



boston social forum
another world is possible!

July
23-25
2004

The Boston Social Forum

On July 23-25 at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, the weekend just before the 2004 Democratic National Convention, the Boston Social Forum (BSF) plans to bring the World Social Forum process to the United States, where thousands of people will have a chance to create something new on the modern U.S. political scene--a fun way to sidestep the two-party system.

A regional forum within the World Social Forum process, the BSF has been called to help people to begin to answer some very basic questions: What kind of future do we want for our region? For our nation? For the world? What is our vision of a better society?

Through a series of workshops, cultural events, plenary sessions, and giant convocations of the entire forum, BSF is encouraging progressive organizations of all kinds to showcase their best analysis of the present, and their best ideas for the future, across the breadth of human knowledge - politics, economics, science and technology, culture and faith - in the context of corporate globalization.

Starting with a handful of Boston-based organizers at the Campaign on Contingent Work and the North American Alliance for Fair Employment, the BSF has blossomed into a network of over 50 Boston-area progressive organizations--ranging from an SEIU local to the UNITE New England Joint Board, from the Eastern Massachusetts Global Justice Coalition to Boston-based Technology for Social Change (TecsChange). It also includes organizing committees and faith-based groups all over New England and connections to an increasing number of national and international organizations.

Why the gathering in Boston?

The drive for the BSF began in November 2002 when Boston, Massachusetts won the race to host the next Democratic National Convention (DNC). The initial BSF organizers realized that, if events followed their usual pattern, local progressives would probably embark on the same old response strategy. People in power hold some event, say a meeting of the IMF and World Bank. Progressives, rightfully, protest this event. The media, if it covers the event at all, focuses on what the powerful did at the event and gives perhaps a bare mention of the protestors--who are most often held up as an inchoate, reactive mass with few, if any, useful ideas. "When all is said and done, the general public has little inkling of what progressive activists are all worked up about. Few people outside our movements understand that progressives are not just trying to protest, we are also trying to express our visions for a better world."

The BSF organizers agreed that one new political form already existed that could give local movements--and friends from across the region, nation, and world--the chance to showcase their best ideas: the World Social Forum process. Starting a Boston Social Forum seemed like a way to make use of the DNC without putting all our time and effort into a one-time demonstration/march.

Globalization is now (appropriately) a major topic of academic discussion and research. See, for example, the **Global Studies Association** which began holding annual conferences in 2003: <http://www.net4dem.org/mayglobal/Events/events.htm> (Some of the papers from the April 2004 gathering are posted at the GSA website.)

Tracks and Programs

A **track** is an organizational device the BSF effort uses to make sure that all the major areas of human knowledge have BSF events that relate to them from a progressive perspective. Each track brings together workshops and other events that focus on a major issue area or problem such as peace, social justice, economic inequality, etc.

Note that some events may cut across several tracks, and there will be other events that do not specifically fit into any of the tracks. (This is a preliminary list of programs and tracks, since program development is still in progress.)

- Active Arts Youth Conference
- Climate Change
- Corporate Accountability
- Council of Parliamentarians
- Criminal Justice Track
- Culture Track
- Democracy Track
- Economy Track
- Education Track
- Environment Track
- European Peace Council
- Faith Track
- Film Series
- Fund the Dream
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Issues
- Global Justice Track
- Health Track
- Immigration Track
- Jobs & the New England Economy
- Localization Track
- Media Track
- Movement Building Track
- Peace Track
- People of Color Organizers Track
- Politics Track
- Roxbury Environmental Education Project
- Science and Technology Track
- Strategic Nonviolence Track
- Students & Youth Track
- Water Track
- Women's Liberation Track
- Women's Web

Brian Corr, chair of Massachusetts Peace Action and a member of the BSF Planning Committee, explained, "Far too often we are forced to respond to day-to-day challenges, whether it's keeping a clinic or welfare office open, preventing an eviction, or protesting the latest U.S. military adventure overseas. This summer we'll have a chance to step back and think strategically. We will be coming together with progressive activists from Boston and beyond, and focus on our own goals and our agenda for social change."

Will the church be visible in these conversations about the current face of globalization and alternative models?

Many peace leaders from around the world are expected to participate in the European Peace Network meeting that will be happening at the BSF. Plus, Walden Bello, one of the most famous thinkers and activists in the global movement against corporate globalization, has tentatively agreed to speak. Mark Solomon and the Committees of Correspondence have arranged for Angela Davis, Manning Marable, and Bill Tabb to join us as well.

Two presidential candidates are interested in leading panels; Dennis Kucinich (Democrat) on the creation of a Department of Peace and David Cobb (Green Party) on Corporate Personhood.

BSF FILM FESTIVAL ABSF Film Festival will likely take place at independent movie theaters in the Boston area the weekend before the BSF, and then throughout the entire BSF in rooms dedicated to that purpose.



The Meatrix

In 2003, the 4-minute flash animation The Meatrix was the result of a the first ever Free Range Graphics flash activism grant. The film spoofs the Matrix movies while educating viewers about the issues surrounding factory farming in a humorous way.

