

Humanist Society of Metro New York

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THE CORLISS LAMONT CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

The Clinton Doctrine: Global Capitalism and Democracy

By
Nigel Roberts

Humanists are committed to an open and democratic society. Among other factors, democracy entails the equal opportunity for all citizens to participate effectively in governmental decision-making. Accordingly, democratic societies must make decisions, through debate and critical evaluation, about its economic system. The Humanist Manifesto states that “we need to democratize the economy and judge it by its responsiveness to human needs, testing results in terms of the common good.”

Numerous critics have condemned capitalism for the grave economic inequalities that it produces. Yet, American domestic and foreign policy makers have always been unwavering in their committed to free market capitalism.

Uninhibited by its confrontation with the former USSR, American foreign policy makers created a post Cold War policy that seeks, more fully, to globalize their ideology.

In a speech at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, on September 21, 1993, Anthony Lake (the National Security Adviser during President Clinton’s first term in office) articulated America’s post Cold War foreign policy: *Democratic Enlargement* (sometimes referred to as the Clinton Doctrine).

Lake proclaimed that “the successor to a doctrine of containment must be a strategy of enlargement—enlargement of the world’s free communities of market democracies.”

Continued On Page 3

The AHA at the United Nations: An Interview with Beth Lamont

By
Nigel Roberts

Buzzing with the muffled roar of chatter and laughter, the upper dining room of the Moonstruck Restaurant was unusually crowded on this chilly, damp Saturday afternoon. Our small group sat at a corner table by the window conversing about a variety of topics that humanists take pleasure in discussing.

Eventually, the other diners left and our group slowly departed with warmhearted farewells. I then seized the opportunity to sit with Beth Lamont, to inquire about her fascinating work for the AHA at the United Nations.

When we sat down to talk, I noticed that she wore a blue lapel pin bearing the image of Ernesto “Che” Guevara, the Argentine born revolutionary. When I asked her about Guevara, her face lit up as she responded “I feel a kinship with Che Guevara. He was a revolutionary and a poet.”

Continued On Page 4

IN THIS ISSUE

- The Clinton Doctrine 1
- The AHA at the UN 1
- Meetings 2
- Announcements 2
- Events of Interest 3

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Humanism is a rational philosophy informed by science, inspired by art, and motivated by compassion. Affirming the dignity of each human being, it supports the maximization of individual liberty and opportunity consonant with social and planetary responsibility. It advocates the extension of participatory democracy and the expansion of the open society, standing for human rights and social justice. Free of supernaturalism, it recognizes human beings as a part of nature and holds that values—be they religious, social, or political—have their source in human nature, experience, and culture. Humanism thus derives the goals of life from human need and interest rather than from theological or ideological abstractions, and asserts that humanity must take responsibility for its own destiny.

MEETINGS

1. May 9 at 6:30 p.m. We will meet at the Moonstruck East Restaurant (upstairs), 449 Third Avenue at 31st Street. Ellen Farber will lead a book review and discussion on Thomas Paine's classic, *Common Sense*.
2. May 27 at 3 p.m. We will meet at The Juilliard School cafeteria at Lincoln Center Plaza, W 65th Street and Broadway. Michael Geoghagan of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) will speak from his career perspective on the precarious status of the peace and social justice

activist organizations (NGOs) that work to make an impact at the UN.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. **PLEASE NOTE THAT WE WILL MEET AT THE JUILLIARD SCHOOL CAFETERIA FOR THE MAY 27TH MEETING.** The school is located at Lincoln Center Plaza, W65th street and Broadway. Take the no. 1 or 9 local train to the 66th St. Station. The M5, 7, 10, 11, 66, and 104 buses all stop within 1 block of Lincoln Center.
2. In conjunction with the June 1 - 4 Joint Conference of the American Ethical Union and the AHA, the AHA has organized a UN briefing by the Group of 77 (G-77). The G-77 reports on its recent economic summit in Cuba. The AHA has organized this briefing with sponsorship and support from the governments of Bangladesh and Cuba. Government representative from Bangladesh, Cuba, and Nigeria will discuss critical economic issues from the perspective of developing nations. We invite all Humanists to attend the briefing, whether or not you attend the conference. The event takes place at the UN Headquarters in the Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium on June 1 at 10:00 a.m. You must request a pass to attend the UN briefing. Call the AHA at (800) 734-6646 at least one week in advance to make arrangements.
3. We encourage you to submit announcements, letters and articles to the editor for publication. Articles should be between 500-700 words. Send submissions to: The Humanist Society of Metropolitan

