

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

A Tale of Two Bolivias

by Bill Buddington

Bolivia is a country divided in two. In the West lies vast natural gas resources, the seat of the government at La Paz, and the indigenous majority. In the East, the white minority and business interests exert power from Santa Cruz. Until very recently, Bolivia's white rulers maintained a regime of terror and expropriation of the indigenous. The illusion of peace was maintained by brutal police forces and repression of union movements. When in 2000, President and one-time dictator Hugo Banzer privatized the water distribution system in Bolivia's third largest city of Cochabamba, leaving thousands without access to clean drinking water, the city exploded in a wave of protest and union activity. As news about Cochabamba spread, a broader and more cohesive indigenous social movement began to take form, uniting miners, cocaleros, craft-workers, and social activists to demand entry into the political arena. In December 2005, Evo Morales became president of the republic, the first indigenous president in the nation's history.

Evo Morales and his MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo) party ran on the ticket of land reform, a rewriting of the constitution, and a broadening of social programs for the nation's poor. In a recent interview, vice president Alvaro Garcia Linera described the land reform project: "If you look at the program put forth by the poor in Bolivia, it doesn't propose socializing all wealth or property. What you find is the demand for opportunities, a demand to take part in the distribution of resources. I haven't seen anyone who's saying, 'We have to take all the land away from the hacendados (large landowners).' They say, 'We want to have land too, we also have a right to have land.'"

Asserting a right to the land has been a central theme of the Morales government. By September of last year, Morales had distributed 2,301 titles of state-owned land, and promised to increase that amount to 20 hectares by the end of his term in 2011. While this may seem like a radical move, it is important to note that this land is not a product of expropriation from the rich, but rather a reallocation of what the Morales government has deemed 'unproductive land.' Still, this plan has been met with fierce opposition from the eastern landowners, who criticize the reform as hinting at communism.

Rewriting the constitution has been a more difficult task for the government to institute. Set in the city of Sucre at the site of an old theater, a new form of political theatrics is taking place. The Constituent Assembly, the body charged with creating the new document, has been bitterly divided between representatives of the rich and those of the poor. Since August 2006, the process has been impeded day after day by deliberation, bureaucratic obstinacy, and even sometimes physical violence. In addition, rowdy street mobilizations organized by powerful right-wing Santa Cruz leaders have disrupted the assembly's work. As a result, representatives of the assembly have not agreed to one single article.

The right-wing demonstrations have stagnated the assembly so much that on November 24th, an executive order by Morales moved the assembly to the military barracks of Sucre. At the barracks, and in spite of opposition within the MAS party, the "MAS-proposed version of the Constitutional text was approved 'in full.'" Almost instantly, the colonial city became a "battlefield," where "students and citizen groups went at the police with

escalating intensity while the latter responded with tear gas and rubber bullets." In the ensuing conflict, four demonstrators were left dead. Jumping at the opportunity, the media from Santa Cruz applauded the demonstrators as "democracy's heroes" - despite the fact that they were engaged in activities such as throwing Molotov cocktails through the windows of MAS politician Osvaldo Peredo and vandalizing the city. The conflict has left the two sides more bitter than ever, and in the most violent situation in years.

Much of the violence is prompted by the Santa Cruz based Civic Committee, an organization formed with one purpose: to destabilize the popular government. Under the catchall word "autonomy," the civic committee plans to break away from the central government, "and take the natural resources with them." Although Branco Marinovic is their leader and public face, the militant wing of the organization plays a more sinister role. The Civic Committee youth gangs openly admit to attacking the indigenous minority on the streets of Santa Cruz, though they say it is in self-defense. They wear green armbands with imagery reminiscent of fascism.

The third goal of the MAS government, opening up the political arena to indigenous participation, hinges on the success of the other two. Only fifty years ago indigenous Bolivians had no right to vote. Even today, those without proper documentation, including the poorest in the country, cannot provide the paperwork necessary to prove that they are eligible voters. Without the material means of survival, it is impossible to even think of gaining voting rights. And without an overturning of the legal system that keeps these inequities in place, it is impossible to achieve political representation.

