter of 1771-1772, when colonists in Weare beat up officials appointed by King George III who fined them for logging white pines without approval.

"All we're trying to do is put an end to eminent domain abuse," Clements said, by having those who advocate or facilitate it "live under it, so they understand why it needs to end."

Bill Quigley, Weare deputy police chief, said if protesters show up, they're going to be told to stay across the street from a dirt road that leads to Souter's brown farmhouse, which is more than 200 years old. It isn't known whether Souter will be home.

"They're obviously not going to be allowed on Justice Souter's property," he said. "There's no reason for anybody to go down that road unless they live on that road, and we know the residents that live there. The last time (Clements) showed up, they had a total of about three or four people who showed up to listen to him." Clements, of Los Angeles, said he's never tried to contact Souter, who voted for the decision.

"The justice doesn't have any comment about it," Kathy Arberg, a Supreme Court spokeswoman, said about the protesters' cause.

The petition asks whether the town should take Souter's land for development as an inn; whether to set up a trust fund to accept donations for legal expenses; and whether to set up a second trust fund to accept donations to compensate Souter for taking his land. The matter goes to voters on March 14.

About 25 volunteers gathered at Weare Town Hall on Saturday before setting out in teams to go door-to-door. Organizer Logan Darrow Clements gathered nine signatures in less than an hour, with only one resident declining to sign. He also distributed copies of the Supreme Court's decision, *Kelo vs. City of New London*, to residents.

The court said New London, Conn., could seize homeowners' property to develop a hotel, convention center, office space and condominiums next to Pfizer Inc.'s new research headquarters.

The city argued that tax revenues and new jobs from the development would benefit the public. The Pfizer complex was built, but seven homeowners challenged the rest of the development in court. The Supreme Court's ruling against them prompted many

states, including New Hampshire, to examine their eminent domain laws.

Arming Iraqis, Chechens with Nukes US, Russ Leave Major Weapons Unguarded

by Noam Chomsky, *Alternet*, 14 January 2006 (excerpt)

Geov Parrish: *In the War on Terror, however, how does one define victory against a tactic? You can't ever get there.*

Noam Chomsky: ...There is no War on Terror. It's a minor consideration. Invading Iraq and taking control of the world's energy resources was way more important than the threat of terror. And the same with other things. Take, say, nuclear terror. The American intelligence systems estimate that the likelihood of a "dirty bomb," a dirty nuclear bomb attack in the United States in the next ten years, is about 50 percent. Well, that's pretty high. Are they doing anything about it? Yeah. They're increasing the threat, by increasing nuclear proliferation, by compelling potential adversaries to take very dangerous measures to try to counter rising American threats.

This is even sometimes discussed. You can find it in the strategic analysis literature. Take, say, the invasion of Iraq again. We're told that they didn't find weapons of mass destruction. Well, that's not exactly correct. They did find weapons of mass destruction, namely, the ones that had been sent to Saddam by the United States, Britain, and others through the 1980s. A lot of them were still there. They were under control of U.N. inspectors and were being dismantled. But many were still there.

When the U.S. invaded, the inspectors were kicked out, and Rumsfeld and Cheney didn't tell their troops to guard the sites. So the sites were left unguarded, and they were systematically looted. The U.N. inspectors did continue their work by satellite and they identified over 100 sites that were systematically looted, like, not somebody going in and stealing something, but carefully, systematically looted.

GP: *By people who knew what they were doing.*

NC: Yeah, people who knew what they were doing. It meant that they were taking the high-precision equipment that you can use for nuclear weapons and missiles, dangerous biotoxins, all sorts of stuff. Nobody knows where it went, but, you know, you hate to think about it. Well, that's increasing the threat of terror, substantially. Russia has sharply increased its offensive military capacity in reaction to Bush's programs, which is dangerous enough, but also to try to counter overwhelming U.S. dominance in offensive capacity. They are compelled to ship nuclear missiles all over their vast territory. And mostly unguarded. And the CIA is perfectly well aware that Chechen rebels have been casing Russian railway installations, probably with a plan to try to steal nuclear missiles. Well, yeah, that could be an apocalypse. But they're increasing that threat. Because they don't care that much. #

Chavez Sees "Socialism or Death" World Social Forum in Caracas Draws 80,000

by Marc Becker, Truman State U (MO), 2 Feb 2006

As has happened every year for the last six years, at the end of January people from around the world gather in the World Social Forum (WSF) under the slogan "Another World is Possible." The goal of the forum is to provide a space for social movements and civil society to reflect and strategize on ways to confront neoliberalism and militarism.

