

# BCA Dispatch

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

Newsletter of the **July-August**  
**Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy** 2009

*The individual is handicapped by coming face to face with  
a conspiracy so monstrous he cannot believe it exists.  
The American mind simply has not come to a realization  
of the evil which has been introduced into our midst.*

—J. Edgar Hoover, regarding—umm---communism, 1956

## COMMUNITY NOTES

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

Hurrah! The Alliance for Democracy's national council has  
affirmed regional conferences in lieu of a single national conven-  
tion. This arrangement will allow many *(Continued on Page 10>>)*

## Obama at NAACP

### Fierly Rhetoric, Bootstrap Conservatism

by Tom Eley, World Socialist Web Site, 18 July 2009

**T**HE MAIN THRUST OF PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA'S SPEECH be-  
fore the centenary meeting of the National Association for  
the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Thursday  
was to blame working class African-Americans for the social  
crisis engulfing them.

Obama alluded to the dimensions of the social misery con-  
fronting black workers. African-Americans are "out of work more  
than just about anybody else" and are "more likely to suffer from  
a host of diseases but less likely to own health insurance," the  
president said. Obama also made reference to the dispropor-  
tionately large number of African-Americans incarcerated in the  
nation's massive prison system and affected by AIDS.

This truncated list—Obama might have mentioned the fore-  
closure crisis, homelessness, the collapse of public education in  
the cities, etc.—offers only a glimpse of the dire conditions con-  
fronting African-American workers, though by no means only  
black workers.

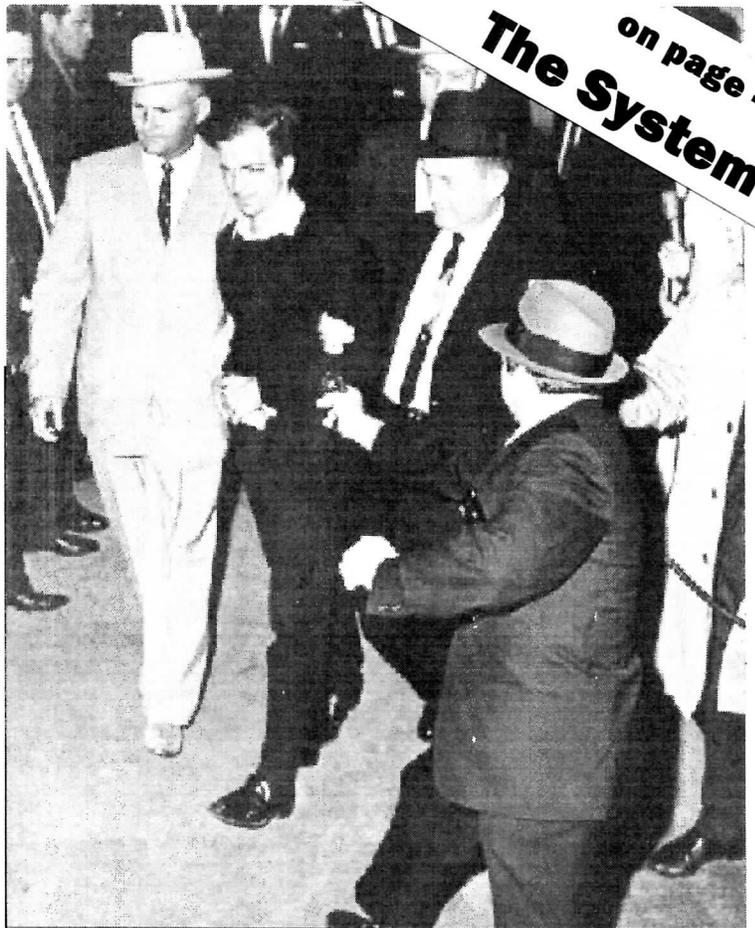
But what is the cause of this misery? And how does Obama  
propose to alleviate it?

Here Obama adopted all the right-wing nostrums about "per-  
sonal responsibility" that have been used to justify the gutting of  
social programs, exacerbating the crisis confronting broad sec-  
tions of the working class.

"Government programs alone won't get our children to the  
Promised Land," Obama declared. In other words, black workers  
can expect no significant social assistance from the Obama ad-  
ministration. Instead, Obama claimed that what is needed is "a  
new mind set, a new set of attitudes."

According to Obama, "[O]ne of the most durable and destruc-  
tive legacies of discrimination is the way we've internalized a  
sense of limitation; how so many in our community have come to  
expect so little from the world and from themselves."

Obama is doubtless aware that this is a recapitulation of  
Daniel Patrick Moynihan's widely dis- *(Continued on Page 9 >>)*



on page 4  
**The System**

Mobster Jack Ruby about to silence accused assassin Lee Harvey  
Oswald. Evidence suggests that both were part of a CIA-FBI-Army plot  
to assassinate President Kennedy: Oswald was set up as a scapegoat,  
while Ruby, who was seen carrying a rifle-case onto the grassy knoll at  
the assassination site, was backup killer of Oswald in case the Dallas  
police failed to do it. Ruby died in custody three years later.

## CIA: The Fascists Within

### Arranged JFK's Death, Boosting Cold War

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy, Catholic Radical\*, June 2008,  
reviewing **JFK and the Unspeakable: Why he  
died & why it matters** by James W. Douglass,  
Orbis Books, 2008.

**T**HE JFK ASSASSINATION HAS INSPIRED HUNDREDS OF BOOKS,  
articles, and films without establishing a historical con-  
sensus as to what happened and why. Conspiracy  
theories about President Kennedy's murder are so diverse as  
to become the butt of jokes. Jerry Bruckheimer's 2007 film  
"National Treasure: The Book of Secrets" has the truth of Ken-  
nedy's assassination hidden in the Library of Congress along  
with the skinny [information] on Area 51 and Elvis Presley's  
death. Many people, myself included, have become suspicious  
of those who claim to have discovered the facts about JFK's  
death. But if anyone could give me pause, it's Jim Douglass,  
whose earlier books are scholarly and well-reasoned.

Researched over more than fifteen years and including 100  
pages of source materials and footnotes [and an 11-page  
chronology], Douglass's 510-page book, *JFK and the Unspeak-  
able*, may well be the most definitive written on the assassina-  
tion to date, not only because of the author's diligence, but also  
because he had access to numerous documents only recently  
made public. It's a genuine must-read. *(Continued on Page 2 >>)*

Douglass blames Kennedy's assassination on a phenomenon that Trappist monk Thomas Merton called "the Unspeakable", a systemic evil which perpetrates illegal and immoral acts, including murder, for political and economic purposes, so long as "plausible deniability" can be maintained. An opponent of Kennedy's Cold War politics, Merton nonetheless saw a spark in the president which could turn the country away from the brink of nuclear war. But Merton warned in 1961 that "such people are before long marked out for assassination."

