

# BCA Reader.3

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## ARTICLES OF LASTING INTEREST

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### Delusion 1: Military

#### Iraq Disaster and Prospect

by Chris Hedges, Truthdig.com, 6 August 2007

**T**HE WAR IN IRAQ IS ABOUT TO GET WORSE—much worse. The Democrats' decision to let the war run its course, while they frantically wash their hands of responsibility, means that it will sputter and stagger forward until the mission collapses. This will be sudden. The security of the Green Zone, our imperial city, will be increasingly breached. Command and control will disintegrate. And we will back out of Iraq humiliated and defeated. But this will not be the end of the conflict. It will, in fact, signal a phase of the war far deadlier and more dangerous to American interests.

Iraq no longer exists as a unified country. The experiment that was Iraq, the cobbling together of disparate and antagonistic patches of the Ottoman Empire by the victorious powers in the wake of World War I, belongs to the history books. It will never come back. The Kurds have set up a de facto state in the north, the Shiites control most of the south and the center of the country is a battleground.

There are 2 million Iraqis who have fled their homes and are internally displaced. Another 2 million have left the country, most to Syria and Jordan, which now has the largest number of refugees per capita of any country on Earth. An Oxfam report estimates that one in three Iraqis are in need of emergency aid, but the chaos and violence is so widespread that assistance is impossible. Iraq is in a state of anarchy. The American occupation forces are one more source of terror tossed into the cauldron of suicide bombings, mercenary armies, militias, massive explosions, ambushes, kidnappings and mass executions. But wait until we leave.

It was not supposed to turn out like this. Remember all those visions of a democratic Iraq, visions peddled by the White House and fatuous pundits like Thomas Friedman and the gravel-voiced morons who pollute our airwaves on CNN and Fox News? They assured us that (Continued on Page 5 >>)



Dead End

### Delusion 2: Economic

#### The Coming Transformation

by William Greider, The Nation, 10 June 2006

**M**OMENTOUS CHANGE IS APPROACHING IN AMERICAN POLITICS. Conceivably, the turning point has already arrived, too indistinct to recognize. We are witnessing the demise of the reigning economic ideology. A deep shift of this kind is a very rare event, one that comes along only every thirty or forty years. Economic disorders accumulate that the orthodoxy cannot answer and may even have caused. Eventually, the ideological presumptions are discredited by real-world contradictions.

The last time this happened was in the 1970s, when economic liberalism foundered and collapsed. Ossified intellectually, unable to adjust to changed circumstances, the liberal order did not know how to deal with economic consequences like inflationary stagnation. As the long postwar prosperity lost its energy, so did liberal politics.

Something similar is happening now to the Republicans. Their problem is the underperforming economy, which must borrow to stay afloat and, roughly speaking, lifts only half the boats. The conservative order—inspired two generations ago by Milton Friedman and Friedrich von Hayek and brought to power by Republican ascendancy—pushed government aside so business and capital would be free to generate more lasting prosperity. But their utopian promise was not fulfilled. Instead, the right's principal product, one can say, was economic inequality.

The breakdown won't necessarily produce an immediate shift in power. When the bottom fell out of liberal doctrine thirty years ago, what first unfolded was confusion and political paralysis, then an awkward retreat by the Democrats until they were finally displaced by the aggressive new conservatives under Ronald Reagan. But it does mean that Republicans have lost the political cohesion to advance their more extreme measures (privatizing Social Security, freeing capital entirely of taxation).

More to the point, the way is now open for alternative thinking: the new ideas that can lead to a new governing order. These ideas must be grounded in a determination to give the people back their future. The strange (Continued on Page 12 >>)

## DEMOCRACY PROTECTION KIT

Friends:

**O**NE MONTH AFTER HITLER GOT HIMSELF APPOINTED CHANCELLOR, the German parliament was set afire. Communist "terrorists" were blamed, although evidence indicts the Nazis themselves. This "catastrophe" set in train Hitler's invasions, mass killings, and World War II.

For the first five years things in Germany looked normal on the surface, though his "emergency" powers enabled Hitler and his Nazi police to work in the shadows to control the media, schools, and workplaces, and kidnap thousands of dissidents and other undesirables, while building a superior military establishment. His inspiration in part was the Teutonic myth of the "Ring".

So too in the U.S.—on the surface—things appear normal even after 9-11. President Bush blamed "the terrorists" and immediately invaded Afghanistan, and then Iraq, moved in part by the myth of Biblical "Revelation". Declaring himself wartime president, he began yellow and orange signals of perpetual danger. Now people are afraid that terrorists might pop up on the morning commute, at the entrance to city hall, in the theater, or in a neighbor's garage. After his Patriot Act was passed to enhance federal police powers and override citizen rights, President Bush has been issuing executive orders not reported in the mainstream media or debated in Congress. These orders give himself alone the powers—following a "catastrophic emergency" which he identifies—to "coordinate" all three branches of government (NSPD-51 aka HSPD-20). He has already declared the emergency necessary to give himself powers to arrest or seize the assets of anyone seeming to interfere with his "democratization" of Iraq (Exec Order 13438) or Lebanon (signed Aug 1). That means any of us with a different opinion.

**Wake Up America! We are fast becoming captives. It has done little good to petition our far-away congress members. But we can "set ourselves free" by "knowing the truth" in our own communities. To protect our democracy we must act locally. We can start by engaging our local officials.**

This e-mail is a **Democracy Protection Kit**—ready to forward to your concerned friends. The action component is **interviewing your mayor**, your strongest **city councilors**, and your **chief of police**. Find out **how they weigh demands from federal agencies** like Homeland Security, **and the demands and rights of the townspeople** and our Constitutions—US and state. Use this information to inform all by newspaper, radio, TV, internet, meetings, and word of mouth. The resulting discussion will help you and your fellow citizens and local officials to **link groups and draw up procedures for resisting unwarranted federal demands**. This is not Hitler's Germany! We can and must be the "deciders"—and the agenda-setters.

"We" are the regular mix of local citizens. Organizers of any interview, or set of interviews, should strive for a diverse group representing diverse organizations and citizens—socially, economically, and politically. Start with a small delegation of 5-8. Later you can have forums.

**Attached are resources:** (Download at [www.NewEnglandAlliance.org](http://www.NewEnglandAlliance.org) or request from [boston@NewEnglandAlliance.org](mailto:boston@NewEnglandAlliance.org))

- \* a model letter to your most important local officials (interview request—see Box 1, opposite)
- \* a model set of 5 questions to discuss with them (interview questions—see Box 2, opposite)
- \* a news article detailing problems of federal-local cooperation (police intelligence)  
[www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/30/AR2006123000238\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/30/AR2006123000238_pf.html)
- \* two executive orders by George Bush, allowing him to dominate  
(taking over) [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/05/20070509-12.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/05/20070509-12.html)  
(seizing assets) [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/08/20070802-1.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/08/20070802-1.html)
- \* an article warning how Bush may cancel 2008 elections (cancel elections)  
[www.commondreams.org/archive/2007/07/31/2874/](http://www.commondreams.org/archive/2007/07/31/2874/)
- \* a readable scholarly article developing the whole picture (global research)  
[www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=6134](http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=6134)

**The Alliance for Democracy** can encourage and coordinate use of these materials. Contact:

- \* Dave Lewit, BCA Dispatch editor: 617-266-8687 [boston@newenglandalliance.org](mailto:boston@newenglandalliance.org) or
- \* Barbara Clancy, Alliance national office coordinator: 781-894-1179 [afd@thealliancefordemocracy.org](mailto:afd@thealliancefordemocracy.org)

Even more important...

- \* Your Local Alliance activists:
- \* Your Local allied group activists—from ACLU, Rotary, LWV, NAACP, SEIU, BORDC, Catholic Charities, Weekly News, etc.:

Thanks! Get in touch! Get started!

**Box 1: INTERVIEW REQUEST  
SAMPLE LETTER**

Dear Mayor Menino: (or Council President Flaherty, or  
Police Chief Davis)

We are a group of Boston citizens concerned about federal interference with our local government and our lives. We are deeply concerned about recent White House executive orders (enclosed) which are so broad that they might criminalize ordinary dissent and compromise our rights under the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th, 7th, 8th and other Amendments and customs. We want to protect local democracy, and to help educate our fellow citizens about how local officials will act in this regard, and how we can act as citizens to protect our democracy.

Therefore we want to interview you as mayor, and also the president of the city council, and the chief of police. We are writing to those officers separately. Specifically, we have five questions concerning relations with FBI, Homeland Security, Treasury, and other federal departments in the event of emergency or other special orders from Washington:

- \* Boston's cooperation and compliance
- \* Boston's challenge procedures
- \* Federalization of local government
- \* Community support and participation
- \* Transparency.

