

DEMOCRATIC THERAPY
When the Public Good is Almost Impossible—Politically

Dr. Mario D'Angeli
Professor Emeritus
San Francisco State University

33rd International Congress of Schools of Social Work
Santiago, Chile
August 28 – September 1, 2006

Democratic Therapy (DT) is an approach to psychosocial change activity (individuals, couples, families, relationships) with a counterpart in macro social-political change activity. Both are philosophically and prescriptively influenced by the social goals and environment of democracy.

DT views most psychosocial problems as caused or influenced by failure to implement democracy.* That is, failure to socialize children and youth for democratic roles; failure to support democratic relationships at micro, mezzo, and macro levels; failure to expose fraudulent democracy; and failure to support continuation and strengthening of democracy. Cooperation between people that is based on mutuality, freedom of speech, equal opportunity, rationality, individuality, and fairness is the heart of democracy. Domination (and coercion) is its nadir.

Democracy is popularly defined as “representative government with elections,” and the definition usually stops there. It is important to realize that there is a lot more to this matter. Elections can be rigged and “representatives” can be manipulated by private rewards, and voters can be swayed by fraud and disinformation. Furthermore, democracy must in large part prevail in micro and mezzo relationships for it to become and remain established at the macro or country level.

What is democracy at these smaller levels? Friendships and families in which there is mutual care and consideration, cooperation (in accordance with level of maturity), openness and full discussion, and participation in problem solving and decision making, resulting in fair sharing in the rewards of the cooperation, are the underlying experiences that produce amity and emotional growth. These are also training opportunities for the mezzo level of relationship in organizations and institutions of society; e.g., the schools, workplaces, and civil society.

Those who have experienced functional micro relationships are more easily able to be functional participants in their schools, workshops, and associations. They are most likely to provide cooperative efforts toward rationality, efficiency, and effectiveness. And, they can also provide, when necessary, the assertiveness that can modify the behavior of others that would otherwise lead to dysfunctional, wasteful (even disastrous) results.

This interaction at mezzo levels, which can include active participation in labor unions, trade associations, the media, and political groups, is important for the current psychosocial health and morale of the population and in promoting widespread optimism for the future of the country. This mezzo level vibrancy is essential for representative government to be truly representative and for elections to retain validity.

Even business enterprise which is privately owned and therefore tends toward authoritative rule by ownership, recognizes that within the confines of their business model, democratic participation by employees produces better problem solving and greater efficiency, with effective “bottom-line” results. This recognition has spurred the utilization of organizational development, management consulting, conflict resolution, and risk management intervention. Consequently, universities have developed programs in organizational dynamics to further research and increase expertise in these areas of study. They too can be functional venues for democracy.

What a wonderful world it would be if all our respective countries functioned along these lines, fostering and deepening democracy at all levels of relationship. However, as we know, that is often not the case. There are varying degrees of inequality in all our countries. In all countries there are forces determined to

* Although biologically-based conditions are exceptions, democracy can make a real difference in severity of symptoms and opportunity to live a normal, fulfilling life.

prevent or reverse democratization. In my country, for example, according to most recent statistics, there are 41 million people living in abject poverty. Think of it this way: if the poor were all gathered together in cities in the USA, we would have 41 cities with a million people each—all of them in abject poverty. Other countries can report even more dismal statistics. And for an example of fraudulent manipulation of democratic process, the now-famous Enron Corporation from Texas spent \$345,000 to persuade the legislature of my state, California, to deregulate the energy industry, which they did, almost bankrupting the state. All in all, that corporation spent \$1.9 million in 28 states of America between 1997 and 2000 to accomplish that same purpose by financial contributions to 700 politicians. Was this the purchase of democracy or legalized theft?¹

All societies have both democratic and undemocratic forces and tendencies. People in a country, community (or family), where the undemocratic tendency prevails, generally exhibit the various manifestations of depression: passivity, withdrawal, substance abuse, bouts of aggression, fear, nonparticipation in decision making, and psychosomatic symptoms. In DSM-IV[†], the psychiatric diagnoses dysthymic disorder and depressive disorder NOS in my view, could be renamed, respectively, Diminished Democracy Depressive Disorder and Denied Democracy Depression. This proposed nomenclature would point to the source of the problem, the internalized thoughts and feelings that maintain the problem, and indicate the treatment that could influence its resolution. Also, imagine how much less PTSD, sociopathy, and anxiety disorder there would be if none of these emotional illnesses would be caused by the arbitrary behavior of others, only by natural disasters.