Douglass gives a straightforward history of Kennedy's political career showing how he alienated himself from both the military industrial complex and the anticommunist national security apparatus within his own government. Beginning with his 1957 senatorial speech supporting Algerian independence from France, Kennedy charted a different course than the CIA which, under President Eisenhower, had overthrown several popular regimes.

#### **Kennedy defies warrior agencies**

Conflict with the CIA deepened with Kennedy's refusal to provide US military support to Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs and his acceptance of a neutral Laos. The young president made more enemies by threatening to transfer military contracts away from US Steel unless they honored a union agreement regarding prices and wages.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy bucked the advice of the entire Joint Chiefs of Staff which called for military strikes rather than a blockade. He enraged the same interests by pushing through the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and by opening back-channel negotiations with Khrushchev and Castro for an end to the Cold War. Kennedy bucked the CIA again by supporting Indonesia's President Sukarno, "the most outspoken proponent of Third World neutralism in the Cold War." But Douglass says Kennedy sealed his fate with his October 11, 1963 National Security Action Memorandum calling for an immediate withdrawal of "1,000 US troops from Vietnam and the remainder by the end of 1965."

Douglass goes on to prove that the CIA, with the FBI and the Pentagon's complicity, planned Kennedy's assassination by multiple marksmen, while simultaneously scapegoating a supposed communist named Lee Harvey Oswald. Douglass provides overwhelming evidence to support his claim and its more terrifying conclusion that the conspirators hoped to lay blame on Cuba and the USSR, thereby provoking a US nuclear first-strike against them. Using credible sources, Douglass proves that both the CIA and the Pentagon were eager to wage nuclear war before the Soviet Union could reach parity with the US. At a cabinet meeting in 1961 General Lemnitzer, the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, argued that a nuclear war with only 30 million dead Americans would be acceptable. Kennedy walked out saying "These people are crazy."

#### **Witnesses, Doctors silenced**

Some of Douglass's book is a bit dry. Other segments are so shocking that readers will be compelled to read them aloud to friends and family. The details of Lee Harvey Oswald's long association with the CIA and the vast cover-up of evidence by the FBI and Warren Commission is convincingly described. Especially moving are the stories of numerous individuals who tried to prevent the assassination or expose it afterwards only to be ignored, marginalized, threatened, imprisoned, confined in mental hospitals, or murdered.

Consider the case of Dr. Charles Crenshaw. He was one of 26 emergency medical personnel in Dallas who told the press on

the day of the assassination that Kennedy had been shot in the neck by a bullet which left a massive exit wound in the rear of his head. Under intense pressure from ambiguous government agents who realized that such a shot could not have been fired by Oswald, all 26 doctors, nurses, and orderlies changed their story the next day. Dr. Crenshaw admitted in his 1992 book *JFK: A Conspiracy of Silence*, "I was as afraid of the men in suits as I was of the men who had assassinated the president... I reasoned that anyone who would go so far as to eliminate the president of the United States would surely not hesitate to kill a doctor."

Hospital corpsman James Jenkins was present at Kennedy's autopsy at Bethesda Naval Hospital where admirals Calvin Galloway and George Burkley ordered the doctors not to examine the neck wound or to trace the bullet's trajectory. Jenkins says in Crenshaw's book "I was 19 or 20 years old, and all at once I understood that my country was not much better than a third world country. From that point in time, I have had no trust, no respect for government."

#### **Truman regrets CIA's strange activities**

Douglass's sources go beyond ordinary Americans to include those in the highest branches of government. In an article he must have written immediately after JFK's assassination, former President Truman said in the December 22, 1963 *Washington Post*, "For some time I have been disturbed by the way the CIA has been diverted from its original assignment. It has become an operational and at times a policy-making arm of the Government." He felt the CIA cast a shadow over "our ability to maintain a free and open society." Given the article's timing, it's reasonable to assume Truman was implicating the CIA in Kennedy's death. Six months later, Truman wrote a letter to *Look* magazine which said "The CIA was set up by me for the sole purpose of getting all available information to the president. It was not intended to operate as an international agency engaged in strange activities."

In spite of the extent of Douglass's research, I was still occasionally skeptical on some small points and wished the book had included more of Kennedy's action which ran counter to Douglass's thesis that the President was turning toward peace. After all, despite Kennedy's remarkable progressive speech given at American University in August 1963, he made bellicose statements right up to his death. Douglass's contention that Kennedy's hawkish statements were made either to placate right wingers within his administration or to strengthen him against his most likely Republican challenger, Senator Barry Goldwater, seems possible, but not certain. There were also several segments from Kennedy's personal life which seemed to be lifted out of the sentimental, post-assassination canonization of the president.

#### **Military independent**

On the other hand, many of the documents and quotes of high-ranking government officials not only support Douglass's thesis, but teach other lessons he doesn't spell out. For example, the book includes the text of a 1962 Pentagon plan to overthrow Fidel Castro called Operation Northwoods. It includes multiple examples of international and domestic terrorism reminiscent of the CIA-sponsored Contras in Nicaragua during the 1980s. In order to justify an invasion of Cuba, the report suggests: "A 'Remember the Maine' incident could be arranged... We could blow up a US ship in Guantanamo Bay and blame Cuba;; The US could follow up with air/sea rescue operations covered by US fighters to 'evacuate' remaining members of the non-existent crew. Casualty lists in US newspapers would cause a

helpful wave of national indignation.” One can see the similarity to President Johnson’s later Gulf of Tonkin hoax to convince Congress to escalate the Vietnam War. Additionally, Douglass includes many fallacious statements by military leaders regarding Vietnam which are eerily similar to arguments General Petraeus and President Bush make today [2008] for why we should stay in Iraq.

Perhaps most stunning of all, though, and most supportive of Douglass’s central thesis, are transcripts from a conversation that President Johnson had with Senator Richard Russell four days after the assassination. Johnson had just received information from the FBI linking Oswald to Cuba and the USSR, along with other evidence suggesting Oswald’s connection to the FBI and CIA. Johnson recognized that the latter revelation would destabilize the US government, perhaps even endanger his own life, while the former information might provoke a nuclear war. This convinced him of the need for a commission to state that Oswald acted alone. He told Russell, who would serve on the Warren Commission, “they’re testifying that Khrushchev and Castro did this and did that and kicking us into a war that can kill forty million Americans in an hour.” Douglass goes on to say, “To Johnson’s credit, he refused to let the Soviets take the blame for Kennedy’s murder; to his discredit he decided not to confront the CIA... Thus while the secondary purpose of the assassination plot was stymied, its primary purpose was achieved. The presidency was returned to the control of Cold War interests, priorities, and profits. President Johnson turned the CIA loose in Indonesia, where over a million civilians were ultimately killed. He escalated the war in Vietnam where three million more people died. He continued the nuclear arms race and never pursued detente with Cuba or the USSR.

*JFK and the Unspeakable* should be widely read and discussed in the context of current events. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the War on Terror, and the pretexts which are used to justify torture, suppression of civil liberties and obscene military spending and arms sales must be examined in the light of history Douglass uncovers. A grassroots movement must check the power of the Unspeakable. This happened when the American people demanded that nuclear testing stop. It can happen again. Jim Douglass encourages us all to be part of this peaceful demand.