The film is now the most successful online advocacy film ever, with over 5 million viewers online and countless numbers who are now watching The Meatrix at conventions, conferences, film festivals, and at special events, and it aired May 28th on PBS "NOW with Bill Moyers." View the Meatrix online at www.themeatrix.com, with links to sustainable agriculture resources.

Active Arts Youth Conference

BSF - Saturday, July 24, 2004

The Active Arts Youth Conference was created with the intention of inspiring, educating, and mobilizing the Hip-Hop Generation toward social action. The AAYC is a youth-led event, committed to creating an environment that is reflective of the lives and experiences of young people.

Join us as people of all ages come together to support youth development and leadership.

Explore topics such as youth activism, social action, politics, and health issues including HIV/AIDS.



- Educate participants on current issues affecting youth
- Provide an open and respectful forum for discussion and exploration
- Stimulate youth and community involvement
- Create a social network for people committed to change

The AAYC takes place on Saturday, July 24, 2004 as part of the BSF. The Active Arts Youth Conference is being organized by *Critical Breakdown*, *Boston Mobilization*, *the Ave Magazine*, and *Project Think Different*. For more information contact Erik at criticalbreakdown@hotmail.com

Boston Social Forum – July 23-25, 2004 University of Massachusetts at Boston

Registration and Housing:

Pre-Registration is \$30 for working adults; \$15 for students/low income/seniors on-line at the BSF website, <http://www.bostonsocialforum.org> Once registered, you may request information about housing.

Registration on-site will be \$40 for adults; \$20 for students/low income/seniors.



For more information call 617-338-9966, or see www.bostonsocialforum.org

Stories in this newsletter come from several organizations participating in the BSF, including Z magazine (Kim Foltz, Suren Moodliar, & Jason Pramas) www.zmag.org; the BSF web page www.bostonsocialforum.org, American Friends Service Committee www.afsc.org, and others. See <http://cswt.pjpr.org/global> for more links on globalization.



G8 Summit June 8-10, 2004 Sea Island, Ga.

What is the G8 (Group of Eight)?

The Group of Eight summit is a meeting of the top officials of the eight wealthiest nations on your planet. In these meetings, this very small number of leaders from a very small number of countries representing about 12.2% of the total world population, decide on what will happen to the other 87.8% over rounds of golf and exotic food. This grotesquely disproportionate distribution of the world's wealth and power is the root of anger and violence over these meetings.

History

Since 1975, the heads of state or government of the major industrial democracies have been meeting annually to deal with the major economic and political issues facing their domestic societies and the international community as a whole. The six countries at the first summit, held at Rambouillet, France in November 1975, were France, the United States, Britain, Germany, Japan and Italy. They were joined by Canada at the San Juan Summit of 1976 in Puerto Rico, and by the European Community at the London Summit of 1977. From then on, membership in the G7 was fixed, although 15 developing countries' leaders met with the G7 leaders on the eve of the 1989 Paris Summit, and the USSR and then Russia participated in a post-summit dialogue with the G7 since 1991. Starting with the 1994 Naples Summit, the G7 met with Russia at each summit (referred to as the P8 or Political 8). The Denver Summit of the Eight was a milestone, marking full Russian participation in all but financial and certain economic discussions; and the 1998 Birmingham Summit saw full Russian participation, giving birth to the G8 (although the G7 continued to function along side the formal summits). At the Kananaskis Summit in Canada in 2002, it was announced that Russia would host the G8 Summit in 2006, thus completing its process of becoming a full member. (See Delegations & Documents for a list of all summits since 1975.)

Summit Agenda

The G7/8 Summit has consistently dealt with macroeconomic management, international trade, and relations with developing countries. Questions of East-West economic relations, energy, and terrorism have also been of recurrent concern. From this initial foundation the summit agenda has broadened considerably to include microeconomic issues such as employment and the information highway, transnational issues such as the environment, crime and drugs, and a host of political-security issues ranging from human rights through regional security to arms control.

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Some "alternative" events are planned in coastal Georgia at the time of the G8. Here is a sample of events:

Saturday, June 5

Teach-in: G8 and Corporate Domination (Atlanta, GA)
Georgia State University Law School or Urban Life Theatre:

10 - 6: Panel, Discussion, March to Coke Pavilion,
Workshops, Solidarity Panel

Call 770-934-5613 for info. or email:
g8teachin@yahoo.com

Sunday, June 6

Fair World Fair (Brunswick, GA) - see
www.fairworldfair.org

The Other Economic Summit (Brunswick GA) - see
www.toes-usa.org

Monday, June 7

Interfaith Activities (Brunswick, GA)

* Jubilee USA Network Press Conference- Religious
Leaders Release Letter to G-8

* Interfaith Service and Vigil for those affected by Global
Economic Policies

Fair World Fair (Brunswick, GA)

The Other Economic Summit (Brunswick, GA)

Tuesday, June 8

Fair World Fair (Brunswick GA)

The Other Economic Summit (Brunswick, GA)

Wednesday, June 9

Fair World Fair (Brunswick GA)

