See you in Atlanta!
U.S. Social Forum, June 27-July 1

Come to share, debate, celebrate, be inspired, network, be renewed, find hope, strategize and mobilize. Join us to create a bit of that ‘other world.’

This year, instead of holding our traditional Summer Institute, CPE will be down in Atlanta at the first U.S. Social Forum. We are looking forward to participating in this historic event that promises to be one of the largest gatherings of progressive social movements in the history of this country.

The U.S. Social Forum, a local ‘edition’ of the World Social Forum, is an open space that is expected to draw tens of thousands of activists, educators, journalists, artists, NGOs, researchers, and community workers. Despite the immense diversity of participants, they are united around two things: their opposition to neoliberalism (the economic model of corporate globalization, ‘free’ trade, privatization, deregulation and government cutbacks) and their belief that ‘Another World Is Possible.’

What is the Social/Solidarity Economy?
Emily Kawano, Executive Director

CPE, along with several other organizations, is organizing a bloc of workshops/activities at the U.S. Social focusing on Economic Alternatives & the Social/Solidarity Economy. The Social/Solidarity Economy is an alternative economic framework that is rapidly gaining importance in other parts of the world, but is almost unknown in the U.S. Here is a primer on the concepts.

Local currency: Japan, which has been mired in economic stagnation since the 90s, has begun to use local currencies to stimulate the local economy, create jobs, provide services, and connect people in their communities. Throughout the world, there are over 4,000 communities that have established their own local currencies. Bernard Lietaer, an economist and one of the architects of the common European currency, argues that local (or complementary) currency is a tool that can address the impending global crisis of unemployment and financial upheaval.

The first World Social Forum was held in 2001 in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Year by year, It has grown in attendance from an estimated 15,000 to 150,000 people from social movements around the globe. The World Social Forum,

(Source: www.accessfoundation.org/PDF/Lietaer_Bernard_Money_Crunch_No_Cartoons.ppt)

Cooperatives: In Canada, the Quebec provincial government guarantees universal childcare for seven Canadian dollars per day. The government provides subsidies to daycare cooperatives run jointly by daycare workers and

Another World is Possible mural, Seattle Chinatown

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CPE Newsletter Spring 2007

CPE Happenings - 2007

Upcoming Events

March: “Getting Out of Iraq and Staying Out of Iran”
Two CPE staff economists braved a snowstorm to participate in this forum in Amherst, MA that was taped for the local TV station. John Fitzgerald provided some historical perspective as a Vietnam War veteran and anti-war activist. Andy Barenberg talked about neoliberal economic restructuring in Iraq. Discussion was hot and lively, particularly around the issue of whether impeaching Bush is critical to military de-escalation. The show will be distributed to other TV stations.

April 14-15: Western Massachusetts Social Forum, Univ. of Massachusetts
CPE is working with other progressive organizations to organize a Western Massachusetts Social Forum (WMSF). The aim of the Forum is to foster cooperation and networking in order to strengthen the social and economic justice movement in western Mass. This Forum is also a vehicle to raise local awareness and participation in the U.S. Social Forum in June (see below). CPE is organizing participation of members of the W. Mass. Economic Alternative Network at the Forum.

May: AIDS in Africa
Kiaran Honderich will give a public talk about the work that she is doing with people who are HIV positive in Africa, including training students and African community organizations to use video as a tool to destigmatize living with HIV/AIDS. (See “Spotlight on the CPE Community,” p. 5) Check out our website to find out when and where this event will be held.

June 27-July 1: U.S. Social Forum, Atlanta, GA
CPE is organizing a presence at the USSF instead of holding a regular Summer Institute. We are working with a number of other groups to put together a track on Economic Alternatives and the Social/Solidarity Economy, as well as a Social/Solidarity Economy Caucus meeting (for more, see articles on page 1). We also continue to serve on the national USSF Program Working Group.

Ongoing projects

Forum on Social Wealth online course
CPE staff economists Nancy Folbre, Michael Ash and Heidi Garrett-Peltier are developing an online course in Political Economy and Social Wealth, with a focus on three sources of social wealth: the environment, ideas and care work. The curriculum will be developed this spring and a pilot of the course will be offered in the summer through UMass Continuing Education. This could eventually be a course that CPE runs on a regular basis. The course development has so far been useful in giving us a base of experience in developing and running on-line courses.