\* The title of Schaeffer-Duffy’s review is “JFK and the Unspeakable”.

## JFK, RFK, MLK, Malcolm X 4 Assassinations by Same 5 Agencies

THIRTY-ONE YEARS [AFTER MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.’S MURDER] I attended the only trial held for it. The trial took place in Memphis, only a few blocks from the Lorraine Motel where King was killed. In a wrongful death lawsuit initiated by the King family, 70 witnesses testified over a 6-week period. They described a sophisticated government plot that involved the FBI, the CIA, the Memphis Police, Mafia intermediaries, and an Army Special Forces sniper team. The twelve jurors, six black and six white, returned after 2 ½ hours of deliberation with a verdict that King had been assassinated by a conspiracy that included agencies of his own government.

In the course of my journey into Martin Luther King’s martyrdom, my eyes were opened to parallel questions in the murders of John F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, and Robert F. Kennedy. I went to Dallas, Chicago, New York, and other sites to interview witnesses. I studied critical government documents in each of their cases. Eventually I came to see all four of them together as four versions of the same story. JFK, Malcolm, Martin, and RFK were four proponents of change who were murdered by shadowy intelligence agencies using intermediaries and scapegoats under the cover of “plausible deniability”. Beneath their assassinations lay the evil void of responsibility that [Thomas] Merton identified as the unspeakable.

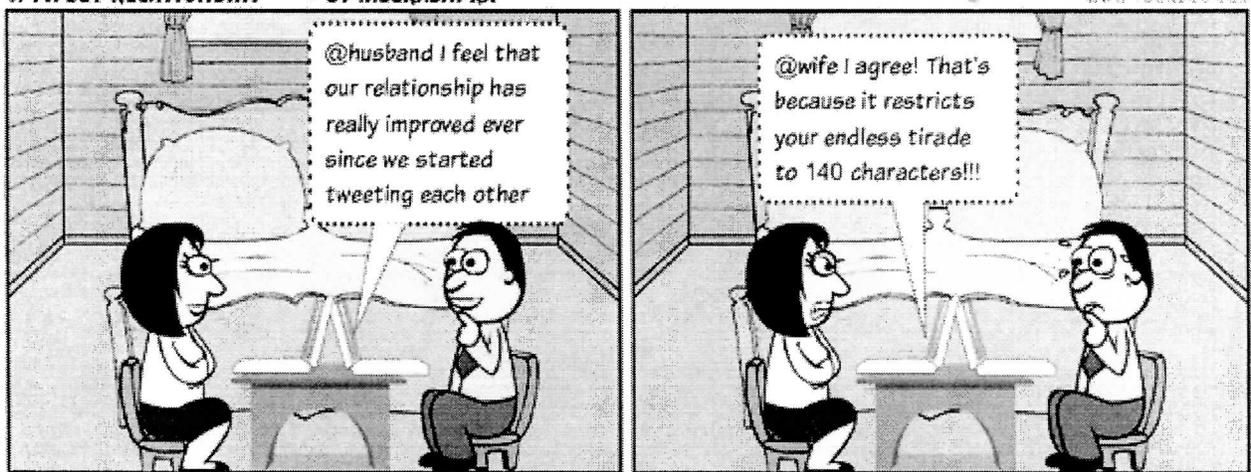
—James Douglass, *JFK and the Unspeakable*, p. xvii.

## Australia Bans Bottled Water

NINE YEARS AFTER A TINY TASMANIAN TOWNSHIP—population 200—led a grassroots national movement to ban plastic shopping bags, the small Australian highlands town of Bundanoon has become the first town to ban bottled water. Angry over a plan to build a water-extraction plant—thus requiring them to buy back their own water—townspeople supported a “Bundy on Tap” campaign and voted almost unanimously to outlaw bottled water. After the vote, residents reportedly cheered. In worse news for the \$572 million-a-year Australian water business, the premier then promptly banned state government from buying bottled water.

—Abby Zimet, *CommonDreams.org*, 11 July 2009

### A TWEET RELATIONSHIP - BY MEERASAPRA



# Mapping The System

## Key to Creating a Better World

by Dave Lewit, *Alliance for Democracy, July 2009*

There is nothing so practical as a good theory.

—Kurt Lewin, *social psychologist, 1944*

Everything is connected to everything else.

—Barry Commoner, *biologist and ecosocialist, 1971*

Open systems vary in their ability to survive even brief interruptions in the cycle of input, transformation, and output.

—Daniel Katz & Robert L. Kahn, *organizational psychologists, 1978*

Self-organization describes a system's ability to change itself by creating new structures, adding new negative and positive feedback loops, promoting new information flows, or making new rules.

—Donella Meadows, *system theorist and practitioner, 1999*

**F**OURTEEN YEARS AGO RONNIE DUGGER launched The Alliance for Democracy with the slogan "The issue is not issues; the issue is the system." He was referring to the pervasive politico-corporate system that tends to frame our thinking and limit our actions. So, when somebody complains that they can't get justice or get ahead or pay the bills or live independently—and if they don't want to blame themselves—they blame "the system". And they're probably right. The system is the connections and rules—written or tacit—which almost everyone takes for granted, vesting rights and power in people who have ownership and position in organizations and government, or have uncontrolled possession of weapons or mass media.

This selfish system is the dominant US system, not the cooperating, gifting system of some tribes, families, intentional communities, and leading movements within such states/provinces as Kerala, Quebec, Uruguay, Emilia Romagna, or Finland. That isn't to say that other major systems in China, Egypt, Peru, and elsewhere are better—indeed, they have cruder and more pervasive controls, privilege, and corruption making social change a very distant whimsy except in times of crisis and after decades of organizing as in Brazil. Although we North Americans have traditions of neighborliness, we seem to be stuck with institutions, beliefs, petty rewards, and pugnacious or passive dispositions which blinker and paralyze us when it comes to social change.

### Working Within the System

We seem to be inured to representative government and brand names. When we are aggravated we continue to petition the authorities either directly or in the streets, usually in concert with others on a single issue, or we go it alone, trying to grasp the benefits of corporate advancement either by hard work or by more devious means—"gaming" the system. That means acting on the odds that rules or norms of fairness—often too numerous, vague, or contradictory—will not be enforced, in part because the enforcers may not perceive infractions or their own responsibility, or may profit by winking—corruption.

A most obvious source of corruption in Congress is campaign finance by corporate lobbies which congress members could eliminate by revising rules or by legislation to sequester themselves from lobbyists while they are deliberating bills—while considering bills from all constituencies rather than those selected by a rule-entrenched committee chairperson. Administrators avoid tough decisions by "orbiting" requests or mandates, with such delays or hand-offs as finally to make a decision irrelevant (as with Bush's official investigation of 9/11).