Enclosed are several papers providing background for some of our concerns.

Please let us know when we may see you, at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

(Names, and organizations—try for social, economic, and political diversity)

(Contact information)

(List of enclosures)

**Box 2: QUESTIONS FOR  
INTERVIEWING LOCAL OFFICIALS  
on  
COOPERATING w FEDERAL AUTHORITIES**

Please re-read your letter of request to the official you will be interviewing. Also please read a good article describing how federal and local authorities cooperate or don't cooperate or do something else—e.g., the *Washington Post* article "Localities Operate Intelligence Centers" of 31 December 2006 (attached "police intelligence"). This will help you formulate specific followup questions, on the spot, to the general responses which your interviewee

may give to any of the five topics below.

You probably want to find answers not only to educate people at home, but also to compare answers with interviews from other cities or towns—inside and outside your state. Below each topic is a lead question which may serve as a model. It may be best for one or two of you to take notes, but not tape record because your interviewee might not be frank or might self-censor interesting examples. Try for spontaneous responses, not prepared answers.

**Cooperation and compliance**

"Exactly how will you and your associates respond to a request or order from Homeland Security or other federal agency?—orders with or without warrants to shut down organizations, stop demonstrations, eavesdrop, seize assets, arrest leaders, use false charges, re-order your priorities, protect federal or corporate hit men, military recruiters, etc? Particularly:

Role of procedural manuals

Role of professional code of ethics

Actions against corporations, e.g., banks seizing assets.

Actions against private citizens, e.g., warrantless searches, wiretapping, provocation, arrests

Discretion—following older, more conservative laws.

Authority of our town/city charter, council, and citizens."

**Challenge procedures**

"How will you challenge an order from a federal agency, which you believe is based on false information or partisan objectives, or which tends to violate constitutional rights?"

**Federalization of local government**

"What is the effect on your organization of funding from federal sources?

What is the effect of funding from state sources?

What is the effect of federal agents working with you?"

**Community support and participation**

"How can the people of this town/city/county help you to defend constitutional democracy, if federal officials are out of control? What can the people do on their own?"

**Transparency**

"We wish to help educate the public about defending local democracy. How open or how restrictive are you and your associates to press interviews and filming?

What documents, books, videos, etc., would you recommend to citizens and students?"

Thank you!

## Bush Executive Order Criminalizing the Antiwar Movement

by Michel Chossudovsky, *GlobalResearch.ca*, 20 July 2007

THE EXECUTIVE ORDER ENTITLED "Blocking Property of Certain Persons Who Threaten Stabilization Efforts in Iraq" provides the President with the authority to confiscate the assets of whoever opposes the US led war. Issued on July 17<sup>th</sup>, it repeals with the stroke of a pen the right to dissent and to oppose the Pentagon's military agenda in Iraq.

This executive order provides the President with the authority to confiscate the assets of "certain persons" who oppose the US led war in Iraq: "I have issued an Executive Order blocking property of persons determined to have committed, or to pose a significant risk of committing, an act or acts of violence that have the purpose or effect of threatening the peace or stability of Iraq or the Government of Iraq or undermining efforts to promote economic reconstruction and political reform in Iraq or to provide humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people."

In substance, under this executive order, opposing the war becomes an illegal act.

The executive order criminalizes the antiwar movement. It is intended to "block property" of US citizens and organizations actively involved in the peace movement. It allows the Department of Defense to interfere in financial affairs and instruct the Treasury to "block the property" and/or confiscate/freeze the assets of "Certain Persons" involved in antiwar activities. It targets those "Certain Persons" in America, including civil society organizations, who oppose the Bush Administration's "peace and stability" program in Iraq, characterized, in plain English, by an illegal occupation and the continued killing of innocent civilians.

The executive order also targets those "Certain Persons" who are "undermining efforts to promote economic reconstruction", or who, again in plain English, are opposed to the confiscation and privatization of Iraq's oil resources, on behalf of the Anglo-American oil giants.

The order is also intended for anybody who opposes Bush's program of "political reform in Iraq", in other words, who questions the legitimacy of an Iraqi "government" installed by the occupation forces. Moreover, those persons or non-governmental organizations (NGOs), who provide bona fide humanitarian aid to Iraqi civilians, and who are not approved by the US Military or its servants in the US-sponsored Iraqi puppet government are also liable to have their financial assets confiscated.

The executive order violates the First, Fourth and Fifth Amendments of the US Constitution. It repeals one of the fundamental tenets of US democracy, which is the right to free expression and dissent. The order has not been the object of discussion in the US Congress. So far, it has not been addressed by the US antiwar movement, in terms of a formal statement.

Apart from a bland Associated Press wire report, which presents the executive order as "an authority to use financial sanctions", there has been no media coverage or commentary of a presidential decision which strikes at the heart of the US Constitution.

### Broader Implications

The criminalization of the State is when the sitting President

and Vice President use and abuse their authority through executive orders, presidential directives or otherwise to define "who are the criminals" when in fact *they* are the criminals.

This latest executive order criminalizes the peace movement. It must be viewed in relation to various pieces of "anti-terrorist" legislation, the gamut of presidential and national security directives, etc., which are ultimately geared towards repealing constitutional government and installing martial law in the event of a "national emergency". The war criminals in high office are intent upon repressing all forms of dissent which question the legitimacy of the war in Iraq.

The executive order combined with the existing anti-terrorist legislation is eventually intended to be used against the antiwar and civil rights movements. It can be used to seize the assets of antiwar groups in America as well as block the property and activities of non-governmental humanitarian organizations providing relief in Iraq, seizing the assets of alternative media involved in a reporting the truth regarding the US-led war, etc.

In May 2007, Bush issued a major presidential National Security Directive (National Security and Homeland Security Presidential Directive NSPD 51/HSPD 20), which would suspend constitutional government and instate broad dictatorial powers under martial law in the case of a "Catastrophic Emergency" (e.g. Second 9/11 terrorist attack).

On July 11, 2007 the CIA published its "National Intelligence Estimate" which pointed to an imminent Al Qaeda attack on America, a second 9/11 which, according to the terms of NSPD 51, would immediately be followed by the suspension of constitutional government and the instatement of martial law under the authority of the president and the vice-president. (For further details, see Michel Chossudovsky, "Bush Directive for a 'Catastrophic Emergency' in America: Building a Justification for Waging War on Iran?" June 2007)

NSPD 51 grants unprecedented powers to the Presidency and the Department of Homeland Security, overriding the foundations of Constitutional government. It allows the sitting president to declare a "national emergency" without Congressional approval. The implementation of NSPD 51 would lead to the de facto closing down of the Legislature and the militarization of justice and law enforcement. "The President shall lead the activities of the Federal Government for ensuring constitutional government..."

Were NSPD 51 to be invoked, Vice President Dick Cheney, who constitutes the real power behind the Executive, would essentially assume de facto dictatorial powers, circumventing both the US Congress and the Judiciary, while continuing to use President George W. Bush as a proxy figurehead.

NSPD 51, while bypassing the Constitution, nonetheless, envisages very precise procedures which guarantee the powers of Vice President Dick Cheney in relation to "Continuity of Government" functions under Martial Law: "This directive shall be implemented in a manner that is consistent with, and facilitates effective implementation of, provisions of the Constitution concerning succession to the Presidency or the exercise of its powers, and the Presidential Succession Act of 1947 (3 U.S.C. 19), with consultation of the Vice President and, as appropriate, others involved. Heads of executive departments and agencies shall ensure that appropriate support is available to the Vice President and others involved as necessary to be prepared at all times to implement those provisions." (NSPD 51, op cit.)

The executive order to confiscate the assets of antiwar/peace activists is broadly consistent with NSPD 51. It could be triggered even in the absence of a "Catastrophic Emergency" as envisaged under NSPD 51. It repeals democracy. It goes one step further in "criminalizing" all forms of opposition and dissent to the US-led war and "Homeland Security" agenda.

*Michel Chossudovsky is the author of the international best seller America's "War on Terrorism", Second Edition, Global Research, 2005. He is Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa and Director of the Center for Research on Globalization.*

#### **MILITARY DISASTER** (Continued from Page 1)

war would be a cakewalk. We would be greeted as liberators. Democracy would seep out over the borders of Iraq to usher in a new Middle East. Now, struggling to salvage their own credibility, they blame the debacle on poor planning and mismanagement.

There are probably about 10,000 Arabists in the United States—people who have lived for prolonged periods in the Middle East and speak Arabic. At the inception of the war you could not have rounded up more than about a dozen who thought this was a good idea. And I include all the Arabists in the State Department, the Pentagon and the intelligence community. Anyone who had spent significant time in Iraq knew this would not work. The war was not doomed because Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz did not do sufficient planning for the occupation. The war was doomed, period. It never had a chance. And even a cursory knowledge of Iraqi history and politics made this apparent.