NY, 777 UN Plaza, New York, NY
10017-3521, Attn: Editor. You may
also submit by e-mail to
neroberts66@prodigy.net

EVENTS OF INTEREST

1. May 11 at 6:00 p.m. "The Conflict Between Human Rights and Trade: The Case of the WTO." Speaker: Roger Normand, Policy Director, Center for Economic and Social Rights. The C.U.N.Y. Graduate School and University Center, located at 365 Fifth Avenue (at the corner of 34th Street). Room 9207. (212) 817-8684.
2. May 16 at 7:30 p.m. "The WTO, Labor Standards and Primitive Accumulation." The Brecht Forum, 122 W. 27th Street (between 6th and 7th Ave.), 10th floor. (212) 242-4201.
3. May 18, 19 & 20. A major conference sponsored by The Foundation for Ethics & Meaning and The NY Open Society, "Re-Imagining Politics and Society at the Millennium, Creating a Just, Caring and Sustainable World." Contact The New York Open Center (212) 226-4056 or www.opencenter.org. Space is limited, so please register early. The conference will be held at The Riverside Church.
4. May 21 at 9:30 a.m. AIDS Walk. Central Park Bandshell. Join in the fight against AIDS in this fundraiser for the Gay Men's Health Crisis. (212) 807-WALK.
5. May 30 at 7:30 PM. "For-Profit Healthcare: The Rise and Fall?" Howard Berliner, Rob Burlage, Oliver Fein & Jerry Joffe. Moderator: Martha Livingston. The Brecht Forum, 122 W. 27th Street (between 6th and 7th Ave.), 10th floor. (212) 242-4201.

Clinton Doctrine

There are four components of the enlargement policy. First, the US seeks to secure and unite the democratic, capitalist nations of the world. Second, America will support new democracies and market economies. Third, the US must contain "backlash" states. Finally, America will pursue its humanitarian agenda. Essentially, enlargement is a strategy for globalizing capitalism and democracy.

The strategy for enlargement begins with those countries that are committed to capitalism and democracy. This group of core nations includes all of the global economic powers. President Clinton believes that by cooperating, the core will expand their wealth and secure their dominant position in the community of nations.

Once the core countries are united and strong, the next step is to nurture new capitalist democracies. The policy targets "...states that affect our [US] strategic interests, such as those with large economies, critical locations, nuclear weapons, or the potential to generate refugee flows into our nation or into key friends and allies." Lake rates Russia as the most important country in this category. Integrating countries into the global free-trade system is the primary means of enlarging the capitalist core.

Concurrent with promoting capitalist democracy in receptive regimes, enlargement requires isolation of recalcitrant nations. Lake uses the term "backlash states" to identify those countries that are unwilling to transition to capitalism while posing a threat to the global system.

Isolation is the best way to contain these countries, according to Lake. Capitalist democracies must

“isolate them diplomatically, militarily, economically, and technologically.”

Unambiguously, Lake says that the United States should respond decisively with its military strength when one of these “backlash” states directly threatens the U.S. or its interests. Moreover, under some circumstances, it is appropriate to act unilaterally.

Humanitarian aid, the final pillar of the enlargement strategy, is best described as a tool. Lake explains that America’s continued aid abroad for disaster, famine, and displacement builds trust and provides an opportunity to enlarge the circle of states committed to free market capitalism.

He said, “over the coming months, we plan to work with Congress to reform this array of aid programs—to focus them more strategically and efficiently on the promotion of democracy and [open] markets, environmentally sustainable development, and early responses to social and economic chaos.”

