



# Doctors for Global Health Reporter

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Doctors for Global Health (DGH) believes there is an intrinsic relationship between art, health, education and human rights. Art has been an integral part of DGH since it began. The volunteers who founded DGH felt a strong link between their work and the inspiration offered by the arts in all its forms, from books to films to music. Art was used in the very first DGH project to help make learning about health fun and interesting through community theater. Below are two personal stories that exemplify how art continues to play an important role in the work of DGH.

## VISIONS FROM WITHIN

By Illille Sawady

Day to day life in Estancia, El Salvador is a tremendous challenge for its residents, as even the essential needs of education, medical attention, nutrition and sanitation are a constant struggle to meet. Generations of marginalization and the atrocities of a 12-year long civil war devastated this already impoverished community.

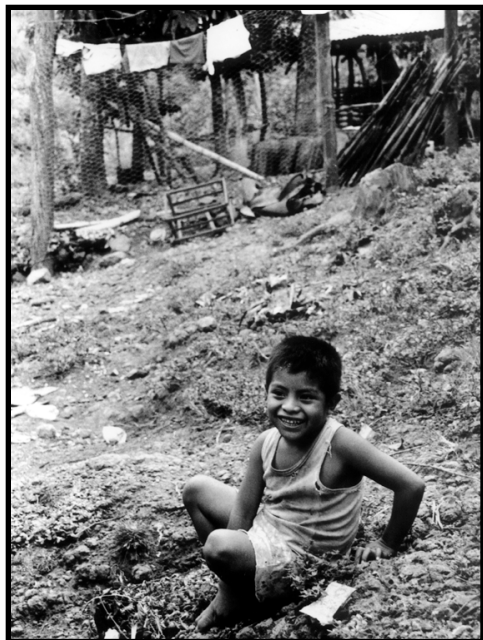
Thirteen years ago in this tough, rural, war-torn environment, a project of accompaniment, *Building Health Where the Peace Is New*, began. Bringing together leaders from the community with volunteers from around the world, this project, initiated by DGH founding president Lanny Smith, has helped bring about extraordinary progress. Together, the community and nonprofit organizations like DGH and *Médecins du Monde* (Physicians of the World-France) have built a medical clinic and early childhood development centers, initiated adult literacy programs, constructed roads and bridges, and recruited volunteers from around the world.

I traveled to Estancia in 2003 to visit my brother Joel, a medical student and long-term DGH volunteer in that community. I requested and received consent from the community and DGH to pursue a photography project there. It was a perfect opportunity to explore my interest in photojournalism. The combination of my multicultural upbringing, my international travels as a child, and a natural attraction to the visual arts initially drew me to this field. I was also influenced by my father, a doctor-turned-photographer, who put a camera in my hands and exposed me at an early age to a private archive of *National Geographic* and *Life* magazines.

Furthermore, while studying psychology at Bard College, I spent a year in India and moved on after graduation to a special education placement in Louisiana with Teach for America. It was during this time that I began to use the camera as a medium for social awareness. I felt a passionate drive to tell the truth about the world I saw. From my first photographs as a teacher in rural Louisiana to my work in El Salvador, I have felt compelled to give a face and a voice to the communities I encounter.

*Visions from Within* is the photographic rendering of my encounter with the people of Estancia and the intricate discover-






Photography from *Visions from Within* by Ilille Sawady. To see more images or to buy prints, please visit [www.ilillesawady.com](http://www.ilillesawady.com).

ies I made there. It is a documentation of the local community and the work of *Asociación Campesina para el Desarrollo Humano* (Peasant Association for Human Development), the nonprofit organization founded a few years ago by the community itself.

*Visions from Within* is a study of people that allowed me to examine, embrace and ultimately capture the raw human emotions of the community that welcomed me. The doors of homes opened along with silent nods and curiosity that matched my own. The laughter of children muted the sounds of the shutter as they became comfortable with me. Dark eyes gazed deeply into the camera with a piercing urgency. It was in these intimate creative moments that I felt a deep sense of responsibility to pursue the journey I began with *Visions from Within*.

Every day I worked on this project brought an unforeseen adventure. While trekking miles with heavy equipment, the shutter clicked in sync with the inspiration that moved my feet through dirt paths and the sweat from my brow dripped onto my viewfinder. My aim was to capture the empowerment I felt from the members of the community as they strive to secure a better life for themselves and generations to follow. While many images illustrate immense poverty, they more importantly speak of the community's strength, potential for change and capacity for joy. It is the vision from within the community that inspired my work.

*Visions From Within* was made possible with generous support from DGH and individual donations. The photographs from this project are being used to raise money and develop resources for Estancia and DGH, and in publicity campaigns throughout the US and El Salvador. You can see more images from *Visions From Within* at [www.ilillesawady.com](http://www.ilillesawady.com). 

## TO SING OF AIDS IN UGANDA

By Judah M. Cohen

On July 10, 2004, I was in an audience of several hundred in a small village in southwest Uganda as sixteen

HIV-positive patients sang, danced and acted out a message of hope in the face of the AIDS epidemic. In a rectangular brick assembly hall with a corrugated steel roof, the Drama Group of the Mbarara branch of TASO (an acronym for "The AIDS Support Organization") gave their presentation in both English and Runyankole (the local language).

The performers, who are TASO clients, sang choral songs, rousing the audience to fight AIDS, to get tested for HIV, and to remember that everyone—including priests, doctors, and school headmasters—is susceptible to the disease. They enacted a thirty-five-minute drama showing both how HIV is transmitted and how people with HIV should be treated. They presented a "folksong" dramatizing the story of a woman ostracized by her family because she had HIV. One member of the group gave a personal testimony on how he acquired HIV and what he was doing to live with it. In between segments, the group's director answered questions about HIV from the audience. Then the group closed by dancing the region's folkdance, leaving the crowd of several hundred on its feet cheering.

A remarkably large portion of the afternoon used music as a means of communication. This is important to consider because the medical world, while receptive to music, has created a literature that treats it overwhelmingly as a form of therapy, or as a way to alleviate pain. Yet such a limited definition of organized sound hardly does the topic justice. As I saw in my work with the TASO Mbarara Drama Group during the summer of 2004, music is itself a form of communication deeply embedded within a community's cultural values. In this case, it plays a valuable role in helping communities negotiate the often contradictory messages they are hearing about AIDS.