This is not to deny the stupidity of the occupation. The disbanding of the Iraqi army; the ham-fisted attempt to install the crook and, it now turns out, Iranian spy Ahmed Chalabi in power; the firing of all Baathist public officials, including university professors, primary school teachers, nurses and doctors; the failure to secure Baghdad and the vast weapons depots from looters; allowing heavily armed American units to blast their way through densely populated neighborhoods, giving the insurgency its most potent recruiting tool—all ensured a swift descent into chaos.

But Iraq would not have held together even if we had been spared the gross incompetence of the Bush administration. Saddam Hussein, like the more benign dictator Josip Broz Tito in the former Yugoslavia, understood that the glue that held the country together was the secret police.

Iraq, however, is different from Yugoslavia. Iraq has oil—lots of it. It also has water in a part of the world that is running out of water. And the dismemberment of Iraq will unleash a mad scramble for dwindling resources that will include the involvement of neighboring states. The Kurds, like the Shiites and the Sunnis, know that if they do not get their hands on water resources and oil they cannot survive. But Turkey, Syria and Iran have no intention of allowing the Kurds to create a viable enclave. A functioning Kurdistan in northern Iraq means rebellion by the repressed Kurdish minorities in these countries.

The Kurds, orphans of the 20th century who have been repeatedly sold out by every ally they ever had, including the United States, will be crushed. The possibility that Iraq will become a Shiite state, run by clerics allied with Iran, terrifies the Arab world. Turkey, as well as Saudi Arabia, the United States and Israel, would most likely keep the conflict going by arming Sunni militias. This anarchy could end with foreign

forces, including Iran and Turkey, carving up the battered carcass of Iraq. No matter what happens, many, many Iraqis are going to die. And it is our fault.

The neoconservatives—and the liberal interventionists, who still serve as the neocons' useful idiots when it comes to Iran—have learned nothing. They talk about hitting Iran and maybe even Pakistan with airstrikes. Strikes on Iran would ensure a regional conflict. Such an action has the potential of drawing Israel into war—especially if Iran retaliates for any air strikes by hitting Israel, as I would expect Tehran to do. There are still many in the U.S. who cling to the doctrine of pre-emptive war, a doctrine that the post-World War II Nuremberg laws define as a criminal "war of aggression."

The occupation of Iraq, along with the Afghanistan occupation, has only furthered the spread of failed states and increased authoritarianism, savage violence, instability and anarchy. It has swelled the ranks of our real enemies—the Islamic terrorists—and opened up voids of lawlessness where they can operate and plot against us. It has scuttled the art of diplomacy. It has left us an outlaw state intent on creating more outlaw states. It has empowered Iran, as well as Russia and China, which sit on the sidelines gleefully watching our self-immolation. This is what George W. Bush and all those "reluctant hawks" who supported him have bequeathed us.

What is terrifying is not that the architects and numerous apologists of the Iraq war have learned nothing, but that they may not yet be finished.

*Chris Hedges, the former Middle East bureau chief for The New York Times, spent seven years in the Middle East. He was part of the paper's team of reporters who won the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for coverage of global terrorism. He is the author of War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning. His latest book is American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America*

## **Living in Shit**

### **4 Million Iraqis Flee for their Lives**

*by Patrick Cockburn, The Independent (UK), 30 July 2007*

**T**WO THOUSAND IRAQIS ARE FLEEING THEIR HOMES EVERY DAY. It is the greatest mass exodus of people ever in the Middle East and dwarfs anything seen in Europe since the Second World War. Four million people, one in seven Iraqis, have run away, because if they do not they will be killed. Two million have left Iraq, mainly for Syria and Jordan, and the same number have fled within the country.

Yet, while the US and Britain express sympathy for the plight of refugees in Africa, they are ignoring—or playing down—a far greater tragedy which is largely of their own making.

The US and Britain may not want to dwell on the disasters that have befallen Iraq during their occupation but the shanty towns crammed with refugees springing up in Iraq and neighbouring countries are becoming impossible to ignore.

Even so the UNHCR is having difficulty raising \$100m for relief. The organisation says the two countries caring for the biggest proportion of Iraqi refugees—Syria and Jordan—have still received "next to nothing from the world community". Some 1.4 million Iraqis have fled to Syria according to the UN High Commission for Refugees, Jordan has taken in 750,000 while Egypt and Lebanon have seen 200,000 Iraqis cross into their territories.

Potential donors are reluctant to spend money inside Iraq

arguing the country has large oil revenues. They are either unaware, or are ignoring the fact that the Iraqi administration has all but collapsed outside the Baghdad Green Zone. The US is spending \$2bn a week on military operations in Iraq according to the Congressional Research Service but many Iraqis are dying because they lack drinking water costing a few cents.

Kalawar refugee camp in Sulaymaniyah is a microcosm of the misery to which millions of Iraqis have been reduced.

"At least it is safe here," says Walid Sha'ad Nayef, 38, as he stands amid the stink of rotting garbage and raw sewage. He fled from the lethally dangerous Sa'adiyah district in Baghdad 11 months ago. As we speak to him, a man silently presents us with the death certificate of his son, Farez Maher Zedan, who was killed in Baghdad on 20 May 2006.

Kalawar is a horrible place. Situated behind a petrol station down a dusty track, the first sight of the camp is of rough shelters made out of rags, torn pieces of cardboard and old blankets. The stench is explained by the fact the Kurdish municipal authorities will not allow the 470 people in the camp to dig latrines. They say this might encourage them to stay.

"Sometimes I go to beg," says Talib Hamid al-Auda, a voluble man with a thick white beard looking older than his fifty years. As he speaks, his body shakes, as if he was trembling at the thought of the demeaning means by which he feeds his family. Even begging is difficult because the people in the camp are forbidden to leave it on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Suspected by Kurds of being behind a string of house robberies, though there is no evidence for this, they are natural scapegoats for any wrong-doing in their vicinity.

Refugees are getting an increasingly cool reception wherever they flee, because there are so many of them and because of the burden they put on resources. "People here blame us for forcing up rents and the price of food," said Omar, who had taken his family to Damascus after his sister's leg was fractured by a car bomb.

The refugees in Kalawar had no option but to flee. Of the 97 families here, all but two are Sunni Arabs. Many are from Sa'adiyah in west Baghdad where 84 bodies were found by police between 18 June and 18 July. Many are young men whose hands had been bound and who had been tortured.

"The majority left Baghdad because somebody knocked on the door of their house and told them to get out in an hour," says Rosina Ynzenga, who runs the Spanish charity Solidarity International (SIA) which pays for a mobile clinic to visit the camp.

Sulaymaniyah municipality is antagonistic to her doing more. One Kurdish official suggested that the Arabs of Kalawar were there simply for economic reasons and should be given \$200 each and sent back to Baghdad.

Mr Nayef, the mukhtar (mayor) of the camp who used to be a bulldozer driver in Baghdad, at first said nobody could speak to journalists unless we had permission from the authorities. But after we had ceremoniously written our names in a large book he relented and would, in any case, have had difficulty in stopping other refugees explaining their grievances.

Asked to list their worst problems Mr Nayef said they were the lack of school for the children, shortage of food, no kerosene to cook with, no money, no jobs and no electricity. The real answer to the question is that the Arabs of Kalawar have nothing. They have only received two cartons of food each from the International Committee of the Red Cross and a tank of clean water.

Even so they are adamant that they dare not return to Baghdad. They did not even know if their houses had been taken over by others.

Abla Abbas, a mournful looking woman in black robes, said her son had been killed because he went to sell plastic bags in the Shia district of Khadamiyah in west Baghdad. The poor in Iraq take potentially fatal risks to earn a little money.

The uncertainty of the refugees' lives in Kalawar is mirrored in their drawn faces. While we spoke to them there were several shouting matches. One woman kept showing us a piece of paper from the local authority in Sulaymaniyah giving her the right to stay there. She regarded us nervously as if we were officials about to evict her.

There are in fact three camps at Kalawar. Although almost all the refugees are Sunni they come from different places and until a month ago they lived together. But there were continual arguments. The refugees decided that they must split into three encampments: one from Baghdad, a second from Hillah, south of Baghdad, and a third from Diyala, the mixed Sunni-Shia province that has been the scene of ferocious sectarian pogroms.

Governments and the media crudely evaluate human suffering in Iraq in terms of the number killed. A broader and better barometer would include those who have escaped death only by fleeing their homes, their jobs and their country to go and live, destitute and unwanted, in places like Kalawar. The US administration has 18 benchmarks to measure progress in Iraq but the return of four million people to their homes is not among them.