Even while the Morales government seems to have opened up the political arena to the poor and indigenous, in a way the MAS political party merely rode on the curtails of a popular movement already in full swing. From this perspective, it is wrong to say that the Morales government or MAS enabled the indigenous to exert real political power. The reverse is true, since it is the grassroots social movements and indigenous workers struggles that allowed Morales to come to power. It was the initial demands and political power that was exerted through grassroots activism that brought MAS into government the first place. Now this real political power is in danger of being destroyed by diverting energies into gaining political representation, rather than furthering the conditions that make grassroots political power possible. "Poder popular" - popular power - is made possible by everyday people through the course of struggle, not by politicians or governments, however well intentioned.

1. <http://americas.irc-online.org/am/4735>
2. The Economist, September 21st, 2006.
3. <http://www.ubnoticias.org/en/article/death-and-sedition-in-bolivia>
4. Ibid.
5. Unreported World: Anarchy in the Andes, 13:40

Photo: Bolivian Insurgent, Ready for the "Clenched Fist" of President Banzer. Sept 2000, <http://www.narconews.com/>



Boycott Burgerking, continued from P. 4)

Burger King claims that the surcharge violates “federal and state laws related to antitrust, labor and racketeering.” Even for the home of the Whopper, that’s a new low. Taco Bell and McDonald’s have not been prosecuted and Burger King itself routinely pays fuel surcharges to the growers. The surcharge would cost Burger King only \$250,000 a year, a pittance considering that Burger King’s CEO made \$4.15 million this year. This is obscene even by the standards of corporate America.

So what can you do? Start by not eating at Burger King (duh!). Tell your friends not to eat there either. Picket your local Burger King franchise. Use your imagination, but if all else fails you can always call Burger King HQ and tell the \$4.15 million dollar man, John Chidsey, exactly what you think of his lying, greedy, corrupt company. The number is 305-378-3000. For more information, check out ciw-online.org.

ICE Strikes Again: Milford, Ma by The Boston May Day Coalition

Friday, December 7, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents “supported” by the Milford Police Department raided an immigrant community, arresting 15 undocumented migrant workers, mostly from Ecuador. The media, sympathetic to ICE, reported that the workers were charged for violating criminal laws. However, only one person was charged with violating “criminal laws”. In other words, the raid was about migrant workers and not about criminal law enforcement.

The local Chief of Police, Thomas O’Loughlin is quoted by the Milford Daily News finds the immigration system in the U.S. “laughable.” He declared, “They’ll lock up one, they’ll leave three ... We’re not going to take them because there’s nowhere to put them.” He also added, “If they (ICE) want to out and get illegal aliens, they can come out any day of the week.”

Almost as startling as the raid itself is the unprofessional coverage by the Daily News, who don’t interview any migrant workers, their families or communities. To the reporter from the Milford Daily News, these workers are “illegals,” to the Chief, they are, “illegal aliens.” The Boston May Day Coalition like much of the rest of the world, believes that that “they” are above all else, human beings only seeking to survive with dignity.

The Coalition condemns this new raid, and sees it as part of the continuing war on immigrants. Likewise, we condemn the biased news coverage. No worker is illegal!

What’s Up With Coney Island? by Cady Vishniac

So I went to this party last night and decided to bring lager, specifically Coney Island-brewed lager, which would give me an excuse to talk about sideshows and maybe stick a nail up my nose (Chicks dig it). My plans to gently steer all conversation toward the only really interesting thing in the entire world -what’s going on at the sideshow and how to do sideshow stunts- was derailed however, by the many, many people present who had been convinced that Coney Island was about to be “shut down.” Friends, you are not remotely up to date. I’m afraid I must correct this error.

First of all, let me explain why you, as anti-authoritarians, radicals, and anarchists, should care deeply about Coney Island’s future. Coney Island Sideshows by the Seashore is the last remaining ten-in-one circus sideshow in this country. Coney Island’s attractions and rides are not part of a giant theme-park, the entirety of which is owned by somebody on an opposite coast. They’re all owned and operated by locals. Attractions which are unique

to Coney Island being run by people from Coney Island stand in direct opposition to monoculture. Moreover, Coney Island USA, the organization which runs the sideshow and sideshow museum, also produces events of the cheap/free persuasion which give people in their low-income neighborhood access to performing arts which they would otherwise not get to see. Coney Island USA and the Sideshows by the Seashore are full of awesome people who come down hard against gentrification and the effect it has on the neighborhood. They perfect and spread dying arts, actual dangerous dying arts the performance of which are acts of bravery and knowledge of one’s own body that we are discouraged from by the medical establishment for no particular good reason.

