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Justice Rising

Grassroots Solutions to Corporate Domination

The public pays little heed that Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and Nestlé are tapping into our public water commons for their private profit

Nancy Price, page 3

We believe that corporatization of water supplies in this community ...constitute[s] tyranny and usurpation.

Barnstead Water Rights and Local Self-Government Ordinance, page 5

(GATS) is not about "fair trade," it is about promoting corporate rights over people's rights.

Ruth Caplan, page 9

Todos somos Uruguayos— We are all Uruguayans.

Maude Barlow, Council of Canadians, page 12

A Publication of the Alliance for Democracy

Water for Life Not Corporate Profit

The natural commons should be seen as interconnected systems on which all life depends—deserving of rights in the constitution, standing in court, and legal recognition in their own right—not as the extension of human property rights.
— Jan Edwards

by Ruth Caplan and Nancy Price—Guest Editors

The Alliance for Democracy's Defending Water for Life campaign is firmly rooted in this reframing of the rights of nature. This is in juxtaposition to the corporate globalization framing that treats water as a commodity to be sold to the highest bidder. It must be available to all people, not just to those who can pay the market price. Water is a fundamental right for people and nature.

This issue of *Justice Rising* focuses on the campaign to protect water as a global commons. It covers the struggles at home and in Latin America. It also provides tools to use in opposing the corporatization of water from the commodification inherent in bottled water to the privatization of municipal water/sewer services. We reject the "commercial right to water" just as we reject the claim that corporations are "persons" with constitutional rights.

Taking on the transnational water corporations can be daunting. Nestlé, Coke, Pepsi, Suez, RWE, Veolia and numerous smaller players promote their agenda through the quasi-official guise of the triennial World Water Forums (WWF). We challenged their corporate ideology in 2003 at the 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto and have used the film *Thirst*, featuring protests in Kyoto and organizing around the world, to organize opposition to the water barons here at home.

In March, this international movement for the right to water came of age when water activists from around the world gathered in Mexico City to attend the first International Forum in the Defense of Water held at the same time as the 4th World Water Forum. Tens of thousands marched through the streets with banners held high. The Alliance distributed headbands reading ¡*Nestlé Basta Ya*! Reviving an ancient tradition, Hopi runners carried their message from New Mexico to Chapultepec Park. The faith community read their *Water: Essential for Justice and Peace* inside the WWF. But most of the action was on the outside as people told their stories and strategized together.

The power of this emerging movement became clear when the World Water Council switched from referring to the "need" for water—which implies that distribution and access to water should be set by the marketplace— to issuing a report titled *The Right to Water: From Concept to Implementation*. The report makes a strong case for the human right to water. They still need to go further though. They avoid any mention of the corporate players. They do not reveal how mining, industry, and agribusiness pollute water sources, robbing communities of clean water. Nor is there any discussion of how bottled water commodifies water. Most importantly, after fierce controversy, the 4th WWF did not include water as a human right in its final declaration.

Now it is our job to keep organizing until the universal right to water is recognized officially and water is recognized as a global commons and protected as a right of nature. The power to determine its use must rest firmly in the hands of the people, not corporations and the institutions that serve corporate interests. So read on and join the movement!

AfD's Defending Water for Life organizers march in Mexico City, saying ¡Nestlé Basta Ya! photo:Art Cohen

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JUSTICE RISING is a publication of **The Alliance for Democracy,** whose mission is to end the domination of our politics, our economics, the environment, and our culture by large corporations. The Alliance seeks to establish true economic and political democracy and to create a just society with a sustainable, equitable economy.

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Democratic Defiance To Stop The Water Barons

Alliance members know that democracy is about much more than going to vote on election day. It is about "We the people" having real power to make decisions that will impact values that we hold most dear. This is about preventing corporations from utilizing corporate personhood to usurp our rights. It is the core issue of our mission to "End Corporate Rule."

So when the Alliance's Defending Water for Life campaign proclaims that water is a commons to be held in the public trust for people and nature for all time, we have to act on this belief in ways that assert local democratic control. As was demonstrated most recently in New Hampshire where the Department of Environmental Services (DES) and the New Hampshire Supreme Court rejected all town and citizen arguments against a corporation being allowed to take their water (see page 5), this country's regulatory systems and courts are in the hands of the corporatocracy.