A TASO Drama Group presentation is typically about three hours long and takes up the afternoon at the village or secondary school where the group performs. After a brief introduction, the group begins with a series of four to five minute-long choral songs. Most of these songs have direct, simple titles and lyrics (such as "Fight, Fight AIDS" and "Let's Get Together, AIDS Cannot Win"), follow a verse/chorus format, have upbeat tempo, and are almost as often

in English as they are in Runyankole. Members of the Drama Group typically perform these songs in two rows while wearing khaki uniforms and TASO or red ribbon lapel pins. The only instruments they use for the choral songs, if they use instruments at all, are percussive: usually drums and sometimes a small box-shaped shaker.

One of the most powerful examples of this genre that I witnessed was a choral version of Ugandan pop star Philly Lutaaya's 1989 song "Alone." Lutaaya, who died of AIDS in the same year, was one of the first public figures to raise awareness about the disease. "Alone" has since become an anthem for AIDS workers across Uganda. Watching the Drama Group members perform with their hands on their hearts to a hushed audience, it became clear to me that this song (and others in its genre) provided a medium for listeners and performers to connect with a national, mass-mediated style—one that is helping contextualize the epidemic as something that is itself widespread and international.

Later in the afternoon, the Drama Group presents what it calls the "folksong." Performers, typically wearing traditional costumes, line up in a single semicircle behind a set of drummers, and provide sung commentary on a story that individuals act out in front of them. The story the TASO Mbarara Drama Group developed for 2004 provides a good example of a typical plot: a wife and husband are feeling weak and sick, but do not know why. The husband conjectures his malaise must be spiritual payback for stealing and eating a cow. Enter three friends, accomplices in the crime, all scratching furiously to indicate they too have been stricken with disease. The group calls in a "witch doctor," who gives them potions, scores their skin and uses other incantations in an attempt to cure them. But, warns the chorus, while some people rely on this kind of treatment, it does not work. Instead, you should go to your local TASO center or AIDS clinic where you can now be treated with anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs). The folksong ends with all the characters dancing to indicate ARVs coursing through their system, and thanking outside sources for making them available. Throughout, the folksong presents a sense of localness and an intimate knowledge of the region's musical and folk practices.

The final segment of an afternoon presentation is the folkdance, described to me as a way for the group to celebrate and communicate its vitality to the audience. Words and melody, while present, are regarded as less important here than the form of the piece and the drumbeat that controls it. Throughout my time with the group no one tried to translate the lyrics sung behind the folk dance; the words eventually become inaudible anyway. Audiences consistently react vociferously to the dancers' movements and pack in close to the stage in order to indicate their interest. That such activity takes place in a show devoted to HIV/AIDS awareness highlights the

breadth of cultural expression used to frame and deliver the message.

I provide here only a glimpse into the deep and complex relationship music has with AIDS in Ugandan society. Not only is music a crucial factor in disseminating information about HIV/AIDS, but it also helps Ugandans provide information about AIDS research and treatments available in a cultural context. It also represents another reality in understanding the way those infected by the virus tell of the AIDS epidemic in their country. Music in this context is not a "therapy," nor is it a way to alleviate pain. Rather, it serves an important role in negotiating community values that will likely lead people to make crucial choices about their own health. Understanding how music factors into the lives and activities of those whom it surrounds would go far in bringing doctors more intimately into the cultures and lives of the people they so much want to help.

*- Judah went to Uganda with his wife Rebecca Cohen, during her one-month medical elective at the Mbarara University Teaching Hospital in Uganda as a Montefiore Medical Center resident and a DGH volunteer. The TASO Mbarara Drama Group has an audio tape of their songs available—as do several of the other regional TASO Drama Groups. All proceeds fund further Drama Group activities. For more information and contacts for the various chapters, visit [www.tasouganda.org](http://www.tasouganda.org).*



The Mbarara TASO performing group giving a community presentation (from the TASO 2004 calendar).

### DGH Reporter

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DGH is administered by a volunteer **Board of Directors** whose members have volunteered with DGH a minimum of two years and are elected by DGH **Voting Members**. The Board is assisted by an **Advisory Council** composed of over 200 physicians, students, retirees, artists, nurses, business people and others. A diverse group of volunteers provides the vital core of DGH's resources, including this newsletter. DGH has no paid employees. Incorporated in the state of Georgia and registered with the IRS as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit, **DGH welcomes your donation, which is tax deductible.** To donate, please make your check out to *Doctors for Global Health* and send it to the address above. You will receive a letter stating the amount of your gift for tax purposes, and the very good feeling of having helped make a difference.

# A DIFFERENT SPIN ON NOITAZILABOLG: DGH AT HOME AND ABROAD

By Jen Kasper

Doctors for Global Health (DGH) has been accompanying marginalized communities in their struggle for health and other human rights since 1995. During this past decade we have witnessed how privatization of public services leads to even more marginalization and isolation. We have seen globalization exacerbate already weak health and education infrastructures, as well as the lack of economic opportunities in our partner communities.

This does not mean we at DGH are against globalization. We are against a corporate globalization that puts public riches into private pockets. We practice our own form of globalization from below. Rather than liberalizing trade, we are liberalizing cooperatives and microenterprises, which not only offer economic gains, but also dignified, community-centered labor. While corporations lobby to reduce trade barriers, we work to reduce geographic barriers by encouraging world citizenship and volunteerism.

Some import and export things like oil, cars and diamonds. We import and export precious commodities like our overseas partners, who come to the DGH annual General Assembly to share their reality with us.

Some fight to protect their intellectual property. We work to increase the globalization of human knowledge, human creativity and human achievement with a conscious belief that all people are worthy of partaking, rather than being exploited.

At DGH, we take a different view of the world and our role in it. Where some create division, we create unity and solidarity. Where our US government preaches and practices pre-emptive strikes, we take an anti-militaristic, peaceful orientation of engagement. Rather than destruction, we are about construction, of clinics and schools and minds. Eschewing hate, we draw on art and music in our healing.

In this age of globalization of economies

and corporations, we see a need for globalization of human rights and responsibilities. Rather than wearing blinders to the injustice that prevails, we examine with a keen eye the social, economic, and political structures that perpetrate and perpetuate poverty and health disparities. We only go where we are invited, working with respect in partnership toward social justice. We articulate an alternative vision, one centered on equality and the sovereign will of people to be active participants in changing their present situation. We take the long view and are committed to accompanying communities around the world as a countervailing force to corporate globalization.