Corporations create so many "choices" of superficial differences that people may be unable or unwilling to calculate best deals, may ignore perils, and lose sight of what they really want (as with medical insurance, mortgages, and other financial "products")—"death by a thousand cuts".

When citizens petition or demonstrate in the streets they face primarily a legislature or a government administration, but they also must contend with media, local opposition, police and courts, irate employers, and so on. All these elements are part of the big System. To succeed they might have to negotiate with leaders of these groups, organize a diverse phalanx of determined folks, and plan a strategy to maximize their chances with the current system. If they fail, they can persist until better conditions come about—if too many members don't drop out.

### Target the System, Not the Issue

But there is another approach: Change the system itself. Take into account the main institutions that represent and implement the system, the "inputs" from the earth, culture, and persons, and the "outputs" to persons, community, and environment. Distinguish the roles of workers, job organizers, outside contractors, lawyers, planners, and managers (Katz & Kahn, *The Social Psychology of Organizations*, quoted above). Construe the connections among these elements—the kinds and force of information and craft that empower, activate, inhibit, control, or change the people or things or concepts impacted (Meadows, *Leverage Points: Places to intervene in a system*, (quoted above).

The big System might be illustrated roughly as in the accompanying chart. Down the center are major classes of institutions with only several of many interesting components named for each; on the left are preconditions providing inputs to institutions and persons; and on the right are the persons and societies and their environments that experience systemic outputs. Digesting their experience they may react (loop or feed back) upon institutions.

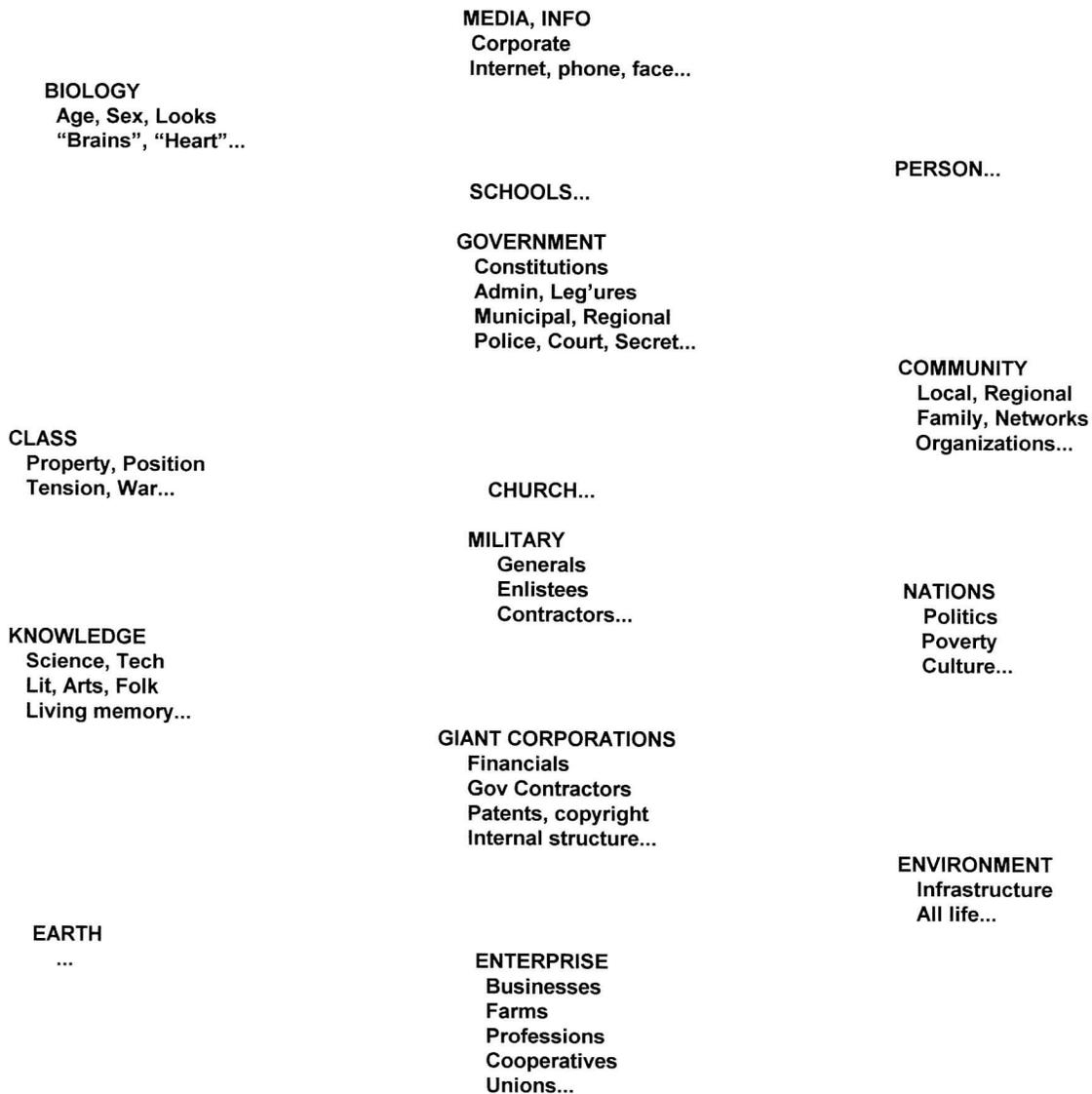
Everything is connected to everything else", but for clarity we suggest you draw only a few such lines—some showing direct effects; others showing indirect (ripple) effects, and some much stronger or weaker effects than others. For example, anti-union and cost-cutting activity by GIANT CORPORATIONS generates unemployment and tends to destructure COMMUNITY, causing homelessness, migration, and interrupting the flow of taxes and commercial/civic activity in the town, and loss of local ENTERPRISE. Lack of local enterprise tends to isolate GIANT CORPORATIONS, leaving them unchallenged or unsupported, narrowing their constructive innovations and ethics, increasing their chances of moving or collapsing.

The chart with connections drawn in is only a "snapshot" of forces within the system. Actually the forces vary from time to time causing at least minor or local shifts in power and linkages. For example, the force of financial corporations on Congress was moderate and only slightly increasing for the past several decades, but was suddenly intensified when several Wall Street investment firms crashed and the Treasury secretary (basically an agent of Wall Street) declared that our national economic foundations were collapsing. Congress therefore provided the biggest Wall Street firms trillions of dollars in an instant, weakening pressures from COMMUNITY, different ENTERPRISES, and so on. The money was supposed to increase bank lending (empowerment) to individuals and small businesses. So far that hasn't happened. So a detail on our chart, if we zoom in under GIANT CORPORATIONS, would be

(Continued on Page 6 >>)

## The System — Outline for Activists

Pick a problem (e.g., *war*. Your goal might be to change the MILITARY [circle it] from an expensive imperialist institution to a less costly, purely defensive force.). Circle its main target below (e.g., PERSON). Draw arrows from source institutions (e.g., MEDIA, MILITARY) to target. Write memo(s) on each arrow (e.g. *pundit, conscription plan*) and on all subsequent arrows—these memos are your art. Draw reaction arrows from target to other elements (e.g., COMMUNITY, GOVERNMENT). Draw connections between those institutions or elements (e.g., GOVERNMENT-MILITARY-GIANT CORPORATIONS). Draw arrows from these to rippled elements (e.g., ENVIRONMENT, NATIONS, KNOWLEDGE). Identify feedback loops as negative (braking) or positive (accelerating). Consider the timing and intensity of impacts (you have already shown (in)directness [looping] and character [memo]). Draw arrows from any of these back to PERSON, and from PERSON to COMMUNITY, etc. Consider in which of these loops you might intervene, given your individual and group strengths, and decide which would have the most powerful immediate or long-term effect\* on MILITARY (direct war-making). Distinguish relatively independent parts of these elements (e.g., Generals, Enlistees). Communicate with your groups to form or support action coalition and strategy. Certain memos suggest your local tactics.