Professionals in social work, marriage and family therapy, clinical psychology, and substance abuse counseling, regardless of theoretical orientation, may enhance their practice with the DT concepts. Under the DT rubric, we synthesize and integrate from several theoretical approaches including existential, person-centered, cognitive, transactional analysis, gestalt therapy, group dynamics, organizational development, social work, and political action. These approaches reflect the democratic impulse and background from which they emanated. But there is a need for a unifying theme that makes explicit the whole of which they are a part. For that purpose, we apply an unexpected, highly regarded, but in practice often disregarded, historic declaration: the preamble to the Constitution of the United States. What? How does that apply?

The preamble is a surprisingly good starting point for DT analysis of social interaction at all levels. With its seven imperative verbs, it is a powerful, revolutionary statement of the necessary conditions for a democratic, viable society, or relationship. It was revolutionary in 1787 and unfortunately, it is still revolutionary. It would be difficult to improve on the preamble, as both an objective summary of, and prescriptive mission statement for, the essential elements that ensure democracy.

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America, 1787

The constitutions of most countries that claim to be democratic contain similar preambles or statements of goals that stir our hearts. It would be useful for all of us to review the constitution of our countries. It is good that such words exist in these most important documents. As we view them, often in dusty books and in framed declarations under glass on our walls, we must understand that our basic task, as social workers, social scientists, and social activists, is to help ensure their full implementation as rapidly as possible.

[†] DSM-IV is the manual of psychiatric diagnostic criteria in the USA.

What has heretofore not been recognized is that the preamble of a constitution is also applicable to micro relationships. At a time when human relations professionals are influenced increasingly to adopt exotic and convoluted theory in conceptualizing our endeavors, DT is refreshingly straightforward and rational. American society and other societies are in profound crisis, caused in the main, as noted above, by widespread non-implementation of these known democratic values. Sixty years ago, the United States was the inspiration for these values throughout the world. They are enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. But they are often disregarded, denied, disputed, and all but forgotten in their land of origin and around the world. This is the crisis of our time.

If we had the time and space to elaborate the major dimensions and stratagems of DT at the **micro** level, we would need to consider the following: promoting democratic parenthood; gender equality; strong ego development; preventing passivity and aggressiveness; assertiveness that influences empowerment; overcoming self-defeating self talk (eliminating the negative); salient theoretical approaches; clarity about status and equality; lessons from Leonardo DaVinci; and **win-win or else**.

At the **mezzo** level, the democratic therapy stratagems include: democracy in the family; the DT therapy group; adaptation and integration in task groups; tipping points, utilizing status and roles; process from entry to evaluation; preventing groupthink; and utilizing systems and subsystems.

Macro democratic therapy involves: demystifying national and international relations; distinguishing democracy from polyarchy; macro processes and historical time; functional humility when the emperor has no clothes; fairness in the continuum from micro to macro; enhancing charisma; diminishing fraud and force; patiently making haste, utilizing love, law, and bargaining; and emphasizing that the ends do not justify any means—**the ends determine the means; good ends require good means**.

The details above can be elaborated at another time and place, in workshops and other publications. For now, I can only list some generalizations to stimulate thinking about democratic therapy.

CORE GENERALIZATIONS

“Concentrated Economic Power lies at the core of much of the unrest, injustice, and unresponsive government that beset us. Until it is removed we can fiddle with this and that, but true progress will elude us.”

P. 418
America Inc.
M. Mintz & J. Cohen, 1971

“As a society, we deny the connection between violence perpetrated upon children and the violence they, in turn perpetrate as adults... in this respect we have cornered ourselves... we’re bottomed out as a society. We think we get it, but we don’t.”

Eric Roberts, 1996
Actor in T.V. Crime Series

“Many of the values of the masculine mystique, such as toughness, dominance, repression of empathy, extreme competitiveness, play a major role in criminal and domestic violence and underlie the thinking and policy decisions of many of our political leaders.”

M. Miedzian
Boys Will be Boys, 1991

“Tis the times’ plague when madmen lead the blind.”

King Lear
Shakespeare, 1605

“Practice must always be based on good theory. Science is the captain, practice, the soldiers.”

Leonardo DaVinci, 1400’s

“There are two things that are important in politics. The first is money and I can’t remember what the second is.”

U.S. Senator
Mark Hanna, 1895

“America—its democratic promise—its nightmare possibilities.”

Maureen Corrigan
National Public Radio, 9/28/2005

Finally, I shall demonstrate the macro analysis that I have performed regarding my country, the USA. If each of us undertakes a similar study of our respective countries utilizing our unique knowledge and skills, it can reinvigorate our efforts to serve democratic goals in our country, and it can provide new insights and new ideas as a basis for energizing the democratic forces. My analysis follows:

In the USA, many say “We live in the greatest, most powerful democracy in the world.” Some of us, who hear or read these words, live rather well; we do work that we enjoy, we are paid reasonably well, we have relationships that satisfy, and have some sense of personal freedom. At first glance we are inclined to resonate with “greatest, powerful, democracy.”