After meeting four of the last five years in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the forum moved this year to a new "polycentric" model of meetings in Mali, Venezuela, and Pakistan. The meetings originally were planned to be held simultaneously, but in the end the Mali and Venezuela meetings were held sequentially with the Pakistan meeting postponed until March.

The Venezuela forum (also known as the second Americas Social Forum, after a similar hemispheric meeting in Quito, Ecuador two years previous) began on January 24 with a massive march through the streets of the capital city of Caracas. Over the next five days, delegates gathered in about 2000 workshops, panels, and sessions on a wide variety of issues.

US the Fourth Largest Delegation

About 80,000 people representing 2,500 organizations from around the world attended the forum. The largest delegation came from Brazil where the forum started, with the next largest group from the host country of Venezuela, and then the neighboring country of Colombia, and the United States providing the fourth largest with about 2,000 delegates. United States participation in the forum has been small but growing, and this was the first year that the U.S. had a significant presence.

The Caracas forum was much more monolingual than the previous forums. In Porto Alegre, the official languages were the four main colonial languages in the Americas (Portuguese, Spanish, English and French), and anyone who was merely bi-lingual was at a distinct disadvantage. In Caracas, the lingua franca was Spanish, with most people from Venezuela and neighboring Andean countries speaking only that language and expecting conversations to be in Spanish. Furthermore, a growing United States presence also introduced a sizeable mono-lingual English audience who increasingly felt alienated in the Spanish environment.

Reflecting these language politics, IPS's forum newspaper *Terraviva* that previously had been published in several languages appeared exclusively in Spanish in Caracas. For the first time, the youth camp had its own newspaper called *El Querrequerre* (named after a local bird that dies if held in captivity) that published almost entirely bilingually in Spanish and English.

Setting the tone for the forum and reflecting its central issues, the leading slogan was "No to war, No to imperialism, Another world is possible, Another America is possible." The dominant discourse at the forum, however, has radicalized. Rather than talking about war and globalization, the language increasingly shifted to one of anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism. Reflecting this, volunteers greeting delegates at the airport sported shirts with the slogan "Another world is possible, if it is socialist." Another common slogan proclaimed "Another world is necessary, and with you it is possible."

Holding the forum in Venezuela was controversial, and reflects long debates within the forum over the relationship between civil society and party politics. On one hand, the Chavez government is engaging in a process of social change in line with the goals of the WSF. As such, Caracas was a logical venue for a debate on how to construct a better world. On the other hand, from the beginning the WSF was designed to be an expression of civil society that explicitly rejected the participation of political parties or armed groups and statist solutions. Debates over the role of state structures in fostering social justice have long run through the political left.

Chavez "Just One More Person" at Forum

For Venezuela, having the forum in their country was an excellent opportunity both to exchange experiences with others as well as to build international understanding and solidarity for the Bolivarian Revolution. Venezuela does not historically have a strong civil society, but under Chavez it appears to have grown significantly. A fourth of the 2000 panels in Caracas were organized by Venezuelan organizations.

Some people feared that in Venezuela the WSF would turn into a Chavez forum. In reality, Chavez was present everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Few Chavista banners or chants made their way into the opening march. Although several panels focused on building solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution, overall the discussions retained their broad ideological and thematic diversity with Chavez being a minor and relatively insignificant footnote.

The one exception, however, was Chavez's personal presence at the forum. As in 2005 at Porto Alegre, Chavez headlined the largest event, although this time as leader of the host government WSF regulations permitted and sanctioned his presence. His speech reflected the consolidation and radicalization of the Bolivarian Revolution. Continuing his religious language, Chavez declared that "we are realizing the utopia dream that Christ did not see during his life." He proclaimed that "this century we will bury United States imperialism." Capitalism is destroying the planet, which leaves only two alternatives: socialism or death.

Chavez argued that the forum should take advantage of its momentum to build a political struggle, and that it is important to support governments like that of recently elected Evo Morales in Bolivia. He noted that the concrete advances in Venezuela would not have been possible without taking political power and the government. Some participants resented Chavez injecting himself into one of the key debates in the forum. Chavez, however, argued that even if he were not president he would still be present advancing these ideas. "I am just one more person like the rest of you in forum," he stated.