## Unborn, Unruined Sad, Angry Life under Authority

by Doris "Granny D" Haddock, speech at Concord MA,  
6 October 2005 (excerpt)

Let us consider the self-repression of the political right... Where authority and power flow down from above, from heaven to the White House to husbands and ayatollahs, the free and joyful living of people can be quite the enemy...

Here it is: those in the clan of authority are not given the privilege—the natural right—of living their own lives. They do as they are told, say and think what they are told. Smothered is their curiosity and their healthy skepticism, and also their imagination, joy, freedom, and lust for life itself. When they see others actually living lives, they react with anger, as if someone had cut to the front of a line that, for them, never moves.

What is the proof of this theory? Those in thrall to authority, cowering under it, lose sight of their own lives. They will venerate above all else the symbol of the yet unruined potential of life: the curled-up unborn. The authority clan will have the image of an unborn baby as its flag, and they will claim to honor and defend innocent life, but that will be a great lie to themselves. For they will not be the ones to demand DNA testing of all prisoners on death row; they will not be the ones to demand health insurance for all children, or better nutrition in all schools, or peaceful alternatives to international conflicts. They will be the ones to rail against these things, for the authority clan parades itself as pro-life while it is truly more like a cult of death. Having died themselves, strangled by authority and fear, they cannot wish happy lives for others—they cling only to that magic symbol of what might have been. They relate to the unborn baby selfishly; it is themselves: unborn, unruined, still hoping for a life. #

## Gandhi on Eve of Holocaust

### Epistle to Jews in Nazi Germany, Palestine

by Mohandas K. Gandhi, written on 20 November 1938, published in Harijan 6 days later.

*Note: In Hitler's Germany and parts of recently-occupied Austria, Kristallnacht erupted on 9-10 November, 1938.*

*"Jewish homes were ransacked in numerous German cities, towns and villages along with 8,000 Jewish shops, as civilians and SA storm troopers destroyed buildings with sledgehammers, leaving the streets covered in smashed windows—the origin of the name "Night of Broken Glass". Jews were beaten to death; 30,000 Jewish men were taken to concentration camps, and 1,668 synagogues ransacked with 267 set on fire." The "final solution"—genocide in extermination camps—was not decided by the Nazis until 20 January 1942, before which more than a million Jews had been murdered. —Wikipedia*

*Meanwhile in Palestine, Zionists had occupied Arab land and in 1936 Arabs attacked, killing 80 Jews. Militant Jewish groups like the Irgun began killing Arabs that year, and by 1946—with time out to join the British war against the Nazis—had killed around 500 including 91 British, Arab, and Jewish colonial staff members in a hotel bombing in Jerusalem. By 1948 war ensued between Zionists including former terrorists and Arab-British colonialist-nationalists, ending with British withdrawal and resulting in independent armed territories of Israel and Palestine.*

*Of course there was a huge difference in scale and intent of killings compared with Europe, but the terrorist spirit of parts of the Israel Defense Force, together with immigration, US military and technical aid, and the dynamics of modern war and nationalism, eventually led to today's disastrous irony. —Ed.*

**S**EVERAL LETTERS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED BY ME asking me to declare my views about the Arab-Jew question in Palestine and the persecution of the Jews in Germany. It is not without hesitation that I venture to offer my views on this very difficult question.

My sympathies are all with the Jews. I have known them intimately in South Africa. Some of them became life-long companions. Through these friends I came to learn much of their age-long persecution. They have been the untouchables of Christianity. The parallel between their treatment by Christians and the treatment of untouchables by Hindus is very close. Religious sanction has been invoked in both cases for the justification of the inhuman treatment meted out to them. Apart from the friendships, therefore, there is the more common universal reason for my sympathy for the Jews.

But my sympathy does not blind me to the requirements of justice. The cry for the national home for the Jews does not make much appeal to me. The sanction for it is sought in the Bible and the tenacity with which the Jews have hankered after return to Palestine. Why should they not, like other peoples of the earth, make that country their home where they are born and where they earn their livelihood?

Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on in Palestine today cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct. The mandates have no sanction but that of the last war. Surely it would be a crime against humanity to reduce the

proud Arabs so that Palestine can be restored to the Jews partly or wholly as their national home.

The nobler course would be to insist on a just treatment of the Jews wherever they are born and bred. The Jews born in France are French in precisely the same sense that Christians born in France are French. If the Jews have no home but Palestine, will they relish the idea of being forced to leave the other parts of the world in which they are settled? Or do they want a double home where they can remain at will? This cry for the national home affords a colorable justification for the German expulsion of the Jews.

But the German persecution of the Jews seems to have no parallel in history. The tyrants of old never went so mad as Hitler seems to have gone. And he is doing it with religious zeal. For he is propounding a new religion of exclusive and militant nationalism in the name of which many inhumanity becomes an act of humanity to be rewarded here and hereafter. The crime of an obviously mad but intrepid youth is being visited upon his whole race with unbelievable ferocity. If there ever could be a justifiable war in the name of and for humanity, a war against Germany, to prevent the wanton persecution of a whole race, would be completely justified. But I do not believe in any war. A discussion of the pros and cons of such a war is therefore outside my horizon or province.

But if there can be no war against Germany, even for such a crime as is being committed against the Jews, surely there can be no alliance with Germany. How can there be alliance between a nation which claims to stand for justice and democracy and one which is the declared enemy of both? Or is England drifting towards armed dictatorship and all it means?

Germany is showing to the world how efficiently violence can be worked when it is not hampered by any hypocrisy or weakness masquerading as humanitarianism. It is also showing how hideous, terrible and terrifying it looks in its nakedness.

Can the Jews resist this organized and shameless persecution? Is there a way to preserve their self-respect, and not to feel helpless, neglected and forlorn? I submit there is. No person who has faith in a living God need feel helpless or forlorn. Jehovah of the Jews is a God more personal than the God of the Christians, the Musalmans or the Hindus, though, as a matter of fact in essence, He is common to all the one without a second and beyond description. But as the Jews attribute personality to God and believe that He rules every action of theirs, they ought not to feel helpless. If I were a Jew and were born in Germany and earned my livelihood there, I would claim Germany as my home even as the tallest gentile German may, and challenge him to shoot me or cast me in the dungeon; I would refuse to be expelled or to submit to discriminating treatment. And for doing this, I should not wait for the fellow Jews to join me in civil resistance but would have confidence that in the end the rest are bound to follow my example.

If one Jew or all the Jews were to accept the prescription here offered, he or they cannot be worse off than now. And suffering voluntarily undergone will bring them an inner strength and joy which no number of resolutions of sympathy passed in the world outside Germany can. Indeed, even if Britain, France and America were to declare hostilities against Germany, they can bring no inner joy, no inner strength. The calculated violence of Hitler may even result in a general massacre of the Jews by way of his first answer to the declaration of such hostilities. But if the Jewish mind could be

prepared for voluntary suffering, even the massacre I have imagined could be turned into a day of thanksgiving and joy that Jehovah had wrought deliverance of the race even at the hands of the tyrant. For to the god fearing, death has no terror. It is a joyful sleep to be followed by a waking that would be all the more refreshing for the long sleep.

It is hardly necessary for me to point out that it is easier for the Jews than for the Czechs to follow my prescription. And they have in the Indian satyagraha campaign in South Africa an exact parallel. There the Indians occupied precisely the same place that the Jews occupy in Germany. The persecution had also a religious tinge. President Kruger used to say that the white Christians were the chosen of God and Indians were inferior beings created to serve the whites. A fundamental clause in the Transvaal constitution was that there should be no equality between the whites and colored races including Asiatics. There too the Indians were consigned to ghettos described as locations. The other disabilities were almost of the same type as those of the Jews in Germany. The Indians, a mere handful, resorted to satyagraha without any backing from the world outside or the Indian Government. Indeed the British officials tried to dissuade the satyagrahis (soldiers of non-violence) from their contemplated step. World opinion and the Indian Government came to their aid after eight years of fighting. And that too was by way of diplomatic pressure not of a threat of war.

But the Jews of Germany can offer satyagraha under infinitely better auspices than Indians of South Africa. The Jews are a compact, homogeneous community in Germany. They are far more gifted than the Indians of South Africa. And they have organized world opinion behind them. I am convinced that if someone with courage and vision can arise among them to lead them in nonviolent action, the winter of their despair can in the twinkling of an eye be turned into the summer of hope. And what has today become a degrading man-hunt can be turned in to a calm and determined stand offered by unarmed men and women possessing the strength of suffering given to them by Jehovah. It will be then a truly religious resistance offered against the godless fury of dehumanized man. The German Jews will score a lasting victory over the German gentiles in the sense that they will have converted that latter to an appreciation of human dignity. They will have rendered service to fellow-Germans and proved their title to be the real Germans as against those who are today dragging, however unknowingly, the German name into the mire.