What’s the Economy for Anyway?
This multi-faceted project seeks to challenge the mainstream economic preoccupation with growth and profits. It will raise the simple and provocative question, “what is the economy for, anyway?” and will take a look at how our economic system could be restructured to deliver greater social and environmental well being. Components of this campaign include a film, educational materials, curriculum, workshops and a conference at the Green Festival in October. CPE’s role is to develop curriculum and educational materials, including a book on economic alternatives, and to deliver a number of workshops over the next two years. Partners include the Forum on Social Wealth, filmmaker John de Graaf (Affluenza and The Motherhood Manifesto), and the Center for a New American Dream.

Somali Women’s Project - Culture and Economic Development
We continue our partnership with New World Theater, International Language Institute, Community Music School, and Akeret Films. Last November there was a very successful Somali Festival held in Springfield. The project is now in the process of creating structures and processes that will encourage greater ownership and involvement by the Somali women, including the creation of a steering committee comprised of women from the community. CPE will organize a series of 12 workshops over the course of 2007 and 2008 that will include topics such as financial literacy, and local and cooperative economics. CPE will also serve as coordinator for other groups who will provide leadership development and cooperative business development.

Houseparties
Dale Melcher and Bill Newman graciously hosted a brunch fundraiser at their wonderful home in December. It was a great success, with around 25 guests and half a dozen CPEers. Moncha Alba Matas – a past participant from the last Summer Institute - will be hosting a houseparty in New York in April. If you would like to support CPE by hosting a houseparty, please contact us for a ‘houseparty kit’.
There’s been a war going on for nearly 30 years. It is a war on government – its institutions, programs, policies and legitimacy.

It is a war on the public good, our common wealth, public space, and democratic control. In order to thrive, the public good needs some form of democratic management – international, federal, state, municipal and community control. These forms of government are public goods – they are part of our common wealth and they are being turned over to private interests.

It is a war to promote the interests of private enterprise, private property, profits, and the rule of the marketplace. The ‘free’ market caters generously to the needs of the well off, but it does not produce the goods where profits are low. Nor can it address issues of equality, social protection and environmental sustainability.

Is there good cause to criticize government? Sure, there’s plenty to fault the government for. But the answer is to fix the problem, not simply opt for the individualistic and profit-driven logic of free market capitalism. There are lots of strategies for improving government – campaign finance reform, greater transparency, and increasing public engagement through, for example, participatory budgeting. There are also many examples of non-governmental forms of collective management by communities or stakeholders.

**Tactics of this war:**

*Vilify, vilify, vilify* – create the public belief that the government can’t do anything right, efficiently, or honestly.

*Demonize poor people* - Play on racism, sexism and anti-immigrant sentiment to portray poor people as lazy and dependent on government ‘handouts’ in order to erode support for anti-poverty and affirmative action programs.

*Push ‘personal responsibility’ as the solution.*

*Run up deficit* - Rollback programs: Cut taxes, create huge deficits, then use the deficit as a reason to cut government programs.

*Break it, then privatize* - Cut taxes, under-fund programs, then argue that government programs don’t work and that the private sector can do it better.

*Promises, Promises* - Deregulate: Argue that regulations are bad for business and consumers. Promise that free competition will lead to better service and lower prices.

**Some casualties of this war:**

*Katrina victims:* Economic apartheid has flourished under policies that demonize the poor, setting the stage for the Katrina travesty. Ideological commitment to downsizing government played out with the lack of public funding for broadly backed proposals to address Gulf Coast flooding; FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) was crippled by budget and staff cuts, privatization of various functions and being folded under Homeland Security. The appointment of inexperienced political cronies added insult to injury.

*Poor people:* From 1960-1980 the percentage of poor people in the U.S. was roughly cut in half. Some predicted that we were within reach of wiping out poverty. Since the 80s, the downward trend stopped and has even been reversed, as anti-poverty and affirmative action programs have been attacked for encouraging dependency and bad behavior.