Lining the streets around meeting spaces vendors sold all sorts of Chavez memorabilia—hats, t-shirts, watches, and even dolls. Was his omnipresent image on the edges of the forum merely a reflection of opportunistic informal economic actors motivated by profit, or a manifestation of gung-ho supporters determined to use the forum to advance their political agenda? In either case, by their purchases many participants demonstrated their interest in, and support for, the Chavez agenda.

More significant, however, was the logistical and institutional support that the Chavez government provided to the forum. A week before the forum was to open, a bridge on the freeway between the airport and

Caracas showed signs that it was on the verge of collapse and had to be closed. The government diverted traffic onto an old winding road through the mountains and poor neighborhoods separating the airport from Caracas, turning a safe and quick fifteen minute trip into a potentially dangerous trek of at least two hours and often much longer.

In response, the state oil company PdVSA provided free and safe shuttle service between the airport and the city. Once in the city, the government provided free transportation on the metro system, tents for the meetings, and even free bottled water. The government also waived visa requirements and airport taxes, facilitating the participation of as many people as possible. Chavez seemed to recognize this balancing act. "We have helped with forum and are willing to do so in future," he stated, "but its work is completely autonomous."

Although an expression of civil society, the forum could not succeed without external support. While the forum also received official support in Porto Alegre, due to the polarizing nature of the Chavez government this collaboration became even more overtly apparent and controversial in Caracas. Some argued that the forum should return to its original vision of providing non-governmental alternatives, while others maintained that governments are not inherently good nor evil but value neutral and that Chavez demonstrates how state structures can be used to advance goals of social justice. Who should be responsible for organizing and administering an enormous event continues to be a pressing issue.

Without governmental support, the forum would need to be scaled down significantly. And perhaps this would not be a bad idea. The forum has grown so large that it has become a logistical nightmare—with delegates often arriving late and missing speakers and discussions. Spread across a congested and polluted city, it was difficult to travel from one event to another. With an additional 80,000 people dumped on the metro system, all hours seemed to be peak hours with riders often having to wait for several trains before finally squeezing onto one. The organization of the forum was often lose and chaotic, with events starting late or being canceled. As with the bridge into the city, the forum seemed to be on the verge of collapse under its own weight. Larger is not necessarily better, and cannot be used as a measure of success.

Others, however, found encouragement in the chaos as people joined together in good spirits to overcome adversities. It reflects a certain amount of flexibility, both on the part of the government and the forum, to adapt to changing circumstances. It is this creativity that brings a good deal of strength and power to the WSF.

People Before Capital

After having a good five-year run that significantly advanced the agendas of social movements around the world, perhaps the WSF has served its purpose. During its tenure, South America has taken a significant swing to the left. Social movements have become empowered and revitalized with new ideas. Even in the United States, the fundamentally subversive notion of organizing a social forum has taken hold and led activists to rethink fundamentally how to organize civil society. As Hugo Chavez noted, the goals of social justice expressed at the WSF are well on their way to being the dominant discourse in the world, and those who advocate putting capital before people will soon be seen as the dissidents.

While the conditionality programs of international financial institutions led to the birth of the WSF, the recent announcements that Brazil and Argentina will pay off their International Monetary Fund (IMF) burdens may

call for a reorientation of social movement strategies. What role will the forum play in that process? The forum has become more of an event where organizations quickly organize events but then fail to realize its potential to network and connect with other movements and struggles until the next WSF the following January. Perhaps at this point the World Social Forum has served its original purpose of altering the discourse around economic and social policies, but it has been a historic experience with a lasting impact on social movements around the world.

Marc Becker teaches Latin American History at Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri. He has attended the last four World Social Forums, including this year's forum in Caracas. More information and pictures are available at <http://www.yachana.org/reports/wsf6/>. Contact Marc at marc@yachana.org

Where to contact the Boston Delegation?

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UNRECOGNIZED VILLAGES (Continued from Page 1)

of many ages in this village, but in the cemetery it looks as though everyone who died was just a child." The villager responded, "That is because the grave stones indicate only the years of happiness."

I later realized the significance of his story.

