ALIVE AND KICKING: *IN THESE TIMES* TURNS 30

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FEBRUARY 2007

IN THESE TIMES

Say what? A **politically correct** lexicon for today

Jehangir Pocha on the **world** in **2037**

8 reasons why closing GUANTÁNAMO will save the U.S.

KAREN J. GREENBERG REPORTS

PLUS:

Who's to **blame** for America's new **torture techniques**? Mischa Gaus investigates

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Thirty More Years

Back in 1976, when James Weinstein decided to move to Chicago to start *In These Times*, his inspiration was *Appeal to Reason*, a socialist weekly published out of Girard, Kansas, between 1895 and 1922. At its peak in 1912, the paper had 761,000 subscribers—including 38,000 in Oklahoma. When the Post Office banned its special issues, which had print runs in the millions, subscribers around the country, "the Appeal army," circulated it by hand.

Appeal to Reason was founded at a time when American society confronted both the effects of the industrial revolution and the emergence of corporations as dominant players in national politics. In American cities the majority of citizens had little control over their own lives. The places they lived were unsanitary, the food they ate unsafe, the conditions of their work horrendous and their pay meager. Children were exploited for their labor. Women lacked the right to vote. Blacks, Chinese Americans and Indians suffered institutionalized racism and discrimination.

Ida Tarbell, Upton Sinclair, Helen Hunt Jackson, Lincoln Steffans, Abraham Cahan, George Seldes and many others witnessed this injustice and decided to do something about it. In newspapers and magazines, they chronicled the misery in their midst. In league with the writers, social reformers and political activists of the day—people like Henry Demarest Lloyd, William Dean Howells, Ida B. Wells, Frank Norris, Jane Addams, Eugene V. Debs, Victor Berger and Florence Kelley—these journalists became the backbone of the social movement that ushered in the eight-hour work day, child labor laws, public health departments, and food and safety regulations.

For example, in 1904 and 1905, *Appeal to Reason* serialized Sinclair's *The Jungle* and he was damned by the powerful. "I have utter contempt for him," wrote President Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt derided crusading journalists as "muckrakers" unable to look up from the filth and appreciate America's glory. Yet, for all his disdain, thanks to Sinclair's work, Roosevelt signed the Meat Inspection Act of 1906.

Though coined by Roosevelt as a pejorative, "muckraker" became a badge of honor by journalists willing to risk society's disapproval to write honestly about the world they lived in.

In These Times was—and is—inspired by those muckrakers. One of the magazine's original subscribers, the late Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.) put it this way: "Meaningful democracy cannot survive without the free flow of information, even (or especially) when that information threatens the privileged and the powerful."

Today's agenda is different from that of the Progressive Era, but citizens face a similar challenge. The wars we started in Afghanistan and Iraq are spiraling out of control. More and more families cannot afford health insurance. Civil liberties are increasingly violated. Cataclysmic damage to the Earth's environment is ignored. And the Bush administration, abetted by the corporate media, has repeatedly lied to the public in order to win elections and reward its wealthiest supporters.

In These Times was founded on the belief that a healthy democracy requires a thoughtful and independent media—a watchdog for the people. In a democracy, a crusading press and an informed public can, together, create change.

In the forward to *Appeal to Reason: 25 Years In These Times* (the 2002 book edited by former Managing Editor Craig Aaron), Weinstein wrote:

> As small as *In These Times* is in the world of American media, it has played a vital role in keeping honest journalism alive … A viable new left cannot exist without principled, rigorous publications to inform it, and to help give it direction. That was what we intended to do in 1976 when we cobbled together *In These Times*' initial staff in Chicago. It remains our purpose today.

And, with support from readers like you, it will remain our purpose for decades to come.

–Joel Bleifuss

IN THESE TIMES

"With liberty and justice for all…"

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mixed reaction

77 Percentage of Americans who say they "always look for ways to save money," according to the Pew Research Center.

6.9 Percentage increase in consumer spending on goods and services in 2006—the largest increase since the bubble year of 2000, according to *Advertising Age*.

18,000 Number of Americans who die each year from treatable and preventable diseases because they don't have health insurance, according to the Institute of Medicine.

$161 billion: Estimated amount that the United States would save each year on paperwork if it adopted single-payer health care, according to the Drum Major Institute.

> "Attempts by the United States Administration to redefine 'torture' in the framework of the struggle against terrorism in order to allow certain interrogation techniques that would not be permitted under the internationally accepted definition of torture are of utmost concern."
>
> —U.N. COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, FEB. 16, 2006 REPORT RECOMMENDING THE CLOSURE OF GUANTÁNAMO

LABANARAMA BY TERRY LABAN

QUID PRO QUO

THE QUID:

The prospect of a newly elected Democratic Congress stemming corruption caused a flash of anxiety: *Would there be no more grist for Quid Pro Quo's mill?* The thought has safely perished.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) terrified oil execs late last year with her promise to "roll back the multibillion-dollar subsidies for Big Oil." The subsidies and tax breaks in place over the next five years for this industry making record profits total $32 billion.

THE QUO:

The final House bill, passed during the infamous "100 Hours," cut only $5.5 billion. The lobbying team representing Big Oil, including former Rep. Jim Chapman (D-Texas), reached out to current Democratic Texas Reps. Gene Green and Chet Edwards, who convinced Pelosi that they were serious about protecting their benefactors.

One of the lobbyists involved imparted this eternal D.C. truth: "[G]ood lobbying is always bipartisan."

letters

On the Nose

Antonia Juhasz' "Spoils of War" (January) was the most stunning, head-on account of what was really going on during the Iraq invasion/demolition-so-U.S.-contractors/corporations-could-get-all-the-money-and-Iraq-would-be-bound-by-WB/IMF/WTO-loans-forever-and-ever (whew!) that I could ever hope to read.

Condensed into those six pages was an incredibly succinct outline of the market subversion of an entire (if cobbled together) country-that-was.

Bravo, *ITT!*

Connie Hall
Chicago, Ill.

Parsing Inequalities

While I cannot disagree with most of Rinku Sen's arguments about the failure of white progressives to recognize racism in its many disguises, her reasoning has a basic flaw that must be addressed. It's important to identify your enemies—but recognizing friends and allies can be even more critical. Yes, white progressive *men* fail to understand just how big a problem racial prejudice is in the 21st century, but is that true of their female counterparts? I don't think so.

Just as racial minorities have to work twice as hard to get half as far as many of their white counterparts, so too, do white women who work for a living and are often head of household. Not that they don't have it easier than many minorities, but they still cannot compete with white guys. The discrepancy in pay rates says it all.

The need for a just economic and social policy demands equality for all, no matter what color they are painted, or how they are plumbed.

It's important to remember that the need for a just economic and social policy demands equality for all, no matter what color they are painted, or how they are plumbed.

Carol R. Campbell
Keaau, Hawaii

Impeach!

I was pleased to see John Nichols keep the idea of impeachment alive ("In Praise of Impeachment," December 2006).

I believe that the impeachment process is necessary to demonstrate to the world that we Americans do not appreciate being lied to, bankrupted and made objects of hate by an administration that gained power by deceptive means, with the intent to wage war on Iraq and redistribute our tax dollars to private corporations via the Department of "Defense." Should we fail to do this (as we did with Nixon), the legacy of once again trashing the Magna Carta and our Constitution will soil everything we attempt to do in the world for decades to come.

Karen Hayes
via e-mail

Not a Pretty Picture

The photo accompanying Natalie Y. Moore's article on Beyoncé ("Beyoncé's Bootyful B'Day," November 2006) is one of the most reprehensible I've seen in a long time, in terms of the fundamental assumptions underlying it. Looking at the photo, one can easily imagine the singer as a 'Barbie doll' complete with moveable joints and that animals are on this earth to be the playthings of humans.

Ellen Rosner
via e-mail

ART DIRECTOR RESPONDS

The photo—like it or hate it—is from the album artwork for Beyoncé's recent release, *B'day.* Though it wasn't a personal favorite, it conveyed the tone of the story.

CORRECTIONS

In "America's Toxic Sweatshops" (January), the Texas Campaign for the Environment was erroneously reported as one of the groups that jointly published the report "Toxic Sweatshops." Two other groups that did participate in drafting the report—the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition and the Center for Environmental Health—were not cited. Also, the article misidentified what the acronym OSHA stands for. It is, of course, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

In "A Dark Night In Iceland," (January) one of the rivers in the photo on page 33 was misidentified. It is Jökulsá á Dal, not Jökulsá á Fljótsdal.

We regret these errors.

The State of the Union

BY KURT VONNEGUT

contributors

Dear Reader,

With this issue, you hold a piece of *In These Times* history in your hand.

Thirty years ago, *In These Times* was established as a national, non-profit magazine that was independent of all political parties, but committed to informing and building a national progressive movement. That core mission has not changed. On page 46, you will read how *In These Times* has made its mark over the last 30 years through the memories of former *In These Times* editors.

This issue also celebrates the present: *In These Times* just won the 2006 *Utne Reader* Independent Press Award for "Best Political Coverage." As the *Utne Reader* observed, since becoming a monthly magazine in 2006, *In These Times* has had a "palpable, politically unpredictable energy—a little less worry and a lot more fight." This award reflects the dedication, passion and creativity of the *In These Times* staff and writers who are committed to producing journalism that questions authority, provides provocative analysis, and informs a movement for change and true American democracy. We couldn't have received this accolade without the support of readers like you. On page 18, we honor the *In These Times* community whose contributions make the magazine possible.

On a final note, I want to thank and say farewell to two special people, Executive Editor Jessica Clark and Associate Publisher Aaron Sarver. In the last five years they have taken *In These Times* to extraordinary new levels of journalism and productivity. But they won't be missed too much—our friendships are deep and both will continue to write for these pages. I also want to congratulate Phoebe Connelly, the new Acting Managing Editor, as well as Erin Polgreen and Anna Grace Schneider, who will both become Associate Publishers. These three young women will help *In These Times* continue to flourish.

I hope you enjoy this special issue. And let's all toast to another 30 years.

—Tracy Van Slyke

KAREN J. GREENBERG is the executive director of the Center on Law and Security at NYU School of Law. She is the editor of the *NYU Review of Law and Security* and *The Torture Debate in America* (Cambridge University Press). She served as co-chair for Elliot Spitzer's transition team for Homeland Security. She is a frequent writer and commentator on issues related to national security, terrorism, and torture. Greenberg is currently working on a book about Guantánamo.

RICK PERLSTEIN is the author of *Before The Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus*, winner of the 2001 *Los Angeles Times* Book Award for History. He is currently working on its sequel, titled *Nixonland: The Politics and Culture of the American Berserk, 1965-1972*, which will be published by Scribner in early 2008. He also writes a biweekly column for *The New Republic Online*. He lives in Chicago and online at www.rickperlstein.org.

MISCHA GAUS has been a freelance investigative reporter for five years, after a few eye-opening stints in corporate media. A graduate of Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism, his work is published most frequently in *In These Times*, where he was recently named contributing editor. His work has also appeared in *AlterNet*, *The New Standard* the *Chicago Reader*, and unwillingly, twice in the *Wall Street Journal*. His writing focuses on the abuses of power, often returning to the concerns of labor and political economy.

ADAM DOSTER was an *In These Times* intern last summer, making editorial contributions in the office and spectacular plays on the softball diamond as the centerfielder for the *ITT* Deadline Dogs. A senior at the University of Michigan, he's currently taking one three-hour seminar on Stalin and another on the works of James Baldwin.

how to reach us

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We encourage letters to the editor, and reserve the right to edit them for clarity, grammar and length. Send them to: 2040 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, IL 60647. Or submit them electronically at: www.inthesetimes.com/site/about/contact. Please include your full name and address.

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JAY J. JOHNSON-CASTRO, SR.

Protesters stand outside the T. Hutto Residential Center during a candlelight vigil on Christmas Eve, 2006.

Families Behind Bars

U.S. immigration policy is putting kids in jail.

BY KARI LYDERSEN

Named after the co-founder of the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), the T. Don Hutto Correctional Center in Taylor, Texas, opened as a medium-security prison in 1997. Today, the federal government pays CCA, the nation's largest private prison company, $95 per person per day to house the detainees, who wear jail-type uniforms and live in cells.

But they have not been charged with any crimes. In fact, nearly half of its 400 or so residents are children, including infants and toddlers.

The inmates are immigrants or children of immigrants who are in deportation proceedings. Many of them are in the process of applying for political asylum, refugees from violence-plagued and impoverished countries like Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Somalia and Palestine. (Since there are different procedures for Mexican immigrants, the facility houses no Mexicans.)

In the past, most of them would have been free to work and attend school as their cases moved through immigration courts. "Prior to Hutto, they were releasing people into the community," says Nicole Porter, director of the Prison and Jail Accountability Project for the ACLU of Texas. "These are non-criminals and non-violent individuals who have not committed any crime against the U.S. There are viable alternatives to requiring them to live in a prison setting and wear uniforms."

But as a result of increasingly stringent immigration enforcement policies, today more than 22,000 undocumented immigrants are being detained, up from 6,785 in 1995, according to the Congressional Research Service.

Normally, men and women are detained separately and minors, if they are detained at all, live in residential facilities with social services and schools. But under the auspices of "keeping families together," children and parents are incarcerated together at the T. Don Hutto Residential Center, as it is now called, and at a smaller facility in Berks County, Penn. Attorneys for detainees say the children are only allowed one hour of schooling, in English, and one hour of recreation per day.

"It's just a concentration camp by another name," says John Wheat Gibson, a Dallas attorney representing two Palestinian families in the facility.

In addition, there have been reports of inadequate healthcare and nutrition.

"The kids are getting sick from the food," says Frances Valdez, a fellow at the University of Texas Law School's Immigration Law Clinic. "It could be a psychological thing also. These are little kids, given only one hour of playtime a day, the rest of the time they're in their pods in a contained area. There are only a few people per cell so families are separated at night. There's a woman with two sons and two daughters; one of her sons was getting really sick at night but she couldn't go to him because he's in a different cell. One client was pregnant and we established there was virtually no prenatal care."

When local staff for the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) collected toys for the children at Christmas, Hutto administrators would not allow stuffed animals to be given to the children, according to LULAC national president Rosa Rosales.

"That's what these children need—something warm to hug," she says. "And they won't even allow them that, why, I can't imagine. They say they're doing a favor by keeping families together, but this is ridiculous."

A CCA spokesperson refers media to the San Antonio office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), but that office did not return calls for this story.

Immigrants have been housed at the facility since last summer, and public outrage and attention from human rights groups has grown in the past few months as more people have become aware of the situation. In mid-December, Jay J. Johnson-Castro, a 60-year-old resident of Del Rio, Texas, walked 35 miles from the Capitol to the detention center, joined by activists along the way

and ending in a vigil at the center.

"Everyone I have talked to about this is shocked that here on American soil we are treating helpless mothers and innocent children as prisoners," says Johnson-Castro, who had previously walked 205 miles along the border to protest the proposed border wall. "This flies in the face of everything we claim to represent internationally."

A coalition of attorneys, community organizations and immigrants rights groups called Texans United for Families is working to close the facility. The University of Texas Immigration Law Clinic is considering a lawsuit challenging the incarceration of children.

Valdez sees the center as a political statement by the government.

"Our country likes to detain people," says Valdez. "I think it's backlash for the protests that happened in the spring—like, 'We're going to show you that you're not that powerful.' It's about power." ■

KARI LYDERSEN *has been writing on immigration issues for 10 years. Her most recent book is* Out of the Sea and Into the Fire. *With this issue, she joins* In These Times *as a contributing editor.*

Getting Vets Their Benefits Back

Rick Scavetta lives with his wife and young daughter in a small town near New Haven, Conn. He joined the Army at 18, in part to earn money for college, and served in the regular Army and then the Reserve for a total of 15 years, reaching the rank of Sergeant 1st Class. In 2005, his Reserve unit was called up, and he served a year in Afghanistan.

Scavetta says he made a firm decision to leave the military last February, and planned to use his GI Bill benefits to pursue a master's degree in political science and to study Arabic at Southern Connecticut State University. But he was told in his exit briefing that if he deactivated—in military terms, "left drill status"—he would not be eligible.

"Imagine if someone told you, 'We promise you these benefits if you serve your country,' and you held up your end of the bargain for six years in the Reserve, a year or two deployed overseas," he says. "It's frustrating, especially since school can be a very grounding thing for a veteran returning from war."

Scavetta is just one of the many vets Jack Mordente works with as director of Veterans Affairs (VA) at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven. Mordente says he learned last May that the Department of Defense was telling war-activated Guard and Reservists that if they left paid drill status they would lose their GI Bill education benefits. "And in fact it's not true," he says.

VA representative Keith Wilson backs up Mordente's interpretation. Providing a bit of history, he says that in 1985 Congress created GI Bill education benefits for members of the Guard and Reserve for the first time. Then, he adds, "During Gulf War I, some individuals in the Guard and Reserve were called up for active duty, which interfered with their ability to pursue their education. So Congress passed a law that allowed the delimiting date (i.e., eligibility deadline) to be extended for a period equal to the time they're activated plus four months."

Mordente says if a member of the Guard or Reserve knows he or she is eli-

SOLAR COOKERS FOR SAFETY

More than 17,000 displaced Sudanese women at the Iridimi refugee camp in Chad risk abduction, branding or rape every time they leave the makeshift village to gather firewood. In an inspired effort to protect these women and improve their quality of life, Jewish World Watch, in partnership with Netherlands-based manufacturer KoZon, sent more than 2,000 solar ovens to Iridimi since the spring of 2006.

According to Executive Director Tzivia Schwartz-Getzug, the use of solar cookers has reduced the incidence of rape in Iridimi by 65 percent and transformed the camp's economy. Rather than sell firewood to supplement their incomes, says Schwartz-Getzug, "the women have created their own industry, making and selling cloth carrying bags for the ovens"

The solar cookers are also good for the environment. Since many refugee camps are located in remote, arid areas with little vegetation, natural resources are quickly depleted. One cooker preserves the equivalent of 1,000 pounds of firewood per year, greatly reducing the environmental impact of one family.

The project has been so successful that the United Nations has launched a committee to replicate the project in other camps.

One $30 donation provides trainings and the raw materials for two cookers. For more information, visit www.jewishworldwatch.org.

—Erin Polgreen

gible and files for the benefit, the Veterans Administration will pay it.

But the Department of Defense (DoD) interprets the law differently. Lt. Col. Steve Beller of the Army National Guard writes the Guard policies to implement Army regulations. He says that the Department of Defense, unlike the VA, interprets the law to restrict eligibility for benefits to those who remain on drill status.

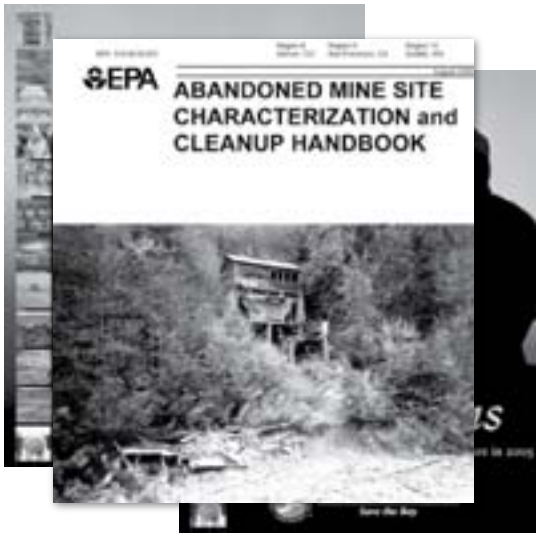
"The general counsels of the VA and the DoD issued opposite opinions," he says. The two departments are trying to resolve their differences, but until they do, Beller says, "We will continue briefing as our attorneys have stated, that those benefits terminate upon leaving Selective Reserve." He adds, "The funding we get for bonuses, retention and the GI Bill is all in one pot. If we take that money and give it to a vet, that means there's a soldier sitting in the desert to whom I can't give a re-enlistment bonus."

Scavetta knows he's eligible, but has still run into roadblocks. "I applied for my GI Bill benefits in August," he says, "and I haven't heard anything from the VA. I tried to call them, and got redirected to a call center, and the voice says nobody's available to talk to me and hangs up." He's putting his school expenses—about $1,400 per semester—on his credit card. "To not have a quicker delivery system for the benefits we're entitled to is, quite frankly, bullshit."

Besides serving veteran-students at SCSU, Mordente is also president of the National Association of Veterans Program Administrators, and through his organization he is trying to get the word out nationally. He says student vets make up more than 20 percent of the nearly 400,000 members of the Guard and Reserve from all branches of the military who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan since 2001. So far, the VA's Wilson says the department has paid about 3,400 people under this provision, with a maximum payment of $300 a month. No one knows how many retired GIs haven't applied because they've been told they're ineligible.

"These are war-activated Guard and Reservists who sacrificed," Mordente says. "And now they're being told they're not eligible for a benefit they *are* eligible for. It's appalling."

–Melinda Tuhus



Need to know how to clean up a mine? Too bad.

Why are EPA Libraries Closing?

In February 2006, when President Bush unveiled his budget proposal for FY 2007, the EPA Library Network learned that its annual disbursement would be slashed 80 percent from 2006 funding levels—from $2.5 million to just $500,000. A month later, administrators at the EPA's Region 5 facility in Chicago circulated an e-mail announcing it would be the first to close. By October, two other regional libraries were gone. Together, the three facilities had served the entire middle United States.

Since last year, the EPA has drifted from its initial assertion that the move is purely budgetary to embrace the closings as a technological achievement. "EPA's library modernization is providing better access to a broader audience," says EPA spokesperson Jessica Emond. "When libraries go digital, everyone benefits."

Not everyone sees it that way. Opponents of the plan have presented a laundry list of concerns ranging from questions about the EPA's motive to critiques of its method. Foremost among the critics are employees of the agency itself. Shortly after the initiative was proposed, the presidents of 17 union locals—representing over 10,000 EPA scientists, researchers and support personnel—lodged a formal protest against the closings.

In a letter to Sens. Conrad Burns (R-Mont.) and Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.), members of the American Federation of Government Employees, the National Treasury Employees Union, the National Association of Government Employ-

ees, and the Engineers and Scientists of California urged Congress to reverse the budget cuts and mandate that the EPA keep its libraries open. They have been joined by a growing coalition of lawmakers, advocacy groups and citizens.

"The EPA libraries are essential to the agency's ability to carry out its mission to protect human health and the environment," says Michael Halpern, outreach coordinator for the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), one of several groups actively engaged in the debate.

Founded in 1971, the EPA Library Network consisted of 27 facilities across the country at its height, serving 10 regional agency offices, two research centers and 12 EPA laboratories, as well as thousands of ordinary citizens. The libraries house information on everything from basic sciences, such as biology and chemistry, to local records on hazardous waste, drinking water, pollution prevention and toxic substances.

According to Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), in 2005 the library network handled more than 134,000 research requests from its own scientific and enforcement staff and housed an estimated 50,000 "unique" documents that are available nowhere else. "Access to information is one of the best tools we have for protecting the environment," says Jeff Ruch, PEER's executive director. "The dismantlement of EPA's Library Network has been directed from above without any assessment of the information needs of the agency."

Emond says that the EPA has implemented a stringent agenda to ensure that no essential material gets lost and has followed the American Library Association's (ALA) guidance by developing criteria for reviewing its library collection.

ALA President Leslie Burger takes issue with that assertion. "The [ALA's] loose collection of resources is a good starting point for thinking about collection development policies but does not constitute ALA guidance and criteria," said Burger, in a recent statement to the National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology.

UCS's Halpern also takes issue with the linking of digitization and closings. "The EPA's plan is backwards," says Halpern. "A thoughtful and deliberate digitization of all of the information in a library's collection should occur before the library's physical location is closed."

Still others question the value of digitization itself, arguing that access is only part of the equation.

"A simple search engine just isn't enough," said Burger. "With the loss of the brick-and-mortar facilities comes the loss of the most important asset in the library: the librarian. After all, what good is information if you can't find it?"

Further, the EPA itself has admitted that it may not have the authority to digitize certain copyrighted material. Add to that the fact that many EPA compendiums are hundreds of pages in length and contain complex maps and graphics—which require special viewing formats—and it's easy to see why digitization of the entire catalogue is virtually impossible.

A newly invigorated Democratic Congressional majority has taken up the cause. In a November 30 letter to EPA administrator Stephen Johnson, Reps. John Dingell (D-Mich.), Bart Gordon (D-Tenn.), Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) and James L. Oberstar (D-Minn.) urged the agency to stop closing libraries until Congress has had the chance to review the plan. The lawmakers had previously asked the Government Accountability Office to look into the closings.