*Healthcare:* Forty-five million Americans do not have health insurance. Every other industrialized nation in the world has some form of nationalized healthcare with universal coverage. We spend more than twice as much (cont’d on p. 6)
Corporate Toxics Information Project: Helping activists translate the right to know into the right to clean air and water

In May 2006, researchers at the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) at the University of Massachusetts released the Toxic 100, an updated list of the top corporate air polluters. This list is part of a larger project, called the Corporate Toxics Information Project, which is headed by CPE Staff Economist Michael Ash and Advisory Board member James Boyce.

“The Toxic 100 informs consumers and shareholders which large corporations release the most toxic pollutants into our air,” says James K. Boyce, director of PERI’s environment program. “We measure not just how many pounds of pollutants are released, but which are the most toxic and how many people are at risk. People have a right to know about toxic hazards to which they are exposed. Legislators need to understand the effects of pollution on their constituents.”

The Toxic 100 index identifies the top air polluters among corporations that appear in the “Fortune 500,” “Forbes 500,” and “Standard & Poor’s 500” lists of the country’s largest firms. The Toxic 100’s top five companies are E.I. Du Pont de Nemours & Co., US Steel, ConocoPhillips, GE, and Eastman Kodak.

Toxic pollutants prove that what you can’t see can hurt you. Toxins released into our air and water have serious impacts on both human health and ecosystem integrity. But the fact that these pollutants are often invisible – and even when they can be seen (or smelled) are hard to track to their source – impedes efforts by communities to reclaim their right to a healthy and safe environment.

Community-based environmental justice advocates across the country want and need to know what toxic releases from which corporate facilities are affecting their communities, and what other communities across the country are impacted by the same corporations. This information can be a potent tool for empowering citizens to address environmental concerns that directly affect their health and their families.

Toxins, and environmental pollution in general, are what economists call ‘negative externalities’ or ‘external costs,’ because they are costs imposed on other people, rather than being borne by the polluting firm. The information generated by the project will provide a better picture of who generates these costs, and who is on their receiving end.

Ash and Boyce don’t think that pollution can be eliminated entirely, or at least don’t expect to see that happen in their lifetimes. But the amount of pollution can be reduced. That will happen only when people who are being hit with these ‘external costs’ stand up and defend their rights to a clean and safe environment. According to Jim Boyce, he and Michael Ash “hope to help people translate the right to know into the right to clean air and clean water.”

This article contains excerpts from information on PERI’s Corporate Toxics Information Project website. To find out more, visit: http://www.peri.umass.edu/Corporate-Toxics.298.0.html

Field Guide / Econ-Atrocity Website

The website originally created to help publicize the Ultimate Field Guide to the U.S. Economy in 2000 has been totally revamped to suit a new edition (Field Guide to the U.S. Economy [2006]) and a new vision of what a website can do. The biggest change is to convert the archives of Econ-Atrocity and Econ-Utopia articles into a blog format, meaning that readers can post comments and reactions directly to the website. We hope this will promote the kind of give-and-take that exemplifies CPE’s mission to teach tools of economic analysis to grassroots activists for social change in the effort to democratize the economy. In addition, CPE staff economists are invited to contribute more blog posts as the spirit moves them. With a little dedication, www.fguide.org could turn in to a premier source for left/progressive political economic analysis—and whatever else strikes our fancies. Hopefully, this will help spread the word about CPE, summer institutes, workshops, and our other outreach activities, and inspire water-cooler conversations and activism to make real the other worlds that are possible.

Go to www.fguide.org to read posts and contribute your comments!
Kiaran Honderich, CPE Staff Economist

Kiaran spends half of every year teaching Economics and Gender Studies at Williams College, and half of the year working with AIDS activists, principally in Uganda, Kenya and Senegal. She is working to build models of collaborative digital video work and popular education. Here is what Kiaran tells us about her recent work:

In January I took five students from Williams College to Kampala, Uganda to spend 3 weeks editing video collaboratively with two groups of East African AIDS activists. The video footage had been shot by the East Africans themselves, filming their own lives and communities. The students represented a very diverse mix of backgrounds and video editing experience, since my goal was to create a model of collaborative, nonauthoritarian learning.