\*Go to Donella Meadows, *Leverage Points: Where to intervene in a system*: [sustainabilityinstitute.org/pubs/Leverage\\_Points.pdf](http://sustainabilityinstitute.org/pubs/Leverage_Points.pdf)

top management (who receive and hold the money) as distinct from employees, contractors, and even shareholders.

The very essence of systemic activism is in the nature of the feedback. If the feedback is "positive", the agents of the instigating institution are encouraged to do more of the same, only faster. Too much positive feedback can accelerate growth out of control, resulting in violent conflict, desertion, and destruction.

If the feedback is "negative", the agents may be prompted to adopt new means of impacting persons/society, including partnerships with those impacted—partnerships which they may dominate (coopting). Sufficient negative feedback may disrupt the institution—"unfreeze" its structure (in the words of Lewin)—providing an opportunity for persons (activists, leaders) to "move" or reconstruct the institutional standards or combine or invent institutions. This is the essence of revolution or forced change, provided that new linkages are created and information and resource flows unblocked. Lewin points out that the changed institutions must be "refrozen" for their benefits to be realized ("Frontiers in Group Dynamics", 1947). That means that beneficial connections with other institutions and resources must be established and stabilized.

### Using A System Map

The purpose of this chart is to prompt us to visualize forces (influences, impacts) from any element to others, changes in the impacted elements, and forces unleashed from those elements back upon the instigator and upon other elements as well—currently all in an unholy and sagging balance so far as the nation and the world are concerned. It prompts us to take into account a variety of potential elements under different classes of institutions and resources, and to define the characters of their forces so as to orchestrate change—change from below, from us. Thus we might look at many sources of power for the military, and the many impacts that the military has on other elements, some of which feed back to the military and war in cycles tending to reinforce, or to weaken, or to change linkages at a later time (the map will change—elements and linkages will change).\*

For example, ongoing war usually impacts the MILITARY at first by increases and eventually by decreases in money, materiel, and options (geographic, strategic, and tactical) via GOVERNMENT. Meanwhile War also impacts Migration and MEDIA in obvious ways, and of course GIANT CORPORATIONS via Government contracts for materiel and services. Other inputs to the Military include CLASS (recruits, officer trainees, contractor managers, etc.), KNOWLEDGE (many scientists work for the Department of Defense and military contractors), EARTH (oil, uranium, water, food, etc.), and other sources. Cutting back or cutting off any of these sources would weaken the Military as a whole, although that institution might reorganize to strengthen certain functions, e.g., lobbying, public relations, assassination, unmanned aircraft, electronic interference, etc.

The challenge for anti-war activists is "where to intervene in the system" (see Meadows) for greatest "leverage": short- and long-range effect. Thus they may well consider outputs of the Military: destruction, oppression, depletion of resources and money, pollution of environment, disruption of community, and also jobs for soldiers and contractors, college stipends, jobs in local industry, community entertainment (air shows, parades, assisting movie-makers, patronage of bars), etc. These are links—modes of force—to PERSONS, COMMUNITY, and other categories.

Activists must choose the effects (outcomes) they care most about, think about the institutions that control those effects, avoid

unwanted effects, and choose the inputs to selected institutions most likely to change those effects AND which they are capable of affecting. That capability is most likely to work if means are strong AND non-violent in any of its many forms. That capability usually depends on collaboration (or opportunistic coincidence) with other activist groups or even neutral groups (like certain professions) which can affect outcomes.

Pro-democracy activists may zoom in on Government as a focus. Considering various facets of government, constitutions may be central, their explicit connections with almost every other category coming close to a lexicon of the system. Check old and new constitutions (local, regional, national, and international) against a contemporary display of the system. The US Constitution, for example, says nothing about giant corporations despite their centrality. Corporate rules and dispositions are part of governance, unless the corporation as an institution is restructured, differently connected, or dispersed. What should the constitution say? What are different outcomes worth? Will processes of personalized local giving and receiving be more stable than commercial exchange? How should change be construed—by an ideal model, or through an assembly or set of assemblies, possibly of randomly-seated individuals or communities? (And as in Star Wars or Noah's Ark, should animals—ecosystems—somehow be represented?)

Active campaigns, as parts of a movement, need not be coordinated in detail—only not get in each others way. "Let one hundred flowers bloom!" Many parts of a complex system need to be changed and at least minimally integrated. For example, campaigns against corporate "personhood" (constitutional rights) may complement or involve those which would establish public banks for greening and localization.

By hit-and-miss mass and individual action, or by traditional actions, beneficial social changes may sometimes come about. But our overall goal may be a new paradigm—social, economic, and political. Wouldn't broad strategic consideration provide more confidence, and more popular and effective action? ■

\* Some social scientists may try to write equations (algorithms) to quantify such changes, but are unlikely to capture these multiple, fast moving, emerging and dying, often unmeasured elements and linkages in time to be useful to either elites or activists.

## Iran Voting Process Safer than US Tehran Street Protesters Likely Are Dupes\*

by Paul Craig Roberts, *Counterpunch*, 3-5 July 2009 (excerpt)\*\*

The US [government] has no media. But it does have a Ministry of Propaganda [working through corporate media]. Americans were programmed with days of propaganda that Islamic Iran, a member of the US-designated "axis of evil," stole the election from the Iranian people. According to the US Ministry of Propaganda, the Iranian people are allied with the US government against the Iranian government.

Even people who are regarded as Iran experts said, without any evidence, that the elections were stolen. One of their arguments is that three hours were not enough time to count all the votes, yet it was announced that Ahmadjinejad won. The ignorance of "experts" made theft a certainty for American TV audiences.

The "experts" who make this assertion are obviously ignorant of Iran's electoral procedures. For the ignorant "experts" and the Americans deluded by them, here is the way it works:

There are more than 45,000 voting places, which means less than 1,000 votes per voting place, an easy number to count and report in three hours. At each voting place there are a dozen or more observers, including every candidates' representatives, representatives of the Guardian Council, and the local police. The votes are counted in the presence of all, and all sign documents attesting to the count.