"Congress … has approved neither the President's 2007 budget request nor the library closure," they wrote. "We request that you maintain the status quo of the libraries and their material while this issue is under investigation." As *In These Times* went to press, the outcry seemed to be having some effect.

On January 12, a Washington D.C.-based blog run by Cox Newspapers reported that the EPA had halted the closings. But Emond says this was a mischaracterization since the agency never planned to close any more libraries.

Nevertheless, she says, "We have rescheduled our recycling schedule in order to take time to address some of the Congressional questions."

So far, the EPA says it has digitized about half of its collection, but admits it will take at least another two years to finish the project.

Halpern worries the damage may already be done. "Even if Congress acts now, it's pretty difficult to put a library back together once the bookshelves and the microfilm readers have been sold and scientific journals have been recycled," he says.

–Christopher Moraff

Fights Over Chinese Labor Reform

Last March, in his annual speech to the National People's Congress, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao announced wide-ranging economic reforms of "epoch-making significance," including a new labor law that would crack down on inhumane working conditions.

But the move sparked opposition from many American and European corporations, even though they have long claimed that their business activities in the People's Republic of China promote human rights.

PETER PARKS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Chinese laborers in front of Tiananmen Gate

The first draft of the law would have required all employers in China to sign written contracts with workers (preferably without fixed termination dates), restricted mass layoffs, increased severance pay and boosted the power of the government-sponsored All-China Federation of Trade Unions to negotiate layoffs, salaries, working conditions and internal company policies.

In a suprise move, the government asked for public input. Nearly 200,000 comments were sent in. The responses were mostly from Chinese workers, but representatives of American and European business organizations, including the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai and European Union Chamber of Commerce in China, also chimed in, criticizing the proposed safeguards. They warned that the new law would discourage their corporate members from making further investments in China.

The business community made its in-

fluence felt. Andreas Lauffs, a Hong Kong-based lawyer who advises Western corporations on Chinese employment law, says that in mid-January the Chinese government began circulating a second version of the law. Although much of the first version was left intact, companies no longer have to worry about union approval for changes such as conducting layoffs. Lauffs says he had expected government to simply ignore all the criticism. "Frankly, I was surprised how big the changes were."

This has pro-labor groups in the United States crying foul. "[Western corporations] have shown themselves to be hypocrites," says Tim Costello, co-director of Global Labor Strategies, a Boston-based think tank. "They're opposing the very things that can raise the living standards of Chinese workers."

Experts say the Chinese government hopes to close the huge wealth gap between prosperous urban dwellers and the vast majority of Chinese citizens who have gained little from the global economy.

Violent disturbances, largely driven by the millions of migrant workers with few rights or protections, have become common throughout China.

The Ministry of Public Security estimated that there were 87,000 public protests in 2005, a six percent rise over the previous year. Although the ministry reported a steep drop in disturbances during 2006, the *South China Morning Post*, a Hong Kong newspaper, has reported that the Chinese government began stopping the national media from covering protests and strikes, and many experts question whether the unrest has actually lessened.

Lauffs says party leaders are trying to put their stamp on history by addressing the fact that "many quarters of society have totally lost out since the '80s." But he feels they have gone about it the wrong way. Migrant workers tend to work long hours for Chinese-owned companies, and usually receive little or no overtime pay, an issue not covered by the new law, he says. Local governments are too weak or unwilling to enforce existing labor law, and frequently let domestic firms get away with serial violations. In contrast, he claims, the Western-owned firms he represents give all their workers contracts, and maintain good working conditions.

Other business advocates agree. "It is a complete misnomer to say [American] companies oppose [Chinese] labor law," says John Frisbie, president of the U.S.-China Business Council, a Washington, D.C.-based lobbying group with several hundred member corporations, including Wal-Mart, Microsoft and Boeing. The council did send the Chinese government a letter several pages long, mostly criticizing the proposals requiring companies to secure the union's approval before laying off workers or changing any policies.

Some groups, however, were more aggressive. The American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai, which represents more than 1,000 corporations, submitted several dozen pages and rejected most of the draft law. And, according to their own English translation, they also gave the Darwinian advice, "that the fittest survives is the basic principle of all creatures."

Costello says pro-labor forces need to publicize the role played by multinational corporations in suppressing progressive trends in China. Many unions simply criticize the Chinese government, but he does not believe that's enough. "We need to put the attention back on global capital."

–Brian J. Rogal

appall-o-meter

5.3 McMansion Of One's Own

When archaeologists and historians centuries hence try to understand the glory that was America, the acme of world-dominating civilizations, they will have to explain not only the McMansion, but the Mini-Me McMansion. The latter, an excrescence described recently in the *Wall Street Journal*, is the miniature structure that many members of the American mandarin class build, usually in the backyard, so that their offspring may share in the manifold joys of real estate lunacy.

According to the *Journal*, some of these structures are merely elaborate playhouses. But custom builders report a growing trend in commissions to replicate the parental McEdifice, and to include upgrades such as media rooms, satellite TVs and deluxe finishes. Construction costs often run into six figures.

Ostensibly built for the kids, these structures actually appear to stimulate some as-yet undiscovered pleasure center in the brains of overachieving suburbanites. Often enough, young Kaitlynne and Skyler find their new bowers an unwanted introduction to adult stress. "Sometimes we see parents get into it a bit more than the kids," one builder told the *Journal*. In one case the family "got into a big argument over color patterns and plumbing. I sort of stayed out of it until they worked it out for themselves."

2.4 DesMoines Never Looked So Good

In the mad, mad world of London real estate, an apartment in the city's posher 'hoods selling for less than a million is news. Thus the furor when a place in Kensington was listed recently for $335,000. Problem is, the musty, cave-like pad has no electrical service or heat, and it measures a mere 77 square feet, according to the Associated Press. The space it occupies at 18 Cadogan Place might best be described as the part of the house where Victorian families used to lock the club-footed stepchild.

No matter, it's a screaming buy and the seller's agent is considering several offers. The lucky buyer, the agent admits, will probably have to sink another 50 large into the place to make it habitable.

6.3 Worst. Surgery. Ever.

Medical tourists will want to steer a wide berth around Romania. The nation's doctors union is coming to the defense of a scalpel-happy surgeon who was fined $200,000 for what may be the most appalling act of malpractice ever.

Professor Naum Ciomu was operating to correct a testicular malformation when he suddenly flipped out. Upset at having mistakenly severed the patient's urinary channel, Ciomu grabbed a scalpel and, uh, relieved the patient of a rather important organ. As the surgical team watched in horror, Ciomu then sliced a neat stack of fleshy coins.

The price of a new package for the injured party ($40,000) will be covered by the hospital's insurance. Damages, however, are ordered to come out of Ciomu's pocket—which is what the doctors union objects to. Sets a bad precedent, they say.

—Dave Mulcahey

Declassified, But Still Unavailable

snapshot

ALLAHABAD, INDIA—A girl dressed as a goddess waits for handouts from Hindu pilgrims near the ritual bathing site at the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati rivers, January 24, 2007. The 45-day Ardh Kumbh Mela (Half Pitcher) festival in northern India is the largest religious gathering in the world. It commemorates the conflict between gods and demons over a pitcher filled with the 'nectar of immortality'. (Photo by Mario Tama/Getty Images)

At the stroke of midnight on December 31, hundreds of millions of pages of secret government documents—including 270 million pages of FBI files—were instantly declassified, promising to shed light on everything from the Cuban Missile Crisis to government surveillance of antiwar and civil rights activists in the '60s and '70s.

It was to be a "Cinderella moment," said the *New York Times*, for researchers of the government's secret history. But upon contacting the National Archives, researchers learned that declassification is not the same thing as release—none of the documents were publicly available for review.

The confusion over the documents' status was understandable. The 2003 Executive Order that President Bush signed with great fanfare clearly stated that government documents more than 25 years old "shall be automatically declassified whether or not the records have been reviewed," which many took to mean they would be available to the public. But it did not provide for the documents to be automatically made public.

In the words of the Justice Department, the policy of automatic declassification means that the material must be "reviewed for declassification, exemption, and/or referral to other government agencies." Furthermore, it provides for nine areas of exemption and, beyond that, laws such as the Privacy Act can present numerous obstacles that ensure many documents will remain secret indefinitely.

Some of the exemptions outlined in Bush's Executive Order appear reasonable enough—for example, if an agency head determines that declassification would "reveal information that would assist in the development or use of weapons of mass destruction." But others, such as the exemption for information that would reveal "an intelligence source or method," can be easily abused to keep embarrassing information secret. The FBI has often claimed this exemption for information obtained through wiretaps, which, of course, is one of their standard "sources and methods."

Another exemption provided by the Executive Order regards information obtained from foreign governments, a stumbling block that journalist Jon Wiener often encountered in his 23-year battle to obtain John Lennon's government surveillance files.

When Lennon's remaining 10 FBI files were finally released last month, Wiener notes that they did not reveal any sensitive intelligence that would have compromised an allied government. Instead, he says, they "contained only innocuous information about Lennon's antiwar activities in London in 1971 that had always been publicly known."

Catherine Nielsen, FOIA coordinator at the National Security Archive, a Washington-based nonprofit that seeks to educate the public on the secret history of U.S. foreign policy, says that it is "hard to say" how many of the exemptions are legitimate and how many are designed to maintain undue secrecy relating to official misconduct.

Furthermore, regardless of how many of the newly declassified documents ultimately remain secret, researchers may be frustrated to learn that even those that are deemed releasable might not be available for many years, due to the enormous amount of material that was declassified on January 1 and the huge backlog that exists at the National Archives.

Even before the recent batch, there were already approximately 400 million pages of documents that the National Archives has yet to release. Hampering their efforts is a chronic understaffing problem, which was only exacerbated by budget cuts last year.

The scarcity of funds certainly "serves as a constraint," says Bill Leonard, director of Information Security Oversight Office at the National Archives. And he notes that it will be an ongoing issue each year.

Despite this backlog, Leonard says the new policy is generally a positive development, noting that "the specter of declassification" has already forced various agencies to release documents that otherwise would still be secret.

–Nat Parry

LAURA S. WASHINGTON

Cultivating the Media Garden

The tides, they were a-rising in Memphis last month at the Free Press National Conference for Media Reform. A record-busting 3,000 people attended—a sizeable boost from the 2,500 at the 2005 confab in St. Louis. Media organizers packed the ballroom of the Memphis Convention Center to rally in a deafening call for change in the corporate media.

The highlights were many:

"The Rev." Bill Moyers: The mild-mannered Southern gentleman kicked off the conference with a lilting, yet blistering, denunciation of the evil corporate and public media. He delivered a withering critique of Republican attempts to spin the public and cow the media into somnolence.

On the eve of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Moyers compared the corporate-owned media of today to plantation owners of long ago. "What happened to radio, happened to television, and then it happened to cable. If we are not diligent, then it will happen to the internet, [creating] a media plantation for the 21st century dominated by the same corporate and ideological forces that have controlled the media for the last 50 years."

Bill Moyers delivered a withering critique of Republican attempts to spin the public and cow the media into somnolence.

"Something is wrong with this system. This is the moment freedom begins," he went on, "the moment you realize someone else has been writing your story, and it's time you took the pen from his hand and started writing it yourself."

Moyers chose not a pen, but a megaphone to announce he would be back on PBS in April, with a reprise of his old weekly program "Bill Moyers' Journal."

The coo-some twosome: Everywhere Michael Copps and Jonathan Adelstein—a couple of Washington-bureaucrats-turned-rock-stars—went at the conference, they were met with hosannas and standing ovations.

Last year, the FCC commissioners did some serious damage to an American corporate icon, AT&T—and boosted the cause of "net neutrality." They set conditions on FCC approval of the merger of AT&T and Bell South, commanding that the new company pledge to treat Web traffic equally.

The Internet is imperiled by the gatekeeper aspirations of cable and telephone companies to control the "tubes" that carry broadband media. If corporations are allowed to control the flow of the Web, they can dismantle its inherently egalitarian infrastructure, and endanger independent media and political organizing in the process.

21st Century free speech: No worry, at least for the moment. Monsieurs Adelstein and Copp played political hardball, extracting a pledge from AT&T that it would observe net neutrality for the next two years. That victory, combined with the Democratic Party sweep, had the crowd pumped.

Rep. Ed Markey (D-Mass.), chairman of the Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, added hot sauce to the concoction, calling for the demise of corporate influence in his committee. "I believe we can do it right and will continue to fight to make national telecommunications policy reflect our highest aspirations as a society," he pledged.

A Senior Moment: The other "Rev," Jesse L. Jackson Sr., was also in town for the conference and King birthday celebrations. Jackson recalled that the concept of a broad-based racial and economic coalition was birthed on King's last birthday: Jan. 15, 1968. Three months before his assassination, King convened a meeting at a church basement in Memphis, with African Americans from deep South Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi, whites from Appalachia, native Americans, and Jewish allies from New York, Jackson told the crowd.

The rainbow emerged. "We had never really worked together before," Jackson recalled, adding, they were "choosing coalition over coexistence."

Jackson's inclusion was one of many concerted efforts the Free Press made to capture the black struggle under the banner. The media reform movement had been running at a diversity deficit, and had been rightly attacked as a bastion of displaced white male elites in search of a platform.

This year, the dovetailing of black and white voices was impressive. Activist actor Danny Glover, deejay Davey D, the Rev. Lennox Yearwood of the Hip Hop Caucus and Janine Jackson of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, to name a few. The end result: A rainbow that would do King proud.

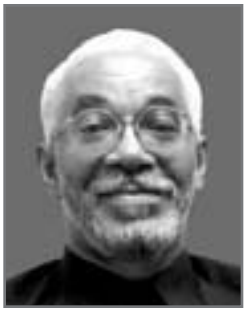
The Whisper Number: Still, a fear of victories undone hovered under the radar. You can be sure that the corporate media doesn't plan to adopt oblivion as a return address. Media activists have to learn to work with like-minded members of the corporate media to change the landscape. Moyers, MSNBC's Keith Olbermann, and Amy Goodman of "Democracy Now" are already doing it every day.

It's a fertile moment. Media consolidation, falling circulation, declining ad revenues and layoffs have put both mainstream media and independent media into a tailspin.

Get to work, media reformers: The flowers can bloom for progressive endeavors. Instead of pissing in the garden, it's time to cultivate the soil. ■

BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

Barack's Black Dilemma



The day after the national celebration of King Day, Sen. Barack Hussein Obama (D-Ill.) announced he was forming a committee to explore a run for the presidency. Obama's rapid ascent and the popular draft that has swept him into the presidential race would have amazed the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Less than 40 years after his assassination virtually killed the civil rights movement, many white Americans seem willing to back a black man for their leader. Even King dared not include a black president in his celebrated dream.

To paraphrase James Brown, this is a brand new bag. Had Brown not died last Christmas, he might have written a song about it.

Obama's announcement was met with the kind of media coverage that makes politicians' mouths water. Such media adulation has accompanied the 45-year-old since his keynote speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention and his election to the U.S. Senate that same year. Before that, he was an Illinois state senator who had earned bipartisan respect for his energy, intelligence and political acumen.

Obama won his Senate seat through a series of lucky breaks (i.e., both of his major political rivals were done in by damaging allegations from former spouses), as well as his political appeal. His Ivy League education and well-modulated eloquence wear well in the mainstream, but have sometimes provoked suspicion from the black electorate. This Hawaiian-born son of a black Kenyan and white Kansan is a brother from another …

Rep. Bobby Rush (D-Ill.) exploited those suspicions when Obama challenged him in 2000 for his First District congressional seat. Obama lost badly. In fact, Obama has had to deal with questions of racial authenticity since his initial foray into politics. Perhaps that's why the line in his convention speech, that black parents must guard their children against the "slander that a black with a book is acting white," resonated with such authority.

Some of the same qualities that make Obama alluring to white Americans (his affability, his seeming lack of racial grievance) are troubling to many African Americans. They wonder if the senator feels as connected to the black community as he does to the educated elite with whom he spent so much of his formative time.

This is a skeptical tradition formed by generations of African Americans who were betrayed by the slave masters' favorite blacks. The logic seems simple: Be suspicious of those like you who are liked by those who dislike you.

Despite these suspicions, most African Americans seem pleased with the Obama phenomena, if also perplexed by the intensity of white Americans' affection. All of this is new ground, which is why, aside from his political stance or ideological leanings, Obama's public prominence will spark necessary discussions on race in American culture.

Obama's racial hybridity is expressed as "black" in the United States only because "one drop" of African blood denoted blackness in a society dependent on racial slavery; this quality became a social taint with a devastating impact on the psyches of African Americans. As late as 1968, James Brown sparked a minor cultural revolution with his song, "Say it Loud ('I'm Black and I'm Proud')." It is one of Obama's favorite songs.

Many blacks wonder if mainstream whites love Obama because of his lack of history as a slave, which elicits no feelings of historical guilt.

Some who question Obama's racial credentials raise the point that, unlike most African Americans, his family history was not framed by generations of chattel slavery. Black Republican Alan Keyes raised that issue during his disastrous senatorial campaign against Obama. Conservatives like Rush Limbaugh have also raised it. In fact, some conservatives are so distressed by his popularity that they've hinted he could be a "Manchurian Candidate" for Islam, programmed during his short childhood stint at an Indonesian madrasa. Whew!

But his unusual ancestral narrative may also fuel the fervor of Obama's white support, in that his lack of slave history elicits no feelings of historical guilt among whites. They love Obama because he doesn't hate them, as they suspect blacks should. Another theory making the rounds on black talk radio proffers that some whites see Obama as a way to redeem America in the eyes of a world angered by the Bush administration—the multicultural Obama's calming presence serving as a necessary balm.

But where does this great black hope of whites stand on issues of enduring interest to African Americans? In Chicago, Obama won over many of his black critics by persuading them of his integrity, and with a legislative record that convinced them he had the black community's interest at heart even as he cultivated alliances with other political forces.

For the most part, however, African Americans understand that Obama's bid for national office requires a more complex political calculus than the protest candidacies of the Revs. Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton. They know it's a brand new bag—they just want it to stay funky. ■

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Over those same 30 years, members of the *In These Times* community have, without fail, contributed above and beyond the cost of their subscription to help publish this magazine. These individuals are the backbone of *In These Times*.

With this 30th anniversary issue we honor the more than 2,000 women and men who supported the magazine in 2006. We would also like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the members of the *In These Times* Publishing Consortium, who hold the magazine as a public trust, and the *In These Times* board of directors. *In These Times* wouldn't exist without all of you.

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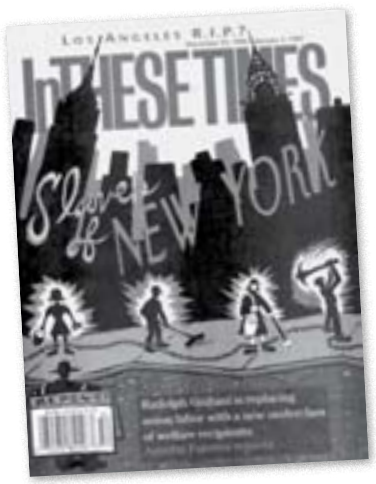

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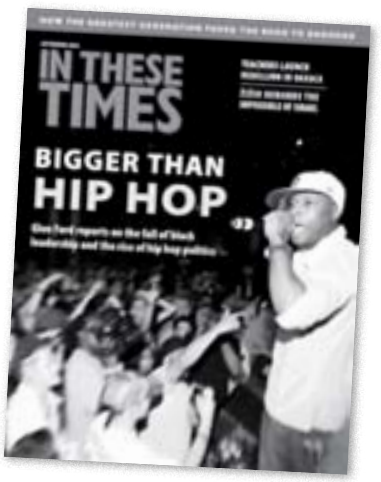

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8 Reasons to Close GUANTÁNAMO NOW

BY KAREN J. GREENBERG

The first detainees arrived in Guantánamo four months to the day after the 9/11 attacks. From the opening of Camp X-Ray—the first site of imprisonment, notorious for its tin-roofed open-air cages—to the recently completed permanent prison known as Camp 6, critics have called for its closure. Even President Bush has said, "I'd like to end Guantánamo. I'd like it to be over with." Yet he refuses to close it because, he says, it holds detainees who "will murder somebody if they are let out on the street."

It's time to look at the powerful reasons to close Guantánamo, both the standard ones enumerated below—and also what may be the most compelling, if unspoken, one of all: Guantánamo must be closed because the United States needs to indicate that it has decided to change course. Closing Guantánamo will help to restore America's standing in the world and in the eyes of its own citizens.

#1 It is a legal no-man's-land

Guantánamo Bay Naval Base was established as a coaling and naval station under U.S. control in 1903. It has no civilian legal authority (you can't get a marriage license there, and you can't be arraigned) and U.S. military authority is limited. According to the Department of Justice, the prison is not indisputably U.S. territory, nor does it necessarily fall under the jurisdiction of any foreign entity.

According to the Church Report—an official investigation of Guantánamo prepared by Vice Admiral Albert T. Church III, a former navy inspector general for the Armed Services Committee—Guantánamo's uncertain legal footing may have been a fundamental reason the administration decided to use the facility to interrogate al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters. "Perhaps most importantly," the report states, "GTMO was considered a place where [other] benefits could be realized without the detainees having the opportunity to contest their detention in the U.S. courts."

According to Northwestern University Professor Joseph Margulies, the administration's legal position rests on "the remarkable claim that the prisoners have no rights because they are foreign nationals detained outside the sovereign territory of the United States." In 2004, in *Rasul v. Bush,* the Supreme Court ruled that U.S. courts have jurisdiction in hearing habeas corpus petitions from Guantánamo. Yet through a series of laws and military rulings, the administration has continued to argue that the prisoners do not have the right to contest their detention in a U.S. court.

#2 It violates the Geneva Conventions

Guantánamo is a prisoner-of-war camp that is not labeled as such. From the beginning, the administration took the legal position that the captives brought to Cuba were not prisoners of war, but fell into the vague, newly created legal category of "enemy combatants."

But according to the International Committee of the Red Cross Commentary to the conventions, no such intermediate ground between civilians and prisoners of war exists: "Every person in enemy hands must have some status under international law: he is either a prisoner of war and, as such, covered by the Third Convention, a civilian covered by the Fourth Convention, [or] a member of the medical personnel of the armed forces who is covered by the First Convention. There is no intermediate status; nobody in enemy hands can fall outside the law."

As the camp was being built, military personnel I interviewed said they knew not to use the words "prison-camp," or "prison." Why? Under the Geneva Conventions, a prisoner cannot be interrogated, punished, or forced to answer questions beyond rank, name and serial number.

#3 Prisoners are degraded and abused

Abusive treatment of Guantánamo detainees has been documented in lawyers' notes, FBI memos, statements from released detainees and court affidavits submitted by attorneys representing detainees.

Jumah Al Dossari, a Bahraini detainee who has been incarcerated at Gitmo for five years, wrote to his lawyer, "At Guantánamo, soldiers have assaulted me, placed me in solitary confinement, threatened to kill me, threatened to kill my daughter, and told me I will stay in Cuba for the rest of my life. They have deprived me of sleep, forced me to listen to extremely loud music and shined intense lights in my face. They have placed me in cold rooms for hours without food, drink or the ability to go to the bathroom or wash for prayers. They have wrapped me in the Israeli flag and told me there is a holy war between the Cross and the Star of David on the one hand and the Crescent on the other. They have beaten me unconscious."

All of what he describes is illegal for the 194 countries that have ratified the Geneva Conventions—of which the United States is one—as well as those that have ratified the Convention Against Torture (which the United States has signed, with reservations).

Prisoners have no way to prove their innocence

#4 Under the Constitution, every prisoner in U.S. custody has the right to legal representation and to due process, i.e. a trial (habeus corpus). Yet the detainees at Guantánamo, though afforded Combatant Status Review Tribunals, cannot have their own counsel at those hearings and have no meaningful way of contesting evidence, some of which is secret. To date, not one individual among the nearly 800 incarcerated at Guantánamo has been charged with a crime recognized under either U.S. or international law. Moreover, the Military Commissions Act (MCA) of 2006 is the latest attempt to strip captives of their right to argue their appeals in U.S. courts.

MCA is currently being challenged in two cases—*al Odah v. United States of America* and *Boumediene v. Bush*. Briefs in these cases argue that the Act is unconstitutional and that the retroactive suspension of the detainees' right of habeas corpus does not apply to pending cases. These briefs focus on the Constitution's Writ of Habeus Corpus, which states that such rights shall only be revoked at times of rebellion or invasion.

It undermines intelligence efforts

#5 Despite the tens of thousands of hours of interrogation that have taken place at Guantánamo, very little worthwhile intelligence has been extracted. What information is left is now five years old, and it is doubtful that any Guantánamo prisoner has knowledge of a ticking bomb or a current plot.