However, as we look around, check the news, reflect on recent history, get in touch with deeper feelings, we find reason to doubt and to question. If we are so great and democratic, why are there so many problems around the United States; why do these problems remain unsolved year after year? Why do we see good intentions blocked or aborted time after time? Why do we encounter so many people clueless regarding cause and effect of the major problems in our lives? Why, in a great democracy, do so many people not vote or even exercise the freedom of speech that a democracy offers? Why so many people, so easily misled?

How does a country with the economic strength and the financial resources available in North America call itself a democracy but continues to have poverty, racism, slums, ghettos, millions without access to medical care, millions without employment, millions without adequate educational opportunity and millions without participation in community decision making?

How does a country that experienced the largest economic boom in world history in the 1990's also continue to have squalid, dangerous neighborhoods in most of its cities across the nation—places where no stranger would walk at night?

We could call ourselves a democracy if we had these problems years ago and after each decade we could report continuing improvement. We would see clear evidence of democratic process if we observed over the years, problem solving proposals presented, and debated, and then community, state and national action taken; and then the social indicators would clearly reflect continuing reduction of these problems. However, that is not the case! The underlying theme has been: “If the market can't solve it—it can't be solved!” and the same problems persist decade after decade.

Most of these problems are termed “hard core,” static, considered “intractable;” some are worsening. When the leadership of the richest country in the world, with the highest quality of life for some, and the most advanced science, technology, and medical care that is possible anywhere in the twenty-first century; throws up its hands and says “that's all we can do—accept it—live with it—*can we call it a democracy?*”

And if the leadership of the country, responds with derision and ridicule, to people and organizations who ask these questions and who demand answers, and who offer to help solve these problems is this the leadership of a democracy? Is this democratic leadership?

Since a democracy by definition has no reason to cause troubles for other countries or to start wars, why are so many people in other countries angry at the United States? And why did some of them come here and cause mass murder and massive property destruction? We have had embassies, consulates and various programs in countries all over the world for years. What have they been doing? How much and what kind of good have they been doing? Have they done anything bad? Have they been representing the best of America? Have they been representing “the national interest?” Are we clear as to what really is in the national interest? Or have they represented those forces in America that have gotten us stuck here in trouble domestically? If so, they are a part of the problem—not the solution! Have they added to the problems confronting the people of other countries? We had better take a closer look at this.

If we are not what we say we are, then what are we? *We are a polyarchy.* A polyarchy is a society with apparent democratic government (and institutions), yet is highly influenced, if not controlled, by semi-hidden forces. These forces are brilliantly disguised by fraud, public relations, and massive lack of awareness by the general public. They have the power to impede change, which would improve the country but hurt themselves; or to bring about change that would help themselves, but hurt the country.² Take note of which socioeconomic situations in our country change rapidly and compare them with situations that, however bad they are for people, seem to never change! You will begin to see the picture.

Evidence of polyarchy appears daily in our media but the “dots are not connected.” These forces are not secret. That is, any educated person who knows where and how to look can discover them. However, many people do not have the education, skill or motivation to look and see. Some are afraid to look, and are in full-fledged denial. Others identify subjectively with these forces even though they do not objectively benefit from them.

Many, when told that to question the polyarchic status quo is “un- patriotic,” determine that a waving of the flag is sufficient to discourage further questions. And the show goes on, to the detriment of the nation and with ever increasing danger to most of us in the United States and in the world.

The heart of polyarchy is the corporation. The corporation is a structure invented by modern society to produce and deliver goods and services effectively and efficiently. Those who own maximum shares in a

corporation have the power to determine who will manage the enterprise, with the expectation that effectiveness and efficiency are the immutable goals, thus producing maximum return on investment. Management within these parameters has autocratic control of the enterprise.

In a democracy the corporation must function within laws derived from the democratic process. Conflict develops when the goals of the corporation for maximum success clash with important goals of the community and nation. One of those goals, according to the preamble to the United States Constitution, is: "To promote the general welfare." What do we do when the drive of a corporation (or several corporations in an industry) to maximize return on investment has adverse effects on many people or the general welfare? Fifty years ago a General Motors CEO said, "Whatever is good for General Motors is good for the country." He was strongly and widely criticized for that statement. However, since then with the advanced use of public relations, few corporate leaders say things like that but it is the way they act.