#### In Palestine

And now a word to the Jews in Palestine. I have no doubt that they are going about it the wrong way. The Palestine of the Biblical conception is not geographical tract. It is in their hearts. But if they must look to the Palestine of geography as their national home, it is wrong to enter it under the shadow of the British gun. A religious act cannot be performed with the aid of the bayonet or the bomb. They can settle in Palestine only by the goodwill of the Arabs. They should seek to convert the Arab heart. The same God rules the Arab heart, who rules the Jewish heart. They can offer satyagraha in front of the Arabs and offer themselves to be shot or thrown in to the Dead Sea without raising a little finger against them. They will find the world opinion in their favor in their religious aspiration. There are hundreds of ways of reasoning with the Arabs, if they will only discard the help of the British bayonet. As it is, they are co-sharers with the British in despoiling a people who

have done no wrong to them.

I am not defending the Arab excesses. I wish they had chosen the way of non-violence in resisting what they rightly regarded as an unwarrantable encroachment upon their country. But according to the accepted canons of right and wrong, nothing can be said against the Arab resistance in the face of overwhelming odds.

Let the Jews who claim to be the chosen race prove their title by choosing the way of non-violence for vindicating their position on earth. Every country is their home including Palestine, not by aggression but by loving service. A Jewish friend has sent me a book called *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization* by Cecil Roth. It gives a record of what the Jews have done to enrich the world's literature, art, music, drama, science, medicine, agriculture, etc. Given the will, the Jews can refuse to be treated as the outcaste of the West, to be despised or patronized. He can command the attention and respect of the world by being man, the chosen creation of God, instead of being man who is fast sinking to the brute and forsaken by God. They can add to their many contributions the surpassing contribution of non-violent action. #

## No More Visual Pollution

### São Paulo Strips All Outdoor Advertising

by Patrick Burgoyne, *Business Week*, 18 June 2007

**A**CITY STRIPPED OF ADVERTISING. No Posters. No flyers. No ads on buses. No ads on trains. No Adshels, no 48-sheets, no nothing. It sounds like an *Adbusters* editorial: an activist's dream. But in São Paulo, Brazil, the dream has become a reality.

In September last year, the city's populist right-wing mayor, Gilberto Kassab, passed the so-called Clean City laws. Fed up with the "visual pollution" caused by the city's 8,000 billboard sites, many of them erected illegally, Kassab proposed a law banning all outdoor advertising. The skyscraper-sized hoardings that lined the city's streets would be wiped away at a stroke. And it was not just billboards that attracted his wrath: all forms of outdoor advertising were to be prohibited, including ads on taxis, on buses—even shopfronts were to be restricted, their signs limited to 1.5 metres for every 10 metres of frontage. "It is hard in a city of 11 million people to find enough equipment and personnel to determine what is and isn't legal," reasoned Kassab, "so we have decided to go all the way."

The law was hailed by writer Roberto Pompeu de Toledo as "a rare victory of the public interest over private, of order over disorder, aesthetics over ugliness, of cleanliness over trash & For once, all that is accustomed to coming out on top in Brazil has lost."

Border, the Brazilian Association of Advertisers, was up in arms over the move. In a statement released on 2 October, the date on which law PL 379/06 was formally approved by the city council, Border called the new laws "unreal, ineffective and fascist". It pointed to the tens of thousands of small businesses that would have to bear the burden of altering their shopfronts under regulations "unknown in their virulence in any other city in the world". A prediction of US\$133 million in lost advertising revenue for the city surfaced in the press, while the São Paulo outdoor media owners' association, Sepex, warned that 20,000 people would lose their jobs.

Others predicted that the city would look even worse with

the ads removed, a bland concrete jungle replacing the chaos of the present. North Korea and communist Eastern Europe were cited as indicative of what was to come. "I think this city will become a sadder, duller place," Dalton Silvano, the only city councillor to vote against the laws and (not entirely coincidentally) an ad executive, was quoted as saying in the *International Herald Tribune*. "Advertising is both an art form and, when you're in your car, or alone on foot, a form of entertainment that helps relieve solitude and boredom," he claimed.

There was also much questioning of whether there weren't, in fact, far greater eyesores in the city—such as the thousands of homeless people, the poor condition of the roads and the notorious favelas: wouldn't Kassab's time be better spent removing these problems than persecuting taxi drivers and shop owners? Legal challenges followed while, in an almost comical scenario, advertising executives followed marches by the city's students and its bin men by driving their cars up and down in front of city hall in protest.

Nevertheless, the council pressed ahead. "What we are aiming for is a complete change of culture," its president Roberto Tripoli said. "Yes, some people are going to have to pay a price but things were out of hand and the population has made it clear that it wants this."

Originally, the law was to be introduced last autumn with immediate effect but it was first delayed until December and then finally introduced in January 2007 with a 90-day compliance period, supposedly giving everyone time to take down any posters or signs that did not meet the new regulations or face a fine of up to US\$4,500 per day. Throughout that period, the city's workmen were busy dismantling around 100 sites per day, occasionally supervised personally by Kassab, a man with an obvious eye for a photo opportunity.

In theory, 1 April was the first day of São Paulo's re-birth as a Clean City. So what does it feel like? Photographer and typographer, Tony de Marco, has been documenting the new, ad-free world of São Paulo, publishing a sequence of images on Flickr.

The city, says de Marco, is starting to feel more "serene". "I can't tell you what it's like to live in a city without ads yet," says Gustavo Piqueira, who runs the studio Rex Design in São Paulo, "because in a lot of places they still haven't been removed. In Brazil, every time that some new law comes in, everybody waits a little to see if it will really be applied and seriously controlled, or if it's just something to fill the newspapers for a week or two."

In a lot of places, Piqueira says, this has led to the removal of posters but not the structures on which they were displayed. "It's a kind of 'billboard cemetery'. I guess they're waiting to see if the law will really last. If the mayor keeps the law for a year or so, people will start to remove them and the city will, finally, start to look better."

Photographer and typographer Tony de Marco has been out documenting this strange hiatus in a sequence of images published on Flickr and used to illustrate this piece. The city, he



says, is starting to feel more "serene".

Already the law has led to some strange discoveries. Because the siting of billboards was unregulated, many poor people readily accepted cash to have a poster site in their gardens or even in front of their homes. With their removal, a new city is emerging: "Last week, on my way to work, I 'discovered' a house," says Piqueira. "It had been covered by a big billboard for years so I never even knew what it looked like." The removal of the posters has "revealed an architecture that we must learn to be proud of, instead of hiding," says de Marco.

But there are downsides—Piqueira worries that much of the "vernacular" lettering and signage from small businesses—"an important part of the city's history and culture"—will be lost. The organisers of the São Paulo carnival have also expressed concerns about the long-term future of their event now that sponsors will not be allowed to advertise along the route. The city authorities for their part have made it clear that certain public information and cultural works will be exempted from the rules.

After a period of zero tolerance, Piqueira believes that advertising, albeit in a far more regulated form, will start to creep back into the city, either as a result of legal challenges, a change in administration, or compromises between media owners and the city. Already, the council has stated that it would like to see the introduction of approved street furniture such as bus stops, which may well carry ads. As these will no doubt be for the major brands that can afford such lucrative positions, a more sterile, bland visual environment may replace the vibrant, if chaotic streets of the past. Flyposters, hand-lettered signs and club flyers will remain banned while international ad campaigns for global brands on city-approved poster sites will return.

For de Marco, though, "the low quality of the letters and the images on those immense pieces of propaganda" were always a concern, as was "the misuse and occupation of public space. In the weeks before my birthday," he says, "my visual enemies begin to disappear like the happy end of a motion picture. To see my city clean was my best birthday present and my photos were the record of the feast."

Meanwhile, according to Augusto Moya, creative director of ad agency DDB Brasil, the ban is forcing agencies to be more inventive. "As a creative, I think that there is one good thing the ban has brought: we must now use more traditional outdoor media (like bus stops and all kinds of urban fittings) in a more creative way," he says. "People at all the agencies are thinking about how to develop outdoor media that do not interfere so much in the physical structure of the city."

Moya takes an enlightened view of the law. "As a citizen, I think that future generations will thank the current city administration for this ban," he says. "There's still a lot to be done in terms of pollution—air pollution, river pollution, street pollution and so on. São Paulo is still one of the most polluted cities in the world. But I believe this law is the first step for a better future."