The preamble to the constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO) states, "Enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition."

Yet most of the implementation of globalization promotes the pursuit of economic gains without regard to health and human rights, which has a profound, dehumanizing effect on people around the world. The globalized industrial market results in nearly \$2 trillion crossing international borders daily. Nearly one-third of that goes to inter-corporate trading between different subsidiaries of the same transnational corporations (TNCs).

A large portion is in the form of foreign direct investment (FDI), which is highly concentrated—80% of FDI goes to 10 developing countries. A significant portion goes into the coffers of TNCs. In fact, of the 100 largest economies, 51 are corporations, not countries. For example, General Motors' budget is \$176 billion, compared to Denmark's \$173 billion; Wal-Mart's budget is \$166 billion, compared to Poland's \$154 billion; and Exxon Mobil's budget is \$163 billion, compared to South Africa's \$133 billion.

Abraham Lincoln's words from 1864 seem particularly prophetic today: "I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country. Corporations have been enthroned and an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed."

The promise that globalization would result in equalization of incomes across countries has not come to fruition. A 1999 United Nations (UN) report, *Globalization with a Human Face*, indicates more than 80 countries now have per capita incomes lower than a decade ago. An analysis of economic growth rates comparing the periods of 1960-1980 and 1980-2000 shows that there was a fall in economic growth across all country income categories, with the poorest group experiencing a decline of 0.5% per year. The UN Conference on Trade and Development says that between 1965 and 1995 the gross domestic product (GDP) of Sub-Saharan Africa fell 50% and the GDP of Central America dropped 30%. The gap between the richest 20% of the population and the poorest 20% has increased from 30 to 1 in 1960, to 78 to 1 in 1994. The top 20% of people living in high income countries control 86% of GDP, 82% of export markets, and 68% of FDI, while the bottom 20% control less than 1% of each. The wealth of the world's richest 225 people is greater than the collective wealth of 2.5 billion people or 47% of the world's population.

And what of the impact on health? In the time it will take you to read this article, \$600,000 in international finance capital

(Continued on page 10)

“ We see a need for globalization of human rights and responsibilities. We articulate an alternative vision, one centered on equality and the sovereign will of people to be active participants in changing their present situation. ”



Health workers march in the streets of San Salvador against the privatization of the healthcare system.

# Top Ten Reasons to Oppose the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)

By Global Exchange

In recent years, representatives from 34 countries have been working to expand the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to Central America, South America and the Caribbean. The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) is another example of the free-market fundamentalism that has created a global race-to-the-bottom that threatens the environment, families' livelihoods, human rights and democracy. Once again, a sweeping "free trade" agreement is in the works that puts commercial interests above all other values.

**1. The FTAA Expands a Proven Disaster.** The FTAA is essentially an expansion of NAFTA. But NAFTA has proven to be a nightmare for working families and the environment. A look at NAFTA's legacy shows why these kinds of "free trade" agreements should be opposed. Working families suffer: In the US, more than 765,000 jobs have disappeared as a result of NAFTA. When these laid off workers find new jobs, they earn 23 percent less on average than at their previous employment. In Mexico, manufacturing wages fell 21 percent from 1995 to 1999, and have only started to recover. The percentage of Mexicans living in poverty has also grown since NAFTA went into effect. The environment suffers: In the *maquiladora* zones along the US-Mexico border, the increased pollution and the improper disposal of chemical wastes have dramatically raised rates of hepatitis and birth defects. NAFTA should be repealed, not expanded.

**2. The Agreement Is Being Written Without Citizen Input.** Despite repeated calls for the open and democratic development of trade policy, the FTAA negotiations have been conducted without citizen input. A process has been set up to solicit citizens' views, but there is no real mechanism to incorporate the public's concerns into the actual negotiations. The public has been given nothing more than a suggestion box. At the same time, however, hundreds of corporate representatives are advising the US negotiators and have advance access to the negotiating texts. While citizens are left in the dark, corporations—like Monsanto, Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, Citigroup, WorldCom, Raytheon and Shell—are writing the rules for the FTAA.

**3. The Agreement Will Undermine Labor Rights and Cause Further Job Loss.** The NAFTA experience demonstrates how basic labor rights and the interests of working families are eroded by "free trade" agreements that lack enforceable labor protections. Corporations move high-paying jobs to countries with lower wages and bust unionization drives with threats to transfer production abroad. According to a Cornell University study, since NAFTA, two-thirds of manufacturing and communications companies faced with union organizing campaigns threatened workers with moving their jobs abroad. This "race-to-the-bottom" will accelerate under the FTAA as corporations pit exploited workers in Mexico against

even more desperate workers in countries such as Haiti and Guatemala. Already, Mexico is losing *maquiladora* jobs to countries with cheaper wages. In the last two years, some 280,000 jobs have vanished with the closure of more than 350 *maquiladoras*.

**4. The Agreement Will Exacerbate Environmental Destruction.** The export-driven growth model promoted by "free trade" agreements and the policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have destroyed ecosystems around the world. Under this unsustainable model, many countries in the Global South cut down their forests, overfish their waters and exploit

other natural resources to pay off foreign debts. Since NAFTA, 15 US wood product companies have set up operations in Mexico, and logging there has increased dramatically. In the Mexican state of Guerrero, 40 percent of the forests have been lost in the last eight years, and massive clear cutting has led to soil erosion and habitat destruction.

**5. The Agreements Will Hurt Family Farmers.** NAFTA has been a disaster for small farmers in the US and Mexico. By favoring the interests of agribusiness corporations over the needs of family farmers, NAFTA's model of export-oriented agriculture has slashed farmers' income. Between 1995 and 2000, the prices US farmers receive for corn declined 33 percent, 42 percent for wheat, and 34 percent for soybeans. No wonder that since NAFTA went into effect 33,000 small farmers in the US have gone out of business—more than six times the pre-NAFTA rate. In Mexico, the price farmers receive for corn has plummeted 45 percent in three years as agribusiness giants dump their subsidized corn there. At least half a million farmers have left their land. The FTAA threatens to make this crisis worse by encouraging even more overproduction.