(I am now capable, while fully conscious, of performing a procedure on myself which one doctor’s website re-



*Photos of Coney Island
taken by Matt Carrol:
<http://mattcarrollphoto.com/>*

fers to as a new surgery, and for which he uses a general anesthesia and charges thousands of dollars. More importantly, when I have a really stuffy nose, I can just shove the snot out.)

Okay, now this is what’s actually going on in Coney: You heard Coney Island was going to be shut down because it was. More specifically, large swaths of Coney had been bought by Joe Sitt of Thor Industries for the sole purpose of building expensive condominiums. The current residents would most likely have been priced out of their neighborhood, and the amusements would have been displaced by all the “luxury living.” Sitt was doing his best to evict all the rides and attractions on his newly acquired property, or at least do as much as possible to make their lives difficult. When his plans to replace cultural landmarks with boring homes for yuppies created a public outcry, Sitt started to promise that some small part of the amusement area would remain such, only in a sort of Vegas-ified consolidated way. There was still no coherent plan to include the current amusement-operators in the new Coney Island, which would look more like someplace in California than Coney Island. Oh, and a bunch of it was still going to be condos.

Another lie/petty concession by Thor Industries included a series of promises to bring in circuses, thereby justifying the presence of all those empty lots. (The circuses never showed up and it was suggested that this was just a plan to keep the place ready for condo-building rather than build permanent amusements.) Basically, Joe Sitt is a jerk. Googling his name, of course, turns up lots of positive press written by people who were totally credulous about his claims that he just wanted to make the most awesome amusements possible. The wrangling has actually been going on for a year or two.

What changed, you ask? Well, the mayor’s office decided to score some points with all those angry Coney-Islanders by rejecting Thor’s plans and putting out better ones. Thor has been royally screwed by the declaration by the city of New York that they are not going to be building (...continued on pg 8)

Urban Gardening

by Seth Thompson

Lets face it, we all know that we cannot liberate food or eat out of the dumpsters forever. For the very obvious reasons that it does not serve our dignity, our future generations, our health, and in the end leaves us just as shackled to the very self-destructing spectacle that we are trying to overcome. Great, where do we get our food? Well it is really common sense, the less distance something travels, the less exploitation is involved in its arrival. So logically, whatever you grow yourself or in your community is the most morally delicious food. This is an article on how to start doing this. With this article, and its companion (see next month's issue), we will put together some useful ideas about how to use the space we have and the resources available (i.e. zero money) to produce your own sustenance. In this part we will define sustainability - a word that has been diluted by the academics. Then I'll show some principles we can use to work towards that concept.



Artwork by Cristy C. Road.
See more at <http://www.croadcore.org/>

A quick shout out to Bill Mollison, who inspired much of my own research into our planet. In his words: any system which over its life-time produces enough to have created and maintained itself is sustainable (Mollison). The majority of human activity on the planet at the moment is unsustainable. It's heavily dependent on the malicious over-use of materials and humans to maintain growth or even a steady state. To reverse this yourself, you can begin to grow your own food in your own space or a space you visit frequently. So find some space; rooftops, empty lots, balconies, window sills and walls. If you are lucky, then you have a yard, and if you are on the streets, there is always guerrilla gardening. Essentially, we study the properties of every space we encounter, and we optimize them by design to create systems that are regenerating and create yield. This leads us to a brief glimpse at some principles that will help us learn how to approach life as neither consumer nor producer.

Now we are designers. What we exploit is the situation. So our first principle is that for each site there is a species (plant-animal-bacteria-fungi) that wants nothing more than to live there. All we have to do is put it there and make sure that its needs are met, which we can do from another species (including ourselves). For example, kampuchea mushrooms and yogurt love the top of your fridge, and need fruit sweetened water and milk,

respectively. Or, you can put edible fruit vines on the sunny side of your building, and make swales around them to catch water.