The vote totals are forwarded to a central office in the region that has representatives of the candidates and the Guardian Council, where they are verified by a dozen or a dozen and a half of witnesses. From here the vote count goes to the Minister of the Interior, where the vote is announced.

Unless these procedures were not followed, and no evidence has been provided that the procedures were not followed, it is impossible to steal an Iranian election. It is much easier to steal an American one, which happens routinely.

There are thousands, indeed tens of thousands of witnesses, perhaps hundreds of thousands of witnesses, to the Iranian vote. Yet, only Mousavi and his corrupt supporters among the high living Iranian elite, who are fighting for personal power in Iran, contest the vote. The kids in the street were the usual dupes. At this stage in history, how can anyone believe that there is a pure candidate that wants to bring freedom and justice to the people? Anywhere. In any country, the US included.

Ignorant "experts" made a great noise about the fact that 50 cities or towns had votes in excess of registered voters. Again, this is a demonstration of the total ignorance of "Iranian experts". In Iran, voters can vote wherever they happen to be at the day of election. Vacationers, business people on travel, commuters, and the partial absence of distinct voting districts, can produce a vote count in excess of the local registered population.

The Guardian Council examined these differences, added them up, and noted that if every additional vote was fraudulent, the number was insufficient to affect the outcome.

The Guardian Council has agreed to post every vote count.

Did you learn of these facts from Fox News, CNN, the New York Times, or from the CIA and Mossad bloggers? Of course not. Every time "your" media opens its mouth lies jump out that serve the US government's hegemonic propaganda.

America's salvation lies with Charles Pelton and the Washington Post's business side managers. Once the American media is obviously a whorehouse, which it is, Americans might pull themselves out of their stupor and learn to recognize facts and to think for themselves.

But don't hold your breath. From what I have seen, with few exceptions, Americans are as dumb and insouciant as they come. And they think they are the salt of the earth...

*\*Evidence points to Tehran protests (by mostly English-speaking Iranian youth) to have been prompted by US-funded National Endowment for Democracy using Twitter (which does not accept postings in Farsi). See Steve Weissman, "Iran: Who's Diddling Democracy?", Truthout, 18 June 2009.*

*\*\*from an article entitled "Republic of the Insouciant: The Big Whorehouse on the Potomac". Paul Craig Roberts was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the Reagan administration. He is coauthor of The Tyranny of Good Intentions. He can be reached at: [PaulCraigRoberts@yahoo.com](mailto:PaulCraigRoberts@yahoo.com).*

**Ed Note:** Ronnie Dugger, Jonathan Simon, and the BCA Dispatch have been plumping for hand-counted paper ballots for years. Clearly the old-fashioned way is more accurate, less expensive, more community affirming, and less vulnerable to jiggering.

## Honduran Elite Strikes Back For Obama, Latin America Takes Back Seat

by Immanuel Wallerstein, Yale University, 15 July 2009

THE PRESIDENCY OF GEORGE W. BUSH was the moment of the greatest electoral sweep of left-of-center political parties in Latin America in the last two centuries. The presidency of Barack Obama risks being the moment of the revenge of the right in Latin America.

The reason may well be the same—the combination of the decline of American power with the continuing centrality of the United States in world politics. At one and the same time, the United States is unable to impose itself and is nonetheless expected by everyone to enter the playing field on their side.

What happened in Honduras? Honduras has long been one of the surest pillars of Latin American oligarchies—an arrogant and unrepentant ruling class, with close ties to the United States and site of a major American military base. Its own military was carefully recruited to avoid any taint of officers with populist sympathies.

In the last elections, Manuel ("Mel") Zelaya was elected president. A product of the ruling classes, he was expected to continue to play the game the way Honduran presidents always play it. Instead, he edged leftward in his policies. He undertook internal programs that actually did something for the vast majority of the population - building schools in remote rural areas, increasing the minimum wage, opening health clinics. He started his term supporting the free trade agreement with the United States. But then, after two years, he joined ALBA, the interstate organization started by President Hugo Chavez, and Honduras received as a result low-cost oil coming from Venezuela.

Then he proposed to hold an advisory referendum as to whether the population thought it a good idea to convene a body to revise the constitution. The oligarchy shouted that this was an attempt by Zelaya to change the constitution to make it possible for him to have a second term. But since the referendum was to occur on the day his successor would have been elected, this was clearly a phony reason.

Why then did the army stage a coup d'état, with the support of the Supreme Court, the Honduran legislature, and the Roman Catholic hierarchy? Two factors entered here: their view of Zelaya and their view of the United States. In the 1930s, the U.S. right attacked Franklin Roosevelt as "a traitor to his class." For the Honduran oligarchy, that's Zelaya—"a traitor to his class"—someone who had to be punished as an example to others.

What about the United States? When the coup occurred, some of the raucous left commentators in the blogosphere called it "Obama's coup." That misses the point of what happened. Neither Zelaya nor his supporters on the street, nor indeed Chavez or Fidel Castro, have such a simplistic view. They all note the difference between Obama and the U.S. right (political leaders or military figures) and have expressed repeatedly a far more nuanced analysis.

It seems quite clear that the last thing the Obama administration wanted was this coup. The coup has been an attempt to force Obama's hand. This was undoubtedly encouraged by key figures in the U.S. right like Otto Reich, the Cuban-American ex-counselor of Bush, and the International Republican Institute. This was akin to Saakashvili's attempt to force the U.S. hand in Georgia when he invaded South Ossetia. That too was done in connivance with the U.S. right. That one didn't work

because Russian troops stopped it.

Obama has been wiggling ever since the Honduran coup. And as of now the Honduran and U.S. right are far from satisfied that they have succeeded in turning U.S. policy around. Witness some of their outrageous statements. The Foreign Minister of the coup government, Enrique Ortez, said that Obama was "*un negrito que sabe nada de nada*." There is some controversy about how pejorative "negrito" is in Spanish. I would translate this myself as saying that Obama was "a nigger who knows absolutely nothing." In any case, the U.S. Ambassador sharply protested the insult. Ortez apologized for his "unfortunate expression" and he was shifted to another job in the government. Ortez also gave an interview to a Honduran TV station saying that "I don't have racial prejudices; I like the sugar-mill nigger who is president of the United States."

The U.S. right is no doubt more polite but no less denunciatory of Obama. Republican Sen. Jim DeMint, Cuban-American Republican Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, and conservative lawyer Manuel A. Estrada have all been insisting that the coup was justified because it wasn't a coup, just a defense of the Honduran constitution. And rightwing blogger Jennifer Rubin published a piece on July 13 entitled "Obama is Wrong, Wrong, Wrong About Honduras." Her Honduran equivalent, Ramón Villeda, published an open letter to Obama on July 11, in which he said that "This is not the first time that the United States has made a mistake and abandoned, at a critical moment, an ally and a friend." Meanwhile, Chavez is calling on the State Department to "do something."

The Honduran right is playing for time, until Zelaya's term ends. If they reach that goal, they will have won. And the Guatemalan, Salvadorian, and Nicaraguan right are watching in the wings, itching to start their own coups against their no longer rightwing governments.

