

OMNI CONSTITUTION WEEK AND DAY, NEWSLETTER #2, SEPTEMBER 17, 2009: CONSTITUTION, PEACE AND JUSTICE, CLIMATE BREAKDOWN

Edited by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace and Justice based upon constitutional government *for "We, the people."* (Newsletter 1: September 17, 2008).

Constitution-loving volunteers needed to plan our celebration for 2010. Contact any member of OMNI's Executive Committee: Gladys, Nancy, Kelly, Karen, Dick.

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Constitution, UN Charter, Peace and Justice, Climate Collapse

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Dan Dean's "Intolerable Acts"

1. [Constitution Day Materials, US Constitution, Pocket Constitution ...](#)
2. Click here to read the Federal Register announcement of the **Constitution Day** Events. America Reads the **Constitution**. September 17, **2009** at 8:30 a.m.. Individuals who serve the nation in a variety of capacities will ...
[Holidays: Constitution Day and Citizenship Day in United States](#)
Wed, Sep 17, 2008, **Constitution Day** and Citizenship **Day**, Observance. Thu, Sep 17, **2009**, **Constitution Day** and Citizenship **Day**, Observance ...
2009. Last post 06-29-**2009**, 3:12 PM by bcurtis@appc. ... an educational event about the **Constitution** on **Constitution Day**, September 17. ...
[Constitution Day 2009 Poster Contest](#)
Constitution Day is September 17, **2009**. Federally-funded educational institutions are required to hold an educational program pertaining to the United ...
[Constitution Day - BRI](#)
Jump to [New for 2009!](#): If you are looking for other activities that you can use in the classroom on **Constitution Day**, please see our other resources by ...
Dick: What do these programs tell us about the scope and wisdom of official and public discussion of the Constitution today?

CHOMSKY'S LECTURE ON US DEMOCRACY AT RIVERSIDE CHURCH, JUNE 12, 2009, excerpted by Amy Goodman, *Democracy Now*, June 3 on CAT. Google Democracy Now

Noam Chomsky on “Crisis and Hope: Theirs and Ours”

CONSTITUTION, WORLD PEACE and JUSTICE, PLANETARY CLIMATE
BREAKDOWN

WAR AND PEACE

Scott Ritter's *Waging Peace* includes the entire U. S. Constitution and United Nations Charter, which together define U. S. core values. This may sound odd until you recall that the U.N. Charter is a treaty and you remember Article VI of the Constitution: “The Constitution, and the Laws of the United States...and *all Treaties made*...shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby....”. These two documents together provide the peace movement with a powerful foundation. The U. N. Charter says in Chapter 1, Article 2, Sections 3 and 4 that all members “shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means” and “shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force” against another state.” These principles are the law of our land that our judges are to follow.

The hope in this foundation is that we, the people have barely begun to explore its peacemaking opportunities. The U. S. Constitution offers us a powerful way to confront our imperial leaders, but we in the peace movement have seldom employed it. The one exception is the anti-nuclear Ploughshares Movement. And they have learned in courts how few judges follow the law of the land. But globally the judges of other nations are recognizing international law, and eventually, with our pressure, our judges will recognize *our Constitution/U.N. Charter*.

CLIMATE COLLAPSE

Our Constitution/U.N. Charter core values will also be a bulwark against the new dangers posed by global warming. James Lovelock presents the worst case scenario in *The Vanishing Face of Gaia*: “Our first imperative is to survive, but soon we face the appalling question of whom we can let aboard the lifeboat? And whom must we reject? There will be no ducking the question for before long there will be a great clamor from climate refugees seeking a safe haven in those few parts where the climate is tolerable and food is available.” The U.S. a lifeboat after Bangladesh is submerged? Arkansas a lifeboat after a level 5 hurricane devastates New Orleans and the Gulf coast? We must prepare our constitutional system and the people for the great social derangements resulting from dislocated populations. Especially we must guard against the tyranny of militarism that is the first response to crises by many. See OMNI's Democracy Forum and the books surveyed—e.g. Naomi Wolf, *Give Me Liberty: A Handbook for American Revolutionaries*. Simon and Schuster, 2008.

DEMOCRACY

A chief book in our Democracy Forum was *Democracy's Edge* by Frances Moore Lappe. She describes movements “that not only seek to restore the long arc of justice but are potentially extending it to democracy's next historical stage—a more inclusive, pervasive, vibrant

democracy." She draws hope from the growth of truthful information gradually enlarging the informed citizenry. People know (she is writing in 2005) that eleven million children in the world's richest nation face hunger and that wages are so low that one in four working families face financial hardship. Part of this new, alert electorate is the growing awareness (not with cynicism but with realism) of the incompetence and greed of many leaders. "The 1980s savings and loan scandal and the 1990s implosion of corporate giants like Enron and Tyco revealed shocking arrogance and ethical blindness." And going to war on worthless and fabricated intelligence, without planning to secure the peace, bringing about the deaths of thousands of our own troops and of perhaps a million Iraqis, "have forced Americans to face up to bad faith at the highest levels."