The next principle we'll look at is the use of the free energy (rain, sun, wind). Here we observe where the rain flows to, where our high winds are, and the direction of incoming light throughout the year. This can include mechanical technology such as rainwater catches, or the regulation of house climate by the keen observation of temperature differentials caused by open windows. This mechanization can include high-tech electricity generation by sun and wind to power your anti-microsoft communication portal (sustainability reaches these abstract levels too, but that is for another article). Or, it can be bio-tech by harnessing this energy through the use of living systems. For example, letting clovers cover our plant beds because they use the sun and the wind to fix the nitrogen in the soil for other plants, or by using specific trees or bushes to direct wind to your aeolic generator and away from the tomatoes.

Next, boundaries are the places richest in life since species can draw on two different systems, and material tends to collect at the borders between the two (this too extends to other more abstract systems). An example is the edge of a wooded area, which offers wind protection and nutrients but also (depending on situation) offers more light than the woods itself. This also is shown in the way leaves pile up at fences or over street drains, or border cities that trade things that are illegal in their neighboring state.

Next if you look at nature you will see that plants grow together, not in straight lines of single species. So we imitate nature--go ahead and plant your carrots with your tomatoes, or plants with small roots, such as kale or herbs, at the base of your potted trees.

Another principle is that all players in a system need input and make output. Plants all have different nutrient and water needs. You output solid waste (shit--seriously--not on you comestibles, but at least on your smokables) (please be careful you need to dry the stuff first--be sanitary [don't use shit if you eat meat]). You out-put lots of food scraps which breakdown and become great fertilizer. You also use (output) lots of water, which can be collected and used to water plants and flush your toilets.

Which brings us to a final subject that supersedes principles, but which is well worth your time to read: water and trees. There is too much to say about both in a few sentences, but I'll try. First, the world is becoming a desert--I've seen it in my life time, hell I've seen it in the last few years. To those of you who live north of 40 degrees or so, you have no problems (for now--unless you live in Boston or NY etc), but that doesn't relieve you of the obligation to conserve and use well the water that you have free access to. Second, there is no need for the world to become a desert, there is plenty of water, it is all a matter of appropriate storage and usage (check out the idea of swales). Trees offer the most amazing, efficient means of storing water, being composed of up to 95% water, and they condition all of the soil around them. What's more, they are fractal surfaces that not only collect condensation, but act as a tonic (a substance that brings balance to a system), heating and humidifying or cooling and drying. And in the end they are the biggest engines of transpiration (a plant process which releases water and oxygen into the air), providing rain and tempering climates inland, while at the same time trapping carbon (science's global warming scapegoat in the form of CO2).

So those are some neat principles you can use to study your world and recreate it in, or close to your living space. Obviously it is not the whole picture--but it's a start. Next Month, I'll give you some hints on actually doing it for free.

(Coney Island, continued from P. 6)

anything on the Coney Island Boardwalk. The people currently operating Coney Island are also getting screwed, unfortunately, but not as hard as before. Well, still pretty hard for some of them. Let me explain:

According to Michael Bloomberg, Coney is going to become a nationwide attraction. The sideshow will stay. Coney Island USA and its events will stay. I imagine that the street performers will stay, although I bet a stupid permitting program will be enacted there like in tourist areas I've seen already in Boston, Manhattan, and Baltimore. (Oooh, I do so hope I get lucky and have to audition for a board hired by a corporation in order to ever go work there.)

The bad news is that independent ride-operators are in some cases still being squeezed out, with no real place in the city's plans. What are they being squeezed out for? Generic amusements like an ice-skating rink and a brand new roller coaster which is exactly like any other roller coaster you could find in any amusement park in the Northeast. Restaurants and bars. Retail, retail, and more retail. The sort of things that blur the distinction between cultural landmark and outdoor mall generating profits for people who have never been anywhere near Brooklyn. The property values will skyrocket, rents will go up, and the people who live down the street from the sideshow and museum right now will be gone.

I imagine that the new Coney Island will be in some ways like Faneuil Hall/Quincy Market, where I currently work. Sure, there will be history, museums, and meeting halls which are officially open for public events, but most of it will go unused and unvisited by the tourists who mostly just walk along outside, stopping in at the Urban Outfitters before having dinner at a chain restaurant. Politicians involved will declare it a victory because of the revenues generated by the stores selling clothes and the restaurants selling burgers. Those who buy into the political process will declare it a case of the "little guy" winning due to the fact that they were able to call the attention of a "friendly" administration to their plight, ignoring the fact that the littlest guy is the one getting paid less than a living wage by corporate America to make bad food in a neighborhood where they can't afford to live.