And even if some Paulistanos remain unconvinced, there is at least one group who are certainly not complaining—the city's scrap dealers, who are set to make a killing from recovering all the old signs and structures.

## Evangelicals vs. Bush

### New Generation Is More Liberal

by Harvey Cox, *Boston Globe*, 9 July 2006

IN THE SPRING OF LAST YEAR, President Bush flew to Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Because of its conservative religious reputation, his advisers thought it would be a safe and friendly place, but the visit did not turn out as expected. He was greeted by a petition, signed by a third of the faculty, and a large student demonstration. Both denounced the invasion of Iraq as not meeting the classical Christian criteria for a just war.

Indeed, as the president has tried to shore up support among religiously conservative voters in preparation for this fall's congressional elections, returning to such issues as a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage, he has found himself grappling with a new challenge. Evangelical Protestants are becoming increasingly concerned about a wide range of issues—the Iraq War, the environment, torture, and poverty, for example—which put them at odds with much of the Bush agenda.

#### Enter the Real, nonPolitical Jesus

This interest in what are often considered "liberal" issues marks the rise of a younger and more moderate leadership among evangelicals. Paradoxically, these new leaders are more "religious" than the old guard of the religious right. The difference, one could argue, is that they are more concerned about actually following Jesus, who had much to say about violence and the poor, but said nothing about gays or a strong military, and who was put to death by torture. The appearance of these new social concerns means that something important is afoot in the vast evangelical community of America. It is simply no longer accurate to identify "evangelical" with "religious right."

To those familiar with American religious history, this development will not come as a surprise. Christians who are theologically conservative have not always been politically right wing. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, evangelicals were in the forefront of such progressive movements as abolition and women's suffrage. And African-American churches, it bears mentioning, have always been theologically conservative and politically progressive.

Historically, the main worry of the most theologically conservative Protestants, who began calling themselves "fundamentalists" in 1912, was religious, not political. They wanted to preserve such orthodox beliefs as the virgin birth, the resurrection of Jesus, and the inerrancy of the Bible against what they called "modernism," which included the critical historical study of the Bible and the theory of evolution. But these same people were often left-leaning populists and progressives in the political arena.

The best known self-styled "fundamentalist" of the late 19th and early 20th century was the three-time Democratic candidate for president William Jennings Bryan. Bryan is remembered today mainly for his role in the Scopes "monkey trial" in 1925, the last year of his life. But even then, Bryan remained a progressive fundamentalist. (No biblical literalist, he believed that the seven days of creation mentioned in Genesis might refer to very long eons. "The Bible is about the rock of ages, not the age of rocks," he remarked, slyly ribbing the

literalists.) Bryan's positions on public policy issues were almost the complete opposite of those of today's religious right. His famous "cross of gold" speech at the 1896 Democratic convention in Chicago brought crowds to their feet with its stinging attacks on Wall Street. He was so suspicious of militarism that he resigned from Woodrow Wilson's cabinet before World War I to protest what he saw as that president's undue belligerency toward Germany.

Some historians believe that after the ridicule poured on them during the Scopes trial American fundamentalists retreated in humiliation and almost disappeared. This, however, is a mistaken picture and makes it hard to explain their powerful rebirth after World War II. Where had they been? And how did they get where they are today?

The fundamentalists had not disappeared. During the 1930s and 1940s they simply regrouped, and began to form a nationwide religious counter-culture made up of thousands of independent churches, Bible institutes, summer camps, conference centers, radio ministries, and revival services. They advised their people to "come out and be separate." Since society at large was so obviously plunging toward judgment and destruction, they usually eschewed any political involvement. Why patch up a ship that was doomed to sink anyway? The kind of reforms Bryan once advocated now seemed pointless to them. The best one could do was to save as many individual souls as possible.

#### Today's Progressive Evangelicals

But in 1940, a rift emerged among religiously conservative Protestants, marking a major change in the American religious landscape. An influential group under the leadership of the Rev. Harold Ockenga of Boston's Park Street Church formed the National Association of Evangelicals. Its purpose was to draw a sharp line not just against "modernists," but also against fundamentalists. These evangelicals held many of the same beliefs as fundamentalists, but there were important differences. Evangelicals firmly believed in the religious and moral authority of the Bible, but most did not consider it a dependable source for geology or history. The main point of contention, however, was that evangelicals did not want to withdraw from the larger society; they wanted to engage it. Longing for a rebirth of Protestant Christian influence on American culture, they went public.

If Bryan had been the most visible American purveyor of evangelical Christianity in the decades before his death in 1925, beginning in the early 1950s that mantle was passed to the Rev. Billy Graham. Starting as a raw-boned Tennessee fundamentalist, Graham matured over the next decades. He soon became the icon of the evangelical movement, but much more than that as well. Year after year, polls showed him to be the most respected religious leader in the country. As he shook off the hard shell of his early years, however, he also reaped scorn and abuse from fundamentalists for cooperating with "liberal" denominations and Catholics in his many crusades; for insisting that his audiences, even in the South, should not be segregated; and, later, by calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

But alongside Billy Graham's coupling of evangelical theology with a broad social outlook, a narrow and contentious new kind of evangelicalism was also emerging in America. When a little-known Baptist preacher and self-styled fundamentalist named Jerry Falwell, at the urging of conservative Republican campaign specialists, organized what

he called The Moral Majority in the late 1970s, the religious core principles of the original fundamentalist movement were nowhere in sight. One heard little about theological issues like the virgin birth or even the inerrancy of scripture. This was an explicitly political movement.

Anything but an advocate of "come out and be separate," Falwell welcomed Catholics, Jews, and even Mormons, if they shared his political and moral convictions. His agenda was provoked not by religious heresy, but by what he and his followers described as a frontal assault on the traditional values of American society.

Some of the voices in this new and politically charged "moral fundamentalism" took the battle to the streets and, like Randall Terry, founder of Operation Rescue, were arrested blocking abortion clinics. Now the enemy was no longer theological modernism, but a series of court decisions that banned prayer and Bible reading in public schools, legalized abortion, and reached a climax here in Massachusetts with the approval of gay marriage. Indeed one preacher called the fight over same-sex marriage not just another skirmish but the "battle of Gettysburg." "If we lose this one," he remarked, "we lose the culture war."

At first the alliance Falwell forged with the most conservative wing of the Republican Party paid off handsomely for both partners. The religious right mobilized perhaps millions of voters for Republican candidates, and in turn, beginning with Ronald Reagan, Republican office holders rewarded the movement's leaders with briefings, phone calls, and access to the highest level of the administration, including the Oval Office. Even though by the 1990s Falwell's Moral Majority had faded, it was succeeded by Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition and James Dobson's Focus on the Family. Both are also driven by explicitly political agendas.

#### **Fundamentalist Blunders**

In recent years, however, the political alliance Falwell originally stitched together has been fraying. Republicans in office have not achieved the results—on abortion, school prayer, marriage, and other cultural issues—that the religious right expected. In May of this year [2006], speaking about support for Republican congressional leaders in the midterm elections, and possibly in 2008, James Dobson grumbled, "I think there's going to be trouble down the road if they don't get on the ball."

Meanwhile, a series of missteps and embarrassments—the religious right's heavy-handed intrusion into the Terry Schiavo case, the intemperate statements by Falwell (who attributed 9/11 to God's judgment on America for its gays and feminists) and by Pat Robertson (who advocated the assassination of the president of Venezuela on his nationwide television program), and the criminal investigation of Ralph Reed, the former director of the Christian Coalition—appear to have driven more moderate evangelicals away from the old religious right.

But as the religious right begins to lose its former vitality, something else has begun to emerge in the American evangelical world that could have even longer-lasting significance: the reappearance of a politically progressive evangelicalism.

#### **Mega-Churches Can Be Liberal**

The spirit of Bryan and his like is being born again. Some of this change is powered by the amazing growth of mega-churches throughout the country. These congregations, often 15,000 to 20,000 strong, are mostly evangelical in style if not in substance. Their preachers generally steer clear of

controversial doctrinal questions and concentrate on practical spiritual advice for day-to-day living. Joel Osteen, pastor of the mammoth Lakeside mega-church in Houston, is more likely to preach on how to avoid procrastination than on abortion or homosexuality. Like other mega-church pastors, Osteen knows how to market his product, and has found that many younger people are simply not drawn by antigay preaching or by the other hot-button cultural issues so favored by the old religious right.

Last February, many evangelicals responded enthusiastically when Rick Warren, pastor of the immense Saddleback church in California organized a coalition to safeguard the environment based on explicitly evangelical religious beliefs, such as God's command to human beings to be faithful stewards and to nurture and care for the earth. Both Falwell and Robertson have refused to sign on [Falwell died in May 2007—Ed.].