And while the government maintains that detainees can provide a primer on jihad networks and al-Qaeda's strategic goals, at this point, the information is likely out of date. Besides, what can be extracted from individuals who, for the most part, were the wrong people to imprison in the first place.

According to a report by Seton Hall School of Law, 86 percent of detainees were arrested by Pakistan or the Northern Alliance and "handed over to the United States at a time when the United States offered large bounties for capture of suspected enemies."

Moreover, Guantánamo's very existence has alienated potential inside sources of information. Two years ago, at a Center on Law and Security conference in Florence, Italy, two of Europe's leading terrorism magistrates pointed out that attempts to infiltrate terrorist cells had become much more difficult in the wake of rising public anger over Guantánamo.

It creates new enemies

#6 Guantánamo has fomented that which it was created to combat—anti-American extremism and jihad.

Guantánamo is just the public face of a global network of "ghost prisons." According to Human Rights First (formerly the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights),the United States has acknowledged 20 detention centers in Afghanistan, in addition to the bases at Bagram and Kandahar; as a prison near the Afghan border in Kohat, Pakistan; and the al Jafr prison in Jordan. This suggests that Guantánamo may have been a smokescreen for more inhumane, less legal incarceration and interrogation practices elsewhere.

According to Armando Spataro, a senior Italian prosecutor known for his work on global terrorism, Guantánamo and the U.S. renditions policy "is extremely damaging to all our efforts to integrate our Muslim communities." Muslims around the world are asking why there is so little international opposition to the U.S. policy of imprisonment without due process. The collateral damage of Guantánamo—the incarceration of nearly 800 individuals who are denied legal rights, who regularly report being abused and who face a lifetime of imprisonment—is incalculable. It breeds new angers and resentments, and thus new enemies.

Last March, the Department of Defense finally released the names and countries of the detainees. It turned out that many were not captured on the battlefield but picked up elsewhere in the world, in the Gambia, in Pakistan, and even in Europe. In all, persons detained in Guantánamo Bay come from 46 different nations, including Spain, France and the United Kingdom.

… and alienates our allies

#7 At a time when international solidarity is needed to confront the potent and lethal enemy of terrorism, Guantánamo has led to widespread distrust of the United States. British Prime Minister Tony Blair has called for Guantánamo's closure. And Justice Lawrence Collins, a British high court judge, has said, "America's idea of what is torture is not the same as ours and does not appear to coincide with that of most civilized nations."

Baltasar Garzon, Spain's most prominent magistrate for crimes of terrorism, has warned, "If we continue along these lines, we are on the road to committing crimes against humanity."

In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel has said, "There is no question … An institution like Guantánamo in its present form cannot and must not exist in the long term."

It will signal a fundamental change of strategy in the war on terror

#8 Guantánamo is the single most potent symbol in the misguided war on terror. In the wake of 9/11, the United States' pledge to do everything in its power to protect its people from further harm led to a policy of overreaction. Closing Guantánamo will signal that the United States has emerged from its confusion, and regained a place among civilized nations.

We must no longer act like scared victims, willing to make any bargain with any devil to create the illusion of safety. We must reassert our confidence in the rule and wisdom of law. Enemies must be combatted with legal tools, military prowess and diplomacy—not with illegalities, bullying and walls of silence.

Closing Guantánamo is not about bowing to human rights concerns or even to the law. We must close it as a signal to the world that, even in the face of danger, the United States remains true to its values. Closing Guantánamo is a pledge of allegiance to the American past and to the American future. ■

Research for this article was contributed by Center on Law and Security Research Fellow Francesca Laguardia.

Interrogations Behind Barbed Wire

Who's to blame for America's new torture techniques?

BY MISCHA GAUS

His psychiatrists call it "Groundhog Day."

José Padilla—the once-renowned "dirty bomber" who is now little more than a dim light in the government's galaxy of desperadoes—has spent almost five years in solitary confinement. Whenever his lawyers attempt to discuss his case with him, he has the same response, begging them over and over again not to. When they try, his face seizes in tics and his body contorts uncontrollably.

"Mr. Padilla may be suffering from some form of brain injury," writes a forensic psychiatrist who evaluated him for his lawyers. His story illuminates what has happened to many prisoners of America's war on terror.

In addition to being tormented psychologically, Padilla and other Guantánamo detainees say the U.S. military has drugged them against their will. Each new disclosure of U.S. treatment of detainees hints at a continuing fascination in the intelligence community with developing and employing interrogation techniques that arise from a long and spotty history—techniques intelligence research says cannot be depended on to extract reliable information.

Accusations of drugging

In These Times has learned that several other detainees have joined Padilla in claiming they were involuntarily drugged.

Adil Al Nusairi, a 33-year-old former Saudi police officer, says he was imprisoned by the Taliban while traveling to Pakistan for eye surgery, before being sold to U.S. forces for a bounty by Pakistani police. Several times during his four-year incarceration at Guantánamo, Nusairi claims he was injected with an unknown substance, according to his lawyer, Anant Raut.

One time, groggy and disoriented after spending half a day in a freezing cell, he says he was interrogated for hours, his captors demanding over and over that he admit he was part of al-Qaeda.

"OK, I'll admit it, if you'll let me sleep," he said, according to his lawyer's notes. Sent back to his cell, Al Nusairi tried to read the Koran and couldn't. He became so weak he could barely lift his arms. His vision blurred and he began to drool uncontrollably onto himself.

Despite facing allegations similar to many other detainees, Al Nusairi was released from the camp last May along with 14 of his countrymen in a series of incremental releases detainee lawyers find arbitrary. The men were held briefly by the Saudi government, but are now free—although they have been instructed by the United States government not to speak about their experience.

Two other Guantánamo detainees say they've found drugs powdered or half-dissolved in their food and drink. Kristine Huskey, now at American University's International Human Rights Law Clinic, represented one of the men, Fawzi Al Odah, a Kuwaiti who is still being held captive. Lawyers for the other detainee who has reported finding drugs in his meals have requested anonymity to protect their client from potential repercussions.

The effects detainees report are consistent: Dizziness and disorientation, lethargy and "clouded" thinking. Lawyers say the reports are credible because they were volunteered by the detainees, were not produced in response to government demands or accusations, and are detailed, discrete events.

Because of the obstacles repeatedly put in front of counsel, lawyers for the detainees have difficulty accessing medical records. Padilla, however, boasts some-

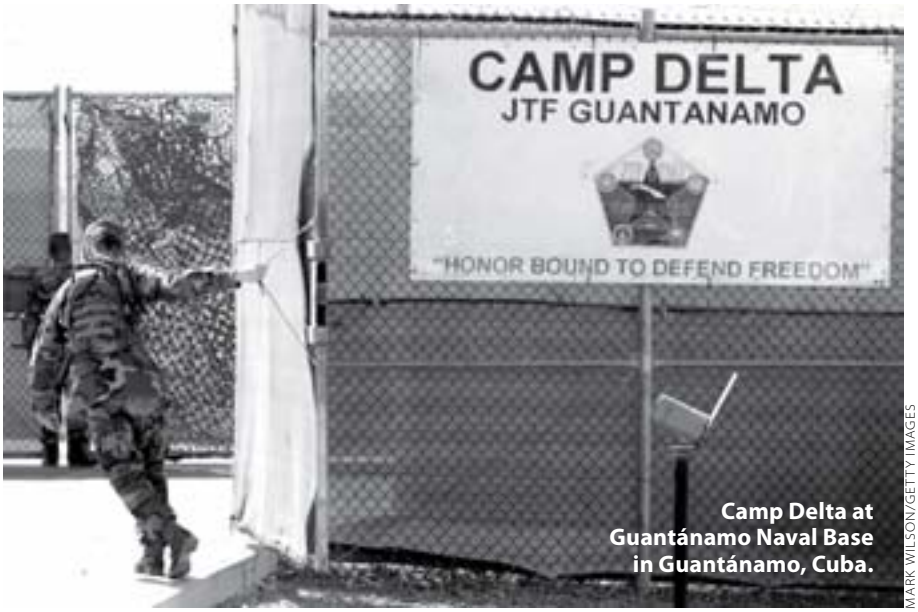
January 11, 2002
First prisoners from the "war on terror" arrive in Guantánamo

February 27, 2002
The first coordinated large-scale hunger strike occurs at Guantánamo, after a guard removes a homemade turban from a prisoner during prayer.

May 8, 2002
Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen, is arrested at O'Hare International Airport. He is not given access to attorneys for two years.

Late 2002
Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller approves the creation of "Behavioral Science Consultation Teams." The teams, made up of a psychiatrist and a psychologist, observe Guantánamo interrogations from behind one-way glass and offer suggestions on how to make interrogations "more productive."

June 28, 2004
In *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*, the Supreme Court rules that a U.S. citizen held as an enemy combatant must be given "meaningful opportunity to contest factual basis for his detention."



Camp Delta at Guantánamo Naval Base in Guantánamo, Cuba.

MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES

thing no Guantánamo detainee can: A U.S. passport. Because he is a U.S. citizen, his lawyers have been able to investigate his detention more closely than any Guantánamo prisoner. Finding out what has been done to this very broken man could breach the walls erected by the Bush administration around the medical and psychological treatment of the 14,000 prisoners that the Pentagon says are currently being held in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantánamo.

Becoming an enemy combatant

In May 2002, eight months after the 9/11 attacks, Padilla was arrested at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, accused of plotting to explode a crude radioactive bomb. He spent three and a half years at the Charleston Naval Brig in South Carolina as an "enemy combatant." In December 2005, when an imminent Supreme Court deadline could have forced a precedent-setting review of his military imprisonment, the Bush administration changed his status from "enemy combatant" to criminal defendant. Pending a review of his mental competency, he now faces a civilian jury in Miami on federal charges of conspiring to participate in and aid "violent jihad" in Bosnia and Chechnya in the late '90s. Robert Chesney, who specializes in national security law at Wake Forest University, has compared the prosecution's tactics to charging Al Capone with tax evasion.

The government now pins responsibility for the "dirty bomb" plot on Binyam Mohamed, a detainee at Guantánamo and one of three prisoners who made statements under duress connecting Padilla to al-Qaeda's leadership. After being captured in Pakistan, Mohamed was rendered to Morocco at the behest of the United States. Moroccan jailors elicited the information about Padilla at the tip of a razor blade, sunk repeatedly into Mohamed's genitals, according to his attorney, Clive Stafford Smith.

Mohamed's case may one day be heard in the new $125 million Guantánamo tribunal building, future home of the administration's quasi-courts. It's a legal environment plastic enough to permit hearsay and evidence derived from torture, so long as it's "reliable" and in the "interest of justice," in the words of the Military Commissions Act passed by Congress last September.

Since Padilla, like Mohamed, was termed an enemy combatant during his detention at the Charleston Navel Brig, how the military treated Padilla is unknown, despite a September court order demanding his medical records be revealed. His lawyers say they have received 68 "fairly innocuous" pages, separated by the two-year gap from when he was taken to the brig in 2002 and when he was given access to attorneys in 2004.

Details about what took place during that period could reveal much about the lengths the administration has gone to break detainees. Padilla has repeatedly said he was injected with a "truth serum," possibly LSD or another hallucinogen. Orlando do Campo, a member of Padilla's defense team, says the medi-

August 30, 2004

Gitanjali Gutierrez, from the Center for Constitutional Rights, is the first civilian lawyer to visit Guantánamo.

June 29, 2006

In *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*, the Supreme Court holds that the military tribunals of the Detainee Treatment Act (signed into law six months before) are in violation of both military code and the Geneva Conventions.

June 28, 2004

In *Rasul v. Bush*, the Supreme Court rules that non-citizen detainees have habeus rights—their cases can be heard in the federal courts.

February 15, 2006

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights releases a report recommending the closure of Guantánamo.

October 17, 2006

Bush signs the Military Commissions Act, which retroactively dismisses the habeus corpus rights of enemy combatants.

cal records thus far mention no drugging. To date, only a few scant notes chronicle the military's psychological evaluation of him. The record is so thin Padilla's psychiatrists call it "unusual" and "concerning."

"Someone popped in his cell and wrote one line," says do Campo.

Padilla's lawyers call his treatment "outrageous." He was housed in a nine-foot by seven-foot cell, the window of which was taped to prevent natural light from entering. The cell was furnished with a steel platform for a bed, had no clock, and darkness and temperature were controlled externally. Noxious smells seeped in, and adjoining cell doors were electronically opened and closed, disrupting his sleep.

What most terrifies Padilla, according to the psychiatrists' reports, is the Bush administration's final trump card. If the civilian trial proves unsatisfactory, the administration has reserved the right to again declare Padilla an enemy combatant and return him to the brig.

The Bush administration seemingly claims the right to subject detainees to whatever it sees fit. In 2005, when he was head of Guantánamo's medical system, Capt. John Edmondson, a physician, announced that due to the conditions of the detainees' incarceration, their competency could not be assumed—and thus medical interventions could be delivered without their consent.

Edmondson made the claim in response to accusations that force-feeding hunger-striking detainees was unethical. He wrote, "I do not feel the individuals in this situation meet the criteria for ethical self determination."

For the most part, the medical community has repudiated the U.S. military. The American Medical Association and American Psychiatric Association have prohibited their members from participating in interrogations—and the psychiatrists have spelled out practices they find incompatible with Hippocratic principles, including humiliation, infliction of physical pain, and sensory and sleep deprivation.

The one professional group that has not banned the aiding of interrogation is the American Psychological Association (APA). A leaked interrogation log, reported by *Time* magazine two years ago, reveals that a psychologist was present during an interrogation where the prisoner was made to perform dog tricks and given intravenous fluids to force him to urinate on himself.

The ethical stance of the APA is meaningful because during a six-year period in the '90s, the military granted some psychologists the same prescribing privileges as psychiatrists—a privilege long sought-after by the APA and one it continues to lobby the government to expand. The APA passed a resolution condemning torture last August, but pointed to the U.S. government's reservations about the U.N. Convention Against Torture in their resolution. Those reservations claim that, "in order to constitute torture, an act must be specifically intended to inflict severe physical or mental pain or suffering."

Guards in Guantánamo have borrowed interrogation techniques from training meant to innoculate U.S. soldiers from torture.

MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES

Decades of dubious tactics

Regardless of who is or isn't responsible for drugging detainees, the information gained from doing so is not well regarded by intelligence professionals. But the Bush administration has a record of ignoring career intelligence officers. In a 2002 memo written to justify torture in overseas interrogations, former Assistant Attorney General Jay S. Bybee argued that drugging should be included in the roster of techniques available to interrogators. And while that memo was repudiated, Guantánamo attorneys maintain that their clients are being drugged.

"Truth serums do not force the subject to tell the truth," writes Kristin E. Heckman and Mark D. Happel of the MITRE Corporation, a military-funded research center, in "Educing Information," a survey of interrogation research published by the National Defense Intelligence College in December. "[A]lthough a subject's inhibitions have been lowered, there is no guarantee that any of the information elicited will be accurate," they write. According to the report, the persistence of coercive strategies in interrogation is based on anecdotal knowledge and Cold War norms, not rigorous examination of effectiveness.

"Truth drugs" have long proven unreliable. The Korean War brought public hysteria about Chinese and Soviet brainwashing camps turning captured GIs into unwitting dupes. In response, in 1953 the CIA launched Project MKULTRA, a series of 149 experiments over two decades that used subjects—including prisoners—to test mind-control techniques, including hypnosis and then-new hallucinogens like LSD. The Senate's Church Committee brought the abuses to light in the late '70s, revealing that only a handful of thousands of subjects knew what was being done to them.

Not a single mind-control experiment succeeded. "The whole MKULTRA program was a giant dead-end," says Alfred McCoy, a University of Wisconsin-Madison historian and author of *A Question of Torture: CIA Interrogation, From the Cold War to the War on Terror.*

Far more influential as a model for getting prisoners to reveal sensitive information was the CIA's KUBARK in-

terrogation manual, written in 1963 and declassified a decade ago. Along with a discussion of building rapport with interrogation subjects, it recommends coercive strategies: Deprive subjects of sensory stimuli, destabilize and disorient them, and use self-inflicted pain—for instance, having the captive stand at attention for great lengths of time. Such tactics are more likely to sap resistance than inflict pain.

Taking this advice, the military devised a training program to aid soldiers in resisting interrogation if they are captured. The nexus of the military's "stress inoculation" training is the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) courses at the JFK Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The SERE training process has been reverse-engineered to exploit detainees.

As Jane Mayer reported in the *New Yorker* in 2005, many of the elements of the SERE curriculum surfaced in Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib, including insulting detainees' religious texts, waterboarding prisoners, exploiting national flags, humiliating detainees sexually, and the essentials of sensory surfeit and denial: hooding, shackling, muffling, denying sleep, withholding food and clothes, and subjecting prisoners to loud, repetitive noise and temperature extremes.

Another element of the SERE program is biochemical. Psychologists and psychiatrists at Fort Bragg have studied the level of hormones present in stressful situations, particularly cortisol, which increases anxiety and alertness. The changes in cortisol levels recorded during the trainings have been among the largest ever documented, according to a 2000 report in *Special Warfare*, a publication of the JFK Special Warfare School.

"Stress inoculation occurs only when the stress intensity is at the optimal level," the report's authors wrote, "low enough so as not to overwhelm them ... if the stress level is too high, stress sensitization will occur."

The application of SERE's cortisol findings to detainees could allow interrogators to find their "breaking" points, Brig. Gen. Stephen Xenakis, a psychiatrist who led the Southeast Regional Army Medical Command before retiring nine years ago, told *In These Times*. Using the measure of cortisol to find the hormonal point at which a detainee can no longer protect himself could help interrogators inflict the precise amount of stress that would make a detainee most vulnerable to questioning.

But while truth serums and SERE tactics—and their associated mental changes—both produce acquiescence, the efficacy of either is very much in doubt. Steven Kleinman, an Air Force senior intelligence officer, writes in "Educing Information" that compliance with interrogators has been confused with meaningful cooperation. Born of the desire to understand—and withstand—Soviet-era coercive interrogations, Kleinman writes, the emphasis of U.S. interrogators has focused on techniques to bring about submission, not the production of reliable information.

"Once torture starts, it begins very quickly to proliferate," says McCoy, the historian. "The techniques become increasingly brutal. Whether it's Algiers in 1957 or Afghanistan in 2002—in every instance we have, it proliferates out of control."

That the tactics learned at SERE were being exported to the interrogation chambers of the "long war" became very apparent to Col. Morgan Banks, a SERE administrator and psychologist who advised on interrogations at Guantánamo and Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan. Consequently, he instituted a new rule for SERE graduates in 2004: Sign a pledge that SERE techniques will not be used on detainees in U.S. custody.

Such assurances come too late for Padilla, who becomes "visibly terrified" at the thought of watching his interrogation tapes and "appears to be incapacitated by Post Traumatic Stress Disorder," according to psychiatric evaluations.

"It is clear that there are definite similarities, with some techniques being identical, between some of the tactics allegedly used on José Padilla and those adapted from the SERE program for use as interrogation methods at Guantánamo and elsewhere," says Nathaniel Raymond, senior communications strategist for Physicians for Human Rights, which tracks detainee abuse.

In court filings, Padilla's lawyers describe him as a "piece of furniture"—a man objectified and dehumanized by the U.S. government; a government that is relentlessly focused on extracting information, regardless of its utility or its veracity, from him and hundreds of others. At any cost. ■

Details about what took place during Padilla's two-year detention without counsel could reveal much about how far the administration has gone to break detainees.

Inside America's Gulag

A Guantánamo lawyer reports from a parallel legal universe

BY H. CANDACE GORMAN

According to the U.S. government, Guantánamo Bay is leased to Uncle Sam by the Cuban government. However, Cuba does not recognize U.S. claims to the Bay and has not accepted lease payments for decades. Therefore, while Guantánamo is officially Cuban territory, it is effectively a fiefdom of the United States military. Guantánamo's bizarre political status makes it a perfect haven for the parallel legal universe the Bush administration has created for "enemy combatants."

This parallel legal universe is populated by the likes of Attorney General Alberto Gonzales. On January 17, Gonzales shocked the Senate Judiciary Committee with his statement that "the Constitution doesn't say, every individual in the United States or every citizen is hereby granted or assured the right to habeas. It doesn't say that. It simply says the right of habeas corpus shall not be suspended." Gonzales wasn't trying to have a philosophical discussion with the Senate; he isn't the philosophical type. No, it was more sinister than that, and we must now wait to find out how this novel theory ties in with whatever illegality the administration currently has up its collective sleeve.

Couple that with the menacing remarks made on January 11, the fifth anniversary of the opening of Guantánamo, by another denizen of this twilight world, attorney Cully Stimson, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for detainee affairs. Stimson was yucking it up on Federal News Radio about the uproar that he was sure would ensue when the media reported which corporate law firms were representing Guantánamo detainees. "When corporate CEOs see that those firms are representing the very terrorists who hit their bottom line back in 2001, those CEOs are going to make those law firms choose between representing terrorists or representing reputable firms,"

ADALBERTO ROQUE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Above, Cuban soldiers guard Point 8, the Cuban border post at the Guantánamo Naval Base.

Right, a map showing Guantánamo Bay.

he said. Stimson does not seem to realize that it is unethical for an attorney to retaliate against opposing counsel by exerting financial pressure. And I can tell you unequivocally that, contrary to Stimson's claim, my client is not a terrorist, and neither are the vast majority of prisoners locked up at Guantánamo. But with legal geniuses like these running our country, is it any wonder that the men in Guantánamo have languished for five years?

My client, Abdul Al Ghizzawi, has been held in Guantánamo Bay since 2002. On Dec. 9, 2005, I filed a petition for habeas corpus on his behalf but I had to clear a daunting series of bureaucratic hurdles before the government would allow me to meet with him. In order to see our clients, attorneys representing Guantánamo detainees must receive a security clearance and have a protective order entered by the court. The protective order outlines the rules for habeas counsel. I applied for my security clearance in January 2006. In February, I received news that my client's health was deteriorating and I filed an emergency motion to have the protective order entered. The Justice Department opposed the order and the judge subsequently denied my motion, saying that I didn't show anything "concrete" or any "impending irreparable

harm." The judge did not explain exactly how I was to show something concrete when I was not allowed to communicate with my client.

In early June I received an email from another attorney whose notes were "cleared" from his last visit to the base. He told me that his client was concerned because Al Ghizzawi was ill with liver disease. I filed another emergency motion and this time the judge relented. Since I had now received my security clearance I was granted permission to see my client.

I arrived at Guantánamo on July 15 on a small plane owned by a cargo airline. The 14-seater takes three hours from Ft. Lauderdale because the plane must circle around Cuban airspace. As I flew in to the small military airport I was surprised at how arid and dismal this part of the island looked. The base, home to 8,500 servicemen, is divided in two parts, separated by the bay. The main part of the military installation is on the windward side of the bay. Attorneys are housed on the leewardside at a dumpy military hotel called the Combined Bachelor Quarters. There is one restaurant on that side, a dive called The Captain's Galley. Everything is deep fried.

The morning routine for habeas counsel is to take the 7:40 bus to the ferry and the 8:00 ferry to the windward side where the prison camp is located. While the leeward side is ramshackle and barren, the windward side is surreal. There is (of course) a Starbucks, a McDonalds, a combined Subway-Pizza Hut, a Wal-Mart-like big box store called the Nex and a gift shop … yes, Guantánamo has a gift shop that sells Guantánamo key chains, shot glasses, t-shirts and shell tchotckes. Fillipino and Haitian workers staff all the establishments. And in the distance, beyond these icons of American consumption, is the "gulag."

After eight months of delays and obstruction, and after a great deal of effort both on his part and mine, I was finally allowed to meet Al-Ghizzawi at the "gulag." My briefcase and papers were examined in a cursory way. (On later trips, these searches resulted in letters to my client being confiscated on the grounds that they made oblique reference to "world events.") I was then ushered by my escort behind a chain-link fence, through three gates into a sweltering cinderblock hut at Camp Echo. I was a little nervous going into that first meeting. I knew little about Al Ghizzawi and it seemed plausible to me that he might be the "worst of the worst"—which is what our government claims Guantánamo is holding. However, when I entered the tiny windowless room, I met a frail, bearded, jaundiced man of about 45, wearing a khaki jump suit and flip flops with his feet shackled to a ring on the floor. In time, I learned this member of the "worst of the worst" had been the owner of a spice shop and bakery in Jalalabad when, in December 2002, he was turned in to the Americans for a bounty—typically $5,000. He was initially held at Bagram Airforce Base before being sent to Guantánamo in March 2002. Initially our military determined he was a non-enemy combatant but this determination was mysteriously overturned by a second tribunal in Washington (five weeks after the first tribunal) because the military claimed it had new evidence against him. My security clearance allowed me to see the top secret "new evidence" and although I cannot disclose the contents, I can assure the readers of *In These Times* that there was nothing new presented to the second tribunal—nothing whatsoever.