Should we allow corporations to sacrifice the good of the country for corporate goals? Polyarchy is the organized effort to achieve that aim. Corporations made a great leap toward establishing polyarchy when they sought and received a United States Supreme Court ruling in 1886 that *a corporation had all the legal rights of an individual U.S. citizen.*[‡] The court majority decided that the Fourteenth Amendment, a Civil War measure legalizing citizenship for ex-slaves, also applied to corporations. Corporations are not a mere social invention or institution that serves the community. They are a citizen with full citizenship rights and when they grow very large, they are "great and powerful" citizens; who can accumulate large amounts of discretionary income to utilize, *tax free*, for public relations, advertising, lobbying, think tanks etc... With these resources they can purchase considerable influence, legislation, and power while maintaining a low profile. They become forces great and powerful, while democratic government becomes puny, impotent and disparaged.

Contrariwise, our purpose is not to disparage effective corporations that adhere to democratically derived laws and that contribute economically to the domestic and/or international goals of a democratic society. Instead our purpose is to reverse at the earliest, the transformation of our country into a quasi authoritarian state serving aggrandizing corporations.

I will now provide a few specific examples of our (solvable—but remain unsolved—) long-term problems. Next, I shall show how fraudulent politics and public relations maintain non-resolution of problems. Finally, I will suggest ideas for increasing the probability of democratic success.

Problem #1: Child Abuse

"The United States, Mexico and Portugal lead the world's 27 richest nations in deaths stemming from child abuse, according to a report released... by the United Nation's Children's Fund. The report linked the levels of deaths from child abuse and the levels violence in society as a whole." What person, system or group should get credit for this³?

Problem #2: Child Poverty

The United States, in another U.N. Children's Fund Report, "ranks at the bottom with Mexico for having the **most child poverty in the industrial world** with 22.4% of our kids in poverty."⁴ Compare this with Sweden 2.6% and Norway with 3.9%⁵. While we debate "faith-based vs. non-faith-based social services, other countries are moving ahead with solution-based help to the needy and the elimination of neediness.

[‡] Santa Clara v. Southern Pacific Railroad 118 US394.1886

Problem #3: Education

And, as funds are siphoned off for war and mayhem overseas, simultaneously the **“No Child Left Behind” funding is cut for “half of all school districts and millions of children, nationwide.”**⁶ So much for an already feeble, flawed, attempt to solve the long festering problem of public education in America.

Problem #4: Health Care

According to the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine the millions of Americans without health insurance cost the nation “between \$65 billion and \$130 billion every year.” In addition this “translates into a poorer quality of life span...” The total number of uninsured is 47 million. Imagine 47 cities with a million people each.⁷

Problem #5: Public Health – Mental Health

“The United States mental health system is in crisis, unable to provide even the most basic services to people with psychiatric disabilities according to a federal report.”⁸ When we calculate the fear, misery, conflict and oppression suffered by the many who cannot afford treatment, there emerges a picture of long-term, unnecessary suffering that **is basically avoidable**. But the suffering continues, because our attention as a public is directed to other matters elsewhere.

Problem #6: Militarism Displacing Social Programs

The United States spends over \$776 billion a year for all military-related expenses. The average American household pays over \$4,400 per year in taxes, annually, for this purpose. As military spending has grown, social programs go begging, and infrastructure crumbles (e.g., the Katrina levees).⁹

Problem #7: Pollution

Leave it to Molly Ivins who deserves an award for the information she provides in her breezy style: “We could cut mercury emissions by 90% in four years. Instead, the Bushies chose a plan that will reduce it by 50% over 14 years, thus saving millions for big campaign contributors...”¹⁰ And needlessly damage the health of millions of children and adults in this country and around the world?

Problem #8 Social Gap

The newspaper headline 9/19/03 proclaims “Rich getting richer, net worth of wealthiest people in US rises.” This is indeed heartwarming news, especially to the long term unemployed and recently “outsourced” jobless. This has been a continuing headline for the past many decades. Unfortunately, much of our inadequate social policy for the poor, needy, and vulnerable emanates from the views of the most affluent who live in **cash-cow cocoons**.

Problem #9 Blue and White Collar Crime

Interwoven in the U.S. as a cause and effect with the continuing social pathology noted above, are the two types of crime prevalent today; blue-collar street crime and white-collar suite crime. In 1995, the lowest to highest estimate cost of street and violent crime to the nation was \$105-450 billion. The low to high estimate of suite crime was \$1.2 to \$2.6 trillion that same year. These are statistics that precede the spike in corporate crime of 2001-02; Enron, Comcast, Tyco, etc...¹¹

Is the proliferation and exploitation of crime stories on TV and in movies, the most we can do about the tremendous human costs of crime? And is our correctional system, with its three modern features—non-rehabilitation, the death penalty, and increasing privatization, the best we can do? Can we export with pride what our nation does to prevent and treat crime? Should this be the American model?

This is only a smattering of the problems in our country that are hidden, denied, or ignored, at a time when national policy sends brave but hapless, well-meaning Americans around the world, selling, or worse, imposing “market” democracy (read: polyarchy) onto others.