Our delegation visited an unrecognized village, Ain Hud, in the Carmel Mountains near the artist colony, Ain Hud. We also visited unrecognized villages in the Bedouin region of the Negev Desert. While in Ain Hud, we met with Mohammed, the owner of a beautiful family restaurant with a panoramic view of the Carmel Mountains. After preparing a wonderful meal for us, he told us the story of his unrecognized village and his 25 year struggle to gain recognition. Mohammed explained that his family and fellow villagers were forced from their land now occupied by the nearby artist colony. For 25 years he and others in the relocated village have argued and pleaded with officials for recognition.

Recognition would give them a sense of permanence as well as entitlement to public services. Up until quite recently they had no paved road. The road would commonly wash out during rainy periods. Without recognition, they have no access to public services like water, sewage systems, electricity, and public education. They have had to depend on their own innovation and extra effort to haul materials back and forth, use generators for electricity, and put solar panels on their roofs. At one point in his talk, Mohammed said something to the effect of, "If you know where these regulations are I wish you would tell me because in 25 years I have not found them. Maybe they are buried under the deep blue sea." He then invited us to watch a video documenting their efforts including their organizing with others in unrecognized villages.

According to Maureen Meehan, Palestinians uprooted from their homes in 1948 are considered to have rebuilt their homes "illegally" and consequently, their villages and towns are "unrecognized." Their towns are excluded from official maps. Palestinians point out the inconsistency of Israeli policy, *The Law of Return*, which encourages Jewish people from all over the world to settle in Israel and grants them citizenship, while denying Palestinians *The Right of Return* to their own homes. Palestinians are also victimized by the *Absent/Present Law*. When Palestinians were expelled from their villages in the 1950s they were also prohibited from returning to their homes. Once they had been absent more than a month they lost the rights to their property. This is how unrecognized villages were created.



In the Bedouin area we were shocked by the site of shacks in desert land. The shacks were built with plastic and corrugated metal. There was no evidence of electricity or plumbing. When we

met with a mayor of a Bedouin community, in an unrecognized village, he told us that many of them had been forced to build on sites near a toxic waste dump. He also said that their children do not receive the early education that Israeli children get in the same area. According to the publication on Unrecognized Villages in the Negev, approximately 76,000 people in Negev live in unrecognized villages without the benefits of electricity, water supply, sewage system, access to education and health care. The Bedouin people also suffer from high rates of unemployment, low literacy and high infant mortality. There is only one post office and high school in the area. Worse, a "governmental plan to deal with the Bedouin sector" demolished 100 houses and 22,000 dunams (similar to acres) were sprayed. Thus, land could not be used for agricultural purposes. With a proposed plan to relocate the Bedouins, their semi-nomadic way of life is threatened.

While their lives are harsh, their hospitality to our delegation was memorable. We were invited into a large room with a rug on the floor and pillows along the wall. While we relaxed, the wind was howling outside. We were served tea as the mayor talked about their lives, their challenges and their hopes. Later, that day, we visited a women's cooperative where rugs were made. There we were served an exotic lunch and shown how they make the rugs. One of the village women, explained through an interpreter, how important it has been for her and her family to have this source of income and pride.

CONSERVATIVES (Continued from Page 1)

politician and author George Marlin said that the mainstream of the Republican Party capitalized on public dissatisfaction with what was perceived as collapse of public decency in the 1960s and 1970s. After the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision, the GOP further cemented itself to conservative social values in creating an identity based on anti-abortion and pro-morality policies, author Jeffrey Bell said.

But many of today's conservatives are dissatisfied with the Bush administration's failure to press for more limited government, panelists said. And many conservatives are struggling to define a new ideological mission beyond the issues—taxes, crime, and perceived liberal cultural standards—that propelled the movement into power.

Marlin highlighted what he termed leftward leanings of Republican candidates in New York, saying that the GOP risks becoming seen as "Democrat-lites" and warning of a "Democratic tsunami" in upcoming elections.

Journalist Lou Cannon and other panelists said conservatives may need to extricate themselves from the Republican Party because of disillusionment with the war in Iraq, public demand for growth in government services, and increasing class inequality.

Princeton professor Larry Bartels of the Center for the Study of Democratic Politics said he didn't find much consensus at the conference—but rather a range of views about what conserva-

tism is, how it is faring, and where it might lead. "I was struck by how disaffected some of the stronger conservatives are from the Bush administration and the Republican congress, particularly on the issue of government spending," Bartels said.