The two groups we worked with were Danso, a grassroots support group of people living with HIV in Dandora, a Nairobi slum, and the Ugandan Network of Young People with AIDS (UNYPA), a nationwide network doing advocacy with the Ugandan government. The two groups wanted to use video for very different reasons. Danso wanted to produce a video to destigmatize HIV in their community in Nairobi, and educate people about positive living. They will use the video in their outreach work, and give it to clinics to show in their waiting rooms. They also wanted a second video for us to use for fundraising in the

(Cont'd on p. 7)

Mbarou Gassama Mbaye, Participant in CPE’s 2006 Summer Institute

Mbarou currently works as the Managing Director of a new project in Senegal: the "Women’s Incubator Center," which is the first women’s incubation program in Africa. Its main goal is to support women entrepreneurs. Here is what Mbarou tells us about her work and the role that CPE has played in it:

The picture to the right shows the opening day ceremony of The Incubator Center. On the first floor of the center, we have a cyber café to provide Internet services for tourists and women in business, while the second floor is dedicated to offices for the entrepreneurs. The third floor is for the staff: myself, as managing director, a business development services coordinator, and the project assistant. Our main activities are: a) teaching women how to conduct their business, b) how to get organized in their office - most of them have received credit from organizations, but did not know how to use it, c) access to the computer and Internet - to learn word processing, to better manage their business and develop market strategies. I am using my nonformal training education and evaluation skills and also providing a lot of one-on-one coaching.

I travelled from Senegal to Amherst to attend the CPE Summer Institute in 1996 and found it very interesting. I started connecting my organization RAFET, which gathers women from many African countries, to CPE. Since that date many colleagues attended summer workshops in the US (from Marocco, Guinea, Rwanda, Senegal). Since many participants wanted to attend, but could not come to the US, we decided to organize two sessions in Senegal in 2000 and 2001.

One of the participants in 2000 said that, as a union activist, she felt more confident to negotiate with government because she was able to develop supporting arguments using her economic knowledge (after taking a popular economics class). CPE offers classes that fit the needs of grassroots organizations, unions, and women's economic groups, particularly those from developing countries.
along with its many local editions, has become a critical hub for networking and mobilization. Reporting on the 2007 World Social Forum held in Nairobi, Immanuel Wallerstein wrote, “...[T]he WSF is presenting a real alternative, and gradually creating a web of networks whose political clout will emerge in the next five to ten years.”

In the spirit of building that 'other world,' CPE is working with several other organizations to organize a bloc of workshops/activities on Economic Alternatives & the Social/Solidarity Economy (for more, see Social/Solidarity Economy, p. 1). These kinds of concrete economic alternatives have long been under-represented at social forums. Topics will include: worker, producer and consumer cooperatives, land trusts, social currency, participatory budgeting, fair trade, green technology, sustainable economics, the care economy, social entrepreneurship, local economics, living wages, ‘high road’ economic development as well as strategic discussions.

We will have a Social/Solidarity Economy tent in one of the parks which will give us a central meeting place where folks interested in promoting the SSE can meet, get information about sessions and just generally hang out.

For updates and more details, check our website www.populareconomics.org. Hope to see you there!


(U.S. Social Forum, cont’d from front cover)

Western Massachusetts Social Forum

In the spirit of ‘think globally, act locally’ CPE has been heavily involved in organizing a Western Massachusetts Social Forum which will take place at UMass Amherst, April 14-15.

Organizers see it as a good opportunity to build a stronger local movement for social and economic justice, to make the connections to global justice movements and to organize a contingent from W. Mass. to attend the U.S. Social Forum. Organizers hope that the Social Forum process and experience will generate sufficient inspiration and energy to build coordinated and collaborative strategies and mobilizations.