The new face of American evangelicalism is not confined to the mega-churches. It is also appearing among younger evangelicals, like the ones attracted to Jim Wallis's Call to Renewal movement; in smaller, more traditional congregations; and among evangelical student groups on secular college campuses. It is especially evident on many Christian college campuses, like Calvin College, which handed Bush such a rude surprise last year. In April of this year [2006] the vice president of the National Association of Evangelicals, and other prominent evangelical leaders, joined with more theologically liberal church figures and with Jewish and Catholic leaders to issue a strong public condemnation of torture based on shared religious principles. Though not naming names, the statement was clearly critical of the current administration's policies.

#### **"Family Values" Not Jesus' Issue**

One reason the future may belong to these new evangelicals is that they take the life and teaching of Jesus more seriously than the religious right, which bases its positions not on the gospels, but on what they call "traditional values" and "family values." But Jesus himself had little to say about family values; rather, he emphasized love of neighbor, and even of the enemy. And he often criticized the "traditional values" of his own time so harshly that the anxious guardians of those traditions viewed him as a menace.

To be sure, the old religious right is not dead yet. Its coffers are crammed with millions of dollars. It controls hundreds of radio and TV stations. It still exerts influence, especially on judicial appointments. Nonetheless, we may be witnessing the last hurrah of the old generation of fundamentalist and evangelical religious spokesmen. They can no longer speak with any assurance that they will be heard by all of the people once considered a faithful following.

What is happening in American evangelical Christianity is both a changing of the guard and the emergence of a younger constituency with different ideas. This does not mean they will all vote for Democrats, with whom they still disagree on several matters, but that they are concerned about a much wider range of issues. The progressive social impulse of early 20th century evangelicalism appears to be making a comeback in an America sadly in need of a vision that is both spiritually vital and politically forward looking.

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*Ed. Note: Want to see a 10-minute YouTube video of folks who believe in Armageddon and Rapture? And hear Sen. Joe Lieberman? Try <http://www.altemet.org/blogs/video/58172/>. Note that interviewing about End Times was forbidden, because maybe they would have to tell the Jews "convert or die."*

## **ECONOMIC DELUSION** (Continued from Page 1)

paradox of our times is that despite America's fabulous wealth, most people's lives are shadowed by economic anxieties and real confinements, the wounds that market ideology has imposed. They fear that much worse is ahead for their children. Reform must re-establish this fundamental principle: *The economy exists to support society and people, not the other way around.* [Italics ours, thought.] Only government can liberate them from the harsh rule of the marketplace, the demands imposed by capital and corporations that stunt or stymie the full pursuit of life and liberty in this complex industrial society. This very wealthy country has the capacity to insure that all citizens, regardless of status or skills, have the essential needs to pursue secure, self-directed lives. This starts with the right to health, work, livable incomes and open-ended education, and to participate meaningfully in the decisions that govern their lives. The marketplace has no interest in providing these. It is actively destroying them.

A coherent alternative agenda that will fulfill these principles does not yet exist. Nor will a liberal-progressive program emerge miraculously if the Democratic Party should somehow regain power in the next few years, since many Democrats in Congress have internalized the market ideology and collaborate with the right. But elements of that alternative agenda are already ripe for discussion. Before we explore some of them, however, we should examine the economics of why the right failed.

### **History's Goat**

The economic engine is running on empty. It looks robust only if you ignore the underlying conditions. Household savings were negative last year for the first time since 1933; that is, families kept up by spending more than they earned and by borrowing to do so. The national economy, encompassing private-sector business and government as well as households, also had negative savings in the fall quarter of 2005, despite bountiful corporate profits.

The household accounting reflects a common reality: Wage incomes, adjusted for inflation, are stagnant or falling. The weekly wage for 92 million people in nonsupervisory jobs (82 percent of the private-sector workforce) has declined for three consecutive years, largely because total working hours shrank across the economy. Even per capita income—a broader measure that includes the billionaires—declined for four years in a row under Bush. One in six manufacturing jobs has been lost since 2000 (39 percent in communications equipment, 37 percent in semiconductors). These losses are explained as free-market "efficiencies" but mainly represent the global relocation of American production.

The cumulative effect is an economy that doesn't produce enough to pay for what it wants and needs. The conservative order, notwithstanding its proclaimed values, makes up the difference by borrowing. In five years, Bush has added \$2.5 trillion to the federal debt with more to come (thanks to his regressive tax cutting, deficit spending, the war in Iraq and the subpar economy). In the same five years, the national economy as a whole took on even more debt—\$2.9 trillion—to pay for

the ever-swelling trade deficits. The creditors are our trading partners, led by China and Japan. The collective indebtedness is growing much faster than the nation's collective income—always an ominous sign for a debtor. George W. Bush may wind up as history's goat because he had the bad luck to inherit the effects of twenty-five years of rightward governance (including Bill Clinton's tenure). Government shifted tax burdens downward, favored military spending over productive domestic investment, encouraged multinationals to disperse jobs and production overseas and embraced the Federal Reserve's hard-money monetary policy, which suppressed working-class wages. Fortunes were shifted upward, fabulously.

The era produced a great ideological irony: Starting with Reagan, the right repeatedly finessed its contradictions with debt—the borrow-and-spend "sin" they once assigned to liberalism. In 1981, Reagan's first year as President, the federal debt surpassed \$1 trillion for the first time ever. Twenty-five years later, despite fiscal restraint under Clinton, the federal debt has surpassed \$8 trillion.

The Republicans now find themselves in a corner with no good choices. If Bush withdrew the stimulus of federal deficits, economic growth would collapse. The sensible course would require a massive shift in priorities—moving money and benefits from the wealthy few to the struggling many—but that is ideological heresy and would double-cross the GOP's monied patrons. Bush could confront the huge trade deficits by imposing unilateral limits on imports, but that is also a humiliating heresy he won't touch. So conservatives are likely to muddle on, hoping the economy will somehow work itself out of its weaknesses. Progressives should get busy now developing alternative ideas for the major shift that must inevitably follow.

### **For Life and Liberty**

You wouldn't know it from reading the newspapers, but substantial and often overwhelming majorities of Americans have repeatedly endorsed governing concepts that conventional politicians dismiss as radical or unrealistic: *Universal health care. A job for everyone who wants to work, guaranteed by the government. Secure retirements. Stronger enforcement of environmental laws. Stronger defenses against encroaching corporate power. Union protection for workers against exploitive employers.* The list goes on. These widely endorsed goals assume an activist government that nurtures people and society first, ahead of corporations and capital. Imagine a political agenda that sets out to give the people what they say they want.

The heart of the problem is the deterioration of work and wages. There are many other elements damaging the pursuit of life and liberty; but as old-school liberals always understood, if wages and working conditions are not moving in the right direction, you won't accomplish much toward healing other social injuries and disorders. What follows is a short list of provocative ideas meant to stimulate imaginations.

### **Repair Wages.**

This should start with government acting as the "employer of last resort" and involves a large and permanent program of federally financed jobs, open to anyone ready and willing to work and closely integrated with skill training and education. For most workers, the public jobs would be temporary, a safe harbor until opportunities improve in private employment. What might the people do? Any work that helps address the vast inventory of unmet public needs—a broad program of public investment that rebuilds neighborhoods, reclaims ruined

ecosystems or restores production. *Local citizens and governments would choose the priorities, not Washington.*

The most dramatic benefits would obviously accrue to the poor—injecting jobs with reliable (and legal) cash incomes into desolate urban and rural communities, a financial platform to stimulate private enterprise and redevelopment. Young people could hold part-time public jobs, conditioned on staying in school, and bring cash home to the family, while getting hands-on experience and productive skills—a powerful alternative to dead-end lives. The federal job guarantee would also bolster the broad working class: a new safety net for the people displaced by recessions, offshoring or corporate downsizing. Wages could be scaled upward for the public jobs, based on the skill levels involved, and the displaced industrial workers would have access to retraining.

Above all, a permanent program of public employment, properly conceived, would boost wages. It would mop up surplus labor (about two times larger than official unemployment) and create a new wage floor, generating upward pressure in the labor market. In a more bountiful era, this might seem unnecessary, even inflationary. But today's economy has things upside down: It proliferates the low-wage service jobs that cannot sustain families, while it gradually eliminates the high-wage manufacturing jobs that provide middle-class incomes. Public jobs, together with a sustained campaign to raise the minimum wage and other measures, would gradually shift the flow of rewards in the other direction.