**6. The Agreement Will Lead to Privatization of Essential Services.** The FTAA is expected to force countries to privatize services such as education, health care, energy and water. Such privatization would especially harm working class communities and communities of color. In some countries, these privatizations are already occurring, and those least able to pay for vital services are the ones who suffer the most. When the Bolivian city of Cochabamba privatized its water utility, water rates increased 200 percent. In the ensuing protests, police shot and killed a 17-year-old student.

“ The FTAA is essentially an expansion of NAFTA. In the US, more than 765,000 jobs have disappeared as a result of NAFTA. When these laid off workers find new jobs, they earn 23 percent less on average than at their previous employment. In Mexico, manufacturing wages fell 21 percent from 1995 to 1999, and have only started to recover. ”

## A Performer's Prayer

By Holly Near

Why am I up here  
In front of all these people?  
It is a wild notion  
To perform in front of people

Ah yes, I remember  
I am not here for me  
I am not here to promote my ego  
I am here to serve the Great Spirit  
To be a voice for those afraid to speak  
To be movement for those who are stuck  
I am here to reveal a mystery  
To learn something new about myself

I give my talent to the wind  
I give my weakness to the rocks  
I give my fear to the stars  
I give my confidence to the moon  
I give it all away

So if I am great, it is not my greatness  
It is the wind that will celebrate  
And if I am not great, it is not my failure  
It is up to the rock to carry the pain and  
disappointment

I am a channel here to do the work  
To make the discoveries  
To shout the joy  
To call my mistakes "teacher"

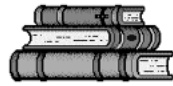
I am here to give it away  
To the people who come to watch and  
listen and feel  
So that we will remember more than the  
time of day

Why am I up here  
In front of all these people?  
So that the Great Spirit may paint a picture  
on my face

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Holly's music and concert schedule available  
at [www.hollynear.com](http://www.hollynear.com)

# Human Rights

At DGH we believe there is an intrinsic relationship between art, health, education and Human Rights. Art, in its various forms, inspires our daily work. Every other issue we will share some of the books, movies and music that have touched us. We invite you to recommend some works that have moved and enlightened you. Send your suggestions with a brief description to Monica Sanchez at [newsletter@dghonline.org](mailto:newsletter@dghonline.org).



## In Print

**CONFESSIONS OF AN ECONOMIC HIT MAN**, by John Perkins, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2004, Nonfiction, ISBN: 1-5767-5301-8. For years Perkins worked for an international consulting firm. His job was to convince less developed countries to accept multibillion-dollar loans for infrastructure projects from the World Bank and IMF, and see to it that most of this money ended up at Halliburton, Bechtel, Brown, Root, and other US companies. This book is a blistering attack on a little-known phenomenon that has had dire consequences on both the victimized countries and the US, which takes on new and terrifying dimensions in an era of globalization.

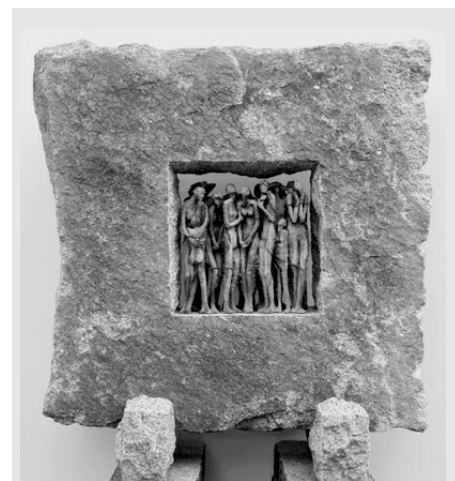
**THE DEATH OF BEN LINDER: THE STORY OF A NORTH AMERICAN IN SANDINISTA NICARAGUA**, by Joan Kruckewitt, Seven Stories Press, 1999, ISBN: 1-8883-6396-7. Ben Linder, a young American engineer fired by ideals of social justice, arrived in Nicaragua in 1983, where he worked to build a hydroelectric dam that would bring electrical power to the remote northern highlands. Linder was murdered in 1987 by the Contras, almost certainly with the foreknowledge and perhaps even tacit approval of US intelligence officials. Journalist Kruckewitt spent years gaining access to classified CIA documents, tracing sources and conducting interviews in Nicaragua to provide this definitive account of Linder's life and murder.

**NORTH KOREA/SOUTH KOREA: U.S. POLITICS & THE KOREAN PENINSULA**, by John Feffer, Seven Stories Press, 2003, ISBN: 1-5832-2603-6. Hailed as "the most

balanced account of the North Korean 'threat'" by scholar Chalmers Johnson, this short, accessible book explores the history and political complexities of Korea.

**PRESS BOX RED: THE STORY OF LESTER RODNEY, THE COMMUNIST WHO HELPED BREAK THE COLOR LINE IN AMERICAN SPORTS**, by Irwin Silber, Temple University Press, 2003, ISBN: 1-5663-9974-2. Long before Branch Rickey signed Jackie Robinson to a Brooklyn Dodger contract in 1945, Lester Rodney, the newly hired and first sports editor of the *Communist Daily Worker*, launched an 11-year campaign that proved decisive in eventually breaking baseball's color line. But in the hostile anti-Communist climate of those years and for many years after, Rodney's story remained largely unknown.

**SICKNESS AND WEALTH: THE CORPORATE ASSAULT ON GLOBAL HEALTH**, Edited by Meredith Fort, Mary Anne Mercer and Oscar Gish, South End Press, 2004, ISBN: 0-89608-716-6. In this path-



ABOVE: VICTIMS, by Rowan Gillespie, Bronze & Granite, 2004. RIGHT: IMMIGRANTS, by John Behan, Bronze, 2003.

# In the Arts

breaking collection, international activists and scholars reveal how plans implemented by the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and other first world interests drastically limit access to medical care and essentially sentence millions to disease and premature death. Edited by affiliates of Health Alliance International, a nonprofit organization, this book provides a historical context for understanding the complex inter-relationship between health, politics and capitalist globalization.

**WHITE-WASHING RACE: THE MYTH OF A COLOR-BLIND SOCIETY**, By Michael K. Brown, Martin Carnoy, Elliott Currie, Troy Duster, David B. Oppenheimer, Marjorie M. Shultz, and David Wellman. University of California Press, 2003, ISBN: 0-520-24475-3. The seven authors of this volume took a decidedly different approach to collaboration. Rather than contribute separate essays, they and their co-authors worked closely together. Over the course of two years they discussed and disagreed about racial issues, augmenting their work with research on law, sociology and history. Theirs is an

effort to dispel the notion, now widely accepted by the American public, that racial inequalities are behind us and that an individual's behavior alone determines success in the areas of employment, income and political representation. The result is a text that is informed by the authors' commitment to melding their differing viewpoints into ideas that transcend simplicity and go beyond the trite and not so true.