If my client had a fair habeas hearing today, a basic right in our legal tradition, (that is, until Attorney General Gonzales announced it was never part of our constitution), he would be a free man. But for now, Al Ghizzawi enters his sixth year, languishing in Guantánamo. ■

H. CANDACE GORMAN *is a civil rights attorney in Chicago. Adrian Bleifuss Prados, her law clerk, contributed to this article.*

Dreaming Up New Politics

Thinking different in an age of fantasy

BY STEPHEN DUNCOMBE

In the autumn of 2004, shortly before the U.S. presidential election and in the middle of a typically bloody month in Iraq, the *New York Times Magazine* ran a feature article on the casualty of truth in the Bush administration. In a soon-to-be-infamous passage, the writer, Ron Suskind, recounted a conversation between himself and an unnamed senior adviser to the president:

> The aide said that guys like me were 'in what we call the reality-based community,' which he defined as people who 'believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernable reality.' I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. 'That's not the way the world really works anymore,' he continued. 'We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you are studying that reality—judiciously, as you will—we'll act again creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do.'

It was clear how the *Times* felt about this peek into the political mind of the presidency. The editors of the Gray Lady pulled out the passage and floated it over the article in oversized, multi-colored type. This was ideological gold: the Bush administration openly and arrogantly admitting that they didn't care about reality. One could almost feel the palpable excitement generated among the *Times* liberal readership, an enthusiasm mirrored and amplified all down the left side of the political spectrum on computer listservs, call-in radio shows and print editorials over the next few weeks.

What worried me then, and still worries me today, is that my reaction was radically different. My politics have long been diametrically opposed to those of the Bush administration, and I've had a long career as a left-leaning academic and a progressive political activist. Yet I read the same words that generated so much animosity among liberals and the left and felt something else: excited, inspired . . . and jealous. Whereas the commonsense view held that Bush's candid disregard for reality was evidence of the madness of his administration, I perceived it as a much more disturbing sign of its brilliance. I knew then that Bush, in spite of making a mess of nearly everything he had undertaken in his first presidential term, would be reelected.

How could my reaction be so different from that of so many of my colleagues and comrades? Maybe I was becoming a neocon, another addition to the long list of defectors whose progressive God had failed. Would I follow the path of Christopher Hitchens? A truly depressing thought. But what if, just maybe, the problem was not with me but with the main currents of progressive thinking in this country? More precisely, maybe there was something about progressive politics that had become increasingly problematic.

For years progressives have comforted themselves with age-old biblical adages that the "truth will out" or "the truth shall make you free." We abide by an Enlightenment faith that somehow, if reasoning people have access to the Truth, the scales

will fall from their eyes and they will see reality as it truly is and, *of course*, agree with us. But waiting around for the truth to set people free is lazy politics.

The truth does not reveal itself by virtue of being the truth: it must be told, and we need to learn how to tell the truth more effectively. It must have stories woven around it, works of art made about it; it must be communicated in new ways and marketed so that it sells. It must be embedded in an experience that connects with people's dreams and desires, that resonates with the symbols and myths they find meaningful. We need a propaganda of the truth.

Progressives like to study and to know. We like to be right (and then complain that others are not). But being right is not enough—we need to win. And to win we need to act. I propose an alternative political aesthetic for progressives to consider, a theory of *dreampolitik* they might practice.

Go to Grand Theft Auto school

Progressives need to study dreams. Fortunately, we have a ready-made laboratory at our disposal. Unfortunately, it takes the form of something progressives traditionally disdain: commercial culture. Recognizing the importance of commercial fantasies does not necessitate some sort of pseudo-populist embrace of the entirety of popular culture. But it does mean that we need to recognize that in these expressions some popular will is being expressed. *How* that will is being manifested in popular culture may be something to condemn—or applaud—but the will itself has to be dealt with. Acknowledging the present passions of people is not the same thing as accepting things as they are. Instead, current desire is the fulcrum on which to leverage future change.

As unlikely as it seems, progressives can also learn a lot from a best selling shoot-'em-up video game like *Grand Theft Auto*. Yes, all the hand-wringing, wet-blanket, moralistic critics of video games are right: *Grand Theft Auto* is apocalyptically violent. But there is something else about these games, especially morally suspect ones like *Grand Theft Auto*, that demands our attention. They are wildly popular. Why?

Video games like *Grand Theft Auto* may appeal to our worst libidinal instincts—a bit of eros and a whole lot of thanatos—but these games also demand the participation of the gamer; new worlds open up to the player as he or she develops new skills, and characters respond based upon the player's past actions. In video games, unlike almost all other mass media, the spectator also becomes a producer.

This runs counter to much of how progressive politics is done these days. Consider the typical "mass" demonstration. We march. We chant. Speakers are paraded onto the dais to tell us (in screeching voices through bad sound systems) what we already know. Sometimes we sit down in a prescribed place and allow the police to arrest us. While these demonstrations are often held in the name of "people's power," they are profoundly disempowering. Structured with this model of protest is a philosophy of passive political spectatorship: they organize, we come; they talk, we listen. Progressives need to re-think our game. If people aren't joining us maybe it's because the game we're playing just isn't much fun to play.

With Reclaim the Streets (RTS) we tried playing by different rules. For five years I was an organizer with the New York City franchise of this international direct-action group. Beginning in London in the early '90s as an unlikely alliance between environmentalists and ravers, Reclaim the Streets merged protests with parties, taking over streets and turning them into pulsing, dancing, temporary carnivals in their demand for public space.

The RTS protest model proved popular. From its relatively small first reclamation of Camden High Street in 1995, demonstrations grew steadily in size and scope; the model spread to cities across the United Kingdom and Europe, then Australia, Israel, South America, and the United States.

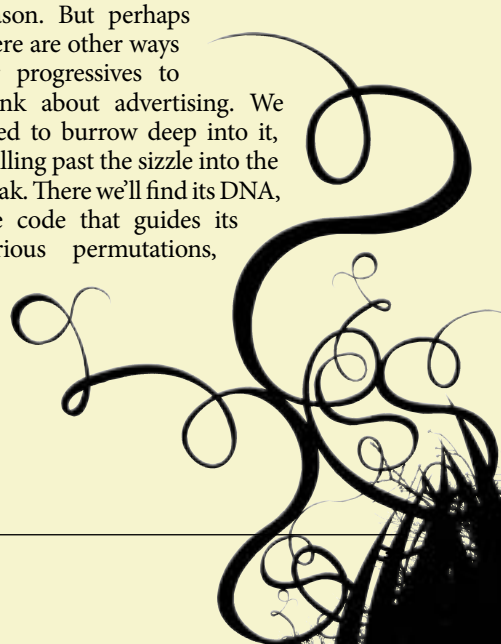
Acting autonomously, activists adapted the London model to local conditions. In New York, RTS protested everything from the privatization of public space to the World Trade Organization, throwing demonstrations to draw attention to the destruction of community gardens and highlight the exploitation of Mexican American greengrocery workers. Political targets shifted with location and over time, but the method of protest—and the philosophy behind the method—remained constant. RTS believes that political ends must be embodied in the means you use. Giving the idea of "demonstration" new meaning, protests should literally demonstrate the ideal that you want to actualize.

When RTS organized a protest what we were really organizing was a framework for activity. We would decide upon a place and time and put out a call. We printed up propaganda and press releases, trundled in a sound system, and set up legal teams to get people out of jail if they get arrested. But the actual shape the protest took on was determined by who showed up and what they did. We saw what we were doing as opening up a space: literally, in terms of reclaiming a street from auto traffic and specialized use, but also metaphorically by opening up a space for people to explore what political activism could mean for themselves. We turned spectators into producers.

All advertising is about transformation, and transformation was once the property of the left. What were democracy, socialism, feminism and civil rights if not dreams of a world transformed?

Think different

Violent video games aren't the only popular fantasies that progressives can learn from. As much as it might pain us to acknowledge, we can also learn a great deal from advertising. Progressives traditionally respond to the fantasies of Madison Avenue as reactionaries. We're against it, and we want to oppose it with what we know: reason. But perhaps there are other ways for progressives to think about advertising. We need to burrow deep into it, drilling past the sizzle into the steak. There we'll find its DNA, the code that guides its various permutations,



no matter what product is being sold. From these building blocks I believe we can reassemble a model of communication and persuasion that is true to progressive ideals and effective in today's world. In brief, we need to heed the call of Apple Computer's grammatically challenged campaign and "think different" about advertising, and our politics.

All advertising is about transformation. The product advertised will transform you from what you are (incomplete, inadequate, and thoroughly normal) into what you would like to be (fulfilled, successful, and completely special). Transformation was once the property of progressives. What were democracy, socialism, anarchism, civil rights, and feminism if not dreams of a world transformed? Advertising is, in essence, a promise—often a false promise, sometimes ironic, but a promise nonetheless. Progressives need to work on our promises.

Too often, we progressives pitch our cause in reactionary terms of hanging on to what we have and holding the line. Or we make appeals to guilt and sacrifice, asking people to give up what they already have so that others might have a piece of it. These are appeals to the past or to a diminished present. They take for granted that the best we can do is redistribute what we have already attained and that we cannot all gain more. Because of this they are doomed to failure.

For a moment imagine an advertisement that asks you to stay where you are, to accept things as they are, or, if you are looking for social change, promises to make things personally worse for you. Progressives often do this and, tactically speaking, are insane for doing so.

Advertising also requires us to "think different" about the very way we think. We like to think we derive our truths through linear logic, but the trick of advertising is its ability to circumvent such logic, substituting associations for equations. A picture of a happy family is placed next to a picture of McDonald's: Bingo—Big Macs are familial bliss. The goal is to equate unlike items, collapsing difference into unity.

How can progressives hope to appropriate such a principle as association? Why would we want to? To answer the second question first, we must. Linear logic belongs to the age of the sentence and the paragraph; associative logic is in tune with the present visual era. If progressives wish to communicate in the present, they need to learn the language of association.

Conservatives use it all the time. Think of the propaganda of the second Bush administration in preparation for their war in Iraq. By constantly referring to Iraq in the same sentence as terrorism, and Saddam Hussein in the same breath as al-Qaeda, the administration effectively forged an association that continues today.

But is that what progressives should do: elide the truth and play a cynical game of *realpolitik*? I don't think so. We can find ways to harness the power of association without slipping into a moral morass. Associations conjure up an ideal, not an equation of facts. But this does not mean that associations must be built upon lies.

Lines of connection and association have been traced by progressives before. These were the lines that Martin Luther King Jr. wanted us to follow when he asked us to consider where we get our sponges, our soap, our coffee, tea, and toast: "Before you finish eating breakfast in the morning, you've depended on more than half of the world." Associations were what King was describing late in his life when he drew out the connections between the war in Vietnam and poverty and race hatred in the United States. More recently, Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger, in their provocative 2004 white paper "The Death of Environmentalism," argued that the environmental movement needs to articulate a wider set of associations, articulating (and publicizing) links between industry and weather, resources and war, nature and values. The principle of association is an opportunity for progressives to move past the timid linear logic that inspires no one and to harness a powerful tool of persuasion.

But it's not enough to draw connections between things we do not like; associations can also communicate what we are for and what kind of world our policies might create.

Reclaim fun

Progressives can use association at the level of organization building as well. I learned this in mid 1990s working with the Lower East Side Collective (LESC), a community activist organization I co-founded in New York City. We didn't fundraise by applying for grants, sending out direct-mail appeals or badgering people on the street. Instead, we raised money for our organization by throwing huge, raucous dance parties. We goofed around and socialized while tabling for causes. We prided ourselves on our cleverly worded signs. And, working with groups like Reclaim the Streets and More Gardens!, we turned our demonstrations into festive carnivals. In brief, we enjoyed ourselves.

The projection of "fun" was part of a conscious strategy on our part to counteract the public perception of leftists as dour, sour, and politically correct—a stereotype that had some validity, at least in the Lower East Side of Manhattan in the mid-1990s.

LESC had a standing working group whose function was fun. We called it, with tongue firmly in cheek, the "Ministry of Love." Within a year of our founding we had more than 50 activists working with us and were engaged in six simultaneous campaigns. We also had been attacked by several on the sour left for being too joyous. That's when we knew we had succeeded in transforming the association of progressive activism from sacrifice to pleasure.

The importance of fun in politics is not just the luxury of the privileged activist. In the middle of the murderous civil war in El Salvador, Salvadoran women would immediately create three committees when setting up new refugee camps: one on sanitation and construction, another on education, and a third, *comité de alegría*, on joy. Yes, activism involves sacrifice—a sacrifice of free time as well as the bliss of ignorance. But activism is also social, exhilarating, rebellious and fun. Which make better selling points?

Modern politics is about appealing to people; you need to attract activists into an organization and supporters to your cause. The hair shirt wearing, self-sacrificing progressive may be a suitable candidate for sainthood, but politically they are a liability. Branding is the new buzzword in advertising; it's the set of associations attached to a product or corporation. Politics, whether we like it or not, are branded too. The important question is what sort of brand we want to build.

Advertise desire

The most valuable lesson progressives can learn from advertising, however, has to do with the power of desire. Advertising circumvents reason, working with the magical, the personal and the associative. A journey of emotions rather than an argument of fact, advertising's appeal is not cognitive, but primal. This emotionality, perhaps all emotionality, disturbs progressives. As heirs to the Enlightenment, progressives have learned to privilege reason. Feelings are what motivate the others: Bible thumpers, consumers, terrorists, the mob. All true, but emotions also can motivate progressive politics. The problem is not desire, but where desire has been channeled

Progressive desire (as well as some rather more base ones) has provided material for copywriters and creative directors for decades. In its own convoluted way, and for its own pecuniary objectives, Madison Avenue has been an invaluable propaganda bureau for progressive ideals, keeping hope alive. Each advertisement, along with this or that product, sells the dream of a better life. Now it is time to turn the tables. Advertising has provided us with sophisticated techniques to reach people and connect with their desires; now progressives need to use these tools to redirect progressive passions back into progressive politics. Karl Marx once argued that only socialism could unlock the material promise of capitalism; today I believe that only progressive politics can free the fantasies trapped within advertising.

Have a dream

Embracing our dreams does not necessitate closing our eyes, and minds, to reality. Progressives can, and should, do both: judiciously study and vividly dream. In essence, we need to become a party of conscious dreamers.

Right now the only people flying this flag are sequestered to the far fringes of progressive politics. Some of this marginalization is of their own choice. Many street activists and political performers are suspicious of more mainstream progressives who, in their eyes, have abandoned the utopian dreams that once directed and motivated the left. They also have contempt for the tactical (non)sense of a bumbling, fumbling Democratic Party. "At least we shut down Seattle and opened up a discussion on the politics of globalization," they brag (an estimation shared, with some concern, by the editors of the *Financial Times*). Disgusted by the conciliation and incompetence of their more moderate comrades, these progressives often keep their own company.

But this marginalization is not entirely of their own making, for progressives ensconced in the center show little interest in their left flank. Here conservatives have something to teach us. The Republican Party learned to look to its margins. Grover Norquist, Ralph Reed, Karl Rove, Ronald Reagan—all these men at one time might have been described as people whose fringe politics guaranteed their irrelevance. They are also the very people who led the Republicans to power over the past few decades. During the same decades groups like the Democratic Leadership Council argued that the Democratic Party needed to abandon its margins and move to the center. They were successful. As a result the Democrats have virtually no connection to the aesthetic and political fringes of the progressive movement today.

It's a shame because these activists—in all their marginality—have a better understanding of how the center operates than do the centrist professionals inside the Beltway. They understand the popular desire for fantasy and the political potential of dreams, and they know how to mobilize spectacle. They have a better read on the attractions of popular culture and the possibilities of harnessing this for progressive politics than the "pragmatic" center who, secure in their sense of superiority, stick to their failed script of reason and rationality.

It is time to cut our losses and try another tack by moving the strategies, tactics, and organization of the margins to the center. This will take convincing on all sides. Those on the margins need to take power seriously, giving up the privileged purity of the gadfly and court jester and making peace with the dirtier aspects of practical politics: the daily compromises that come with real governance. Those in the center have to be open to a new way of thinking about politics that challenges some of their core beliefs about the sufficiency of judicious study and rational discourse and the efficacy of a professionalized politics. The centrists need to acknowledge that their model of politics is, ironically, out of touch with the cultural center of our society. They must be willing to dream. ■

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A Politically Correct Lexicon

Your 'how-to' guide to avoid offending anyone

BY JOEL BLEIFUSS

In the late '70s, "politically correct," "PC" for short, entered the public lexicon. Folks on the left used the term to dismiss views that were seen as too rigid and, also, to poke fun at themselves for the immense care they took to neither say nor do anything that might offend the political sensibilities of others. "You are so PC," one would say with a smile. In the '80s, the right, taking the words at face value, latched on to the term and used it to deride leftish voices. Beleaguered progressives, ever earnest, then defended political correctness as a worthy concept, thus validating conservatives' derision. Today, on both the left and the right, being PC is no laughing matter; three decades of culture wars have generated a bewildering thicket of terminology.

To help me parse what's PC and what's not, I had help from people attuned to the nuances of words, particularly those that describe race, ethnicity and sexual identity. Rinku Sen is a 40-year-old South Asian woman. She is the publisher of *Colorlines*, a national magazine of race and politics, for which she has developed a PC style manual. Tracy Baim is a 44-year-old white lesbian. She grapples with the ever-evolving nomenclature of sexual identity and politics as the executive editor of *Windy City Times*, a Chicago-based gay weekly. Lott Hill is a 36-year-old white gay male who works at Center for Teaching Excellence at Columbia College in Chicago. He interacts with lots of young people—the font from which much new language usage flows.

African American: In 1988 Jesse Jackson encouraged people to adopt this term over the then-used "black." As he saw it, the words acknowledged black America's ties to Africa. "African American," says Hill, is now "used more by non-African-American people, who cling to it because they are unsure what word to use." Sen says, "African American" is favored by "highly educated people who are not black. Whether one uses 'black' or 'African American' indicates how strong your social relations are with those communities." And Chris Raab, founder of Afro-Netizen, says, "People who are politically correct chose to use African American, but I don't recall any mass of black folks demanding the use of African American."

Asian: The correct term to use for anyone of Asian ancestry. When accuracy is desired, nationality of origin is appended to "American," as in "Korean American." Sen, who describes herself as South Asian or Indian American, says that there is "some push around not conflating everybody into Asian. This is mostly an issue among new immigrants. If there hasn't been time for a generation, it seems to be hard to move those folks to the Asian category."

Bitch: A word, says Baim, which is "absolutely being reclaimed by a younger generation of women who are asserting their sexuality and control of their sexuality." Successfully repurposed by *Bitch* magazine over the past decade, 'Bitch' is now becoming passé as less edgy writers like Cathi Hanauer, author of *The Bitch in the House,* adopt it. Similarly, though more slowly, "slut," "whore" and "cunt" are being reappropriated. "The young people use those terms all the time teasingly and sometimes to even refer to themselves," says Hill. "It is more common to hear someone say 'I am a slut' than 'I am a whore.' " "Cunt" is gaining currency among some young lesbians, though Baim says it is a word that gets stuck in her throat. "While it is a reclaimed word, it is one I can hardly say, the same way some older blacks have trouble saying the n-word."

Black: At *Colorlines* "black" is used with a capital B, while *The Associate Press Stylebook* advises use of the lower case.

Boi: A word, says Hill, that is "used by young queer people to refer to either young gay males or young females who are presenting as males."

Brown: A general term for people who are not white. *Colorlines* uses "brown" in a casual or playful way. "We might have a headline 'Brown People to the Back' in a story about restaurant hierarchy," Sen says. Sometimes used to refer to Latinos, as in the "black-brown" coalition that helped elect Harold Washington mayor of Chicago in 1983.

Chicano: Correct term for people of Mexican ancestry, popularized during the civil rights movement. "We use it to refer to U.S.-born people of Mexican descent," says Sen. "Mexican American is the more distant, politer thing to say."

Dyke: A word lesbians have reclaimed. Hill, however, says that among the young it is "on its way out."

Fag (faggot): The new "queer." "Like the n-word, it's a word that can be said by gay people," says Hill. "I hear 'fag' a great deal, especially among queer-identified young people, like 'don't be such a fag' or 'you are such a fag.' "

Feminist: "A word that the younger generation doesn't always embrace," is how Baim, 44, describes it. A lot of young women, she says, are "feminists but they don't want to be pigeonholed." "Feminist somehow became a tainted word along the way," says Hill. "I have heard a lot of people say, 'this sounds feminist' or 'I used to be a feminist.' "

Gay: The word used to refer to males and, inclusively, to the whole gender-bent community. "College-age people are more likely to refer to themselves as queer," say Hill. "People out of college are more likely to refer to themselves as gay."

Girl: " 'Girl' is used by older women," says Baim. "It is kind of nice because it used to be used derogatorily and now it is used in a fun way."

GLBT: Shorthand for GLBTQ²IA.

GLBTQ²IA: The acronym for Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Transgendered, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Allies. "This is coming from the youth movement, the college campuses, it has not seeped into the whole community at this point," says Baim, who at the *Windy City Times* uses GLBT, an acronym the *New York Times* has not yet seen fit to print.

Guys: Very controversial. Used, especially in the Midwest, when referring to a group of people. "In Chicago that word gets used a lot," says Hill. And Baim says, "I use it all of the time." Some feminists, like Andi Zeisler, the editor of *Bitch*, find "guys" problematic. "We assume the descriptor 'guys' denotes a quality of universality," she says. "It would be hard to imagine a group of men being addressed by their server as 'hey you gals' and not taking offense, but the reverse happens all the time."

Hir (Hirs): Gender neutral for him and her. At Wesleyan University, incoming freshmen are instructed to use gender-neutral pronouns in campus correspondence. As one person wrote on the university's online Anonymous Confession Board, "I am usually attracted only to people of hir original gender, rather than hir intended gender. As such, I'm afraid that I'm, like, viewing hir wrong, or not respecting hir wishes or something."

Hispanic: "We never use Hispanic," says Sen. "It privileges the European roots of the identity of Mexicans born in the United States." Hispanic, however, is the preferred term of people in the Southwest whose families are descendents of Spanish colonists.

Indian: The preferred term for Native Americans. "Indians either use their specific tribal name or use Indian," says Sen. "You use the qualifier American when you need to distinguish from Indian Indians."

Latino: (capital "L," with "a" or "o" at the end used to connote gender) Politically correct term for those from Spanish or Portuguese speaking cultures. "We use it instead of Hispanic when we want to refer to many different national groups where there has been an indigenous-European mix," says Sen.

Lesbian: "The younger generations are less connected with the terms 'gay' and 'lesbian,' " says Baim. "Lesbian is out of favor as a self-identifying label, it means something political, something more rigid than the younger generation is comfortable with."

Macaca: The latinization of the Bantu "ma-kako," meaning monkey. According to the *Global Language Monitor*, former Sen. George Allen (R-Va.) helped make this the most politically incorrect word of 2006 by using it to refer to an Indian American.

Native American: Some Indians object to the term, seeing it as a way to linguistically eradicate "Indian" and thus the history of their oppression by whites. "I almost always hear Native American, and in the more enlightened conversations there is usually 'indigenous' thrown in there somewhere," says Lott. Sen says, "Native American seems to be a more distant construction, developed by academics."

Nigger: "It is a word that white students struggle with and black students use pretty freely," says Hill. "Young people are much more open to using it, especially young people who are black or who have been exposed to more diverse groups of people." While Sen says, "I can't imagine a political or a social multiracial situation where it would be appropriate, but I know that is because I am too old. The word is so prevalent in the popular youth culture, grounded in hip-hop, that I wouldn't like to predict where that debate is going to end up. But if the popular culture ends up agreeing that it is okay to use, then I think there are a lot of pretty scary implications."

Queer: Anyone who falls outside the lines of straight. "It has been reclaimed far ahead of faggot or dyke," says Baim. "It is our buzz word," says Columbia College's Hill. "It is how we avoid saying all of those letters [GLBTQ²IA]." REM lead singer Michael Stipe, for example, is queer, not gay. "For me, queer describes something that's more inclusive of the gray areas," he told *Butt,* a pocket-sized Dutch "fagazine." "It's really about identity I think. The identity I'm comfortable with is queer because I just think it's more inclusive."

Transgendered: (trans) A person who is not presenting as their biological gender. "It is fascinating how transgendered is becoming like an octopus with all the tentacles of identity and personal design. The transgendered movement is burgeoning and fluid, they are creating all of these new ways to define who they are," says Baim.