At this conference, "corporatism" seemed to be ignored, and only "liberalism" (social democracy) seemed to be viewed as conservatism's contender, and for some "neoconservatism". Is there a blindness among "conservatives" to the new radicalisms—e.g., environmentalism, localism, global social solidarity, and abroad Chinese Capitalism, Bolivarianism, Islamism? —Ed.

Who's Killing Iraq's Intellectuals? 1000 Arts, Sciences, Law Professors Shot

by David Hoskins, *Workers World*, 3 Dec 2005

Iraqis opposed to the U.S. occupation believe there is a systematic campaign of targeted assassinations aimed at Iraqi intellectuals and that a well-organized enemy intent on keeping Iraq weak and susceptible to foreign occupation is carrying out the killings.

The Monitoring Net for Human Rights in Iraq recently reported Iraqi police figures demonstrating that well over 1,000 Iraqi academics and scientists have been shot to death since the beginning of the U.S.-led invasion. The U.S. State Department has confirmed that hundreds of university professors have been killed.

The shooting of peaceful academics clearly differentiates these killings from those attributable to the Iraqi resistance's effort to defend its homeland. The popular insurgency has primarily targeted U.S. and British forces along with Iraqi military and police personnel who cooperate with the occupation.

Whoever is responsible for the assassination of academics must also have access to sophisticated intelligence techniques that allow for the widespread targeting of a particular grouping of civilians.

The attacks on Iraqi intellectuals first began when U.S. forces purged at least 15,500 researchers, scientists, teachers and professors for alleged ties to the Baath Party. The dismissal, and subsequent emigration, of so many leading professionals contributed to a destabilized Iraq and provided the occupiers with an excuse for staying in the country.

An article in the [London] *Times Higher Education Supplement* (15 Sept 2004) points out that "there is a widespread feeling among the Iraqi academics that they are witnessing a deliberate attempt to destroy intellectual life in Iraq."

The cold-blooded nature of the assassinations leaves many wondering exactly who is responsible for this ongoing campaign. The Iraqi resistance denies it is responsible, and those interested in liberating Iraq from the occupation have no motive to carry out such wide-scale killings.

Osama Abed Al-Majeed, the president of the Department for Research and Development at the Iraqi Ministry for Higher Education, has accused the Israeli secret service, Mossad, of

perpetuating the violence against Iraqi scientists. A June 2005 report by the Palestine Information Center claims that Mossad, in cooperation with U.S. military forces, was responsible for the assassination of 530 Iraqi scientists and professors in the seven months prior to the report's publication.

Mossad unquestionably has the motive and means to assassinate leading Iraqi intellectuals. The Israeli intelligence agency contains a Special Operations Division called Metsada which is tasked with conducting assassinations, sabotage and paramilitary projects. Israel has a long history of interference in Iraq, going back to the 1981 bombing of a nuclear energy plant that stood 15 miles outside Baghdad that just before that attack had voluntarily undergone inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Regardless of who is responsible for the killing of Iraqi scientists and academics, it is clear that the U.S. and Britain, as the leading occupying powers, have the responsibility for the precarious situation in which these intellectuals are forced to live.

Dr. Saad Jawad is a university professor who was known to speak out against certain Baathist policies. But he recently said, "To tell the truth, in the time of Saddam Hussein, we used to speak to our students freely. But now, a lot of people are not willing to say these kinds of things because of fear."

In an interview reported in Counterpunch (3 Jan 06), Dr. Jawad said "Iraqi intellectuals and scientists are targeted by many elements. When we analyze who is targeted and by what methods it is clear that] the Israelis and the Americans are after one part of them. Iran and the sectarian parties are after some others. The Baathists liquidated some of their old comrades when they noticed that they were cooperating with the Americans, and the local mafias kidnapped and assassinated others after making them pay ransoms. The problem of security, or the lack of it, is the main reason why intellectuals have become such easy targets for any act. Yet, precisely because of the chaos, the systematized assassinations of Iraqi intellectuals have gone largely unnoticed in the outside world. Iraq is being drained of its most able thinkers, thus an important component to any true Iraqi independence is being eliminated."

Stop the Presses!

WASHINGTON (AP) - A federal judge on Friday set former White House aide I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby's trial date for January 2007, two months after the midterm congressional elections.