The Honduran coup has to be placed in the larger context of what is happening throughout Latin America. It is quite possible that the right will win the elections this year and next year in Argentina and Brazil, maybe in Uruguay as well, and most likely in Chile. Three leading analysts from the Southern Cone have published their explanations. The least pessimistic, Argentine political scientist Atilio Boron, speaks of "the futility of the coup." Brazilian sociologist Emir Sader says that Latin America faces a choice: "the deepening of antineoliberalism or conservative restoration." Uruguayan journalist Raúl Zibechi entitles his analysis "the irresistible decadence of progressivism." Zibechi in effect thinks it may be too late for Sader's alternative. The weak economic policies of Presidents Lula, Vazquez, Kirchner, and Bachelet (of Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile) have strengthened the right (which he sees adopting a Berlusconi style) and split the left.

Myself, I think there's a more straightforward explanation. The left came to power in Latin America because of U.S. distraction and good economic times. Now it faces continued distraction but bad economic times. And it's getting blamed because it's in power, even though in fact there's little the left-of-center governments can do about the world-economy.

Can the United States do something more about the coup? Well, of course it can. First of all, Obama can officially label the coup a coup. This would trigger a U.S. law, cutting off all U.S. assistance to Honduras. He can sever the Pentagon's continuing relations with the Honduran military. He can withdraw the U.S. ambassador. He can say that there's nothing to negotiate instead of insisting on "mediation" between the legitimate government and the coup leaders.

Why doesn't he do all that? It's really simple, too. He's got at

least four other super-urgent items on his agenda: confirmation of Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court; a continuing mess in the Middle East; his need to pass health legislation this year (if not by August, then by December); and suddenly enormous pressure to open investigations of the illegal acts of the Bush administration. I'm sorry, but Honduras is fifth in line.

So Obama wiggles. And nobody will be happy. Zelaya may yet be restored to legal office, but maybe only three months from now. Too late. Keep your eye on Guatemala.

Ed. Note: *Top military leaders of the coup were trained in counter-insurgency at US School of the Americas (renamed after protests as Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation).*

## Cops Medically Sodomize Suspect Victim Billed \$6,792 for "Hemorrhoids"

by Brendan J. Lyons, (Albany NY) Times Union, 18 July 2009

**A** MAN WHO WAS FORCIBLY SEDATED so his body could be searched for drugs that were never found will receive \$125,000 under an out-of-court settlement reached recently with Albany County and Albany Medical Center Hospital. The settlement stems from a federal lawsuit filed two years ago by Tunde Clement, an ex-convict arrested by sheriff's investigators on March 13, 2006, at the Albany bus terminal. Clement was carrying a backpack when he stepped off a bus from New York City and was quickly confronted by investigators who suspected he may be carrying drugs.

Clement, 35, who police claim had an outstanding warrant for failing to appear in court in a neighboring city, was handcuffed and taken to a police station where he was strip-searched. No contraband was found, so Clement was taken to Albany Med, where doctors forcibly sedated him with powerful drugs against his will.

Sheriff's investigators did not obtain a search warrant for the procedure, and hospital officials did not require them to produce one. Police and hospital officials considered the matter a "medical emergency."

While Clement was under sedation, a camera was inserted in his rectum, he was forced to vomit and his blood and urine were tested for drugs and alcohol. Scans of his digestive system were performed using X-ray machines, according to hospital records obtained by the Times Union. Clement spent more than 10 hours in custody before being released on an appearance ticket for resisting arrest—a charge that was later thrown out by an Albany City Court judge.

"I think the settlement speaks for itself," said John F. Queenan, Clement's attorney in the federal lawsuit. Clement's suit claimed his civil rights were violated. He filed the federal complaint against Albany Med and several doctors and nurses, and also sued Albany County and Sheriff James Campbell, Inspector John Burke, who heads the narcotics squad that arrested Clement, and eight investigators assigned to Burke's unit. He claimed he was a victim of assault and battery when officials strapped him down and injected him with drugs against his will and with no medical need or emergency.

After being led from the bus station in handcuffs, Clement was taken to a holding cell in the county Judicial Center. He was forced to strip naked, squat and cough as investigators wrongly concluded he was hiding drugs inside his body. He was then taken to the emergency room. Medical records indicate a doctor called the hospital's risk management director

to assess the liability exposure of what they were about to do. People under arrest normally cannot be forcibly sedated without a court order unless they are in imminent danger, such as when a bag of drugs bursts inside them and they have a seizure or fall unconscious.

The hospital's records indicate Clement was behaving normally and showed no signs of any medical emergency. "Spoke to Shirley of Risk Management," a physician wrote, documenting the medical decision-making that day. "OK to treat, sedate & remove FOB (foreign object body) against (patient's) will despite his personal refusal."

The following month Clement received a \$6,792 bill from Albany Med for the procedures. Hospital records indicate the final diagnosis as "hemorrhoids."

"Every step of the way there was a factual basis for everything that was done by the law enforcement personnel in the case from the initial stop, and learning there was an arrest warrant, and then being advised there was a medical emergency," said Thomas J. O'Connor, an attorney for Investigator Douglas Vogel, who is assigned to the narcotics unit. "They were afraid for his life."

Lawyers for the hospital and Albany County could not be reached. The county's share is \$65,000. The sheriff's department's stop-and-frisk tactics at the downtown bus station have drawn harsh criticism from defense attorneys and civil rights advocates. Eight years ago, the state's highest court issued a searing rebuke of their methods while overturning the conviction of a passenger who'd been arrested carrying three ounces of cocaine.

The Court of Appeals said it was improper for the investigators to board buses from New York City and flash their badges, waiting for passengers to react. Now, sheriff's investigators said they no longer single out buses from New York City and simply approach passengers who appear to be acting suspiciously.

Clement was paroled from state prison last month after serving less than two years on a drug charge related to an arrest in Albany.

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## OBAMA AT NAACP (Continued from Page 1)

credited "culture of poverty" theory. In 1965, the sociologist (later a Democratic senator) authored a study asserting that poverty among blacks was essentially a social pathology perpetuated within "the Negro family." These conceptions featured prominently in the drive to gut the welfare system.

Obama made clear that dire social conditions are no justification for government assistance to black youth. While there may be economic problems, he declared, "That's not a reason to get bad grades, that's not a reason to cut class, that's not a reason to drop out of school."

"We've got to say to our children ... Your destiny is in your hands ... No excuses ... all those hardships will just make you stronger, better able to compete." To Obama, not only are hunger, homelessness, and police harassment, not "excuses." These "hardships" are actually a good, making black youth "stronger, better able to compete."

The president even offered some parenting tips. "To parents ... You can't just contract out parenting," he counseled. "That means putting away the Xbox, putting our kids to bed at a reasonable hour."