Ze: Gender neutral for he or she. As Mary Boenke writes on the PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Web site: "When talking with Leslie Feinberg, noted transgender author, I asked Leslie which pronouns to use. Ze shrugged hir shoulders and said ze didn't care." ■

Eyes Off the Prize

As Iraq dominates U.S. attention, China, India and Iran are emerging as the next world powers

BY JEHANGIR S. POCHA

The resurgent cultures of China, Iran and India will irrevocably alter the world in the next three decades.

About 30 years ago, U.S. diplomats famously dismissed the civil war raging in the jungles of Cambodia as a "sideshow" to the Cold War. Callous as that was, the uncomfortable fact remains that the diplomats were probably right. As bloody and heartrending as the situation in Cambodia got by 1977, in the end it appears to have had only a limited bearing on the wider historical forces at work in the world, adding a further dimension of sheer meaninglessness to the tragedy and trauma that still haunts millions of Cambodians.

Today, headlines are fixated on the gore and chaos unfolding in Iraq. The conflict there has been shaping the outcome of the elections in many Western nations, and is certain to be the most contentious foreign policy issue in the 2008 U.S. presidential election. Yet this unrelenting focus on Iraq obscures the reality that in another 30 years the Bush administration's adventure there will probably look like the Cold War-era face-off in Cambodia does now—a tragic mistake fuelled by hubris that cost countless innocent lives and billions of dollars, but which ultimately had only a limited effect.

Instead, the principal dynamic shaping life in the year 2037 will be the re-emergence of three ancient nations: China, India and Iran. Their powerful economies, muscular militaries, ambitious politicians, nationalistic populaces and resurgent cultures will irrevocably alter the lives of the 2.9 billion people who will then be living within their borders. But beyond that, these three countries will radically alter the balance of power in the world and give people and nations everywhere a new impetus to recreate their own societies.

That this will happen is certain. What's up for grabs is what it will mean for the United States and the world. Yet the United States and most other countries seem to be only marginally prepared to deal with this nascent new world order.

China is the nation whose resurgence is best understood in the West. But despite the media hype around China, the country is only of marginal interest to the average American citizen and policymaker, as illustrated by the fact that when Chinese President Hu Jintao visited Washington earlier this year President Bush didn't even offer him a state dinner, dismissing him with just a hurried lunch. India, for all the ferment and change it is experiencing, receives hardly any diplomatic or media attention. Both official and general perceptions of this complex and contradictory country generally revolve around banal sound bites of it being a "software superpower." And, because official and public views of Iran are so dogged by miscomprehension and prejudice, the entire country is seen almost exclusively through a political lens, even though Western diplomats themselves tell us the Islamists ruling Tehran are almost totally out of step with the rest of the country.

The relatively few editors, businessmen, academics and officials committed to studying China, India and Iran provide us with invaluable insights into these countries. But they still generally label what we are seeing in these three ancient civilizations as "amazing change." In reality, it is much more: not just change or evolution, but a paradigmatic shift that will challenge the basic framework of the post-WWII world.

As with any new idea, the world is trying to cope with the changing dynamics in China, India and Iran by squeezing them into existing structures and processes. But the national ambitions of the rising East and the sheer scale of their change will force a major, if not complete, re-thinking of the global system.

Just as the turn of the last century saw Germany, Japan and Italy demand (but so misguidedly pursue) their own place in the sun, China, India and Iran will soon demand that the global system that currently protects the United State's interests adapt to accommodate their own economic and strategy ambitions. The most immediate impact will be on the three pillars of U.S. dominance: the global financial system that has the U.S. dollar at its center, the global oil and gas trade which the United States currently controls, and America's "soft power," or its ability to win friends and arguments based on the popularity of its culture and values.

Today's global financial system is based around an informal but effective agreement labeled Bretton Woods II, which revolves around the idea that, de facto, the world is following a regime of fixed global exchange rates just like the original Bretton Woods regime maintained de jure from 1945 to 1973. While the original Bretton-Woods was a formal system that fixed nations' currency rates to their gold reserves, Bretton Woods II is an informal arrangement that pegs exchange rates to the U.S. dollar.

Currently, more than 30 nations, including China and Saudi Arabia, have their exchange rates pegged to the dollar in one form or another, allowing them to export their goods into the United States and maintain huge trade and current account surpluses. This arrangement works as long as this surplus is used to purchase U.S. dollar-denominated debt, including the U.S. national debt. With this money coming from China, Saudi Arabia and other countries, the United States can then finance its $8 trillion budget deficit. This allows the U.S. Federal Reserve to produce enough money to stimulate spending by U.S. consumers, who will then buy Chinese-made clothes and home theatre systems (or Saudi oil) via the "fixed" exchange rate. The Asian countries then invest their profits into U.S. T-bills—in other words, lending it back to the United States so the cycle can repeat itself over and over again.

This system has worked well until now. China is an exporting juggernaut and has about $1 trillion in foreign reserves, most of which is used to buy U.S. debt, including $350 billion in U.S. T-bills. This has allowed Americans to live beyond their means on someone else's money, while also allowing the United States to raise its huge debt in its own currency, thereby neutralizing any currency risk.

This can happen because international loans are mostly denominated in dollars and when a country borrows too much its own currency depreciates, thus making it more expensive for the borrowing country to pay back its dollar-denominated debts. So, for example, if India borrowed $1 billion from the World Bank in January 2006 when the exchange rate was 10 rupees to the dollar, that means in rupee terms India borrowed 10 billion rupees. If India borrows another $1 billion in 2007 and investors deem that excessive, the value of the rupee will fall to, say, 12 rupees to a dollar, which means it will now cost India 12 billion rupees to pay back the original $1 billion it borrowed.

Because the United States borrows in its own currency, it is immune from this currency exchange trap. The $1 billion the United States borrows remains $1 billion even if the dollar devalues globally. In fact, it is the lenders who bear the cost of the devaluation, as the $1 billion they get back will be worth less vis-à-vis their own and other currencies.

What policy makers should now begin to grapple with, according to former U.S. Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers, is that the rationale for China to buy U.S. debt is slowly fading. Beijing's huge stock of dollars is threatening its own economy with inflation and the United States' mammoth debt is making China and other countries wonder if U.S. dollars are truly a wise investment. In the last year alone, China, the United Arab Emirates, Russia, Italy, Switzerland, Qatar and New Zealand have all said they will reduce their U.S. dollar holdings and buy more gold and Euros.

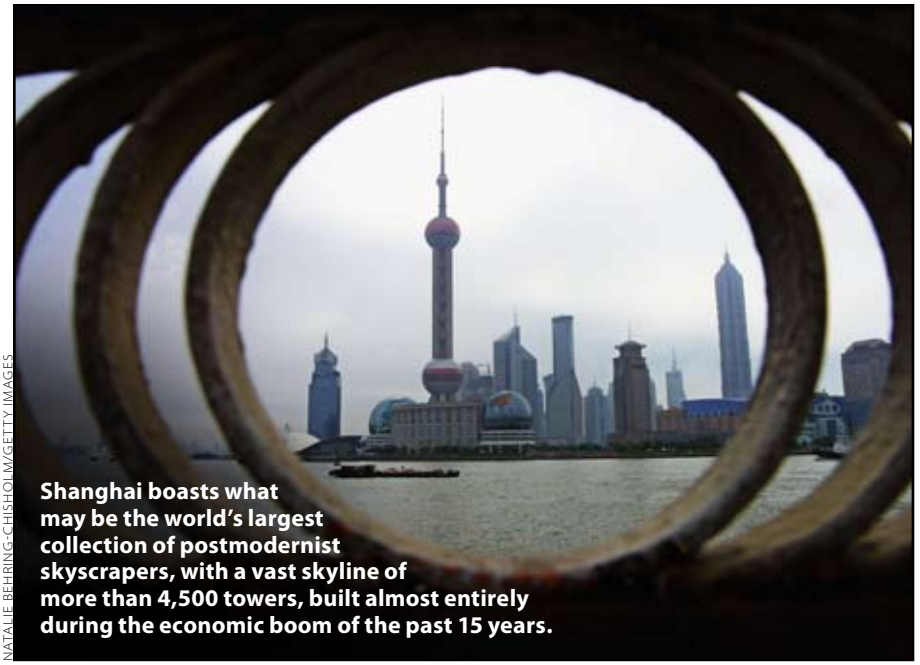
China also realizes its dollars are subsidizing U.S. growth when they could be used on domestic development projects and/or lent to other Asian nations with whom it wants to buy influence at the expense of the United States. Though Chinese officials are generally deferential to the United States in their public comments, many say privately that they realize that China is lending money to the United States, which in turn is lending dollars to global institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and thereby acquiring greater clout over the global financial system, particularly over the countries dependent on the IMF for loans.

What we are seeing in these three ancient civilizations is not just change or evolution, it is a paradigmatic shift that will challenge the basic framework of the post-WWII world.

Increasingly Beijing, New Delhi and other Asian nations, including Thailand, are talking about using their surplus dollars to create their own financial institutions, such as an Asian Monetary Fund, that would lend Asian surpluses to Asian borrowers. Not only would this diminish the United States' ability to dictate economic policy to borrowers, it would cement regional ties by giving Asian nations a vested interest in each other's development and stability.

Meanwhile, Iran poses its own threat to the dollar. Currently, the global oil and natural gas trade is conducted mainly in U.S. dollars. Since countries need to pay for their oil in dollars, they strive to acquire them, and this further strengthens both demand for the dollar and its central role in the world economy. But Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has begun talking about selling Iranian oil and gas for Euros and other internationally traded currencies. If Iraq does indeed fall into the Iranian orbit, as many fear it will, and if Iran can get Iraq to follow suit, along with Iran's ally Venezuela, about a third of the world's energy would no longer be traded in the dollar, but in Euros or other currencies.

Another worry for Washington is that Tehran and Beijing have close military ties and are deepening their efforts to keep the United States out of energy-rich Central Asia, an area that has always been seen by Beijing, Moscow, Tehran and New Delhi as their backyard. In the months following the 9/11 attacks, Washington surprised these regional powers by using the international alarm over global terrorism to estab-



NATALIE BEHRING-CHISHOLM/GETTY IMAGES

Shanghai boasts what may be the world's largest collection of postmodernist skyscrapers, with a vast skyline of more than 4,500 towers, built almost entirely during the economic boom of the past 15 years.

lish new military bases in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Washington also used its clout to buy major oil fields in the area and created the strategically important Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which allows Western countries to directly access the Caspian Sea's energy reserves without needing to go through Russia or Iran.

Shi Yinhong, director of the American Studies program at the People's University in Beijing, is concerned that tensions in the region heightened last year when the United States supported the "color" revolutions that toppled pro-Russian and pro-Chinese allies in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, and replaced them with pro-Western democrats. In response, the region's rising powers and disgruntled dictators are pooling their umbrage against the United States' geopolitical dominance under the diplomatic shell of the six-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), says Madhav Nalapat, professor of geo-politics at the Manipal University in southern India. "The SCO is well on track to becoming an organization that directly challenges the geopolitical reach of the United States," he says. "China is in the driver's seat because it sees itself as the next United States."

Initially, the Chinese-founded SCO had only five other members: Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. But in July 2006, Iran and India (as well as Pakistan and Mongolia) were inducted as observers and are expected to become full members soon. This would formally unite China, Russia, India, and Iran in a quasi-military alliance for the first time, fueling talk of an emerging axis between these four powers that could balance, and maybe even threaten, U.S. influence in the region.

Indications of this crested this past year when Moscow, Beijing and New Delhi defended Tehran against the United States' attempts to curb its nuclear activities by imposing sanctions. In fact, New Delhi, often seen as the most pro-United States of the four countries, even threatened to walk away from a much sought-after civilian nuclear deal of its own with the United States if Washington pushed it too hard to support the sanctions against Iran. The SCO has also asked the United States to withdraw all of its troops from the K-2 air base it set up in Kazakhstan just after the 9/11 attacks. Meanwhile, both Russia and India have established new military bases in Tajikistan, not far from the U.S. base there.

The economic endgame in all this is to dilute Washington's hold over the Caspian Sea's energy reserves, says Robert Karniol, Asia-Pacific editor for *Jane's Defense Weekly*. China and India, the world's fastest-growing energy consumers, want to divert Central Asia's energy resources toward their own economies, and Iran and Russia, the region's largest energy suppliers, are keen to reduce their dependence on sales to the West.

Both Russia and India have begun to talk of a Central Asian "energy club" that would create a regional gas grid, pipeline network and oil market, and China is already constructing a pipeline through Kazakhstan that would give it direct access to Russian and Caspian Sea oil. New Delhi and Beijing have raised Washington's ire by backing a more audacious proposal to convert the prized Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which has been designed to bring gas to Europe, into a supply route for Asia. New Delhi wants to extend the pipeline to Syria, where oil could be loaded onto tankers and shipped to Asia through the Red Sea.

Perhaps most significantly, however, the rise of China, India and Iran is increasingly weighing down what Joseph Nye, a former chairman of the National Intelligence Council, which provides the president and intelligence agencies with National Intelligence Estimates, calls the United States' "soft power"—the attractiveness of American ideas, culture and values.

After the end of the Cold War, a U.S.-defined system of secular democracy and free markets was widely hailed as the universal governance model. Now, the increasing diffusion of Chinese, Indian and Iranian ideas, culture and values is increasing the soft power of these countries. This is most evident in the increasing global appetite for their cultural exports, including movies, books, fashion and art. As more and more people—including Westerners—consume Chinese, Indian and Persian culture, they are developing a greater appreciation and regard for these countries, making it easier for Beijing, New Delhi and Tehran to put their points of view out to the world.

For example, the success of the Chinese Communist Party in bringing more people out of poverty than any other country in history and in rebuilding China's global clout is making China, not the United States, the model for many nations, particularly in Africa and Asia. This sentiment was loudly mouthed by some African leaders during the recent Africa summit in Beijing. Even in democratic India, ministers, businessmen and laypeople often talk admiringly of China's one-party system, wishing its effectiveness for themselves.

For its part, Iran is directly challenging the United States' democratization push in the Middle East with its own unique notion of Islamic democracy. Given the way things are shaping up in Iraq, Palestine and

Lebanon, it's likely that Iranian ideas and values and not American ones will shortly become the dominant force in the region.

U.S. attempts to defend democracy after the recent military coup in Thailand have also been undermined by China, and, more disturbingly, Beijing and New Delhi have been the main opponents of a U.S. plan to take military and economic action against the government in Sudan, which is committing genocide in the Darfur region. As a U.S. diplomat in Beijing puts it, "We just cannot exert our will anymore. We have to consider what China and India think before we do anything."

If the trajectory of China, India and Iran's resurgence is not derailed by the substantial problems facing these countries—poverty, corruption, religious turmoil and widening imbalances in income—the world of 2037 will look substantially different from today, with Americans carrying much of the negative burden of the change. Yet, as Nye points out in his book, *The Paradox of American Power,* any U.S. attempt to undermine or contain the emergence of these new powers could backfire just like Britain, France and Russia's attempts to contain Germany, Japan and Italy backfired a century ago. There is already a growing sense in China, India and Iran that the neo-conservatives are likely to push the United States into repeating the mistakes of colonial Europe. The much-touted Project for the American Century developed by Paul Wolfowitz and company is seen by many analysts in China, India, and Iran as a direct challenge to their vision of an Asian Century. The ensuing resentments are already igniting new waves of anti-Americanism in these countries and elsewhere.

A stable and balanced world order will only emerge if the United States can arrive at negotiated understandings with China, India and Iran.

A stable and balanced world order will only emerge if the United States can arrive at negotiated understandings with China, India and Iran over how their new and growing financial, energy and military interests can be achieved within a globally acceptable framework. Even if this approach is pursued with the best of intentions, it could short-circuit under the burdens of the complexities and contradictions that plague relations and interests between the West and the rising East, as well as between China, India and Iran themselves.

Yet neither the United States nor Europe is investing the time and resources required to engage astutely with a resurgent China, India and Iran. Unlike the men, materials and money invested in understanding and dealing with the Soviet Union during the Cold War, the tidal wave of change coming from the East remains on the periphery of Western mindsets.

Thirty years from now, the greatest cost of the war in Iraq might well be that it proved to be the siren song that lured the United States away from its natural if challenging course, onto the rocks. ■

Education Reform: Pass or Fail?

As No Child Left Behind comes due for reauthorization, questions remain about whether it really helps children learn

BY ADAM DOSTER

The Cerveny Middle School in Northwest Detroit looks like any other aging public school in a depressed urban area. The ominous brick structure is checkered with Cold War-era bomb shelter signs, the linoleum tile floors are scuffed from years of foot traffic and a busted clock rests on a hallway wall in dire need of a paint job.

But one classroom on the second floor is markedly different. A Malcolm X quotation—"I never felt free until I began to read"—lines the outer wall, and Gary Paulsen's teenage classic *Hatchet* leans against the chalkboard alongside a biography of Che Guevara. When the bell rings, a seventh grade language arts class enters the room and begins an orderly, active and sophisticated discussion about the effects of depopulation on their once-enormous city. Welcome to English class with Nate Walker.

Can bureaucrats craft education policy that benefits students?

PHOTO COURTESY OF MONICA MCCLOUD

Walker, 26, in his fourth year as English teacher, basketball coach and drama director at Cerveny, is tired of the status quo in education. Instead of using customary textbooks or worksheets, he applies state and federal standards to materials and activities that he crafts with his students' interests in mind. During a recent lesson on expository essays, Walker challenged his students to develop a research question, thesis statement and supporting arguments about truancy in the Detroit Public Schools. He then let them debate. "I give [the students] a lot of freedom to explore their own ideas," he says. "Everyone has a voice. It's interactive."

By learning reading through dialogue and communication, Walker's students develop analytic abilities while simultaneously cultivating the skills to pass any test thrown their way. They also behave and enjoy themselves; something that Walker insists wasn't always the case. "I work really hard to try and build a positive learning environment," says Walker, "a classroom that people want to come to." After witnessing Walker in action for two hours, it is clear that he understands and embraces the complexities of educating children. The same cannot be said about leaders in Washington.

Reauthorization on the horizon

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), his most significant domestic policy initiative. Over the last five years, this sweeping legislation transformed K-12 education, generating supporters and detractors in the process. This year, NCLB is up for reauhtorization, amid growing concerns that the bill is not achieving its goals. The resulting debate will galvanize citizens and policymakers concerned with the state of American education.

Introduced in early 2001, NCLB benefited from a groundswell of national unity following 9/11. Congress passed it in an overwhelming bipartisan vote. Many of NCLB's major tenets were derived from school reform efforts instituted in Texas when Bush was governor, but prominent Democrats Rep. George Miller (Calif.) and Sen. Edward Kennedy (Mass.) were instrumental in revising the original draft.

All three of these players have made it clear that they will work toward reauthorization. With Democrats now in control of Congress, Miller has assumed chairmanship of the newly renamed House Committee on Education and Labor, and Kennedy heads the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, meaning both will set the agenda in their respective chambers. Both also claim that reauthorization of NCLB is a high priority. Likewise, in his recent State of the Union address, Bush said that NCLB "has worked for America's children—and I ask Congress to reauthorize this good law." To improve NCLB's public image, the administration recently unveiled a snazzy American flag-themed logo for the legislation.

Yet with renewal right around the corner, many Americans remain un-

clear about what NCLB does. According to a poll conducted in the fall of 2005 by Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup, 54 percent of parents with children in public schools said they knew little or nothing about the law. That's not surprising—teasing out the key points of the 670-page bill can be overwhelming. Essentially, NCLB reauthorizes previous federal education mandates in hopes of improving the performance of all K-12 students, thereby eradicating what Bush has called "the soft bigotry of low expectations." To do this, the law relies on a strict accountability system, called Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

AYP divides students into subgroups—all ethnic/racial groups present in the school, low-income students, students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency—and requires that each subgroup in a school reach state-determined levels of proficiency on standardized tests in math and reading. If one subgroup fails, the entire school fails. By the 2013-2014 school year, the law will require all states to set their levels of proficiency at 100 percent.

For schools that fail, NCLB institutes a series of sanctions and remedies that force schools to improve and at the same time gives students attending low-performing institutions a series of options. After two years of failure, schools are deemed "in need of improvement," meaning that school administrators must devise a two-year improvement plan following strict peer-reviewed guidelines and that students must be allowed to transfer to another school in the district or a nearby charter school. A third year requires the offering of supplemental services like tutoring, a fourth year triggers "corrective action"—such as changes in staff and curriculum and the extension of the school day or year—and a fifth year requires the complete restructuring of the school, which in many cases means the opening of a charter school in its place.

In the case of Cerveny, the school was reconstituted after failing to meet AYP for five straight years. However, its performance plan left some hiring responsibilities to the principal, a unique stipulation that Walker says was critical to the school's recent improvement. Cerveny maintained some local autonomy and teacher stability, and students passed their reading proficiency levels for the first time last year.

NCLB flaws and motives

Although some argue that it's too early to pass judgment, recent evidence suggests that the bill has fallen short of its lofty goals, leaving parents, educators and legislators discontented. Three major studies released in November reported persistent achievement gaps between students of different racial, geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds. According to the Northwest Evaluation Association, an Oregon nonprofit testing organization that studied the results of 500,000 reading and math tests administered in 24 states between 2004 and 2005, pupils attending poor schools achieved less growth than those attending rich schools for each subgroup at every grade level. It found the same variance between students of color and white students. The Educational Testing Service, a nonprofit assessment development and research organization, reported similar findings; in 2005 black students scored considerably lower than white students in math, science and reading. And a study by the Policy Analysis for California Education found that achievement gaps in California actually widened over the past five years, which runs counter to Bush's insistence that the law is successfully addressing educational discrepancies.

Andrew Rotherman, co-director of the education policy think tank Education Sector and a former assistant to President Clinton for domestic policy, sees these disparities as fundamentally unjust. "What's dehumanizing is that the odds of outcome are better off if you are rich and dumb than if you are poor and smart," he says.

'Can't we reasonably assume that high-stakes, high-pressure testing, the threat of failure and all the time wasted on test preparation are turnoffs rather than incentives?'

Upset with the lack of progress, citizens outside of Washington have leveled more systemic criticisms at the law. Many argue that high-stakes testing is poor motivation for struggling students. In her book *In Defense of Education: When Politics, Profit, and Education Collide*, Elaine Garan asks, "Can't we reasonably assume that high-stakes, high-pressure testing, the threat of failure, and all the time wasted on test preparation are turnoffs rather than incentives?" Critics also contend that by elevating the importance of test results, teachers must narrow their curriculums and exclude crucial but non-tested sub-

MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES

Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) walks up to the podium flanked (from right to left) by Sen. Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.), Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), Rep. Buck McKeon (R-Calif.) and Education Secretary Margaret Spellings, after a meeting at the White House on the fifth anniversary of the No Child Left Behind Act.

jects like history, art, foreign language, music and physical education.

The most damning criticism of the law is aimed at its crude and unrealistic proficiency goals. By using one annual test score as a measurement of attainment, AYP focuses on achievement to the exclusion of assessing student growth. "We're placing the emphasis on the product of the educational process instead of the process [of learning] itself," says Walker. In October 2004, a coalition of national educational, civil rights and religious groups produced a "Joint Organizational Statement on NCLB" that has since gathered more than 100 signatories. Their first recommendation was "to replace the law's arbitrary proficient targets with ambitious achievement targets based on rates of success actually achieved by the most effective public schools."

It is the unreasonable proficiency goals that have convinced many that the hidden agenda of NCLB is to sacrifice the public education system in the name of profit, either through the development of expensive and privately produced supplementary education materials or the eventual privatization of schools. "NCLB is a dollars game and it needs to be understood on that level," says Walker. "It has nothing to do with the children—it has to do with making people rich."

Private tutoring, for example, has witnessed explosive growth since the law's inception. ThinkEquity Partners, a San Francisco-based investment bank, estimates that public schools will funnel more than $900 million dollars to private tutors in 2006-2007, up from $300 million in 2003-2004. Textbook publishers are exacting similarly huge profits. McGraw Hill, which publishes the materials for NCLB's Reading First program, cited in its Quarterly Report that sales in the Elementary and High School market were critical to their frequent double-digit growth in earnings per share (17.6 percent in the second quarter of 2006).

The Bush administration has also provided the opposition plenty of ammunition. Ignite Learning, a company owned by the president's brother Neil and backed financially by Saudi Prince Alwaleed Bin Talai, developed a system last year named COW, or "curriculum on wheels." COW is a high-tech instruction aide for teachers that expects to produce $5 million dollars in revenue in 2006, according to *BusinessWeek*. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, former First Lady Barbara Bush donated an undisclosed amount of money to the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund with explicit directions that it be spent only on educational software produced by, you guessed it, Ignite Learning.