## On Film

**AMANDLAL! A REVOLUTION IN FOUR-PART HARMONY**, Directed by Lee Hirsch, Documentary, 2002. Filmmaker Hirsch chronicles the role of music as a means of protest that galvanized black South Africans for more than 40 years and the role it played in the battle against apartheid.

**A CLOSER WALK**, Directed by Robert Bilheimer, Documentary, 2003. This film explores the intricate relationship between health, dignity and human rights, and shows how the harsh realities of AIDS in the world are an expression of the way the world is.

**THE CORPORATION: THE PATHOLOGICAL PURSUIT OF PROFIT AND POWER**, Directed by Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott, Documentary, 2004. This very entertaining film examines the legal/social/economic rise of corporations and their current impact on everything from health to the environment.

Taking its legal status as a "person" to its logical conclusion, the film puts the corporation on the psychiatrist's couch to ask "What kind of person is it?"

**CORRECTIONS**, Directed by Ashley Hunt, Documentary, 2001. This film looks at the US crisis of mass imprisonment through the issue of profit-making and prison privatization. It explores how the

histories of racial and economic inequality in the US are emerging today from the walls of its prisons, and how this crisis has created an entire industry, which Wall Street has called a "growth industry."

**JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDE**, Directed by Jonathan Stack and Jon Osman, Documentary, 2002. An intense and pointed film that explores the high incidence of police brutality in New York City in the 1990s under Mayor Giuliani. The film centers on the deaths of two teenage Puerto Rican boys who were shot and killed by police officers during an incident in the Bronx. The police report called it "justifiable homicide," but independent investigations by pathologists, the Civil Complaint Review Board and an eye witness reveal that the unarmed boys were shot multiple times in the back as they were lying face-down on the floor.

**STEALING THE FIRE**, Directed by John S. Friedman and Eric Nadler, Documentary, 2002. Investigating how Iraq came to possess highly-classified atomic secrets, the filmmakers chart the little-known, disturbing history of international nuclear proliferation. Karl-Heinz Schaab, the Bavarian engineer who sold one of mankind's most dangerous secrets to Saddam Hussein, was only the most recent player in a chain reaction of events dating back to the Nazi war machine. Also playing important roles were competing world superpowers, opportunistic physicists and some prominent industrial corporations.



## On Tape

**THE PEACE JUKEBOX** offers hours of anti-war music for free at [www.peace-not-war.org](http://www.peace-not-war.org). Songs written during the Bush presidency can be heard as high-quality MP3s, with lyrics, on this ad-free music site, which boasts, "This is the most prolific period of protest songwriting in history, and home-studio technology makes it possible for the world to hear these radical songs." *Not War* CDs are being sold by local peace groups to raise funds for their campaigns, and the Jukebox is an inspiring resource for everyone involved in the new global peace movement.



"In the time of shaking" is an exciting exhibition of work of over 100 of Ireland's leading artists in support of human rights and Amnesty International. These and other works can be viewed on the web site and purchased at [www.artforamnesty.org/shaking](http://www.artforamnesty.org/shaking).

# LIBERATION MEDICINE WOOD: WHY NOT?

By Lanny Smith

I would like to take this opportunity to delve into the Liberation Medicine Movement as a foundation—a potentially renewable resource—to fuel the social justice struggle of the new millennium. I will share some history and some impetus to ask the question: Why Not?

As you have probably heard many times (since even within the last four years we have given more than 100 workshops and presentations on the subject), Liberation Medicine is “The conscious, conscientious use of health to promote human dignity and social justice.”

Know anything about global ecology and the concept of mutualism? Mutualism is defined as the “Interactions between individuals of different species that benefit both partners.” There are optional and obligatory forms of mutualism, and they create the ecological integrity of the world around us.

Like the hummingbird that pollinates flowers while drinking their nectar. Or the mycorrhizae, a fungi that lives off a flower’s roots, while helping the plant get more nutrients and water. Then there is the interaction between the badger and the honeyguide bird, a woodpecker-related bird that leads the badger (and people too, actually) to beehives so it can share in the sweet spoils.

I myself am very ignorant about global ecology, but I have been trying to find new ways to illustrate that interdependence that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others teach is crucial to our survival: “As long as there is poverty in the world I can never be rich, even

if I have a billion dollars. As long as diseases are rampant and millions of people in the world cannot expect to live more than twenty-eight or thirty years, I can never be totally healthy even if I just got a good check-up at Mayo Clinic. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. That is the way our world is made. No individual or nation can stand out boasting of being independent. We are interdependent.” (*The Words of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, p. 22.)

We are six billion humans and more, around the world. How many of us have the opportunity to be what we ought to be? What binds us together? The air, for one thing. Tropical rain forests seem so far away from Fernbank Forest, home of the last remaining virgin deciduous biosphere in the state of Georgia (where DGH is incorporated). Many of us have worked in El Salvador, which is the second most deforested country in the Americas. Between 1990 and 2000, El Salvador lost 4.6% of its remaining stock of forest. Haiti, already the most deforested, lost 5.7%.

At the same time, the average temperature of the earth’s surface has risen by 0.6 degrees Celsius since the late 1800s and is expected to increase by another 1.4 to 5.8 degrees by the year 2100. Even if the minimum predicted increase takes place, it will be larger than any century-long trend in the last 10,000 years.

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), “The principal reason for the mounting thermometer is a century and a half of industrialization: the burning of ever-greater quantities of oil, gasoline, and coal, the cutting of forests, and certain farming methods.” To combat this, the UNFCCC created the Kyoto Protocol, which has received 189 instruments of ratification. Has the United States signed? No.

Actually, let’s explore the leadership potential of the US. Have we signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on November 20, 1989? Only the US and Somalia have not signed it. What about the UN Convention on the Rights of Women (CEDAW)? No. How about the treaty banning land mines? No. What about the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment? That one we signed, years ago, with many “reservations,” such as “(b) That the United States understands that the definition of torture in article 1 is intended to apply only to acts directed against persons in the offender’s custody or physical control.”