Employers will not like this, obviously, and will argue that rising wages are bad for the economy—higher prices, lower profits. But is that really so? The steady deterioration of working-class wages over the past thirty years did not produce a healthier economy. Someone should ask working people whether they would choose cheaper prices at Wal-Mart or better incomes for themselves. The current labor market does indeed benefit the more affluent Americans who have been enriched by what happened to the price of labor. Now it is time to reverse the flow and heal the wounded—that is, restore a balanced prosperity.

### **Deregulate Labor**

The destruction of worker rights (the right to organize a union, established by the 1935 National Labor Relations Act) is a great failure of regulatory government and a critical factor in the deterioration of wages and working conditions. Union density has declined to 8 percent of the private-sector workforce, yet a poll last year found that 53 percent of workers would like to be represented by a union—if they could. The gap between aspirations and reality is maintained by systematic and often illegal corporate tactics that block workers from exercising their rights.

One answer might be to eliminate the National Labor Relations Board—free the workers of regulation. Federal law and regulators are quite lame in policing the corporate illegalities, but workers and unions are prohibited by law from using effective tactics like secondary boycotts, sit-down strikes occupying workplaces and mass mobilizations. A newly enacted labor law would be grounded in constitutional rights—*free speech, freedom of assembly, the Thirteenth Amendment prohibiting involuntary servitude*—rather than politically vulnerable regulatory law.

Rethinking labor rights is another opportunity to build bridges across class differences by creating a broader set of rights that apply to all employees, regardless of union status. That would involve basic protections against managerial

abuses, and also new rights of self-expression and the right to participate in decision-making within the firm. The best companies already do this, because they know the free flow of information among employees stimulates innovation and efficiency reforms. Labor law effectively inhibits unionized workers from even meeting with nonunion colleagues without the boss's consent.

Ultimately, labor-law reform should encourage an economy of *worker ownership* in which employees share responsibility for the firm with management and share more equitably in the returns. The top-down corporate structure is a major source of inequality. Does anyone imagine that employees, if they had a voice, would ratify the scandalous executive pay for CEOs?

### **Tax Corporate Behavior**

Major corporations used to be part of the liberal social contract. They were the institutional partners that distributed health insurance, pensions, labor guarantees and other progressive benefits to workers and communities (reimbursed by federal tax deductions). But during the last generation, companies have resigned from this role, turning on their employees and extracting "profit" by expropriating the value that belonged to their workers: wages, pensions, healthcare benefits and good working conditions.

Government has to step in and fill the void to avert social calamity. The old arrangement helped build the middle class, but it was never as good as it sounded. Roughly half the country was left out. Moreover, the voluntary nature gave managements the power to set the terms—and the freedom to break promises—which were challenged only by unions.

Universal health insurance is the most pressing imperative because health costs continue to soar as the burden is shifted to employees. Pensions may become a larger crisis in the long run. The right's twenty-five-year experiment with individual pension accounts has failed, leaving even middle-class workers unprepared for retirement. Instead of tinkering with the failed concept, reformers should create an entirely new national pension: *universal, mandatory savings* under government supervision that, alongside Social Security, will insure comfortable retirement for all. One model is the pension plan already enjoyed by federal employees and members of Congress [see Greider, "Riding Into the Sunset," 27 June 2005].

Companies need to pay, meanwhile, for their antisocial behavior. They collect hundreds of billions in tax breaks and subsidies, yet abuse society in return—degrading the environment and communities, ignoring the national interest, offloading their obligations. Corporate taxation has declined since the 1960s from more than 20 percent of federal revenue to less than 10 percent. Despite their profitability, scores of major corporations pay zero taxes (some even collect refunds). One plausible remedy is to *refashion the corporate income tax* as an important new mechanism for enforcing corporate obligations to society. Imagine a reformed tax code that clears away all the corrupted loopholes and sets the basic corporate tax rate higher, at around 45 percent.

Corporations would then be able to reduce their tax liability—perhaps by 15 points or more—by demonstrating that their performance adheres to higher social standards. Does the company, for instance, increase wages for workers in step with its rising productivity, as economists assume, or does it pocket the money for the insiders and shareholders? A positive record could knock several points off the tax rate. Does the company have an egregious history of trashing environmental laws or

fraudulent dealings in financial markets? It would be ineligible for reductions. If the company is increasing its American workforce, augmenting pensions and healthcare, encouraging democratic relations with employees, it could be rewarded at tax time. This leverage would penalize bad behavior at the bottom line and reinforce the tattered regulatory laws. The performance ratings would be public—a "market signal" that tells investors and consumers which companies are the white hats and which are the rogues.

**Develop an Industrial Policy for Essential Needs**

Economic deregulation produced real economic gains, like stimulating technological innovation, but it also fed inequality in sly ways. The deregulated system raised costs for the least affluent, while larger business customers were able to bargain for lower prices. Financial deregulation (enacted by Democrats in 1980) legalized usurious lending and created a large pool of families (now around 12 million) who can't afford a bank account and get ripped off by predatory lenders. Deregulation of electric utilities led to Enron and the price-rigging scandals. That sector, meanwhile, notoriously ignores its culpability for producing global warming.

The point is, some consumer goods are too essential to be left to the profit-seeking enthusiasms—and reckless disruptions—of private enterprise. People need them to live and are thus always prey to exploitation. Family finances will benefit and so will the environment if government selectively re-regulates industrial sectors producing for essential needs: banking and finance, energy, elements of transportation and telecommunications, for starters.

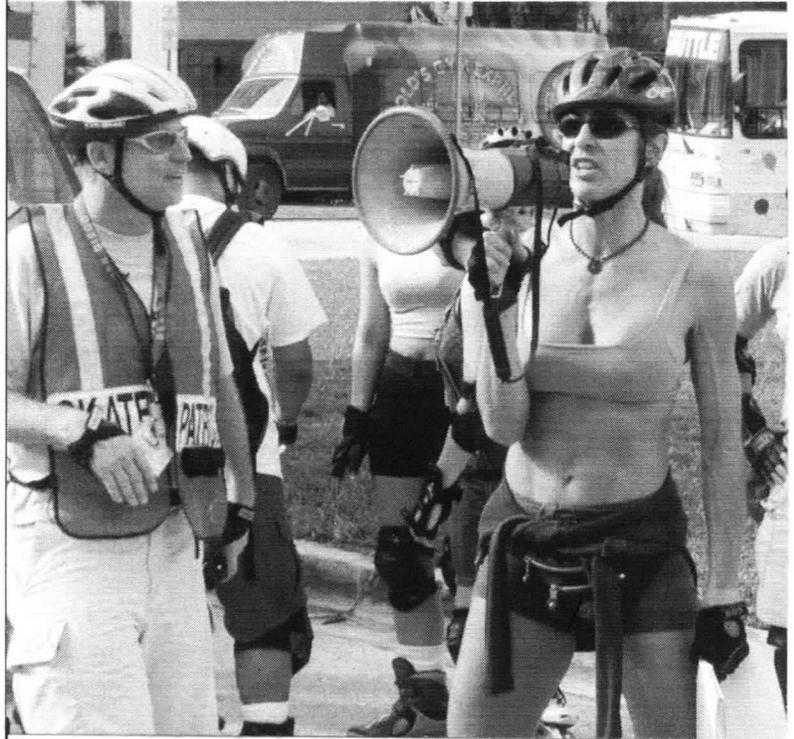
The basic approach is restoring a franchise relationship in which firms accept government-imposed obligations in exchange for limited competition and an assurance of moderate profits. Market space can be preserved for smaller, innovative firms. New rules can avoid the inflexibilities of the old system. But the notion that corporations have a right to annex common public assets and turn them into profitable commodities has to be stopped. Companies are buying the water. What's next—selling us clean air?

A prime candidate for essential-needs regulation is the drug industry. Among its many outrages, the drug companies ride free on the expensive basic research financed by government, then convert it into private, overpriced products—paying nothing at all back to the original financiers, the taxpayers. If citizens ever understood this scam, they would be angry enough to demand a nationalized drug industry. At the very least, citizens are entitled to reasonable pricing and a share of the profits from the medicine they paid to create.

Re-regulation of commerce also requires some rules accepted as everyday practice in business. *When government hands out public money to a company, it should demand an enforceable contract: written agreement from the corporate recipient about what the public gets in return and the right to recover the money if the agreement isn't fulfilled.* When government puts up public capital for a private development as tax breaks or infrastructure, it should get equity in return. If businesses don't like these terms, they don't have to take the public's money.

These ideas and others can gain political traction if reformers reclaim the language of freedom. It starts with a liberating message for people: *The failure lies in the system, not yourselves.* When the conservative order stripped away government protections for society, control was handed over to

another master—the marketplace—that is even more remote from accountability and far less sympathetic to the human condition. That old order is collapsing. Now life and liberty can be restored. Government helps by creating the proper foundations. People will do the rest for themselves. #



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