Perhaps most devastating, NCLB has had a chilling impact on discussions about alternative educational philosophies and techniques. To educate American children effectively, Walker says policymakers and educators alike must break from the long-accepted U.S. pedagogical framework and re-envision the role of education in the 21st century.

Lawmakers crafted NCLB using an outdated understanding of the economy. The industrial economy of the 20th century required obedience and rapid cognition, skills that tests cultivate sufficiently. Now, as semi-skilled labor disappears—the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 21.2 percent increase in professional occupations from 2004-2014 and a one percent decrease in production employment—command-and-control education methods are training students for non-existent jobs.

Instead, educators should focus on fostering the growth of critical thought in order to prepare students for a life of productive citizenship. "Because that struggling kid is going to be put into the world in six or seven years, we need to advocate education for citizenship if we really want any hope," Walker says. Walker not only uses dialogue to encourage students' independent-thinking skills, but also plans direct-action projects that link class material with the student's immediate surroundings. For example, two years ago, after reading a story about segregation and the lack of quality educational resources black students receive, Walker's students painted the lockers in their hallway to improve their physical environment. Though this was a relatively small act, advocates ranging from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to Detroit activist Grace Lee Boggs have long argued that such praxis-based projects encourage civic engagement by making children aware that they are social agents, capable of redefining and revitalizing their schools and neighborhoods.

The politics of renewal

The lack of progress under NCLB, coupled with the new political landscape of the 110th Congress, will likely complicate the reauthorization process. Many recently elected Democrats, who did not participate in the construction of the law, bemoaned NCLB throughout their campaigns.

Tim Walz, a high school geography teacher and the newly elected representative of Minnesota's 1st District, called the bill "an uneven, bureaucratic nightmare [that] harms the students and schools who need it most." Meanwhile, Republican legislators are increasingly voicing their displeasure about the greater federalism that NCLB mandates. Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) recently told an audience at the Heritage Foundation, "You can't have quality development with a top-down approach. It's time to change the way we're thinking about [NCLB] because it's not working."

"NCLB is not just a straight left-right,

Republicans and Democrats issue," says Rotherman. "There are real intra-party disagreements about the legislation, which means it is a less likely candidate to get done in this environment."

On Jan. 24, the administration attempted to placate critics like DeMint when it released "Building on Results: A Blueprint for Strengthening NCLB," which largely emphasized the need for increased school choice and local control. But Democrats, including Kennedy and Miller, immediately called it a non-starter.

Even with these divisions, complete repeal seems unlikely; the political will and the power of the authors will not allow for a comprehensive reinterpretation of the federal government's role in education. For Bush, NCLB is the only substantial bipartisan domestic policy he has passed in six years, so it is important for both his legacy and his attempts to pass favored legislation through the new Congress.

Conversely, Kennedy and Miller, steadfast supporters of testing and accountability, believe that the law is well intentioned, just poorly executed. The two men will likely focus the debate in Washington on ways to fine-tune the bill. Measures should include increasing funding to reach the full amount initially promised during authorization and putting more qualified teachers in the classroom. With these political realities, Rotherman believes that full reauthorization—with only limited changes—will happen, but not until after the next presidential election.

In the meantime, legislators must take additional steps to fulfill the promises guaranteed by NCLB. Emphasis should be placed on the other major section of the bill, the Highly Qualified Teacher Provision (HQT). Authored primarily by Miller, HQT requires that all children be taught by a teacher with a bachelor's degree and state-certification (among other requirements) in core academic subjects like English, reading, science and math. Initially, the provision wasn't taken seriously in Washington—zero states passed the first deadline and no legitimate sanctions were ever crafted, so a one-year extension was granted. "The Bush Administration championed a $100 million dollar teacher incentive, but that's like throwing a bucket of water into the ocean," says Rotherman. To catch up, districts are now taking rash and ineffective steps. In Baltimore, classroom assistants deemed highly-qualified were forced to transfer to high-poverty schools in the middle of the year.

Even HQT is not without its opponents. Aaron Tang, co-director of Our Education, a youth organizing organization, believes HQT fails to differentiate between qualified and quality teachers. "Having a few extra pieces of paper doesn't guarantee that a person can educate or inspire students," Tang says. He would like to see the government explore modes of alternative certification, such as the New York City Teaching Fellows (NYCTF) program, which awards mid-career professionals, recent college graduates and retirees fellowships to teach in New York City's underperforming and understaffed schools. In just six years, the program has placed 7,500 fellows in the nation's largest district, totaling almost 10 percent of the entire system.

By reducing the barriers to entry, NYCTF and similar programs allow eager college graduates or people in related fields, such as doctors or scientists, the chance to provide a welcome infusion of human capital. Walker himself was a sociology major who took advantage of alternative certification through the Teach for America program. Without the aid of alternatively certified teachers like Walker, it seems unlikely that Cerveny would have passed its reading tests in 2006.

But education reform can't be viewed in a vacuum. Studies show that test-score discrepancies appear as early as kindergarten, proving that factors outside of schools largely contribute to gaps in achievement. If Congress is serious about leaving no child behind, it must implement measures to reduce family and youth poverty, such as eradicating gaps in health care coverage and raising stagnating wages for Americans who work long hours away from their children.

When Walker asked his students to produce supporting arguments about why Detroit schools had high truancy rates, the 20 seventh graders in his class didn't hesitate: Kids aren't taught anything of value; it can be embarrassing to try and catch up if a student is pegged as struggling; and students lack support from their parents, teachers and peers.

More support from legislators wouldn't hurt either. ■

ADAM DOSTER IS *a senior at the University of Michigan and the managing editor of the* Michigan Independent

Looking Back, Moving Forward

With this issue In These Times *celebrates its 30th anniversary. On page 18, we honor those readers whose financial support has kept the magazine afloat.* In These Times *has also relied on labors of love. In the past 30 years, many folks have passed through the doors of 1509 N. Milwaukee, 1300 W. Belmont and, currently, 2040 N. Milwaukee, to devote themselves to producing journalism that makes a difference. We asked a few former staff members to reflect on* In These Times *and the role it has played in politics and in their lives. Here is what they said.*

John B. Judis, *1976–1995, has been listed on the masthead as San Francisco bureau chief, foreign news editor, political editor, associate editor, senior editor, Washington correspondent and contributing editor. He is currently a senior editor at* The New Republic.

My favorite stories about *In These Times* tend to make me look good, and I'll tell one of them, but with a certain altruistic purpose in mind. In 1980, I was covering the presidential election, and there was growing dissatisfaction in the office with what I'd characterize as my creeping centrism. When I went to the Republican convention in Detroit that year, I took off during an afternoon to visit a bar or two in Macomb County where I expected to find Chrysler workers. Armed with a tape recorder, I sat down with several guys who had been recently laid off and asked them about Reagan, Carter, national politics, labor unions, taxes, welfare and foreign policy. They began complaining about the Democrats giving money to blacks and to welfare programs and not caring about them. I transcribed the interview and planned to print almost all of it because I thought it was revealing about what the white working class was thinking that summer (pollster Stan Greenberg would go to Macomb County after the 1984 election and discover the same sentiments). But to my surprise, my fellow editors didn't want to print it. "They sound like Archie Bunker," Jimmy Weinstein, *In These Times*' founder and editor, said, meaning that the interviews sounded like fictional versions of the working class. Eventually, we settled on a short sidebar. That November, Reagan swept Macomb County.

My point is one about the present as much as the past. *In These Times* began at a time when Jimmy, myself and others at the magazine believed that after a conservative surge (the word of the month) under Nixon, liberalism was returning with a vengeance and the country was resuming the movement toward the left that had begun in the late '50s. It was hard for us to accept that the Carter years were the Indian Summer of liberalism, and that the magazine (originally titled "The Independent Socialist Weekly") was, at best, a marginal voice in American politics. It was probably easier for me to acknowledge because after a decade or so as a socialist apparatchik and theorist, I'd decided to become a journalist.

The early dreams of the magazine died sometime around then. Today, the situation is different. Jimmy is gone, sadly, but since the middle of the '90s, the country has begun moving left again. The Bush period will represent the Indian Summer of American conservatism. And at such a time, a publication like *In These Times* can play the vital role that it was designed to play—advancing ideas and approaches that Dick Durbin or Hillary Clinton won't be willing to embrace right now, but might, with sufficient prodding, in a few years. And, as Jimmy conceived it, *In These Times* has a unique ability to advance a new understanding because it is published in the Midwest and is less susceptible to either West Coast counter-

culturism or East Coast elitism. I wish the magazine and its editors well and urge them to keep the original promise of the magazine in mind.

Kerry Tremain, *1976–1979, was founding art director of* In These Times. *He is currently the editor of* California *magazine and a former executive editor of* Mother Jones.

Jimmy Weinstein launched *In These Times* from an office on Polk Street in San Francisco, next door to a donut shop, two blocks from a deli-restaurant where he and I ate lunch every day. Jimmy always ordered the same dish—half a roast chicken with a cup of borscht—and pretty soon I did, too. He had hired me as an assistant for $50 a week, which he paid in cash, and usually in arrears, with winnings from gambling. I designed the prospectus whose soaring claim—that a democratic socialist majority would soon emerge—seemed plausible, at least when Jimmy said it.

To my astonishment, I also learned from him that the Kansas town where I'd attended junior high school was once the home of *Appeal to Reason*, the socialist newspaper, circulation 750,000, that served as the historical inspiration for our own effort, and of immigrant mineworkers who, in 1912, had given most of their votes to Eugene V. Debs. Sixty years later, I had run away from just such towns, already dominated by what is now called the religious right, to Berkeley, where I underwent immersion therapy in the ultra-left sectarianism then on the rise.

Jimmy (together with John Judis) rescued me from that insanity, and restored my hope for a democratic left. Jimmy took the long view. He loved a well-reasoned argument and a silly pun even better. He was serious of purpose, but re-introduced me to irony. He was a fine writer and grammarian, a dedicated historian and a democrat. All these qualities he brought to Chicago, where they shaped the new newspaper and girded us against sectarian attacks. The values Jimmy implanted in *In These Times* made the jangling cold, the Milwaukee Avenue dust, the late paychecks and even the staff squabbling worth enduring. Those values and his love of life have informed everything worthwhile that I've done in journalism and in the rest of my life. They still do.

Robert Schaeffer, 1977–1978, *was an* In These Times *managing editor. He is now a professor of global sociology at Kansas State*.

When Jimmy started the paper, he thought it would cover the activities of "the Movement"—a large, democratic and socialist assembly of labor, women, civil rights and environmental activists—that he expected would (re)emerge in the late '70s. All along, he insisted that the staff cover the movement when it *made* news, not when it took a "position" on events. "This is a *news*paper," he'd remind the staff, "not a theoretical journal."

This approach disappointed many people on the left who thought the paper would "cover" their latest pronouncements. But it also made the paper a sound, critical, journalistic enterprise rather than a movement cheerleader. Unfortunately, the large, singular movement that Jimmy anticipated never took shape. Instead, a less-cohesive series of separate movements emerged, and these did not create the kind of readership base that Jimmy expected. Still, the paper has played an important and durable role, charting the newsworthy struggles of grassroots, national and global movements over the years.

The highlight of my work with *In These Times* was our first Chautauqua, which was held in the winter of 1977. I recall Ed Sadlowski, a beer-barrel of a man who led an insurgency of dissident steel workers, rousing the crowd with blunt, furious, working-class rhetoric. Afterwards, I sat and talked with Studs Terkel, who interviewed me. With his shock of white hair and grandfatherly demeanor, it was like meeting an old friend at a bar. The Chautauqua delighted Jimmy, who looked puckish and amused the whole time, because it brought together his "old Left" friends and his young "new Left" colleagues in an intergenerational meeting of political minds. At the end of the evening, I recall drinking with Studs (old left) and watching John Judis (new left) do the pogo on the ballroom dance floor.

Sheryl Larson, 1982–1993, *was In These Times' managing editor*.

Proudest memory during my 11-year tenure as managing editor: The three-part, award-winning series that Dick Russell wrote in 1989, detailing alarming NASA data about encroaching global warming and outlining steps to stop it.

Favorite extended conversation (and they were legion): Christopher Lasch, not long before he passed away, reflecting not only on the meaning of the Republican revolution but life in general.

Most-repeated sentence to writers: The check is in the mail.

Most-repeated sentence to staffers: Wait until next week to cash your check.

Most treasured memory: The chance to consume hundreds of cheap, but good, lunches with Jimmy, always the formidable teacher.

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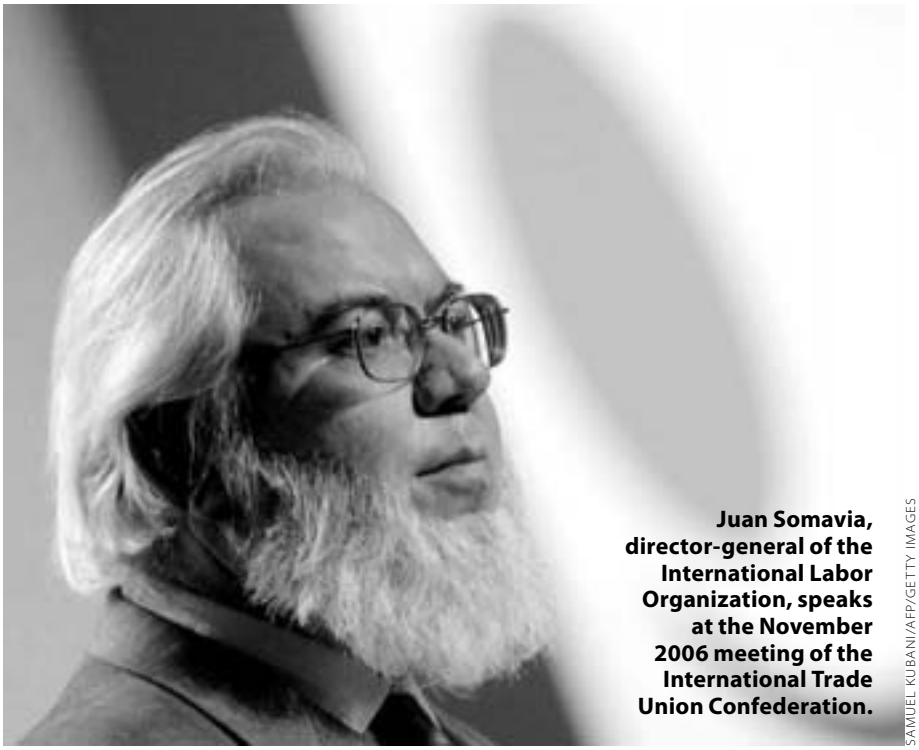
Solidarity Without Borders

Confronted with multinationals and business-friendly trade agreements, unions have begun to act globally

BY DAVID MOBERG

With John Lennon's "Imagine" playing in the background, more than 1,000 leaders of service and technology unions from around the world gathered in Chicago in the fall of 2005. As delegates at the Union Network International (UNI) convention, they represented about 15 million workers in 140 countries. The challenge they faced was laid out in bold by the banner before them: "Global companies require global organizing, global unions."

It's an idea that's as old as it is new. Back in 1848, Marx and Engels exhorted the workers of the world to unite, and in the late 19th century, during an earlier wave of globalization, confederations of unions in similar industries—like metalworking—began to form across borders. But in the United States and elsewhere, the idea remains new and alien to many labor leaders, even as those same international union groupings—now called Global Union Federations (GUFs)—confront a seemingly borderless economy dominated by transnational corporations.



Juan Somavia, director-general of the International Labor Organization, speaks at the November 2006 meeting of the International Trade Union Confederation.

SAMUEL KUBANI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Despite the long history of global federations, no real global union exists. "For a union to exist at any place and any time, there are many preconditions," says Ron Oswald, general secretary of the International Union of Foodworkers (IUF), one of the most imaginative global union federations. "First workers [must] know there's a union, and employers [must] know there's a union. I'm not sure any worker or employer knows there's a global union. It's a brand, not a reality. International companies are clearly a reality. International unions have yet to become so."

There are signs that global unions may become more than mere brands. Alexandra Figus is one of the small indicators of progress. Twenty-seven years ago, Figus, 51, emigrated from Poland to Chicago, where she became a janitor and leader in her Service Employees International Union (SEIU) local. Last September, she flew to Warsaw to help organize security guards as part of a multinational security industry unionizing campaign.

"I was so inspired that so many people they want solidarity to take care of their problems," Figus says. "They know a single worker cannot do nothing. They were very interested what was my experience. They listened to me. These are kids of those who created Solidarity. We told them what you can get if stick together."

The long detour

Workers have been acting together across borders for a long time. The eight-hour day movement of the late 19th century was international, and the Haymarket incident in Chicago was commemorated as May Day, the international workers' holiday. But two world wars, a global Depression and the Cold War disrupted globalization of both capital and the labor movement. Unions in richer countries often scored their political gains by creating national welfare states and using national governments to reinforce trade union power.

International solidarity was often a one-way affair, from rich countries to poorer ones, including expressions of solidarity to jailed unionists. U.S. unions often subordinated their work to their country's anti-communist foreign policy. International labor elites focused on groups such as the 88-year old International Labor Organization (ILO)—a Geneva-based United Nations institution composed of government, business and labor representatives who establish rights and standards for workers globally, but can do little to enforce their directives.

The contemporary global economy

presents labor with a double challenge in regards to global solidarity. On the one hand, corporations push workers into competition over who gets jobs and investment, especially in highly mobile manufacturing or digitized services. At the same time, unions, even in rich countries, realize that they can—and often must—work together to confront those corporations and to lift the standards of working conditions everywhere.

Last November, the 57-year old International Confederation of Free Trade Unions—the world's largest organization of national union federations—merged with a smaller world federation of unions aligned with Christian Democratic political parties, as well as several independent federations, such as the communist-oriented GGT of France. Stan Gacek, AFL-CIO assistant director of international affairs, calls it a "major quantum leap, in terms of organization of the labor movement on a global basis."

Guy Ryder, general secretary of the newly expanded federation, now called the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), says that the politics of the merger were as important as its size, roughly 168 million workers. "This would have been almost unimaginable even four years ago," Ryder says. "Unions saw the Cold War as an element of division in the labor movement, even 15 years after the end of the Cold War."

The merger also created a closer alliance between the ITUC and the GUFs. As a result, the GUFs will focus more on organizing and bargaining by industry and corporation, leaving broader political work to the ITUC.

"The key on global work is to figure out ways to do global grassroots action, not meetings," says Larry Cohen, president of the Communications Workers of America. "For a hundred years, too much has been about sending leaders to meet and dine together, which is great for building relationships, but we're looking for global events, ways for people to act together."

The revolutions in communications and transportation that enabled corporate globalization—such as cheaper airfares and the Internet—make it easier for workers around the world to connect. Korean workers can send videos of their participation at a Haymarket rally in Chicago over their cell phones back to a rally of co-workers in Korea. "We couldn't even begin to think about doing the work we do without the Internet," says Christy Hoffman, an SEIU official who serves as the European-based organizing director for UNI's property services division.

Eric Lee, founder of the LabourStart Web site (www.labourstart.org), which mobilizes labor supporters around global causes, says that the Internet greatly increases the speed and numbers of activists responding to a crisis—like a successful campaign to reverse the firing of an Irish union shop steward for wearing her union pin. It has also increased the involvement of grassroots activists. "International solidarity work has penetrated to the shop floor level," he says, "and hundreds of times as many people are involved in global solidarity work."

The revolutions in communications and transportation that enabled corporate globalization have also made it easier for workers around the world to come together.

A cold splash of reality

Unions are seeking other ways to meet global capital on a more level playing field. In January, several unions—Amicus and the Transport and General Workers Union (T&G), two of Britain's largest unions; IG Metall (the giant German metalworkers union); and the Steelworker and Machinist unions in the United States—announced plans for a new "super union." The proposal is still just a "theoretical concept," says Steelworkers' International Affairs Director Gerald Fernandez, but other unions are also talking about forming joint cross-border unions. And the Farm Labor Organizing Committee already organizes in both Mexico and the United States to represent largely migrant workers in North Carolina and Ohio.

Yet a cold splash of reality is needed. Easier communication and the consolidating forces of global capital may help unite unions, but language, institutional structures, levels of economic development, national identity, strategic differences, and national labor laws and traditions all act as dividers. At a time when the former "international unions" covering neighboring countries like Canada and the United States continue to separate into national unions, creating global unions will not be easy. For the foreseeable future, the challenge will simply be to increase global cooperation and coordination.

Part of the problem is the weakness of what passes for global governance and labor law. Today, the most powerful global governance of the world economy comes from institutions like the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund, which tilt against labor. Although it often appears that corporations write the rules of the new global economy, they still rely on governments to do their bidding. By using their economic and political power to change governments and laws, global unions can change those rules.

Labor unions around the world have agreed that international trade and economic agreements must include protection of labor rights. When no such protections exist, U.S. unions have increasingly used legal avenues to challenge corporations and both the U.S. and foreign governments. The AFL-CIO has taken cases to the ILO contesting the Bush administration's National Labor Relations Board decisions that restrict the right to organize. And Mexican and U.S. unions have filed NAFTA complaints about U.S. violations of the rights of Washington apple pickers and North Carolina state employees. The AFL-CIO also has used trade law to challenge labor rights violations in China and Jordan, but new free trade agreements have removed the threat of suspending trade preferences for violations of worker rights. And some unions have employed a powerful but controversial legal tool, the Alien Tort Claims Act. Used mainly by the International Labor Rights Fund—successfully against Chevron's slave labor practices in Burma—this law permits workers victimized overseas by U.S. corporations to sue in U.S. federal courts.

Though such cases often accomplish little, they build the case that labor rights are human rights, deserving of protection in future trade deals. "Using NAFTA labor or ILO complaints [or] raising our national labor law problems to an international dimension can be helpful if it's part of a broader campaign strategy," says Lance

Teamsters striking against UPS have benefited from global support.

VINCENT LAFORET/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Compa, an international labor law expert at Cornell University.

One strategy for changing the political climate for labor involves negotiation of International Framework Agreements between Global Union Federations and transnational employers guaranteeing basic labor rights. The IUF bargained the first of these agreements in 1988 with Danone, the French food giant, and now various federations have negotiated more than 50 such agreements.

Many strategists saw them as at least improvements on the codes of conduct that transnationals adopted as public relations gambits to fend off criticism from unions and anti-sweatshop groups. At best, they might be first steps towards global collective bargaining. But the deals mainly ratified rights workers had in Europe and were unenforceable in the United States or the global South. "Now we're talking about much tougher agreements," Oswald says, that would guarantee unions access to workers and recognition by the most expeditious means possible.

Still, with few exceptions, global collective bargaining barely exists. The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) campaigned for many years to force "flag of convenience" ships—which fly flags of countries like Panama to avoid regulation—to pay wages for cargo ship crews that the ITF defined as fair. Eventually a global industry group agreed to bargain directly with the ITF.

Targeting transnationals

The most important global work in recent years has been cross-border campaigning in support of strikes or organizing drives at particular transnational corporations. Most are so-called "comprehensive campaigns" that find chinks in the corporate armor where unions and their allies, usually non-governmental organizations like churches or worker rights advocates, can apply pressure. Such global support has been critical in high-profile U.S. labor victories, like the Steelworkers' battles with Ravenswood Aluminum and Bridgestone/Firestone, the 1997 Teamster strike against UPS and UNITE HERE's campaign at the Brylane clothing warehouse (owned by a French multinational). Currently, the west coast longshoremen are working with Korean unions to help organize Blue Diamond almond workers in California, because Korea is a major market for the company, and the Mineworkers are jointly campaigning with Australian miners to organize Peabody Coal.

In most cases, U.S. unions ask their counterparts to pressure corporations with whom they have some clout. Western European union leaders, however, often do not understand how anti-union businesses are in the United States and are more accustomed to civil consultations with employers rather than confrontations. They have at times complained that the Americans wanted them to risk their close relationships with employers, without getting help in return from Americans.

"The criticism that Europeans and Brazilians have of Americans is, 'You're only into international solidarity when you're about to go on strike or negotiate or there's a plant closing. What about the rest of the time?', " says Ben Davis, Mexico representative of the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center, which trains and supports unions in many countries.

But relationships are growing more balanced, and campaigns are becoming less reactions to crises and more a part of global strategies. "We've moved from global solidarity to global strategy," says Ginny Coughlin, UNITE HERE's global strategies director. "Instead of making lots of statements, we're making mistakes, running into obstacles, which means we're making progress. We've embarked for the first time in union history on a real cross-border organizing effort in hotels and hospitality."