Had a white politician made similar statements, there can be little doubt he or she would have been attacked as racist. But because of the color of his skin, Obama's words are hailed as

"tough love." Obama recently made a very similar speech in Africa, in which he argued that the continent most ravaged by imperialism is at fault for its own plight. (See "Obama's neo-colonial mission in Africa")

Obama's lecture to African-American workers closely resembles the position of Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), a black educator who argued that the only way that blacks could counter brutality and poverty in the segregated Jim Crow South was by improving their position through "self-help"—not through political action.

Ironically, it was his bitter opposition to Booker T. Washington that led W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963) to found the NAACP in 1909. Obama claimed that the NAACP "was not founded in search of a handout." Perhaps not. But it was founded, whatever its limitations, in order to politically combat the repression of the black population.

Obama disclosed the essential content of his perspective when he declared: "Because Jim Crow laws were overturned, black CEOs today run Fortune 500 companies. (Applause). Because civil rights laws were passed, black mayors, black governors, and members of Congress served in places where they might once have been able [sic] not just to vote but even take a sip of water. And because ordinary people did such extraordinary things ... that has led me to be here tonight as the 44th President of the United States of America. (Applause)."

From his largely well-heeled audience, this passage received an enthusiastic response. For this social layer, the essence of the civil rights movement was to create a layer of "black CEOs" and politicians. For the needs of black workers, they have only contempt.

The progressive content of the civil rights movement was based on the struggle for equality. However, as social conflicts intensified in the 1960s—including the ghetto uprisings of 1967-68—a section of the political establishment sought to cultivate a layer of the black middle class, through various affirmative action policies, and integrate it into the capitalist establishment. Over the past four decades, social inequality within the black population has increased enormously.

Obama is the outcome of this process. There is nothing in Obama's personal or political history that has anything to do with the struggles of African-American workers. He was very early on picked up by powerful political and financial interests that ultimately shepherded him to the White House. Because of his particular ethnic background, he was seen as someone who could better sell right-wing policies.

Far from advancing the interests of the majority of the black population, identity politics has become the vehicle for a sharp attack on African-American workers and the working class as a whole. While his administration has handed over upwards of \$12 trillion to the big finance houses, Obama has manipulated the bankruptcy of the auto industry in order to drive down the wages and living standards of the working class. He has proposed health care reform that would result in a system of compulsory insurance and rationed treatment. On education—which in his speech he held up as the basic necessity for advancement—Obama is supporting the shutdown of public schools, the expansion of charter schools and an attack on teachers.

Obama's speech, and the entire content of the policy of his administration, only proves that the fundamental division in society is class, not race. ■

## Waiting for the Train

**A**T CONNECTICUT'S "MERRITT 7" COMMUTER RAIL STOP the other day, I had an eerie deja-vu. Merritt 7 is the name of a corporate office park—part of Norwich. I had spent the night at the nearby Marriott motel courtesy of my brother's expense account, and we split early the next morning—he carpooling with colleagues to a conference in New Jersey, and I taking the train to Manhattan to meet my niece and another friend.

Walking a mile, I arrived at the train-stop shelter a half-hour early. One person was on the walk between the road and the single track—a corporate benefits worker waiting for a bus she thought would take her to her new job. The bus never came, but using her cell phone she was finally fetched by an unknown fellow employee.

It was pleasantly clear and cool on that patch of asphalt—a wall of concrete and glass across the tracks and behind the trees, and similar buildings on the grassy slopes across the road, with greenery interspersed. Trees and shrubs planned and cared for by corporations flanked driveways coursed now and then by corporate vans. The only humans around were drivers encased behind glass. The building complex reminded me of the sterile Anacostia naval base of my youth, though more modern—architecturally slick for the corporate bureaucrats who worked there. A feeling of dizziness came over me.

I began thinking of their lives—somehow Orwell's *1984* came to mind—only Big Brother was not Government, but The Corporation. Unlike Anacostia, there were no visible barbed-wired, chain-link fences, but a semblance of freedom in the leafy surround—but with nowhere to go. The long line of cars parked along the track were less luxury than dire necessity for employees living too far into their pseudo-town developments to walk to the office park or the train. With colleagues freshly "let go" in a game of financial musical chairs, were their mortgage payments at risk? Were their medical coverage and college funds at risk? Who would pay for rising day care and fuel costs, and where were the old-fashioned, low-cost state university options?

While dark-skinned federal Big Brother was being guided by his corporate financiers, the pale-skinned, anonymous biz-schooled CEOs and CFOs of HRH Insurance Intermediaries, Eastman-Kodak, GE, Siemens, and the like here at Merritt 7 had become the sole known providers of social services to their employees. I felt a shiver of insecurity that goes with being untenured faculty at a formerly paternal state university—having to move on to a peripatetic life on the margin.

At exactly 8:02 the packed train arrived and I scrambled aboard. I found a seat, to hear only the clicks and hums of the train mechanism as the seventy visible commuters individually kept themselves buried in their *Wall Street Journals* or staring at their Blackberrys on their way to Stamford office cubicles or Manhattan meetings.

—Ed.

### COMMUNITY NOTES (Continued from Page 1)

more people to attend, since transportation and housing will be simplified. So there may be three or four regional conferences this year, which can certainly exchange points of view and action and maybe even visitors. Maybe fewer speakers and more local planning.

Want to help design and promote the Northeast conference? We're just starting to organize—call Barbara at 781-894-1179. The charmed circle who have been attending our meetings in

Waltham MA like the idea of collaborating with two like-minded grassroots groups—Massachusetts Coalition for Health Communities and Majority Agenda project of MassGlobalAction. MCHC is planning a statewide conference probably 18 October, and we in AfD could collaborate partly through doing things on their program and partly by having our convention back-to-back on the same weekend.

On the agenda might be enacting a state citizen trade council, protecting water and climate, participatory budgeting and democracy. These are areas we have been working on for years. Your input on continuing or finishing these projects, and picking up new projects you feel would be better, like public banks dedicated to the public good, would be great!

Our process? More local-focused and participatory.

On the national scene Alliance groups are promoting single-payer medical care—last chance: lobby in Washington DC. Meet at the Capitol on 30 July and work the congressional offices. For information, call Barbara at 781-894-1179.

## ACTION ALERTS

**Sat. 1 Aug, All Day, Boston & vicinity. Tour de Farms (bicycle).** Part of the MassBike Spin Series, visit urban farms in Roxbury and Dorchester, or community farms in the Blue Hills, Waltham, & Newton, and Boston's oldest commercial farm. Sample fresh, locally grown food, learn of the benefits of local agriculture, and how you can actively support these efforts. Ride either the 15-mile, Boston Urban Farm Loop (start Franklin Park 9am), or 40-mile, Community Farm Loop (start Franklin Park 8am). Rain or Shine. Both rides will be led by experienced riders and there will be technical support in the case of flat tires—bring extra tubes and tools!.. \$10 fee. List of sponsors, and registration: [www.urbanadventours.com/tours.php?tourtype=sponsored](http://www.urbanadventours.com/tours.php?tourtype=sponsored)

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