It has been a long and hard slog but we have been privileged to work more closely with a wide range of progressive organizations in W. Mass. and are looking forward to the event. For more info., see the (rather rudimentary) WMSF website: http://www.westernmassafsc.org/wsf/wsf.html

PUBLIC GOOD MYTHBUSTER, CONT'D FROM P. 3

as these countries, but have poorer outcomes in terms of life expectancy, and child and maternal deaths. Opponents are able to scuttle progress toward nationalized healthcare by playing on the public’s distrust of government.

Education: Privatization of education takes various forms, from privately run charter schools, vouchers to pay for private education, outsourcing administration and management, dining, janitorial and busing services. While there have been some success stories, there have also been frightening stories such as Charter Academy closing its schools in California due to bankruptcy, leaving 6,000 students scrambling to find placements.

Consumers: Consumer Reports found in a study of deregulation in electricity, airlines, cable TV, telephone and banking that overall the quality of service has declined, and aggressive marketing and scams have increased. Deregulation proponents point to downward trends in prices, but the truth is that prices have been falling steadily since the 1950s anyway. The price of cable TV has steadily risen since deregulation.

Economy: Over the past five years, the Bush tax cuts have added a staggering $929 billion to the national debt but did not deliver the promised boom that was supposed to result from all that money being freed up for investment. In fact, in terms of growth, jobs, investment, and income, the current recovery lags behind the average growth rate of the previous five recoveries.

To read CPE Mythbusters, visit www.populareconomics.org, and be on the lookout for new additions in the coming months!
US, to help raise seed money for them to start a sewing cooperative to generate income for their members, most of whom lack money for food, rent and their children’s school fees. UNYPA made a series of short videos on particular issues facing young positives in Uganda, to use in their advocacy work with large NGOs, donors, and the Ugandan government. They felt that video could have a much more powerful impact than additional written documents.

The trip was exhausting, challenging and successful. The East Africans made videos with us that they can use in their work, and gained editing skills that move them towards self-sufficiency in video work. The Williams students lived side-by-side with an 18-year old Kenyan woman born with HIV who shared music and stories with them, showing them that she has all the same life goals as them, but an entirely different life expectancy. And we all negotiated our way through our differences and produced some video work we’re proud of.

The social economy, as generally defined in the European Union and Canada, refers to a sphere of the solidarity economy. It includes enterprises that have social aims at the core of their mission - for example, cooperatives, mutual aid systems, non-profits and foundations. In this context, the social economy represents a third sector alongside the private capitalist sector and the public sector.

The terms solidarity economy and social economy have different definitions in different circles, regions and countries. Sometimes they are used interchangeably and sometime simply hyphenated as in solidarity socio-economy. We use the term Social/Solidarity Economy to encompass both the social economy and the solidarity economy.

Taken together, the Social/Solidarity Economy (SSE) is growing rapidly throughout the world both in theory and in practice. There are a number of countries - Brazil, France, Canada and the European Union - that officially recognize, and provide support to expand, the social economy. Regional and international networks have sprung up such as the Peruvian Solidarity Economy Group, the Brazilian Solidarity Socioeconomy Network, Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the Social Solidarity Economy (RIPESS) and the Workgroup for a Solidarity Socio-Economy (WSSE).

Despite the rapid growth and importance of the SSE in other parts of the world, the concept is almost completely unknown in the U.S. We hope that the workshops on Economic Alternatives & the Social/Solidarity Economy that we’re organizing will help to strengthen public awareness of and engagement with the Social/Solidarity Economy. We are also putting together a dialogue for people who are engaged in fostering the Social/Solidarity Economy. These are exciting times and ripe with possibility.