As UNITE HERE bargained last year with U.S. hotel chains, it also supported a new community-religious-labor organization, London Citizens, which is working with the almost entirely non-union London hotel workforce. Besides helping British workers unionize, UNITE HERE wants to stop U.S. hotel chains from embracing this new London operating model—outsourcing room-cleaning to immigrants minimally paid by the room, rather than offering them fixed wage.

SEIU has recently ramped up its global organizing dramatically. It is working with two GUFs (UNI and IUF) on organizing the transnational corporate leaders in four industries—security guards, school bus drivers, janitors, and (with UNITE HERE) "multi-service companies" that provide food, laundry and other services. Thanks to coordinated global union pressure, the three multiservice giants—Aramark, Compass and Sodexho—have quietly agreed to terms tht will make organizing their workers much easier.

"The huge consolidation [in global service corporations] has made it more possible to organize with fewer players," says Stephen Lerner, SEIU's property services director. If global labor can guarantee workers' rights to organize at each of these companies, there's an opportunity to organize quickly on a huge scale. Also, though the companies are global, the services they provide can't be shifted to low-wage countries, as with industrial or digital service work. "They can't move the buildings," Lerner says. "workers [can] support each other because they're not competing

for the same jobs." Ultimately he believes there should be true global unions that match the scope of global companies.

When SEIU encountered resistance from security firms owned by Swedish-based Securitas, they turned for help to the Swedish Transport Workers Union, which was able to mediate talks. "We put our relationship with the company on the line," says Transport Workers International Secretary Lars Lindgren. "We had a good relationship with the company, but SEIU is a sister union, and that comes first."

Securitas agreed to be neutral and recognize the union when a majority of workers in a city signed union cards, and SEIU agreed not to enforce a contract until most employers in the market were organized. Unions are now globally fighting a British-based giant, Group 4 Securicor], that rejects such a deal.

SEIU and the Teamsters, working with the British Transport and General Workers (T&G), had to use shareholder actions and other tactics relatively new for Europeans to win a neutrality pledge from First Group, a British bus company that become a leader in operating yellow school buses in the United States.

Graham Stevenson, T&G national transport organizing director, says that this alliance may help his union stop the company from importing American anti-union management practices. "The useful thing for us is that our members' consciousness has risen a lot," Stevenson says. "We're awash in American capital, but we don't want American labor relations."

The development of these global campaigns creates complex webs. SEIU has at least 15 staff working overseas, mainly in Europe, training organizers and developing relationships with individual unions and the GUFs, which are all poorly financed and understaffed. SEIU also provided IUF with seed money for an organizing fund, which will be replenished by a share of dues from new organizing that the IUF assists.

The Steelworkers have begun developing "strategic alliances" with unions in Australia, Brazil, Germany, Mexico and other countries. The Mexican union helped the Steelworkers in bargaining with companies like Alcoa and Asarco, which is owned by Grupo Mexico. And the Steelworkers have staunchly defended the union's leader, Napoleon Gomez, when the government removed him from his union office for leading a strike over mine safety.

"Mexico is one of our largest trading partners," says the Steelworkers' Fernandez. "If we can't take care of labor rights in our hemisphere, how can we do it in other hemispheres? We have a philosophical basis for assisting them. That's what unions are about. We also have self-interest. Strong unions in Mexico, Canada and the United States make it difficult for multinational corporations to exploit any of us."

Global campaigns can take on a life of their own. When the small Graphic Communications International Union (GCIU) asked the AFL-CIO in 2001 to help develop an organizing plan, they decided to target Quebecor, a Canadian-based transnational printing giant. With UNI's help, they formed a global conference of Quebecor unions and pursued an international framework agreement.

As the company resisted, unions around the world joined in shareholder actions, protests with religious leaders, in-plant petition drives, and global days of solidarity—even a sympathy strike. Governments and client corporations were pressured to threaten cutoffs of lucrative contracts. Organizers trained by Solidarity Center helped win victories in Peru, Chile and Brazil, as well as two elections in the United States. The Teamsters, which incorporated the American part of GCIU, hopes talks will now revive the stalled campaign.

Simply campaigning more, however, won't be enough. Unions need to change both the global political climate and the rules of the global economy. In some parts of the world, particularly Latin America, unions recently have turned more to populist and socialist politics, says Cornell professor Kate Bronfenbrenner, who organized a landmark conference on global comprehensive campaigns.

The global labor movement needs agreement on its broad political agenda. As AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka argues, workers everywhere are boxed in by policies that promote capital mobility, labor flexibility, price stability and privatization of government. When taken together, those policies, at a global and national level, undermine workers' economic power and social welfare protections, make organizing more difficult and limit what unions can do even if they do organize or undertake global campaigns.

"Is the labor movement actually becoming more international, either with regard to employers in organizing and bargaining or in relation to governments in setting policy at both the national and international levels?" asks one high-level union official with extensive global experience. "That's a tough call to say there's been real progress." Yet today more labor leaders and workers around the world at least recognize the need for global unionism, and are looking for ways to give the old idea of worldwide worker solidarity a viable form for a new era. ■

BY DANIEL STURM

Kucinich Comes Back for '08

To his supporters, Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) represents the sane voice of the Democratic Party—a man who reads books, gives intelligent speeches and acts on principle. To his detractors, Kucinich is a small man on an ego trip, too radical to be elected.

Kucinich was the only Democratic candidate in the 2004 presidential primaries to vote against the war in Iraq. His 90-day plan to end the occupation was dismissed by the party's centrist leaders and he came in fourth in the primaries—behind Kerry, Edwards and Dean. Three years later, the Iraq war has cost the lives of more than 3,000 American servicemen and untold thousands of Iraqis. And once again Kucinich, relentless in his call for withdrawing troops, is vying for the nation's top job. "My country calls me to action," he told a cheering crowd after announcing his candidacy on December 12 in Cleveland.

Kucinich first gained prominence in 1977 when, at age 31, he was elected mayor of Cleveland, becoming the youngest mayor ever elected in a major American city. During his campaign, Kucinich promised to save the struggling city-owned Municipal Light Co. When the company's private competitor tried to force the city to sell, Mayor Kucinich refused. In response, the banks cut off credit and the City of Cleveland went into default. In 1979, Kucinich lost his bid for re-election. Years later, the Cleveland City Council would honor him for "having the courage and foresight to refuse to sell the city's municipal electric system"—and saving ratepayers more than $100 million.

During his 15-year hiatus from politics, he worked as a TV commentator, media consultant, college professor and public utility consultant. Kucinich re-launched his political career in 1993, with the campaign symbol of a light bulb and the slogan, "Because he was right!" He won a seat in the Ohio state Senate in 1994 and was elected to Congress two years later.

In These Times recently spoke with Kucinich about his decision to run again for president and his position on the war.

With his proposal to escalate the war through a troop "surge," President George W. Bush plans to dispatch 21,500 additional U.S. troops to Iraq. What effect would this have?

More war, more door-to-door fighting, more civilian casualties, an expansion of the conflict, more deaths of troops, more costs to the people of the United States, more ruination for Iraq and more instability in the region and the world. And it sets the stage for a conflict against Iran.

Daniel Ellsberg, of "Pentagon Papers" fame, told *Democracy Now* that he believes Bush plans to attack Iran, probably without informing Congress. Ellsberg says a similar escalation happened during the Vietnam War, when the battlefield was extended into Laos and Cambodia. Could this be possible?

The analogy is correct. I think this president is looking to expand the war. His comments about Iran and Syria were not conciliatory. He's rattling the saber at a time when saber-rattling hurts our troops. It's the kind of tough talk that dragged us into this war, the same braggadocio that doesn't pass for statecraft, but shows an administration that's out of control. Here's a president who's putting his foot on the accelerator as the car heads toward the cliff.

The "Kucinich Plan" proposes replacing U.S. troops with an international peacekeeping force. But after the United States ignored the world's opposition to its invasion of Iraq, is it practical to expect European and other nations to support America now?

I'm talking about a totally different process. I'm talking about something that legitimates the international community, as opposed to the Bush Administration's plan that rejects the primacy of international cooperation. It is imperative that the United States take a different course—a course out of Iraq. How do you get the international community involved? It begins with the United States indicating its intention to take a new direction. That direction must articulate a desire to end the occupation; withdraw the troops; close the bases; assist in the creation of a new process for reconciliation, reconstruction and reparation in Iraq; and stop the privatization of Iraqi oil. I think that if the United States would take that position, you'd find receptivity in the international community.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi opposes sending additional troops to Iraq, but she has also said that cutting off funding for troops already there isn't an option. How does your position differ from hers?

I have a great deal of respect for Nancy Pelosi. I think we have to give Democrats a few weeks to absorb the full impact of the president's intentions, and to realize that it is absolutely critical to stop this administration from continuing the war. The only way to do that is for Congress to assume its power under the constitution: the power of the purse.

I am going to be presenting members of Congress and the American people with this proposition: If the cost of bringing

J.D. POOLEY/GETTY IMAGES

Kucinich at a rally for Sherrod Brown in November 2006 in Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

the troops and the equipment home is in the area of $5 to $7 billion, according to the Congressional Budget Office, and if we have money in the pipeline right now, why not bring the troops home with that money? If Congress votes to appropriate another $160 billion for Iraq in the spring, we'll essentially have given George W. Bush the money he needs to carry the war through the end of his term. That would bring the total war cost, in 2007, to $230 billion. George Bush has been unequivocal about Iraq, and anyone who's missed this hasn't been paying attention. He has no intention of getting out of Iraq. He intends to keep our troops there until the end of his term. And that's a death-sentence for a lot of Americans stationed over there.

The anti-war movement hasn't evolved much since the start of the war. Why not?

A couple of things are going on. The Bush administration has been very successful in sending out conflicting messages. If you pay attention to what the administration says, it can be very tough to organize. But if you pay attention to what they do, it's pretty easy to organize. Because what they do is to continue to prosecute war. I think that the kind of surge we saw in public involvement in the late winter and early spring of 2003 will happen again, as the surge in troops and this escalation occurs.

The *Toledo Blade* has called you a "diminutive Cleveland congressman" with a "giant-sized ego." How do you respond?

I'm not going to dignify this with a comment. There's a war going on. People are losing their lives. And what is the *Toledo Blade* doing? I would ask the *Toledo Blade* to join me in challenging this unjust war, and to tell the people of Toledo that the war was based on lies. I would ask them to call for the troops to come home. Everything I said four years ago has become mainstream. I'm not speaking from the margins.

Besides the war, what other issues will be central to your campaign?

My campaign isn't just about the war. I'm challenging the very idea of war as an instrument of policy. I'm saying that policies of preemption, first-strike and unilateralism are bankrupt.

It begins with an understanding that war is destructive, not only to human life, and the hopes of people, but also to budgets. My experience has told me that the United States has to return to the American city. I'm someone whose career has been heavily involved in local government. I know exactly the kind of concerns that communities have. Cities need revenue sharing again. Cities need job programs and summer job programs for young people. We need to come up with new energy policies to enable the creation of alternative energy. More money for mass transit. It's almost like domestic policy in America is like the dark side of the moon! Nobody's even seen it, at least not since this administration took office.

What tactical mistakes did you make in 2004?

I think that in 2004 the American people weren't ready for the message I had—not just about Iraq, but about the imperative of taking a new approach in the world, and also focusing back on taking care of things here at home.

If we look at our capacity for transformation as a nation, we move from an American revolution to an American evolution. And the evolutionary potential of this country is not being tapped. We're devolving. We're going back to a time to when we were struggling for survival, when we were alone in the world. We don't need to do that anymore! We can lead the world by example, and in cooperation.

My approach is to show people the potential of America to become a place where there are opportunities for wealth for everyone, opportunities for peace and security for everyone, and where we don't have to fear and to worry whether people will lose their homes because they're trying to get healthcare for a loved one, or they don't have the resources they need to achieve their dreams. Lately our idea of governance has been all about war; we have to change that. Otherwise, we are going to lose our country. We are going to lose our democracy.

We may be at the most pivotal moment of American history, because we're either going to change course, and reintegrate with the world community, or we're going to be locked into a broader conflict that will become intractable. I'm determined and hopeful that we'll take the upland course. ■

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BY SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

In You More Than Yourself

In December, *Time* magazine's annual "Person of the Year" honor went not to Ahmadinejad, Chávez, Kim Jong-Il or any of the other usual suspects, but to "you": each and every one of us using or creating content on the World Wide Web.

Time's cover showed a white keyboard with a mirror for a computer screen, allowing each of us to see his or her own reflection. To justify the choice, the editors cited the global shift from earthly institutions to the emerging digital democracy where individuals—you—are both citizen and king.

There was more to this choice than meets the eye—and in more than the usual sense of the term. If there ever was an *ideological* choice, this was it: The message—the new cyber-democracy allows millions to directly communicate and self-organize, bypassing centralized state control—masks a series of disturbing gaps and tensions.

First, the obvious irony, everyone who looks at the *Time* cover does not see the others with whom he or she is supposed to be in direct communication. They see the mirror-image of themselves. No wonder Gottfried Leibniz, the 18th century German philosopher who invented the binary system, is one of the predominant philosophical references of the cyberspace theorists: Consider his metaphysical concept of "monads," those entities of perception, which are to the mental realm what atoms are to the physical, though "without windows" that directly open up to external reality. Isn't that eerily similar to what we are reduced to when immersed in cyberspace? The typical Web surfer today, sitting alone in front of a PC screen, is becoming more and more of a monad with no direct window onto reality, encountering only virtual simulacra, and yet increasingly immersed into the global network, synchronously communicating with the entire planet.

One of the latest fads among sexual radicals is the "masturbate-a-thon," a collective event in which hundreds of men and women pleasure themselves for charity (www.masturbate-a-thon.com). Masturbate-a-thons build a collective out of individuals who are ready to share something with others. But what are they actually sharing? The solipsism of their own stupid enjoyment. One can surmise that the masturbate-a-thon is *the* form of sexuality that perfectly fits the coordinates of cyberspace.

This, however, is only part of the story. Additionally, the "you" who recognizes itself in its screen-image is deeply divided: I am never simply my screen persona. First, there is the (rather obvious) excess of me as a "real" bodily person over my screen persona: Marxists and other critically disposed thinkers like to point out that the supposed "equality" in cyberspace is deceiving. It ignores all the complex material dispositions (my wealth, my social position, my power or lack thereof, etc.). Real-life inertia magically disappears in the frictionless surfing in the cyberspace. What Virtual Reality provides is reality itself deprived of its substance. In the same way decaffeinated coffee smells and tastes like real coffee without being the real thing, my screen persona, the "you" that I see there, is always already a decaffeinated Self.

Second, there is the opposite and much more unsettling effect: the excess of my screen persona over my "real" self. Our social identity, the person we assume to be in our social intercourse, is already a "mask," as it involves the repression of our inadmissible impulses. However, it is precisely under the conditions of "just gaming," when the rules regulating our "real life" exchanges are temporarily suspended, that we can permit ourselves to display these repressed attitudes. Recall the proverbial impotent shy person who, while participating in a cyberspace interactive game, adopts the identity of a sadistic murderer or irresistible seducer. It is too simple to say that this identity is just an imaginary supplement, a temporary escape from his real life impotence. Rather, the point is that, since he knows that the cyberspace interactive game is "just a game," he can "show his true self" and do things he would never do in real-life interaction. In the guise of a fiction, the truth about one's self is articulated. The very fact that I perceive my virtual self-image as mere play thus allows me to suspend the usual hindrances that prevent me from realizing my "dark half" in real life—in cyberspace, my "id" is given wing.

And the same goes for my partners who I communicate with in cyberspace: I can never be sure who they are. Are they "really" the way they describe themselves? Is there a "real" person at all behind a screen-persona or is the screen-persona a mask for several different people? Does the same "real" person possess and manipulate more screen-personas? Or perhaps I am simply dealing with a digitalized entity that does not stand for any "real" person? In short, *interface* means precisely that my relationship to the Other is never *face-to-face*, that it is always mediated by the interposed digital machinery whose structure is that of a labyrinth. I "browse," I err around in this infinite space where messages circulate freely without fixed destination, while the Whole of it—this immense circuitry of "murmurs"—remains forever beyond the scope of my comprehension. The obverse of cyberspace's direct democracy is this chaotic and impenetrable magnitude of messages and their circuits that even the greatest effort of my imagination cannot comprehend. Immanuel Kant would have called it a cyberspace Sublime.

A decade or so ago, there was an outstanding TV ad for beer in England. Its first part staged the well-known fairy-tale: A girl walked along a stream, saw a frog, took it gently into her lap, kissed it, and, of course, the ugly frog miraculously turned into a beautiful young man. However, the story wasn't over yet: The young man cast a covetous glance at the girl, drew her towards him, kissed her—and she turned into a bottle of beer that he held triumphantly in his hand. For the woman, her love and affection (signalled by the kiss) can turn a frog into a beautiful man, while for the man, it is to reduce the woman to what psychoanalysis calls a "partial object," that in you which makes me desire you. (Of course, the obvious feminist rejoinder would be that what women witness in their everyday love experience is the opposite: One kisses a beautiful young man and, after one gets too close to him, when it is already too late, realizes that he is basically a frog.)

The actual couple of man and woman are thus haunted by the bizarre figure of *a frog embracing a bottle of beer*. What modern art stages is precisely this underlying spectre: One can easily imagine a Magritte painting of a frog embracing a bottle of beer, with a title "A man and a woman" or "The ideal couple." (The association here with surrealist Luis Bunuel's famous "dead donkey on a piano" is fully justified.) Therein resides the threat of cyberspace gaming at its most elementary: When a man and a woman interact in it, they do so under the spectre of a frog embracing a bottle of beer. Since neither of them is aware of it, these discrepancies between what "you" really are and what "you" appear to be in digital space can lead to murderous violence. After all, when you suddenly discover that the man you are embracing is really a frog, aren't you tempted to squash the slimy creature? ■

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Actor Peter Boyle: No Ordinary *Joe*

PETER KRAMER/GETTY IMAGES

LIVES

Who's Afraid of Peter Boyle?

By Rick Perlstein

Peter Boyle died in December. His wacky turn as Frankenstein's tap-dancing monster in a Mel Brooks movie led the obituaries, along with his role as the curmudgeonly father on a hideously popular sitcom. When I heard the news, however, I pulled out one of my old issues of *Life* magazine.

"Agnew on the Warpath" was the lead story. The cover also hymned a new technology: "Cassette TV: The Good Revolution." The date of the issue was October 16, 1970, a time when rage at the *bad* revolutions—Black Panthers forcing shootouts with police; students burning down ROTC buildings; fornicating hippies like Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix, whose deaths by overdose were also covered in that issue—was what made Spiro Agnew cover-worthy: He was on the road campaigning for the Republican slate by pretending Democratic senators were gobbling acid right alongside the fornicating hippies.

Life also featured a short profile of Peter Boyle. He was 34 years old then, and had just scored his breakthrough success as an actor. But instead of bringing him joy, it forced on him a dark night of the soul. And that is what leads this, my eulogy. It tells us so much more about the man and his times.

The movie Boyle had just starred in was *Joe*. His character, Joe Curran, was a tool-and-dye maker from Queens, what the *New York Times* described as an "ape-like, dese-dem-and-dose type," who strikes up a conversation with a businessman in an East Village bar. "Forty-two percent of liberals are queer and that's a fact," Joe says. "The George Wallace people took a poll." He said he'd like to kill himself a hippie—"just one."

The filmmakers, when the movie wrapped in February of 1970, had intended the scene as too fantastical to be taken as plausible. Then reality intervened.

On May 4, Ohio National Guardsmen shot four students at Kent State. On May 8, in a spring rain, students from colleges all over New York City gathered at Federal Hall on Wall Street to remember them and protest the Cambodia invasion. Suddenly, from every direction, 200 construction workers bore down on them. In their identical brown overalls, they looked like some sort of Storm Trooper battalion. They carried American flags, of the sort that topped off construction sites. They started berating the police: why weren't there flags on the flag poles in front of Federal Hall? Had the hippies stolen them? (Actually, per federal regulations, flags were not flying due to inclement weather.) The hard hats then burst through the line of police, who didn't seem particularly anxious to stop them. The hippies who didn't manage to melt away were beaten mercilessly, some with building trade implements wrapped in American flags. At Pace University, they set fire to a banner reading "Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Kent" and bashed through the locked glass doors to get at the students inside. Trinity Church was turned into a makeshift field hospital, though the angry hard hat mob ripped down the Red Cross banner.

Police only made six arrests. Perhaps they agreed with the construction worker who told the *Wall Street Journal*, "I'm doing this because my brother got wounded in Vietnam, and I think this will help our boys over there by pulling this country together." At one point, a worker—his name happened to be Joe—recalled: "The whole group started singing 'God Bless America' and it damn near put a lump in your throat ... I could never say I was sorry I was there. You just had a very proud feeling. If I live to be 100, I don't think I'll ever live to see anything quite like that again." A municipal secretary tried to pull a fourth hard hat off a kid already being worked over by three assailants. She found herself pummeled in turn: "Let go of my jacket, bitch. If you want to be treated like an equal, we'll treat you like one." (Another article in that *Life* magazine: "Women's Lib," by Clare Boothe Luce.)

Joe's producers had made what they thought was an allegory. It became, by the time of its release, social realism. The week after the "hard hat riots," *Time* magazine quoted a Chicago ad salesman, a real-life one: "I'm getting to feel like I'd actually enjoy going out and shooting some of these people. I'm just so god-damned mad. They're trying to destroy everything I've worked for—for myself, my wife, and my children." In real life, that actually happened: There was an epidemic of hippie lynchings in New Mexico in 1970 and 1971.

This was what the businessman said after Peter Boyle's character told him he'd like to kill himself a hippie: "I just did." He explains that he just shot his missing teenage daughter's hippie boyfriend—tracked him down and murdered him, for stealing his daughter's soul.

Joe decides he likes this man very much. Together, they set out to find his daughter. When they happen upon a hippie commune, their anger turns to lust, and they enjoy the favors of two of the gamines. Once sated, they go on their shooting spree. One of the girls they shoot, in the back, is the man's own daughter.

Joe is not a particularly good movie, despite Boyle's riveting performance. But the film's argument, though heavy-handed, resembled a book of the time by the radical sociologist Philip Slater, *The Pursuit of Loneliness: American Culture at the Breaking Point*. Slater argued that people loathed and feared the hippies because

deep down they knew the hippies were right—"we fear having our secret doubts about the viability of our social system voiced aloud"—and envied their freedom. *Joe* made Slater's argument flesh: an attempt to shock viewers into recognizing that all this hating what you desire led to an uncontrollable spiral of violence.

That wasn't the message that people received.

Life's reporter followed Peter Boyle around his West Side Manhattan neighborhood. An excited little old lady approached him: "I agree with *everything* you said, young man. Someone should have said it a long time ago." Construction workers shouted, "Joe!" and greeted him like a long-lost friend. Boyle was horrified.

Boyle lived and died a man of the left, practically a pacifist (or, as his "Everyone Loves Raymond" co-star Patricia Heaton, a whiny Hollywood conservative, referred to him "jokingly" on the set, a "pinko flag-burning commie.") Before he became an actor, he had been preparing to become a monk. In 1968 he was a cast member at Second City in Chicago. That summer, standing with friends in front of a bar, he found himself suddenly chased down the street by cops; it was the summer of the Democratic National Convention. Sitting in front of his apartment, he felt a sneeze coming on; it was tear gas, wafting down from Lincoln Park.

In interviews when the movie came out, Boyle agonized about his portrayal of Joe: "Sometimes I worry we were too hard on him." He'd talk about how guys like Joe were living on the bubble, how their horror of disorder, their racism, had its roots in economic anxiety: "He's got every penny he ever made sunk into his house, and a black family is moving in on the same block. … It's a real problem that most liberals never encounter."