This knowledge of reality is empowering We, the People. Could we—everyday people using our ability to become informed and to act on our knowledge and moral standards—do better? Well, we must, and we have, eventually producing citizen organizations like OMNI, and the insistence on life-giving-and-sharing values.

Out of this confidence in ourselves that We, the People might create a better world, and guided by our Constitution and treaties, our faith peace traditions, The Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Earth Charter, comes the recognition of life-affirming values: nonviolence, world peace, liberty, justice, rights, love, stewardship. We have lived through a darkening eight years opposed to these values. We now anticipate their rebirth, but if we are to have a *living democracy*, we must be its instrument.

OMNI BOOK FORUM ON DEMOCRACY JULY 2009

(In context of Global Warming Forum Sept. 18, 2009, the next Democracy Forum will certainly discuss book that weigh the onrushing heat, rising sea levels, droughts, refugees, and preservation of the US constitutional democracy.)

DEMOCRACY DISMANTLED

Claire Detels: Johnson, Chalmers. *Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic*. 2006.

Amjad Faur: Jane Mayer, *The Dark Side: The Inside Story of How the War on Terror Turned Into a War on American Ideals*. 2008.

(See the many books on attacks on the Constitution in the Constitution Forum News Release.)

DEMOCRACY REBUILT

Lindsley Smith: Ann Fagan Ginger, *The U.N. Declaration of Human Rights is the Law: A Guide to U.D.H.R. Articles in Treaties Ratified by the U.S.* 2008. (Other books by Ginger: *Challenging U.S. Human Rights Violations Since 9/11*. 2005. *Undoing the Bush-Cheney*

Legacy: A Took Kit for Congress & Activists. 2008.)

Thomas Markham. Susan Rosenthal, *Power and Powerlessness.* 2006.

Dick drew attention to these books:

Frances Moore Lappe, *Democracy's Edge: Choosing to Save Our Country by Bringing Democracy to Life.* 2006. Democracy must be of, BY, and for the People.

Tavis Smiley, *Accountable: Making America As Good As Its Promise.* 2009. A compendium of Pres. Obama's promises.

SUSTAINING CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY

“A just world is possible. Human beings create society, and we can change it.” Rosenthal, *Power and Powerlessness.* “It is the job of politicians to make promises, but it is the job of the people who elect them to make sure they keep them.” Tavis Smiley, *Accountable*

Alterman, Eric. *Why We're Liberals: A Political Handbook for Post-Bush America.* Counterattack on right-wing spin and misinformation.

Boulding, Elise. *Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of History.* Syracuse, 2000.

Brown, Peter, and Geoffrey Garver. *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy.* 2009.

Garey, Diane. *Defending Everybody: A History of the American Civil Liberties Union.* 1998.

Ginger, Ann Fagan, ed. *Challenging U.S. Human Rights Violations Since 9/11.* 2005.

Ginger, Ann. *Undoing the Bush-Cheney Legacy: A Took Kit for Congress & Activists.* 2008.

*Ginger, Ann Fagan. *The U.N. Declaration of Human Rights is the Law: A Guide to U.D.H.R. Articles in Treaties Ratified by the U.S.* 2008. Just in time for the 60th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights! (Lindsay Smith)

Hartmann, Thom. *What Would Jefferson Do? A Return to Democracy.* US has departed from vision of Founding Fathers. Democracy is not an aberration in human history but the oldest, most resilient, and most universal form of government.

Hayden, Tom. *The Port Huron Statement: The Visionary Call of the 1960s Revolution.* Historic document of US radicalism, a generational call for direct participatory democracy.

Korten, David. *Agenda for a New Economy.* 2009.

*Lappe, Frances Moore. *Democracy's Edge: Choosing to Save Our Country by Bringing Democracy to Life.* 2006. (Dick Bennett)

Lardner and Loewentheil, eds. *Thinking Big: Progressive Ideas for a New Era.* 2009.

McChesney, Robert. *The Problem of the Media: U.S. Communication Politics in the 21st Century.* 2004.

Morgan, Robin. *Fighting Words: A Toolkit for Combating the Religious Right.* Ideas and arguments from the Founding Fathers and others.

Polner, Murray and Thomas Woods, Jr., eds. *We Who Dared to Say No to War: American Antiwar Writing from 1812 to Now.* Basic, 2008.