Forty years ago Dr. King said: “The greatest irony and tragedy of all is that our nation, which initiated so much of the revolutionary spirit of the modern world, is now cast in the mold of being an arch antirevolutionary. We are engaged in a war that seeks to turn the clock of history back and perpetuate white colonialism.” (*The Words of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, p. 87.)

Echoes haunt us: the poetry of napalm and depleted uranium; the logic of Agent Orange in Vietnam repeated now with Plan Colombia, as vast tracts of rain forest are cleared of people to make way for Monsanto monoculture (only their genetically modified seeds withstand their manufactured defoliant) and petroleum exploitation.

Remember that at the School of the Americas (since renamed so as not to transliterate so easily with “School of Assassins”), manuals on the use of torture were used for training Latin American officers. I remember in 1996 when a US General stated publicly that the use of these manuals was “unfortunate” and that such practices would never be done by the US Armed Forces again. No wonder the US is currently dead set against an international court, as we explore the precedents for Abu Ghraib.

Actually, now that I am onto a bit of history, I would like to lead us in an exercise in humility. (I do not mean this to in any way suggest that I do not love the people of the US as much as I love any people in this world.)

Where did the first airplane bombardment of a civilian population take

“That is the way our world is made. No individual or nation can stand out boasting of being independent. We are interdependent.”



Lanny Smith (far left) at a DGH-sponsored Liberation Medicine workshop at the American Public Health Association Annual Conference in Chicago.



place? Ocotol, in northern Nicaragua, ten years prior to the Franco-invited Nazi bombing of Guernica. The reason? A Nicaraguan guerilla leader, Augusto Cesar Sandino, was winning against the US Marines. Sandino wanted autonomy for his people and said “free country or death” (was that not what our very own Patrick Henry called for?).

He was considered such a problem that the US sent Henry L. Stimson, then US appointed Governor of the Philippines and thus well-practiced in the art of repression, to use the marines to keep a puppet Nicaraguan government in power. Stimson later wrote, in a book entitled *Nicaragua*, that Spain had made an error in not killing all the native peoples of Nicaragua because they were “barbarians.” (This last from the book *Mas Alla del Homo Sapiens*, or *Beyond the Homo Sapiens*, by Mariú Suarez, which I highly recommend as an extraordinary and unique history encompassing the human struggle for liberation and the human creation of art.)

There was also General Leonard Wood, who had extraordinary influence on both Cuba and Philippines in the name of the US. Wood was a Harvard Medical School graduate, who interned (as I did) at Boston City Hospital in 1884. Personal physician to Presidents Cleveland and McKinley, he was a Rough Rider with Roosevelt and stayed in Cuba as Military Governor from 1899 to 1902. He then went to the Philippines, where he “was in charge of several bloody campaigns against Filipino troops, which was to be the beginning of his unpopularity there. He was noted for his harsh, unpopular policies.” (*Wikipedia, Columbia Encyclopedia Online*.) He was later appointed Army Chief of Staff by President Taft and after retiring from the army in 1921 served as Governor General of the Philippines from 1921-1927. Which makes me also humbly recall that William Walker was also a physician. From Tennessee, Walker managed to gain control of Nicaragua in 1888 with Vanderbilt money and immediately declared the reinstatement of slavery. His short-lived government was nevertheless recognized as legitimate by the US government.

Now I do not want you to think that the US people are universally seen as malicious and self-serving around the world. You must know that in Nicaragua, as in El Salvador, and in fact in most other places I have had the chance to ask, the people have a keen appreciation that the government acts differently than most of its people would wish.

I want to give one positive example of a US-born person in the Philippines—William Henry Scott. Dr. Scott was an anthropologist and teacher who lived in Sagada, Bontoc Province, Cordillera Region, from 1954 to his death in 1993, and who was very active in the struggle against the dictator Marcos. Marcos “detained” him for deportation in 1971, but was forced by a groundswell of public protest to set him free. After his release he wrote 15 more books on Philippine history and ethnography. As one Filipino historian wrote of Scott: “Despite his nationality, William Henry Scott belongs more to the Filipino than to the foreign group. He had been assiduous in unraveling many strands of our past. Moreover, he has done so not from the vantage point of Spanish colonialism or American imperialism but from that of the Filipino’s struggle for emancipation.” (*Scotty, Dee and Emmett: Their Fight Against Marcos Repression*, by Frank Cimatú, Baguio City.)

Now, it was not so long ago—1964 in fact—that Che Guevara could write this about the US: “We express our solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico... Puerto Rican soldiers have been used as cannon fodder in imperialist wars.” (*Che Guevara Reader*, p. 285.)

“Those who kill their own children and discriminate daily against them because of the color of their skin; those who let the murderers of Blacks remain free, protecting them, and furthermore punishing the Black population because they demand their legitimate rights as free

men—how can those who do this consider themselves guardians of freedom?” (“At the United Nations, December 11th, 1994,” *Che Guevara Reader*, p. 297-8.)

But, that has all changed 40 years later, correct? Except, of course, for the racial difference in lifespan, in medical coverage, in AIDS infections and—especially—in incarceration of Black men. And, of course, that bit about the cannon fodder is not fair. Why, look at the No Child Left Behind Act, pushed through in 2002. Actually, if you look deeply into that act, you could call it the “no child left unrecruited” act. Section 9528, buried deep within the law’s 670 pages, grants the Pentagon access to directories of students’ names, addresses and telephone numbers so that they may be recruited for military service. I was informed of this by my patients in the South Bronx, for whom this little known clause is a constant source of anxiety and anger. The only way to prevent the school from giving your adolescent’s personal information to the military for recruitment purposes (even for children under 18) is for the parents to write a personal letter to the administration of the school.

This seems an appropriate moment for a reminder that it is women in so many places around the world who must gather water and firewood, part of their “double-oppression” of poverty and unequal decision-making status, as noted by Jenny Hammond in a short essay on “Women in Ethiopia: The Struggle for Liberation and Development.”