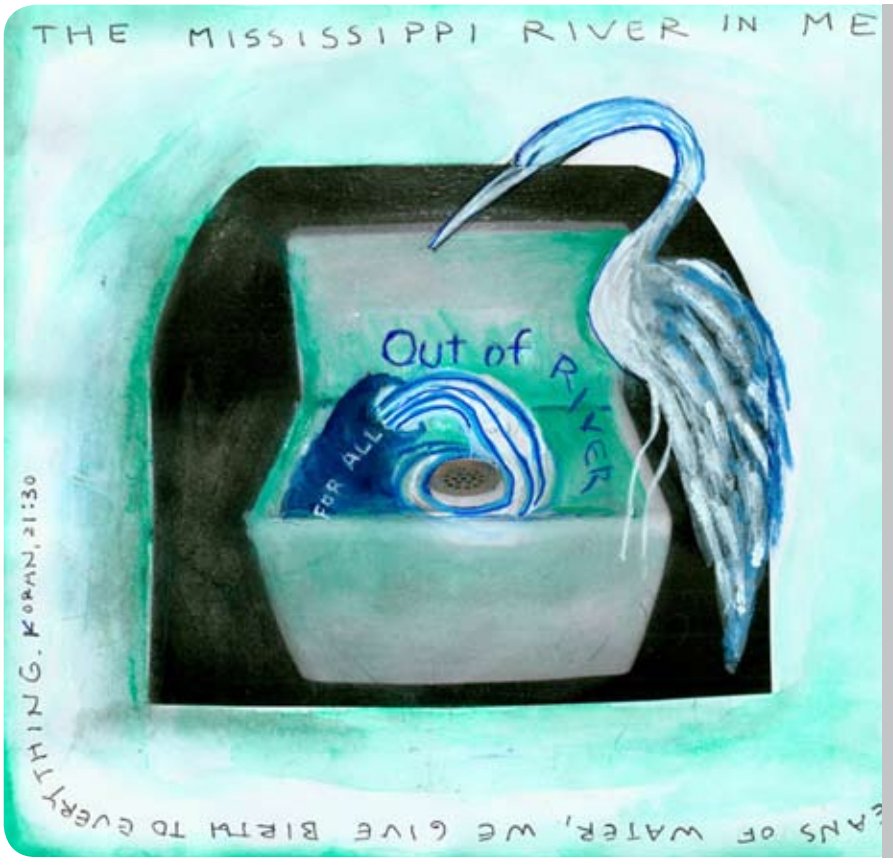
This was a wise observation—wiser than Slater's, or the makers of *Joe,* who fantasized the left-wing reaction to bourgeois alienation was purely innocent. It wasn't. A perverse pleasure can be had in seeing the characters one identifies with depicted as enlightened apostles of peace and love, then watching as they are mowed down as the victims of sadistic know-nothings. Indeed, Pauline Kael came up with a label for this particular neurosis: "liberal masochism." That explains why legions of countercultural youth flocked to see *Joe*—and stood up at the end, shrieking almost joyfully: "I'm going to shoot back, Joe!"

"I'm scared," Boyle told *Life.* "I've been scared for a couple of years. I get scared when I meet people like Joe." But he was scared of Joe's symbolic victims, too. He'd walk down the street and experience a stab of horror: What if they shot him?

I didn't see any obituaries that discussed this, the most interesting and profound chapter of Boyle's public life. It is something the media prefers to repress: the fact that Americans often hate each other enough to fantasize about murdering each other, in cold blood, over political and cultural disagreements. Much better to celebrate dancing Frankenstein monsters, curmudgeonly sitcom dads. And, by the way, the geniality of dead presidents. Gerald Ford? He "healed" a nation. Ronald Reagan? His disposition was always "sunny."

Only good revolutions in America. Mustn't upset the children. ■

[art space]



Invigorate the Common Well, a three-part performance epic, was inspired by a drinking fountain that had been broken for nearly 20 years. The artwork at left was created to evoke the mood of the multimedia series.

Sandy Spieler, artistic director of In the Heart of the Beast Theatre in Minneapolis, Minn., wanted to present water as a vehicle for understanding the loss of public spaces in America. "I was standing in the lobby, trying to figure out how to bring [these ideas together]," Spieler says, "when I saw the fountain and said 'well, duh!' " The performance premiers on March 2; advisory board members include public health officials, environmentalists, plumbers and Aztec dancers. For more information, visit www.hobt.org.

—Erin Polgreen

BOOKS

A Wingnut in Sheep's Clothing

By Phyllis Eckhaus

It's deluded to imagine that human beings are rational creatures. Fearmongering works, which is why every election season campaign strategists immerse us in negative ads. You can't reason with people in a 30-second spot, but you can scare the hell out of a significant and susceptible segment of them, altering election outcomes.

The Enemy at Home, the newest tract from Hoover Fellow and bestselling right-wing pundit Dinesh D'Souza, is somewhat subtler than a nasty election ad, but it too targets the guts of the potentially persuadable. And how does one herd persuadables into the conservative corral, given the growing frustration with Bush and his war in Iraq? D'Souza seeks to revive folks' fear of terror by revving up their fear of shifting sexual mores, then linking up the two. His core contention is a real attention-grabber, cunning and outrageous: he claims the left's promotion of "global depravity" triggered 9/11 and continues to imperil America and the world.

You may laugh, but you're not D'Souza's intended audience. He's aiming for the folks cognitive scientist George Lakoff describes as "biconceptuals," who lean liberal in one regard and conservative in another—uncomfortable with the war, perhaps, but equally daunted by what they view as immorality at home.

D'Souza takes pains to soften them up with early chapters designed to disarm. In a bemused and reasonable tone, he offers commonsense contentions about American foreign policy that seem to transcend rhetoric and ideology. Describing the "illusions of the right," he expresses frustration with the Bush administration's war plan. He suggests that the way to win against Islamic radicals is to build alliances with moderate Muslims. He points out that "terrorism is not the enemy. ... [T]errorism is a tactic." And his account of the left's sentiments and foreign policy positions is recognizably accurate: he says the left fears the Christian right more than the Taliban, hates Bush as much as the right despised Bill Clinton, and views the war as a pretext for profiteering and imperialism.

By the time D'Souza zeroes in on the supposed domestic agenda of the "cultural left" he has presumably won his readers' trust. And he goes straight for middle America's gag reflex, describing Democrats, liberals and leftists as perfervid perverts, hellbent on destroying the family, religion and morality itself. Yes, D'Souza says, radical Muslims hate America and they recruit with increasing ease among moderates. But not because we're overrunning their countries, killing and torturing them. (D'Souza says they expect and respect that.) It's because our scary cultural norms threaten their patriarchal way of life.

Atheism, fornication, divorce, feminism, abortion, pornography and homosexuality—these, we are told, are decadent American diseases spawned and spread by the "cultural left" since the '60s. America can win the war on terror if and only if it publicly repudiates the left, joining forces with moderate Muslims to endorse traditional morality.

It's a slick ploy that takes advantage of the universal free-floating fear of modern life. Everybody wants to stuff some genie back in the bottle—D'Souza would beat back women's and gay rights, I'd turn the clock back to the days before global

PHOTO COURTESY OF MRSMITHMOVIE.COM

Jeff Smith makes a political play

warming and nuclear weapons. For good and ill, globalization, industrialization and technology have wrought dramatic and escalating change—including loosening family ties and gender roles that were once sustained by economic necessity. This is a worldwide phenomenon arguably facilitated more by capital than by freedom movements and the somewhat less-than-all-powerful American left.

Skilled propagandist that he is, D'Souza pretends to support "tolerance"—but his tolerance for fornicators, feminists and gays turns out to mean barest forbearance: no rights, public shaming and the graciousness to refrain from running us out of town or stoning us to death. He cautions against stereotypes and ethnocentrism, but then describes the 9/11 hijackers as "right out of central casting," fitting the part of the "fanatical Muslim terrorist—right down to their nose hairs."

D'Souza's tolerance for the left proves equally illusory; every time he says the left is not treasonous or anti-American, he's actually conveying the opposite message through repetition and linking. By book's end, D'Souza is damning the left as more "dangerous than bin Laden's American sleeper cells" and calling for renewed McCarthyism.

In a world beyond our ken and control, it's tempting to seek scapegoats. And, truth to tell, there's no obvious answer to how we can manage to live together, in this divided country and on this small planet, given our great differences. But the inspired promise of America, reflected in a Bill of Rights authored by Enlightenment idealists, is a dynamic vision of ever-expanding freedoms protective and embracing of all. D'Souza's cramped and vicious work betrays that promise. ■

FILM

Mr. Smith Doesn't Go To Washington

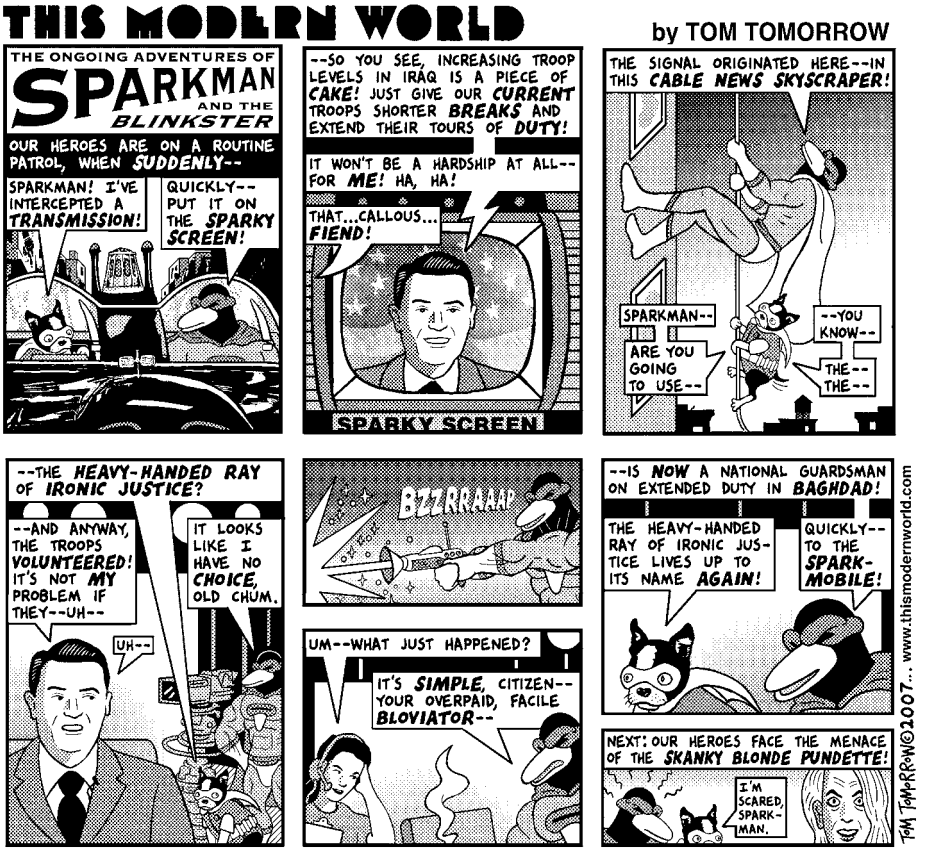
By Erin Polgreen

One of 15 films shortlisted for a 2006 Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary, *Can Mr. Smith Get To Washington Anymore*? is currently playing in limited engagements across the country. But starting in late February, this funny, fast-paced and engaging record of contemporary politics in the United States will be available on DVD from its Web site (www.mrsmithmovie.com). Here's hoping it finds the wider audience it deserves.

First-time director Frank Popper opens the film with a rapidfire series of cuts that establish the disadvantages of underdog-cum-wunderkind Jeff Smith as he makes an improbable bid for the open House seat in Missouri's 3rd Congressional District in 2004. A St. Louis native, Smith neither looks nor sounds like a politician, and he's not. He's an adjunct professor of political science with no electoral experience, who constantly fidgets, compulsively petting his face with his hands when stressed, and whose pants are too long. Only 29 years old, he may seem young—but his staffers are even younger. As Artie Harris, Smith's 25-year-old communications director, describes him, "He's … short, looks like he's 12 and, you know, sounds like he's castrated."

Politicized through his work on education reform in economically depressed and mostly black north St. Louis, Smith was one of nine Democrats vying for the congressional seat vacated by Dick Gephardt in 2004. Topping that list was heir-apparent Russ Carnahan, whose mother, father and grandfather were key political players at the state and national levels. Despite his lack of charisma and horrid attendance record as a member of the Missouri state legislature, Carnahan was considered all but a shoo-in because he could afford the political experts and D.C.-based consulting firms considered necessary for a modern campaign. Carnahan had a name, and that name meant money.

Popper does a terrific job of contrasting



the advantages of the Carnahan political dynasty with Smith's modest, middle-class family. While Carnahan's mother, a former U.S. senator, raises money from national contributors for his campaign, Phyllis Smith stocks her son's campaign headquarters' fridge with peaches and strawberries and refuses to call her friends to ask for money. "I'm not Jean Carnahan," she says, shrugging her shoulders.

Many of Smith's family and friends express an intense distaste for modern politics. Smith's 96-year-old grandmother thinks that "someone with a mind like he has shouldn't waste it on politics." His brother calls political contributions as "a waste of money that kind of makes me sick."

In spite of his family's objections, viewers quickly come to understand that Smith is naively passionate about running a clean and constructive campaign with a focus on bringing the St. Louis community back to politics. When discussing campaign strategy, stout, freckled 22-year-old neighborhood organizer Matt Henley claims that "all the other campaigns were money, money, money and ads, ads, ads, but Jeff was determined to get out there and meet people." In the year leading up to the primary, Smith personally knocked on almost every door in the district.

St. Louisans, for their part, rallied around Smith. His earnest sense of justice and desire for equality is contagious, and it's interesting to see how the community's perspective changes. During the first part of Smith's campaign, the citizens he meets refer to politicians as "them" and "those people." One elderly constituent, after Smith asks if she wants to know anything about his campaign, tells him, "Nobody's worth a shit." As Election Day approaches, however, Smith increasingly becomes a local celebrity. "It's him, I told you it's him," gushes a teenager to his coworkers when Smith stops in to get a sandwich.

Through a delicate balance of studio-based interviews and footage taken directly from the campaign trail, Popper conveys both the weariness of citizens who feel forgotten by the political process and the naive idealism of those who pin their hopes on Smith. For both the tired and the hopeful, the Smith campaign becomes a symbol that hearkens back to "the way the system used to work," in the words of David Drebes, founder of the *Arch City Chronicle*, a free St. Louis newspaper focused on politics and civic issues.

In the final month of the campaign, dilapidated, run-down St. Louis comes alive. Smith wins over political analysts, journalists, students and teachers, ultimately accumulating more money than the Carnahan campaign—and more volunteers as well. On Election Day, Smith and his staff decide to get the vote out (and the media as well) by playing a game of basketball in the street. Smith, in a button-down shirt and tie, plays with young black men wearing oversized t-shirts and slouching jeans. They dribble past boarded-up houses with overgrown lawns while campaign staffers urge citizens to vote via megaphone. The scene sums up the spirit of the campaign perfectly: No matter who you are, or where you live, anyone can play the game.

When Smith ultimately loses by less than 2,000 votes, the shock is overwhelming. In a campaign that seemed so just and right and good, what went wrong?

Unfortunately, we don't really get to find out. Popper interviews a number of St. Louis journalists and political science buffs, but none of them provide a definitive answer. While *Can Mr. Smith* captures the energy and ideals driving the grassroots revolution, it doesn't address the possibly insurmountable and assuredly unavoidable conclusion: that simply working at a local level isn't always enough.

That doesn't mean that grassroots strategies are futile. Though the documentary closes with Smith's loss, there's a happier ending to this story. Two years later, Smith ran for Missouri State Legislature and won. So while it may be impossible for Mr. Smith to get to Washington these days, he can still shake things up in the statehouse. ■

excerpt

A Hungarian Family History

Adam Biro is a Hungarian expat and the founder and owner of the art book publishing house Biro Editeur in Paris. In One Must Also Be Hungarian *he chronicles the history of Hungary through the stories of his family and the Jewish experience. Here, he writes of his ancestor, Finkelstein Ábrahám:*

This is all I know of him. Day laborer. Born in 1806. Napoleon was still alive—good grief! Napoleon was still emperor while Ábrahám was day laborer. … Cézanne wasn't born yet. Ábrahám couldn't imagine what his descendants were to endure, nor the name and the face and the way of being of one of his great-great-grand sons, me. He couldn't have imagined that against all mathematical probability I would be, in the year 2001, his only descendant—and his opposite in gestures, in words, in thoughts, in all of my being. That I would leave the country and that I would speak with my wife and children another language than his. That I would eat oysters and that I would like salami and even smoked paprika sausages. That I would go to the synagogue only once a year, at Yom Kippur, like all *Yom-kippuryid*—atheist but ashamed. That I would make love naked, and even outside on the grass, and for the sole pleasure of it. And that I would know nothing about him, born about one hundred and fifty years before I was: except that he was a peasant …

Looking Back

Continued from page 47

Lasting legacy: An engrained belief that, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, better days are ahead.

Best summation of my time at *In These Times*: Priceless.

Miles Harvey, *1986–1995, was an editor at* In These Times. *He is currently working on a book for Random House, to be published in 2008.*

I was offered a job at *In These Times* on the day my father died, 20 years ago last October. He was never much of an advice giver, but one of my last conversations with him had been about the pros and cons of the opportunity. I told him that the pay was abysmal and that accepting the job was certain to ruin any hopes I had of a career in mainstream journalism. He told me that whenever I talked about the publication my voice brimmed with enthusiasm.

So I followed his lead and my heart—a decision I have never regretted. Taking that job at *In These Times* turned out to be like entering graduate school and running away to join the circus at the same time. Because there was never enough money for paperclips, let alone payroll, the place tended to draw a lot of improvisers and eccentrics, people with the ability to laugh off *In These Times*'s endless absurdities.

No one had a better sense of humor about himself or the place than its founder and publisher, Jimmy Weinstein. When he launched *In These Times* in 1976, Jim had hoped it would become the must-read magazine of an ascendant progressive movement.

That *In These Times* survives today is thanks in no small part to the efforts of the current editor Joel Bleifuss, who began working at the magazine same week I did in 1986. Back then we were cocksure kids who thought little of staying up all night to get an issue to press; now we're middle-aged men whose energy is far from boundless. But even today, when I talk about the magazine, my voice still brims with enthusiasm.

Jessica Clark, *2002–2007, is the executive editor at* In These Times *and a research fellow at American University's Center for Social Media. After this issue she'll be hitting the road for awhile, but will continue on the masthead as editor-at-large.*

I came to *In These Times* in mid-2002, amidst the tatters of the dot-com bust. My own bubble gig at Britannica.com had gone belly-up the year before, and the online version of *LiP* magazine—which I was co-editing—had earned about 500 bucks in the intervening months. *In These Times* was suffering its own dot-com woes; Jimmy had retired, and publisher Bob Burnett, a founding vice president of Cisco Systems, had stepped down to tend to his home fires. It seemed like a fortuitous time to retreat to print publishing.

I'd encountered the magazine several times since my mid-'90s grad school days, when it was under the sway of what we Hyde Parkers jokingly referred to as "the *Baffler* boys": Tom Frank, Dave Mulcahey, Chris Lehmann, et al. Despite its sometimes dubious production values, the magazine exhibited a sense of mirth that its glossier competitors lacked. It showed up in my life again in the late '90s, in the form of the Back to Basics conference, an attempt to re-define what was then known as "left" politics, which we've lately taken to calling "progressive." There I met colleagues who have helped to shape my work since, such as Bob McChesney and Pat Aufderheide. When feminist writer Paula Kamen introduced me to Joel, at the magazine's 25th anniversary party in 2001, it felt like a sign; I applied for the then-open assistant publisher position and have been wending my way up the masthead since.

One word comes up often when people talk about *In These Times*: "scrappy." Both meanings of the term apply—the magazine's tone (like that of its funny, biting founder) has tended towards the pugnacious and—three decades of gossip to be believed—the magazine has often consisted of "disorganized, untidy, or incomplete parts." In this, it resembles the left itself, a jumble of well-meaning, but often Rube-Goldbergian, coalitions, ideologies and soon-to-be-toppled idols.

In covering this hodgepodge, *In These Times* has time and again lived up to its own name, reinventing itself for each new generation. Founded as a weekly tabloid newspaper, it shifted to a biweekly magazine format in the early '90s, and then in 2006 to a longer monthly format. Its thriving online presence draws more than 350,000 readers per month. Along the way, it has trained and showcased some of the country's most influential progressive voices—literary legends like Kurt Vonnegut and Studs Terkel; vibrant working writers like Barbara Ehrenreich, Rick Perlstein and Naomi Klein; and high-profile editors like Joan Walsh at *Salon* and Ana Marie Cox at *Time.com*.

In 2006, in tandem with a groundswell of progressive activism and media-making, a reinvigorated *In These Times* staff stitched the scraps together. With a new publisher, a new art director, a fresh approach and a slate of young writers, we rose to the challenge of our recent times—the head-slapping excesses of the Bush era—and in the process won the 2006 *Utne Reader* Independent Press Award for "Best Political Coverage." While we take no credit for the recent Democratic wins (and are sure to be watching the Dems with a gimlet eye in coming months), we played our part in bird-dogging the administration.

It may be a sign: a job well done, time for me to hand off the needle and thread, time to seek out the next adventure. I'll miss it. ■

BY TERRY J. ALLEN

Faith Healing with Homeopathy

For the half billion people worldwide who use homeopathic remedies, the potions can be as healing as a hug, as benignly nutty as knocking wood for luck or as dangerous as believing a dashboard Jesus will protect you from an onrushing train. What homeopathy is not, however, is medicine that is scientifically proven to work better than a placebo. Independent researchers have debunked almost every favorable study they have examined and a $1 million prize for proving homeopathy's efficacy remains unclaimed.

Some homeopaths counter that their cures are not amenable to scientific proof. That's fine, if you want to call the multimillion dollar industry what it is: faith healing.

The U.S. homeopathic industry would have made my cousin proud. As a kid, he bottled his bath water and sold it to his schoolmates as a magic potion. Unlike this enterprising little charlatan (who went on to work for the Nixon administration—you can't make this stuff up), most homeopaths claiming imaginary powers for ordinary water actually believe in their products. Some are licensed physicians, others simply hang up a shingle. But consciously fraudulent or not, the homeopathy industry is marketing magic; selling placebos wrapped in ritual, tied with a bright bow of superstition.

Homeopathy rests on three unproven tenets: First, "Like treats like." Because arsenic causes shortness of breath, for example, homeopaths prescribe its "spirit" to treat diseases such as asthma. Second, the arsenic or other active ingredient is diluted in water and then that dilution is diluted again and so on, dozens of times, guaranteeing—for better *and* worse—that even if the dose has no therapeutic value, it does no harm. And third, the potion is shaken vigorously so that it retains a "memory" of the allegedly curative ingredient, a spirit-like essence that revives the body's "vital force."

"A shocking fact," writes homeopathic practitioner Bill Gray, "is that the more the remedy is shaken and diluted (serially), the more powerful the curative action! This remains true even beyond the point of there being even one molecule left in the solution!"

Scientific evidence for the memory? None. Rigorous, replicable double-blind studies documenting cure rates higher than placebo? Few to none.

So what about the fact that some homeopathic patients get better? Part of the effect comes from the ritual of consultation with a practitioner who treats the patient like a person rather than a body part on an assembly line. And just taking anything can help; the placebo effect is real. In gold-standard, double-blind studies, placebos presented as possible cures sometimes rival pharmaceuticals for effectiveness, or beat taking nothing at all.

Nor are the effects simply psychological. When volunteers took a placebo that they were told contained painkillers, they experienced relief, while researchers watching PET scans of the subjects' brains tracked increased levels of the body's own pain-relieving endorphins. In other studies, research subjects given placebos instead of antidepressants also showed chemical changes in their brains. FDA data for six top antidepressants showed that 80 percent of their effect was duplicated in placebo control groups.

Which brings us to the patient's dilemma: Have faith in 19th century magic or rely on a pharmaceutical industry that suppresses negative outcomes (including death), promotes drugs for nonexistent diseases, repackages old drugs in new bottles to circumvent patent expirations, bribes doctors with perks and cash and hires ghost writers to author favorable studies? Given the hype, toxicity, and expense of many drugs and Big Pharma's snake-oil tactics, the side effects of water (laced with "memory") start looking pretty damn good. If your condition is relatively minor, self-limiting or untreatable, you may be a lot better off drinking homeopathy's Kool-Aid-less Kool-Aid.

But if you have strep, a broken bone or a tumor, or if you need immunization from infectious disease, reliance on a homeopathic placebo may kill you.

British newspapers recently reported that homeopathic clinics and pharmacies offered unproven products to prevent malaria and other diseases including typhoid, dengue fever and yellow fever. Travelers who thought they were protected ignored warnings to use mosquito netting; some contracted malaria. And during the height of the smallpox-terror scare in 2003, Bill Gray tried to market a homeopathic "shield" for smallpox. One reason the FDA stopped him was that its "Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia" does not recognize the "shield's" supposed ingredient—Variolinum, purportedly extracted from "a ripened pustule of small pox." It bothers the witless FDA not a whit that Gray's water actually contained no Variolinium.

In general, the FDA turns a blind eye to homeopathy's dangers and nonsense. Homeopathic remedies "are the only category of spurious products legally marketable as drugs," according to Stephen Barrett, M.D., and Varro E. Tyler, Ph.D., authors of *The Honest Herbal*. "If the FDA required homeopathic remedies to be proven effective in order to remain marketable—the standard it applies to other categories of drugs—homeopathy would face extinction in the United States." ■

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