Libby, Vice President Cheney's former chief of staff, faces perjury and obstruction of justice charges. He will go on trial Jan. 8, said U.S. District Judge Reggie B. Walton. Walton said he had hoped to start the trial in September but one of Libby's lawyers had a scheduling conflict that made an earlier date impossible... —Tony Locy

Guess what? Judge Walton was appointed to his federal benches by Ronald Reagan, George H W Bush, and George W Bush. —Ed.

CHAPTER NEWS

Bioterror Lab Challenge

In a setback to Boston residents and anti-war activists, Boston University's proposed Level Four Biosafety Lab has cleared the last hurdle and will begin construction later this month in Boston's South End. Like several existing such labs in the US, it will experiment with the most dangerous known germs such as ebola, and antidotes. Residents worry about leakage and deadly epidemics, while antiwar activists are also concerned about the Department of Defense commandeering new, more toxic substances for offense, not defense. See **Action Alerts**, this page, for web sites and phone numbers to call for "next step" activist information.

The End of Suburbia

Because Chuck Turner was unable to be at BCA's January meeting, his video and discussion of participatory budgeting in Boston was postponed until 15 February. Instead, members watched "The End of Suburbia", a "scary" video foretelling the rapid decline of US suburbs in the coming decade as oil and motor fuel become scarce and much more expensive—as detailed in James Kunstler's latest book *The Long Emergency*. The DVD was obtained through the Post-Carbon Institute in CA. Members noted public resistance to hearing this prognosis for The American Dream—"the greatest misallocation of resources in history". Some members were encouraged by the prospect of movement toward building new cities or rebuilding older cities with more livable, walkable facilities and workplaces near residences. Will crisis increase cooperation? The lively discussion left hanging questions such as—the example of Europe? Doing with less? Ruling class? Unions and associations? Traditional economics?

Water—the Big Challenge

BCA's steering committee met as usual one week after our monthly chapter meeting, at Dave Lewit's apartment in Copley Sq. *Note: All BCA members (Dispatch readers) are welcome.* For our March meeting we agreed to feature some member of the Boston Delegation to the World Social Forum in Caracas—note that AfD's *Common Agreement on Investment and Society* was included in their proposal. So just where should BCA go?

We considered various issues touched on recently by BCA—secession, state-level localization policy, media (including AfD work with community cable TV), vote fraud, strategic nonviolence education & training, and internet censorship. But the hot topic was water—especially getting bottled water. Why? Because we have already started a project to get Coca-Cola and other mega-corporations out of our public schools, as part of AfD's major program on "Defending Water for Life". We decided to focus on this issue because it deals with two vital resources—our children and our water, both of which should be protected from corporatization. Dave has already consulted with **Boston City Councilor John Tobin**, who backs city legislation on school solutions. BCA will consider ways that all members may help by working with teachers, students, administrators, parents, elected officials, and the media—starting with our April meeting.

ACTION ALERTS

Biolab "next steps" are being planned as we go to press. For times and places of meetings call Safety Net's Klare Allen at 617 442 7822, Boston MOBE's Eve Lyman at 617 492 5599, Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner's office at 617 635 3510, and State Representative Gloria Fox's office at 617 722 2810.

Sat. 11 Feb. 2-6pm. Boston. Resisting Political Repression. Be united and energized by Jericho Movement. Learn how the grand jury has been used as a tool of political repression. Speakers: John Bowman, Harold Taylor, Hank Jones (all Black Panther veterans), J. Soffiyah Elijah (Harvard Law), Marta Rodriguez (Puerto Rican Independence), Chuck Turner (Boston City Council), Kazi Toure (Jericho Boston, former political prisoner), Danae Kelley and Anthony Nocella (animal/earth liberators). Roxbury Community College cafeteria, 1234 Columbus Ave near Malcolm X Blvd & Cedar St. Co-sponsors: **Jericho Boston, AFSC, Community Church, Fund the Dream, Animal Defense League, Black Cross, NE Committee to Defend Palestine.** Info: www.jerichoboston.org/events.html or Aaron at 617-427-8100.

Wed. 15 Feb. 7:30pm. Cambridge. *BCA Chapter meeting on Participating in Boston's Budget Process, with Chuck Turner.* See box on Page 1 for details. Note special time: 7:30.

Thu. 16 Feb. 7pm. Cambridge. Women and the US Budget. With author Jane Midgeley—talk, discussion, and book signing. Where the money goes and what you can do about it. YWCA, 7 Temple St., Central Square. Info: 781 646-7182

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: _____

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COLOPHON

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