Poundstone, William. *Gaming the Vote: Why Elections Aren't Fair (And What We Can Do About It.).* 2008. On “range” voting.

The Power of Nonviolence: Writings by Advocates of Peace. Beacon, 2002.

*Rosenthal, Susan. *Power and Powerlessness*. Trafford, 2006. This is the most challenging, think out-of-the-box book in this biblio. Its picture of the US is that of a nation divided between "a few who wield immense power and the rest who feel varying degrees of powerlessness.." This imbalance is no accident, but is the direct result of the few grabbing power from the many

MILITARISM INCREASING? Posse Comitatus

The \$500 billion 09-10 Pentagon budget not counting money for the wars, the \$5 trillion Iraq, Afghan, and Pakistan wars, the continued development of nuclear weapons.... and the weakening of Posse Comitatus protection.

Is Posse Comitatus Dead?

By Amy Goodman, Democracy Now!

Posted on October 8, 2008, Printed on October 9, 2008

<http://www.alternet.org/story/102220/>

Amy Goodman: In a barely noticed development last week, the Army stationed an active unit inside the United States. The Infantry Division's 1st Brigade Team is back from Iraq, now training for domestic operations under the control of U.S. Army North, the Army service component of Northern Command. The unit will serve as an on-call federal response for large-scale emergencies and disasters. It's being called the Consequence Management Response Force, CCMRF, or "sea-smurf" for short.

It's the first time an active unit has been given a dedicated assignment to USNORTHCOM, which was itself formed in October 2002 to "provide command and control of Department of Defense homeland defense efforts."

An initial news report in the *Army Times* newspaper last month noted, in addition to emergency response, the force "may be called upon to help with civil unrest and crowd control." The *Army Times* has since appended a clarification, and a September 30th press release from the Northern Command states: "This response force will not be called upon to help with law enforcement, civil disturbance or crowd control."

When *Democracy Now!* spoke to Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Jamie Goodpaster, a public affairs officer for NORTHCOM, she said the force would have weapons stored in containers on site, as well as access to tanks, but the decision to use weapons would be made at a far higher level, perhaps by Secretary of Defense, SECDEF.

I'm joined now by two guests. Army Colonel Michael Boatner is future operations division chief of USNORTHCOM. He joins me on the phone from Colorado Springs. We're also joined from Madison, Wisconsin by journalist and editor of *The Progressive* magazine, Matthew Rothschild. [For the

interviews google Democracy Now--Dick]

COMMENT AND SONG BY DAN DEAN

in 1774, British parliament passed five laws which American colonists called "intolerable acts," including one prohibiting town meetings. these brought about our country's first "regime change". i know i'm fortunate to live in the u.s., but i can't ignore the terrible things for which our government is responsible – slavery, genocide, unilateral invasions of sovereign nations, being the only nation to ever use a weapon of mass destruction... the list goes on. but the u.s. constitution is a revolutionary document. hawkish right-wingers should not be allowed to corner the market on patriotism. peace is patriotic. dissent is patriotic. check out www.aclu.org

intolerable acts

oh say can't you see by the rockets' red glare
the collateral damage - bombs bursting in air
sometimes i don't think everyone saw what i saw
i see our government waging this war without end
they're asking "how did our oil get under their sand?"
well I guess what I'm feeling is shock, because it sure isn't awe

now it's time to reread that u.s. constitution
and reclaim old glory as the symbol of revolution
that it was back when our forefathers
and mothers expressed their dissent
because we the people need the power not the corporations
who could stand to improve their reputations
i hold these truths to be self-evident
these are intolerable acts

oh beautiful and spacious skies
where the smog-stained flag of convenience flies
where profiteers prosper and put on their patriot acts
oh purple mountain majesty with its peak mined away
and its rivers of mercury and leaders of nations
who refuse to listen to the facts

when in the course of human events
It becomes clear our leaders don't have common sense
it's the duty of all true patriot souls to protest
just like back in seventeen seventy six
when the people got tired of old George's tricks
the extent of our love for our country is put to the test

we live in the land of the free, the home of the brave
the land that was built n the backs of the slaves
the land where my fathers dies, land of the pilgrims' pride
land of the natives who suffered our genocide
one nation under god in whom we're told to trust
but if you worship another, we'll bomb you to dust
when millions of people around the world disagree

yet we refuse to rethink our priorities...

it's time to reread that u.s. constitution

and reclaim old glory as the symbol of revolution
that it was back when our forefathers
and mothers expressed their dissent
because we the people need the power not the corporations
who could stand to improve their reputations
i hold these truths to be self-evident
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END OF CONSTITUTION DAY AND WEEK NEWSLETTER #2, SEPTEMBER 17, 2009