Hope to see you in Atlanta!
Many thanks for your support in 2006

Randy Albelda • Amy Almeida • Douglas Amy & Susan Rosen • Michael Ash • Anthony Bair • Ed Baker • Radhika Balakrishnan & David Gillerist • James Barr • Laura P. Benedict Jr & John Morris • Wendy Berg • Lorna Bourg • Roger Even Bove • Jim Boyce & Betsy Hartman • Rosalind Boyd • Elissa Braunstein • Gerard & Sabina Braunthal • Alisa & Steven Brewer • Hank Bromley & Susan Murphy • Henry & Grace Burbine • Mariam K. Chamberlain • Douglas & Ann Christensen • Dan & Mary Ann Clawson • Steve Cohn & Nancy Eberhardt • COMECC • Paul Cooperstein • Jim & Pam Crotty • Anita Dancs & William M. Sweeney • Laure & Linda Davis-Delano • Margaret DeRivera • Sandra Diener • Leonard Elizabeth • Susan Elkin & Diane Clancy • Jerry Epstein • Rev. Norman & Luice-Marie Faramelli • Lenore Feigenbaum • Marianne A Ferber • Ann Ferguson • Eric Fernald • Kade Finnoff & Arjun Jayadev • Dennis & Rona Fischman • Steve Fisher • John Fitzgerald • Jan & Cornelia Flora • Nancy Folbre & Robert Dworak • Sam & Margola Freedman • Gerald Friedman • Steve Gallant • Elizabeth Gallin • Robert Garavel • Herb & Marci Gintis • John & Marianne Glasel • Samuel Goldberger • Richard Goldstein • Marvin Goodstein • Glen & Nelly Gordon • Julie Graham • Raphael Hanson • Alexandra Harmon • Thomas Harris • David J. Harrowe • Curtis Haynes • Carol Heim • James Heitz • Louis Hellwig • Edith Holleman • Frank Holmquist & Mary Foyer • Lisa Honig • Ruth Ineke • Bill Israel • Michael Jacobs • Louis Kampf • Thomas & Augusta Kappner • Gerald Karush • Gary Katz & Ilene Sakheim • Roger Kaufman • Guru Nam Kaur Khalsa • Edith Kawano • Emily Kawano & Jim Dec • Patrick Kelly • Mark Kesselman & Amrita Basu • Tim Kipp & Kathleen Keller • Marc Kitchel • Neil & Peggy Kostick • David Kotz • Louise Lamphere • June Lapidus • Rena Leib • Sarah Lennox • David Lenson & Pamela Glaven • Adam Levine • George & Ann Levengruber • Michael Lindgren • Susan a & Arthur Lloyd • Mary Sue Lobenstein & John Sellen • Nancy Lovejoy • David & Sandra Lyons • Mary B. & Michel Marcelet • Frances & Peter Marcuse • Misch Margaret • Stephen Marglin • Lewis C. Marler • William Marquart • Thomas Masterson • Elaine McCrane • Donald McPherson • Dale Melcher & Bill Newman • Philip Moss • Tillman Neuner • Vivian Newman • Michael Nimkoff • Laurie Nisonoff • William & Kathleen North • Emily Northrop • Phyllis Ohlemacher & Robert Wages • Wayne O'Neil & Maya Honda • Passi Family Trust • Manuel Pastor • Eva Paus • Robert Paynter & Linda Morley • Mark A. Peters • Fred Pincus & Natalie Sokoloff • Bob & Sigrid Pollin • Wilbert Pool • Alan Rabinowitz • Heloise Rathbone • Amelie Ratliff • Nola Reinhart • Matthew Riddle • Sterling Robbins • Judy & Howard Robinson • Allan G. & Sandra Rodgers • Frank Roosevelt • Joseph Salerno • Lisa Saunders • Jack Sawyer • James Schamus & Nancy Kricorian • Julie Schor • Trink Schurian & Ernest • Dick & Marcie Sclove • Maynard Seider • Lois Shaw • Barry Shelley & Brenda Wyss • Lynn Shoemaker • Mha Atma Singh Khalsa • Ann Sink • Vince Snowberger • Stephen C. Snyder • Carolyn Sonfield • Kurt & Martha Sonneborn • Greg & Betsy Speeter • Mary Sprunger-Froesc • John & Nora Stanton • William Strickland • Lynn & Bertram Strieb • Kurt & Gwen Tauber • Jonathan & Wendy Teller-Elsberg • Letitia Upton • Thomas Wartenberg & Wendy Berry • Jane Weihe & John Kaufmann • Eve Weinbaum & Max Page • Sheila Weinberg • Thomas Weisskopf & Susan Contratto • Jon Weissman & Joan Grenier • Richard & M. Sherrill Worthen • June Zaccone • Meeghan Ziolkowski

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