I now cite with necessary brevity, a few typical **events illustrative and emblematic of the problematic political-economic environment that we confront today in America at all levels of government.** First, an example at the local level: privatization in Stockton, California; then, at the state level: the political coup in the governorship of California, and finally at the national level: the ill-fare and warfare that has replaced the welfare state.

At the Local Level:

In Stockton, a city of 260,000 on the San Joaquin Delta, the unemployment rate usually hovers around 10 percent. Two years ago the mayor was convinced that privatizing the municipal water and waste water system was necessary. He persuaded three city council members to support achievement of this goal. Along with his vote they formed a majority on the seven-member Council. Several community organizations alleging that the stated reasons for privatization were specious, formed a coalition to ensure widespread debate and a city-wide vote of the electorate on this issue. They fielded an initiative to accomplish this goal.

A date was set for a city vote on the initiative, but at the mayor’s urging, the council decided to thwart the initiative and voted 4-3 to approve privatization two weeks prior to the vote of the people. Two weeks later the voters approved the initiative (by 60 percent). The Council in its haste, however, neglected to conduct the environmental study on the project as required by the state law; thus throwing the issue into the court system where it will now remain for months or years to come.

Recently the Stockton Council voted to spend \$147 million in bonds to construct a downtown sports center which includes a new stadium for the Stockton Ports, a minor league baseball team. For years this team has played in a local stadium which has attracted a small but loyal attendance. There has been no public clamor for a new stadium. And yet behind closed doors discussions occurred which produced this result. **Why** and **how** are mysteries to the community. Apparently the process is a mystery even to a new city council member who was recently quoted:

“At the start, a proposal is brought before the council for initial discussion...Then it takes off and disappears into a long, dark tunnel. Finally, after a period of time, it emerges into the light for an immediate council vote.”¹²

Fifty years ago a progressive state legislature in California passed the Brown Act, which Stockton, and other California cities, should be implementing, but it is indicative of our political crisis today that many public officials and too many citizens do not live in accordance with the letter or spirit of it’s preamble.

“The people of this state do not yield their sovereignty to agencies which serve them. The people in delegating authority did not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. The people insist on remaining informed so that they may retain control over the instruments they have created.”¹³

Current California politics provide another example of our thesis:

Shortly after the Democratic governor Gray Davis was re-elected for a second four year term, a wealthy legislator who did not like the outcome spent \$1.7 million of *his own money* to recall the governor. He

intended to run as the alternative candidate for governor on that ballot as his reward for this hefty contribution to polyarchic politics.

However when a few multi millionaires persuaded actor Arnold Schwarzenegger to run, he stepped aside. And Arnold with the successful, expensive recall of a democratically elected governor became the new governor of California. As his public relations powerhouse exclaimed he was “a populist for the people.”

Let us examine his populism in action:

In order to maintain its programs for the poor, for children, for education, etc., California has mounted a debt of over \$10 billion for the 2004 fiscal year by under taxing the wealthy and corporations. The new governor who was presented as opposed to “special interests” was immediately faced with two proposals for meeting this \$10 billion dollar deficit. One: a \$15 billion dollar bond issue that would benefit the banking industry to be paid by Californians, and their children, for years into the future; which includes a cut in all state services. Or, instead, a \$26 billion temporary tax increase for the next two years to be paid only by Californians with an adjusted gross income over \$200 thousand dollars per year. There are less than 400,000 people whose income is at or above this level, out of 14.9 million taxpayers in the state. This two year temporary tax would wipe out the current deficit; prevent a new deficit, with few cuts in state programs. Which proposal did the populist governor choose? *Of course, the \$15 billion dollar bond issue* which protects the powerful and hurts the humble.¹⁴

Attached is a San Francisco newspaper editorial which tells the rest of the story (See Attached Editorial):

Dysfunction at the Top = Enormous Damage in the World

The Iraq war as the major response to the tragedy of 9/11, represents to me, the epitome of blunder on top of blunder. It lays bare the profound ignorance and arrogance, underlying the breath-taking, frightening decisions and actions. The initial absence of substantial debate, accompanied by the widespread cheerleading in much of the media, and the subdued expressions of reservation by commentators, and the anguish expressed by those brave enough to dissent, are all indicative of the polyarchic political process from the top down in the U.S. today.

Even the public relations management of the media was amateurish, first the “shock and awe,” then the “heroism” of Jessica Lynch, to toppling the statue of Saddam Hussein, and the “joy” of the Iraqi people and the arm twisting bribery which produced the “coalition of the willing.” These were public relations blunders that matched the strategic and tactical decision making.