And yet, what happens when the whole population is displaced, as in forcible movement from the site of a dam? Arundhati Roy writes about the fate of a displaced community in an essay called “The Greater Common Good,” within the book *The Cost of Living*: “Instead of a forest from which they gathered everything they needed—food, fuel, fodder, rope, gum, tobacco, tooth powder, medicinal herbs, housing materials—they earn between ten and twenty rupees a day with which to feed and keep their families...In their old villages, they had no money, but they were insured. They had the forests to turn to. The

(Continued on page 11)

## A DIFFERENT SPIN

(Continued from page 4)

will fly around the world; 1,200 children will die from preventable diseases; 200 people will die from tuberculosis and 300 from AIDS; and 600 will be infected with HIV. In the current creed—and greed—of globalization, the demands of profitability disregard the demands of social responsibility.

So what are some of the most damaging effects of globalization, a.k.a. neoliberal economics? Privatization, cuts in government social spending, imposition of user fees on social services, promotion of export over domestic production, higher interest rates, and currency devaluation. All have negative repercussions on the health of a country and ultimately those made poor by its policies.

An article entitled, “Ranking the Rich,” by *Foreign Policy Magazine* and the Center for Global Development reports: “The World Bank estimates that trade barriers in developed economies cost poor countries more than \$100 billion annually, roughly twice what rich countries give in aid. And among the most protected industries are agriculture, textiles, and apparel—not coincidentally the precise areas where poor countries are most competitive, and where they could create the most jobs, absent protectionism.”

Disparities in distribution of economic opportunities abound. The large subsidies provided to US farmers by their government, for example, create an uneven playing field for the predominantly agricultural communities in the south. Least developed countries made up only 0.4% of world trade in 1997, a decrease of 50% since 1980. Sub-Saharan Africa received only 2% of all net long-term private capital flows in 1997.

It makes one wonder, is corporate globalization creating a global apartheid?

Adding to the problem is the promotion of globalization by the corporate-leaning trio of the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). These institutions would have us believe that structural adjustment programs and loans to highly-indebted poor countries are producing prosperity for all.

Yet years of experience have demonstrated the opposite effect. From 1990-1997 the amount of money poor, southern countries paid in interest and repayment of foreign debt to wealthy, northern countries was more than they received in new loans, a total transfer of \$77 billion.

Anne Pettifor, Senior research associate for Jubilee states, “Orthodox textbooks teach us that with financial liberalization, capital should flow from where it is plentiful to where it is scarce. Tragically, the reverse is happening today. This is a form of global theft of the world’s poor—and helps explain rising tensions in the world.” One only has to review the *2004 World Bank Finance Development Report* to appreciate the magnitude of the problem.

Total external debt of developing countries is estimated at \$2.4 trillion. In addition, the report shows how much of a country’s per capita income goes to paying interest on its foreign debt: El Salvador 43%, Mexico 24%, Nicaragua 174%, Uganda 72%, Guatemala 22%. To put this in perspective, the UN estimates \$13.5 billion is needed each year to curb the AIDS epidemic in Africa through education, prevention and medical care. That is the same amount these same African countries pay in interest every year on their foreign debts.

The WB’s *2000-2001 World Development Report* states that to combat poverty the capabilities of the poor must be enhanced, particularly through improved provision of education and health. The empowerment of the poor must be facilitated by making institutions more responsive and accountable to the poor. And governments need to better understand and reduce the vulnerability of the poor to ill health. It seems fair to ask how this is to be achieved at the same time that the WB and IMF impose structural adjustment programs that demand governments of developing countries “save money” by cutting back on and privatizing the very services—namely health, education and other social programs—that would help alleviate poverty.


Add to this the dubious record on foreign aid and the situation of the poor becomes clearer. First, in many cases international aid is tied to purchasing the donor’s goods and services, thus it does nothing to support or improve the local economy. For example, the US will give an agricultural loan to Colombia that stipulates that most of the money must be used to buy tractors from a US company. In addition, the amount of foreign aid has fallen. Since 1965, the percentage of industrialized countries’ GNP that goes to international aid has plummeted from 0.48% to 0.23% (the UN has asked that countries give 0.7% of their GDP in aid). The US gives only 0.1% of its GNP to assisting other countries, only a fraction of which is earmarked for health, education, water and sanitation—the problems that plague the communities where DGH works.

The Commitment to Development Index, created by the Center for Global Development and *Foreign Policy Magazine*, looks beyond mere foreign aid, encompassing trade, environment, investment, migration and peacekeeping policies. According to this index, the US ranked 20 out of 21 due to its poor environmental policies and lack of contributions to peacekeeping.

The *20/20 Initiative*, a joint document by several UN agencies, the WHO and the WB, calls for both developed and developing countries to allocate 20% of their budgets (in the case of developed countries, it is their official development assistance budget) to basic social services. The total cost of this endeavor, \$200 billion, represents less than 1% of total global output. A lofty ideal that is on the right track of focusing on health and human rights, but it has yet to be operationalized.

Using our human rights “glasses” (vs. blinders), the answers to why the number of poor in the world continues to grow in the midst of the growing globalized economy are crystal clear.

At DGH we believe that, as the World Social Forum theme states, “*Another World is Possible.*” We also fervently agree with Dorothy Day: “People say, ‘what is the sense of our small effort?’ They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time. A pebble cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions. Each one of our thoughts, words, and deeds is like that. No one has the right to sit down and feel hopeless. There is so much work to do!”

Implementation of a solution is not as easy as naming the problem, but the commonality of our humanity demands that we act. DGH members are committed to this work and we invite you to join us in the struggle to make this world a place of dignity, hope and joy for all. 

**7. The Agreement Will Jeopardize Consumer and Environmental Protections.** NAFTA includes unprecedented ways for corporations to attack our laws through so-called “investor-to-state” lawsuits. Such suits, established by NAFTA’s Chapter 11, allow corporations to sue governments for compensation if they feel that any government action, including the enforcement of public health and safety laws, cuts into their profits. Already, Chapter 11 lawsuits have been used to repeal a Canadian law banning a chemical linked to nervous system damage, and to challenge California’s phaseout of a gas additive, MTBE, that is poisoning the state’s ground water. Negotiators want to include these antidemocratic lawsuits in the FTAA.

**8. The Agreement Will Spread the Use of GMOs.** US trade negotiators are trying to use the FTAA to force other countries to accept the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). But environmental groups warn that these technologies haven’t been adequately tested, and food security experts say GMOs could increase hunger in poor nations. Farmers have traditionally saved their seeds from year to year, but as multinational corporations patent GM seeds these farmers will be forced to pay for seeds, pushing them further into dependency.