**Help us save trees! (paper and money)
For a free email subscription, contact
Jake at trenchesfullofpoets@riseup.net**

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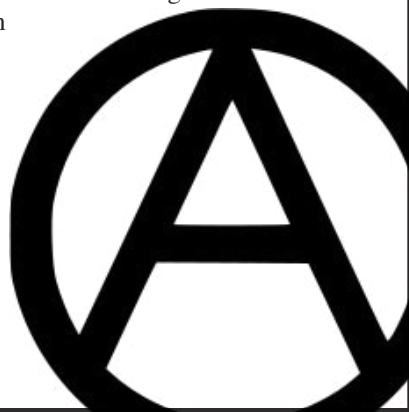
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-www.BAAMBoston.org-

Calendar of events:

First Tuesday of every month: BAAM meeting, 7pm, Lucy Parsons Center 549 Columbus Ave (this month, Jan. 1st)

Second Tuesday of every month: Anarchist Black Cross (defense and prison abolition group), 8pm, 45 Mnt Auburn st, Cambridge, Ma ---> **CHANGE OF DATE: THIS MONTH, ABC, JANUARY 15th, same time same place**

Second Sunday of every month: Meeting of the Industrial Workers of the World. 2pm, Lucy Parsons Center 549 Columbus Ave (this month, Jan 12th)

Every Monday Papercut Zinelibrary meeting. 45 Mnt Auburn st, Cambridge. **Due to holidays, NO meeting until Jan 7th**

Every Friday Boston Common 4-6pm- Food Not Bombs community meal, rain/snow or shine.

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 22nd: BAAM Radical Caroling. Join us on trips to the busy shopping centers of Boston to sing anti-capitalist holiday songs. 2pm, Newbury & Mass Ave [Hynes Convention Center T-stop].

December 23nd: BAAM Radical Caroling. 2PM. Meet in Downtown Crossing.

December 31st-January 1st: Newyears Eve Party to benifit the revolution in Oaxaca, Mexico. Entertainment includes: films about Oaxaca and Brad Will, (Twister?) musical guests TBA, and booze. 10pm. 50 Spring Park Ave. Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

January 11th-13th. The second New England Sub-regional of the Northeast Anarchist Network (NEAN). Portland, Maine. Meetings at 10:00 am at the Meg Perry Center at 644 Congress St. Contact Ani at stamand@riseup.net or (850) 502-7420. Check www.NEanarchist.net.

January 19th: Industrial Workers of the World Industrial Union 460 benifit. Food, drinks and entertainment. Film: "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum" with Al Jolson (83 mins). w/ Speakers: John Maclean and Alex Svoboda. Then music: Sarah Lanzillotta, Evan Greer, Clara Hendricks, Sergio Reyes, High Plains Thunder, Jake and the Infernal Machine, Wobbly Jamboree 6-10pm. Encuentro 5, 33 Harrison, Chinatown. Email Bill at wbumpus62@comcast.net.

January 19-21st,: Unconventional Action Network Consulta. Meeting for the NEAN and allies to plan resistance to the Conventions. Binghamton, NY. Check NEanarchist.net for updates.

January 25th-27: The People's Music Network Winter Concert: a musical uprising across movements and generations! @ Tower Auditorium, Mass College of Art in Boston, MA. 621 Huntington Ave (between Longwood and Evans way) On the Green E-Line -- Longwood T-Stop. 8:00pm. \$20 - 5 sliding scale suggested donation. Feat: Foundation Movement, Tania Asili Y La Banda Rebelde, Riot-Folk, Reflect and Strengthen, Aileen Vance, and more.

February 16th-17th. Meeting between NEAN and the Midwest Action Network. Pittsburg, PA. Check NEanarchist.net

"All things for all [people], since all [people] have need of them, since all [people] worked to produce them in the measure of their strength, and since it is not possible to evaluate everyone's part in the production of the world's wealth... All is for all!" --Peter Kropotkin