In spite of the enormity of the tragedy and the clear incompetence of the U.S. leadership, and as most of the rest of the world gasps with astonishment and anger, we note how excruciating is the slow rise in questioning and doubting among the U.S. population. There is increasing evidence that “the emperor has no clothes,” the waste of large amounts of American treasure, and the needless mass murder in a foreign country, of young healthy Americans who are ordered to action that has killed tens of thousands of Iraqi people.

To understand the issues in depth in Iraq, it is important to broaden our attention to all U.S., government relations with the rest of the world. First, it is of crucial importance to become fully aware of the steady militarization of American society since the end of WWII. As one author put it, “Endless Enemies” have been concocted by polyarchic fabricated definitions of foreign threats; first Russia, then China, then North Korea, the Cold War, the Hot Wars, Iran, the whole Middle East, in many Latin American countries, in Africa, and on and on.¹⁵ Now Iraq; tomorrow where? Can we prevent a tomorrow?

Most of these problem areas involved and involve desperate poverty and deprivation. They need not have become crises. Most crises, without the fraudulent influence of lobbyists and opinion makers

representing corporate polyarchic interests, could have been resolved by democratic diplomacy and socio-economic assistance; not arms, threats of arms, sale of arms, or war after war! Who won? Who lost? We the people lost!

In the book, Promoting Polyarchy, Robinson describes in detail the international process of carrot/stick polyarchic imposition by the United States on the Philippines, Chile, Nicaragua and Haiti.¹⁶ There are many other examples.¹⁷ Hugo Chavez, the president of Venezuela has decried the U.S. interference in the internal affairs of his country. The top U.S. general in the Southern Command, Gen. James Hill, in a recent veiled reference to the President of Venezuela calls him a “radical populist” and equates his domestic political stance with world terrorism! Sadly, this kind of rhetoric fills our media on a daily basis with little or no criticism or debate.

Chavez’s government is pledged to help the poorest, most vulnerable sectors of the population in his country in opposition to U.S. and World Bank pressures, and against the large amounts of mischief money contributed by our government to foment domestic opposition in his country. These funds are unwittingly paid for by the American tax payer on behalf of our powerful, and are characterized as “promoting democracy.”

The strategy for becoming a political/social/economic democracy must be developed only by the respective people of each country. Real democracy can become the central project in all countries *world wide* in the twenty-first century. But first we must stop imposing polyarchy that is mislabeled democracy. Failure heretofore, to achieve this goal has been costly in every dimension of our lives. Continued failure can plunge us into perpetual war, and the prevalence of world barbarism. Who wants this to be our legacy? Where do we start?

- #1. In our country and all over the world we must recognize the existence of polyarchy wherever it prevails. We must assemble the evidence and publicize it in every way possible. This requires the reversal of the trend to privatize almost everything, and the trend to concentrate ownership in the hands of a few—and we need to start with the media. Today in the United States, eight corporations own and control the media. Media concentration has resulted in widespread ignorance of what we are uncovering in this analysis.
- #2. We must decry the unfairness of the unwritten rules of polyarchy (*they who have the gold rule*) and demand public behavior in keeping with our Constitution. The demand must be incessant, increasingly more widespread, unflinching; on target.
- #3. We must influence, and educate our youth and our neighbors to develop self awareness, self confidence, assertiveness, community knowledge, community participation skills, based on community rights and obligations, and motivation to participate in decision making all over the nation.
- #4. We must find allies who understand the problem and who already personify implementing democratic process toward democratic goals. Then together we must relate to the many unwitting victims all around us. Most sectors of our civil society now suffer increasingly from the distorted goals of polyarchic politics: schools are without adequate resources, vital services are without financing, the quality of life is diminishing, and a coarsening popular culture has spawned the cheerleading of foreign military adventures as though they are sports events—our team (good guys) and the enemy team (bad guys). This was all predicted in Orwell’s book *1984* (you can now view the movie *1984* on video or DVD). Mobilizing allies and potential allies into a winning coalition is crucial.