**9. The Agreement Will Increase Poverty and Inequality.** “Free trade” is not working for the majority of the world. During the most recent period of rapid growth in global trade and investment—1960 to 1998—inequality worsened internationally and within countries. Without debt cancellation and rules to curtail rampant capital speculation, countries in the Global South will remain dominated by the Global North, inequality will increase, and the hope of achieving sustainable development will be farther off.

**10. There Are Proven Alternatives.** Policy makers and pundits often try to convince us that corporate globalization is inevitable. In fact, the current economic processes known as “globalization” have been defined and driven by a very small number of corporations. Now people around the world are creating an alternative grassroots globalization. Citizens’ groups from across the Western Hemisphere have written an “Alternative Agreement for the Americas” that offers a picture of what socially responsible and environmentally sustainable trade would look like. You can find the document on the Global Exchange web site.

—To learn more about the FTAA and what you can do to stop it, visit [www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org) or e-mail [ftaa@globalexchange.org](mailto:ftaa@globalexchange.org).

## LIBERATION MEDICINE WOOD

(Continued from page 9)

river to fish in. Their livestock was their fixed deposit. Without all this, they’re a heartbeat away from destitution.” She writes of a man in a resettlement site: “He was making a list of the fruit he used to pick in the forest. He counted forty-eight kinds. He told me that he didn’t think that he or his children would ever be able to afford to eat any fruit again. Not unless he stole it.”

Let me point out that the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), apparently working in coordination with a California-based private group and the government of El Salvador, have threatened to build a dam that would inundate the communities DGH has been accompanying for nearly a decade—the people of Estancia, Morazán.

Among the places where Paul Farmer works is a community in Haiti whose inhabitants found their misery when displaced by a dam. In *Pathologies of Power*, Farmer ponders: “These are indeed dangerous times. In the name of ‘cost-effectiveness,’ we cut back health benefits to the poor, who are more likely to be sick than the non-poor. We miss our chance to heal... Is this the best we can do? Attempting to provide a ‘basic minimum package’ for the poor is something that should be done apologetically, not proudly... The ‘other criteria’ in question are equity criteria, but the language of social justice is increasingly absent from public health parlance... If we lived in a utopia, simply practicing medicine would be enough. But, we live in a dystopia. Increasingly, in this “new environment,” inequalities of access and outcome characterize medicine. These inequalities could be the focus of our collective action as morally engaged members of the healing professions, broadly conceived. Throughout human history, the sick have relied on healers of one stripe or another. Throughout human history, there have been talented healers and there have been charlatans. But never before has medicine tapped the full promise of science and technology. These were twentieth-century developments, and we are now faced with a twenty-first-century decision: where will the healers stand in the struggle for health care as a human right?”

To that question, Dr. King had a corollary: “Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.” (*The Words of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, p. 51.)

Here is a closing thought from “The People’s Remedy: Health Care in El Salvador’s War of

Liberation,” by Francisco Metz, published in the *Monthly Review*: “Once in El Salvador, reality dealt me a startling blow. Bringing about revolutionary change was more difficult and so much slower than I had imagined... I had to learn that a revolution in the making consists of small and very relative successes, of errors and partial failures as well. Nothing was gained effortlessly and there were no magic problem-solving formulas. Instead, the principal tools were constant, painful arduous work, together with a discipline through which individuals exert themselves for the collective good. I came to understand that the revolution, the real revolution, is made up of lots of little revolutions.”

As I finish here I want to point out that all of the above is Liberation Medicine Wood—the fuel and the foundation for making a difference in the health of people. I have given examples and warnings, but mostly it has all been a preparation for the imperative question: Why not? A question we in DGH can answer with hope because we have a group in which we can share our talents and abilities, where every person has a voice, and where we can exercise our passion for mutualism. 🌿

## DGH Announcements

► **DGH 2005 General Assembly.** Save the Date! The DGH General Assembly will be held at Columbia University in New York City, from August 5–7. The theme, “Ten Years of Accompaniment,” celebrates DGH’s first decade of service: 1995–2005.

► **People’s Health Assembly II.** The Second People’s Health Assembly (PHA II) will be held July 18–23, 2005, in Cuenca, Ecuador. Join us to: promote and extend the People’s Health Movement (PHM) as a space that allows for the revival of the spirit of “Health for All”; strengthen global action for the right to health as a fundamental human right; enlarge the debate and the resistance to all mechanisms that violate the right to health of the people (such as neoliberal reforms, globalization or militarization); and share knowledge and practices of alternative models for the promotion and provision of community health. PHA II will be hosted by the International People’s Health Council, a

worldwide coalition of people’s health initiatives and socially progressive groups and movements committed to working for the health and rights of disadvantaged people - and ultimately of all people. IPHC is a founding member of the People’s Health Movement and serves on the International Steering Committee of PHM. For more information about PHA II visit [www.iphcglobal.org](http://www.iphcglobal.org).

► **Social Medicine Portal.** Developed by Matt Anderson, Lanny Smith and other faculty of the Department of Family and Social Medicine of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, the Portal is an online resource ([www.socialmedicine.org](http://www.socialmedicine.org)) that contains over a hundred links to web sites, documents and presentations devoted to Social Medicine. As the creators explain, “Our goal in creating this site is to link together the diverse international community of people working in social medicine and health activism.”

► **Liberation Psychology.** The Seventh International Congress of Social Psychology of Liberation will be held at the University of

Costa Rica from November 16–19, 2005, with the theme: “Another World is Possible, Another World is Necessary: Challenges for Liberation Psychology.” For more information, e-mail [idoables@cariari.ucr.ac.cr](mailto:idoables@cariari.ucr.ac.cr).

► **Global Health Watch.** This new bi-annual report will provide an alternative to the World Health Report. The Global Health Watch report will provide an alternative perspective on health that places equity, human and social rights, the politics and economics of development, and the centrality of health systems development at the forefront of international health debates. In addition, the report will act as a monitor of the performance of global health institutions, development and multilateral agencies, multinational corporations and nations. The report has been initiated by the Peoples Health Movement, Medact and the Global Equity Gauge Alliance and will be launched at the World Health Assembly in May 2005 and at the PHA II in July 2005. For more information, e-mail [ghw@medact.org](mailto:ghw@medact.org).



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**A Different Spin on noitazilabolG ... 4**

**Reasons to Oppose the FTAA ... 5**

**Human Rights in the Arts ... 6**

**Liberation Medicine Wood ... 8**