The Other Economic Summit (Brunswick, GA)

Thursday, June 10

Post-Summit Press Conference: George Bush, Tony Blair
(Savannah Intl. Trade and Convention Center, Hutchinson
Island, GA)

Press Conference: United for Peace and Justice
(Savannah)

4 PM -- Free Speech Savannah Rally/Protest (Forsyth
Park, Savannah GA)

The Other Economic Summit (Brunswick, GA)

Ongoing. Toxic Tour of Glynn County: There are 16 toxic waste sites (including 4 superfund sites) in Glynn County, home of Sea Island Ga, the g8 summit, dubbed by Bush as the "green summit." Organizers will provide tours of the environmental degradation in the region. More information:

What is the G8? *(continued from page 3)*

The responsibility of host rotates throughout the summit cycle at the end of the calendar year, as follows: France, United States, United Kingdom, Russia (as of 2006), Germany, Japan, Italy and Canada. Throughout the year, the leaders' personal representatives - known as sherpas - meet regularly to discuss the agenda and monitor progress.

In addition, the G7/8 has developed a network of supporting ministerial meetings, which allow ministers to meet regularly throughout the year in order to continue the work set out at each summit; these include the meetings of the finance ministers, foreign ministers and environment ministers, among others. G7/8 ministers and officials also meet on an ad hoc basis to deal with pressing issues, such as terrorism, energy, and development; from time to time the leaders also create task forces or working groups to focus intensively on certain issues of concern, such as a drug-related money laundering, nuclear safety, and transnational organized crime.

The G7/8 provides an important occasion for busy leaders to discuss major, often complex international issues, and to develop the personal relations that help them respond in effective collective fashion to sudden crises or shocks. The summit also gives direction to the international community by setting priorities, defining new issues and providing guidance to established international organizations. At times it arrives at decisions that address pressing problems or shape international order more generally.

The summit members comply modestly with the decisions and consensus generated by and codified at their annual meeting. Compliance is particularly high in regard to agreements on international trade and energy, and on the part of Britain, Canada, and Germany. Summit decisions

Imagine agreements between countries that are so powerful that they can effectively override those countries' democratically determined policies. Imagine these agreements crafted by a low profile, nearly invisible body, accountable to no one but themselves, with little or no channel for public hearings on the effects of their agreements. Imagine these organizations influenced mostly by the world's largest corporations and supported by the world's most powerful governments, governments effectively allowing an under the table override of their own laws and enforcing similar overrides on governments who have no say in the policy making... You've just imagined the organizations that craft and enforce agreements like NAFTA and the FTAA.

Globalization is not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, it is inevitable. But it doesn't have to be unfair. It doesn't have to force countries to violate their own policies or face the threat of embargo. It doesn't have to work so hard to keep wealth in the hands of the few. Not every human being wants or needs to be wealthy. But every human being wants and needs dignity and for their voices to be heard. A world built on dignity is more sustainable and economically viable than a world built on fear. A better world is possible.

often create and build international regimes to deal with new international challenges, and catalyze, revitalize and reform existing international institutions.

In recognition of its centrality in the process of global governance, the summit has always attracted the attention of thousands of journalists at each leaders' meeting, and of a number of countries seeking admittance to this exclusive and powerful club. It has also become a prime occasion for non-governmental and civil society organizations to advocate on behalf of their concerns. The annual meeting has been an opportunity for anti-globalization demonstrations since the Birmingham Summit in 1998; the protests turned violent in 2001 at the Genoa Summit, resulting in the death of a protestor.

--from the University of Toronto Library and the G8 Research Group at the University of Toronto. http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/what_is_g8.html

RESOURCES

Jubilee USA Network Education and Action Packet

April 2004

The Jubilee USA Network has reprinted its basic Education and Action packet. The attractively designed folder includes basic educational materials such as an overview of the arguments for debt cancellation; a history of the debt crisis, and accessible fact sheets on structural adjustment programs, odious debt, and debt and global AIDS. It also includes action materials with advice on how to start a Jubilee local group, work with the media, write letters to elected officials, and engage with the World Bank Bonds Boycott!

The full color kits cost \$10. Send your request for orders to coord@jubileeusa.org, or mail a check to Jubilee USA Network, 222 E. Capitol St., NE, Washington, DC, 20003. Please allow 2-3 weeks for us to process your order.

You can also download the contents of the packet below in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format at www.jubileeusa.org

Education

- Why Drop The Debt?
- Introduction to the Debt Crisis and the Jubilee Campaign
- Don't Owe: Odious and Illegitimate Debt
- SAPS: "Structural Adjustment:" Making Debt Deadly
- HIPC: The Debt Relief Obstacle Course -- Understanding the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative
- Drop the Debt to Fight Global AIDS
- The Role of Export Credit Agencies in Debt
- Proclaim Jubilee! Debt Cancellation is the Biblical Norm -- Not the Exception
- Debt Jargon
- Jubilee USA Network Platform and Members

Action

- Starting A Local Jubilee Group
- Writing Letters for Freedom from Debt
- Working with Your Member of Congress