- #5. We need to influence existing organizations in our local communities and nationwide to adopt and develop central projects that de-polyarchize our nation. We must influence coordination of these projects on an inter-organizational basis so they become institutionalized. Profound campaign finance reform is essential including the public financing of election campaigns. In addition, we must recapture the public airwaves and move to a free use of radio and television time for political campaigns and electioneering.
- #6. The Internet has become a major communications tool and antidote to the media oligopolies. The “Move On” group has paved the way toward political-social fundraising that can bypass, effectively the corporate “fat cat” control of US political life. Imagine that a good message, framed appropriately, that reaches enough people at the right time, could persuade one million Americans to give one hundred dollars each and raise one hundred million dollars overnight. This would be the beginning of the end of polyarchy.
- #7. We must move our country toward win/win democracy, domestically, by utilizing and modeling democratic process; we must also ensure that in relations with other countries Americans apply the same win/win transparent, ethical methods to which we pledge ourselves at home.
- #8. We must discover new ways to reach and influence the vast numbers of well intentioned but ignorant people whose life experience and culture have, in our respective countries, kept them from understanding the sources and causes of the needlessly dangerous, threatening times in which **we all live today**. We must help them to learn that terrorists are not attacking us because they are “evil” but because they are frightened and angry, and that we can **allay** their fears and **reduce** their anger **nonviolently**; and that **most** of our insecurity is manmade and can be **reduced** considerably; and that there is **no** absolute need for anyone to starve in this world; and that it is now scientifically possible for almost all of us to die of old age if we so desire; and “**life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness**” is an international human right.
- #9. We must go global. The institution of private business has started globalization; now it is our responsibility to finish it our way: the way of democratic humanity.
- #10. A Congressional investigation of polyarchy in the United States and its role in the causation of 9/11, should be a first crucial political demand of the reform forces. This can be seen as an immediate goal, but if accomplished, can lead to long term fundamental change. In the 1930s, President Franklin Roosevelt called for an investigation of concentrated wealth in the country and the U.S. Congress authorized and performed the investigation. It is available (37 volumes and 43 monographs) in the national archives in Washington D.C. The conservative mass media at that time was able to bury the findings as the focus on World War II withdrew public attention. We can learn from this experience and need not make the same error twice. President Roosevelt’s remarks calling for the investigation are as relevant today as they were in the 1930s:

“To the Congress of the United States:
 Unhappy events abroad have retaught us two simple truths about the liberty of a democratic people.
 The first truth is that the liberty of a democracy is not safe if the people tolerate the growth of private power to a point where it becomes stronger than their democratic state itself. That, in its essence is fascism—ownership of government by an individual, by a group, or by any other controlling private power...

Among us today a concentration of private power without equal in history is growing. This concentration is seriously impairing the economic effectiveness of private enterprise as a way of providing employment for labor and capital and as a way of assuring a more equitable distribution of income and earnings among the people of the nation as a whole.”¹⁸

Evidence is accumulating albeit below the current radar of public awareness, that the trillions of dollars wasted by the U.S.A. in sixty years of cold and hot war, entrenched militarism, increasing concentration of wealth, dismantling the welfare state, elitist globalization, prevention and suppression of progressive social change, has weakened substantially the socioeconomic fabric of American society. As a result, the last half of the twentieth century which should have been the “century of the common man” worldwide led by a triumphal democratic U.S.A., instead became the “American century,” led by short-sighted, pugnacious, self-proclaimed “patriots” who purchased control of this country and turned around its great promise and potential. This false American leadership told the world that we are too powerful and too all-knowing, and that therefore we are not required to listen and consider seriously the needs of others, and that what we the powerful want, we must get, or else. We will either realize soon that this stance may be the fundamental historic cause of 9/11, and that it must be changed immediately; or, this realization will be traumatically thrust onto our consciousness later as we find ourselves a weaker, troubled, debtor nation; a virtual Banana Republic hopelessly left behind by other, more vibrant nations, i.e., China, India, European Union, and who knows what other countries. This dismal future remains preventable! Will we recapture that great American, democratic “can do” spirit? We will, if many, many more of us want it.

The early twenty-first century can become the time when we achieve the democracy that has always been the American ideal promised to the world. Every major, historic improvement in the USA was opposed by powerful forces: from the struggle to end slavery; the enfranchisement and liberation of women; the end of child labor; the advent of social security; and the enactment of laws that protect minorities, consumers, the environment, and working people. They were all the result of a massive, united, national effort, which started with the imagination, knowledge, and will of only a few Americans. We have regressed dramatically in recent years, and in some respects we are more similar to Nazi Germany of the 1930s than to the democratic U.S.A. of that same period. We desperately need, by constitutional means, to dislodge the false patriots who are leading us, and the world, to mass destruction. Success in this project can lead to the realistic probability of greater security, abundance, and freedom for America and the entire world. *Nothing less is acceptable.*

Democratic therapy begins in the home--how we rear infants and children. It applies to the school, student-teacher, and student-student relations. It applies to the playground, in how bullies are prevented, dissuaded, and treated. It extends to teen age and college in the reinforcement of mutual respect between the sexes. DT applies to the norms that limit college pranks so that they are fun but do not demean and humiliate. DT applies to the workplace, ensuring that oppression is not tolerated, and that employers are encouraged to operate tension-free places of business. When employers cut corners and break the rules, democratic unions should obtain and exert their power. To lower the gap between CEO pay and average worker pay, strong unions are a crucial factor. DT applies to the marketplace where cheating, lying, and scams that fool people into giving up money, and receiving nothing in return, are not allowed. DT also enables the view that the guarantee of “life and longevity” should not be determined by the marketplace because medical and health care are the obligations of a democratic community, and are not to be sold to the highest bidders.