In short, President Clinton’s Enlargement Policy is primarily a strategy to globalize capitalism and secondarily to promote democracy. Tactically, enlargement seeks first to consolidate and strengthen the core of states committed to the two ideologies. After the foundation is secure and united, the U.S. plans to bring other countries into the system. American policy-makers understand that some “backlash” nations threaten the global system. Accordingly, the U.S. plans to isolate them. Finally, humanitarian assistance, according to policy-makers, will provide a means to enlarge the circle by creating trust and dependency on the U.S.

The AHA supports the expansion of true democracy and a global system

that increases the economic well-being of all people.

Each Humanist must examine US foreign policy and decide whether it is likely to promote a more humane global society.

Interview with Beth Lamont

Like Guevara, Beth Lamont is an amalgam of seemingly contradictory elements. She is a sharp, outspoken critic with a calm, reserved manner. During our conversation, Beth frequently spoke with indignation against social and economic injustice. Yet, at the same time, there was a gentle compassion in her voice. Because she cares deeply about the human condition, Beth approaches her work at the UN with fervor

Beth became the primary Non-governmental organization (NGO) representative for AHA in 1995. The UN grants consultative status to organizations that work and advocate for a range of global issues. These issues include the environment, human rights, peace, disarmament, labor, and development (to name just a few).

As an NGO representative for The AHA, Beth presents and advocates our views to government delegates at the UN. She also networks with other organizations that have similar concerns.

Beth has a stately and urbane manner, well suited for the task of influencing and associating with UN diplomats. She explained that lobbying diplomats has become increasingly difficult for NGO representatives. Fear of terrorism caused the UN administration to limit full access of its facilities to NGOs. Nevertheless, she has developed a close working relationship with Ambassador Chowrey of

Bangladesh and Ambassador Parrilla of Cuba.

At the UN, Beth engages in a wide range of issues. Among our numerous global concerns, the AHA advocates equitable worldwide economic growth and development. Accordingly, we support developing countries on global economic matters, especially foreign debt relief for poor countries.

To facilitate the goal of equitable worldwide growth and development, the AHA supports the work of the G-77. The Group of 77 (G-77) is the main caucus for developing countries in the United Nations. Originating in 1964, 77 of the poorest countries formed the G-77 at the first meeting of UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development). Now numbering well over 100 countries, the G-77 takes a special interest in addressing the specific economic concerns of developing countries vis-à-vis those of wealthy nations.

Beth is in the process of developing a special project with the assistance of Ambassadors Chowrey and Parrilla. Ambassador Chowrey will sponsor the AHA for an NGO Briefing at the UN on June 1, 2000. NGO Briefings are held on Thursdays at the Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium in the UN. Ambassador Parrilla will participate in the program, which centers on a G-77 report on its recent conference held in Cuba.

An issue that Beth takes a particular interest in is the development of the International Criminal Court (ICC). She excitedly recounted her experience at the 1998 Rome Conference for the establishment of the ICC. At the conference, government delegates debated and painstakingly wrote the

language for the legal documents underpinning the new court.

The US took a dim view of the ICC. Senator Jesse Helms, senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, advised the State Department that the Senate would reject US participation in the ICC unless the US acquired veto power. Moreover, he emphatically declared that the US government would not yield its sovereignty to an international court.

At the conference, Beth distributed copies of the Humanist Manifesto and promoted our views to government representatives. She reports that the American delegation remained unapproachable to Humanist lobbying, despite her perseverance.

At the same time, the US pressured other countries to support proposals that are contrary to the views of Humanists. One example is the American advocacy for capital punishment. In that situation, Beth joined with other NGOs and governments opposed to capital punishment and promoted a system of retribution instead. She is elated to report that in the final vote, capital punishment was eliminated from the documents.

Nevertheless, she laments that the founding document for the ICC does not go far enough. The Humanist Manifesto calls for "...the development of a system of world law and a world order based upon transnational federal government." Nonetheless, the ICC is still a major step toward that goal.

Beth Lamont works tirelessly to promote Humanist values at the United Nations. We are indeed lucky to have Beth on our side.

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Anyone who would like to receive a conference packet is welcome to contact us. Call us toll-free and charge your registration to your Visa or Mastercard. Address all conference registrations and make your checks payable to:

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