The successful application of DT will help make full employment based on full opportunity for education a reality, and economic inequality only a historic, bad memory. Inequality is incompatible with democracy. Democracy is not fully possible, and cannot be fully realized without the extinction of gross

inequality. A society may have a handful of the super rich, but it must not have even a handful of the abject poor.

We have had our wars and revolutions in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. We have had some progress--mainly technological. However, in the early years of the twenty-first century, it is time to do a clean sweep of the reactionary debris that still has such desperate tenacity. It is time for final victory by humanity and it **can and must be achieved nonviolently**. It shall be done **if many more of us participate**.

2-9-04

EDITORIALS

Schwarzenegger's shakedown

THE INVITATION to East Coast high rollers to join Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's "California Recovery Team" is an expensive, and cynical, twist to the "Join Arnold" battle cry that dominated his recall campaign last fall.

This time it's hardly your average Californian to whom Arnold is appealing. You don't even have to be a Californian to join his elite "recovery team."

The only requirement is ponying up \$500,000 to attend an intimate fund-raising dinner on Feb. 24 at the New York City

home of Robert Wood Johnson IV, heir to the pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson's fortune. For that amount, you get to be a listed as a "chairman" and secure a table for 10. A \$50,000 contribution is required just to get through the door.

Why would a New Yorker want to spend huge sums to finance Schwarzenegger's campaign to sell his \$15 billion bond measure to skeptical Californians? It's possible that some are so starstruck they're willing to pay whatever it takes to meet the Terminator-turned-governor. But we suspect that others might — just might — have a financial interest in what happens in Sacramento.

That's impossible to divine because Schwarzenegger has so far re-

fused to release the invitation list to the party. Voters have a right to know whether special interests are trying to influence critical decision making in California, especially as they consider Proposition 57, which converts the state's shortfall into long-term debt.

The fund-raiser is disturbing on another count. Schwarzenegger spent much of his campaign criticizing ousted Gov. Gray Davis for his profligate fund raising. But Schwarzenegger has already raised \$5.8 million in less than three months in office, almost as

much as Davis raised in six months. His rationalizations for his newfound appreciation of special-interest money don't stand up to scrutiny.

Schwarzenegger, who seems to have brought a Hollywood-star-style approach to rationing media access in Sacramento, was too busy to return our call seeking comment, an aide said Friday.

Schwarzenegger should disclose who will attend his New York soiree. Better still, he should cancel the whole event.

It sure smells like
business as usual.

Express your views: You can e-mail Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger at governor@governor.ca.gov or leave a phone message for him at (916)445-2841.

-
- ¹ Ivins, Molly. "National Institute on Money in State Politics." *San Francisco Chronicle*. April 21, 2006.
- ² Robinson, William I. *Promoting Polyarchy*. Cambridge University Press. 1996.
- ³ San Francisco Chronicle. 9/19/03.
- ⁴ The Record. 6/13/00.
- ⁵ Center for American Progress. 4/6/04.
- ⁶ San Francisco Chronicle. 6/18/03.
- ⁷ San Francisco Chronicle. 9/17/02.
- ⁸ Ivins, Molly, San Francisco Chronicle. 4/4/04.
- ⁹ Andreas, Joel. Addicted to War. AK Press: Oakland. 2003. p. 39.
- ¹⁰ Councilman Bestolorides. The Record. 9/19/03
- ¹¹ Winslow, Geo. Capital Crimes. MR Press. 1999.
- ¹² The Record. 9/7/03.
- ¹³ Ibid. 9/7/03.
- ¹⁴ San Francisco Chronicle. 2/9/04.
- ¹⁵ Kwitny, J. The Crimes of Patriots. WW Norton. 1987;
Kwitny, J. Endless Enemies. 1984.
Johnson, Chalmers. The Sorrows of Empire. Henry Holt and Company: New York. 2004.
Roy, Arundhati. An Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire. South End Press: Cambridge, MA. 2004.
Maass, Peter. "A Touch of Crude." *Mother Jones*. February 2005. pp. 48-53, 86-89.
Burns, Thomas S. Tales of ITT: An Insider's Report, Houghton Mifflin: Boston, 1974. pp. 9, 20-21, 34-35.
- ¹⁶ Robinson, 1996.
- ¹⁷ Perkins, John. Confessions of an Economic Hitman. Berrett/Koeler: San Francisco. 2004.
- ¹⁸ Seldes, G., 1000 Americans, Boni and Gaer: N.Y. 1947.