It takes defiance—as in our song "Join the Alliance" by Jim Bush who wrote "Don't let corporate domination be the downfall of the nation. Show a little true defiance, join with us in our alliance." And defiance is just what the town of Barnstead, New Hampshire has shown (see page 4) when they passed an ordinance that states "placing the control of water in the hands of a corporate few, rather than the community, would constitute tyranny and usurpation" and therefore they will not allow corporations to take their water.

And defiance is what the city of Cochabamba, Bolivia demonstrated when Bechtel came to town and made their water unaffordable. They said "*Basta*" (enough) and took to the streets until Bechtel left their city. In March, Bolivia's Minister of Water showed more defiance when he told the corporate-led 4th World Water Forum in Mexico City that water is a social/cultural good, not an economic good, and must be excluded from all trade agreements (see page 13). Around the world people are standing up to the water barons.

So join the Alliance's Defending Water for Life campaign and stand up to the water barons by showing some democratic defiance. For the latest news and actions on water and other campaigns, subscribe to AfD's E-mail Updates at www.theallianceforDemocracy.org.

Council Nominations

This is the official notice to members of the Alliance for Democracy (AfD) to submit nominations of qualified persons to serve as candidates for membership on AfD's National Council. The Council is responsible for the business of the Alliance between the conventions.

Council members envision the role of AfD within the broader movements to end corporate domination and to spread social, economic and environmental justice. They establish policies to facilitate attaining the goals of AfD and oversee fundraising and the budget for the ongoing expenses of the Alliance.

Council seats open for election include: two co-chairs; two vice-co-chairs; a secretary, a treasurer, and five at-large members. There are also two ombudsmen positions that need to be filled. The nominations committee has nominated a slate of people for these positions including Nancy Price and Lou Hammann as Co-chairs, the incumbent officers, and five at large members. Regional Reps are elected by their regions and Cliff Arnebeck will be on the board as past Co-Chair. For a complete list, email rtp@mcn.org. Send nominations to the AfD Nominations Committee at PO Box 14, Caspar, CA 95420

Guest Editors & Future Issues

This issue of Justice Rising has the good fortune of being written and edited by Ruth Caplan and Nancy Price, with a special contribution by Jan Edwards. Ruth served as the first national co-chair of the Alliance with Ronnie Dugger and since then has co-chaired the Corporate Globalization/Positive Alternative campaign with Dave Lewit. She represents the Alliance in the Our World Is Not For Sale global network opposing the WTO and is author of "Trading Away Our Water," on how the trade rules impact water and water services. She is national coordinator of AfD's Defending Water for Life campaign. Nancy Price is Co-Chair of the Alliance for Democracy National Council and Western Coordinator of the Defending Water for Life Campaign. In California, she represents the Alliance in several coalitions working for water as a human right and as a memmber of the California Coalition for Fair Trade and Human Rights.

The next issue of *Justice Rising* will look at the corporate origins of war and the democratic struggle for peace. We welcome submissions and graphics about AfD participation in researching the corporate role in war from the Carlyle group and Halliburton to the spreading of corporate free trade zones through means of military might.; and in grassroots actions to bring this to an end. Deadline for that issue will be September 1. Email submissions to rtp@mcn.org; or mail them to *Justice* Rising, Box 14, Caspar, California 95420. Call 707-964-0463 if you have any questions or ideas. Letters to the editor are also welcome in *Justice Rising*.

The winter issue will be on corporations and religion in America. It will be guest edited by Elizabeth Shoal, Public Policy Director of the California Council of Churches and by long-time AfD member Henry Clark,Theology Professor emeritus. The deadline for that issue will be November 15.

Corporate Spin Takes Us All for a Tumble

After an intense 15-year marketing campaign, the bottled water giants have convinced us that there's nothing wrong with wanting bottled water any time, any place.

Enticed by picturesque labels of clear mountain streams and designer "plastic" bottles, the public pays little heed that Coca Cola, PepsiCo and Nestlé are tapping into our public water commons for their private profit and that 10 billion plastic bottles end up as garbage or litter each year.

Now, in the U.S., bottled water is the fastest growing "beverage" with more than $7.9 billion in sales last year. Today, beer, coffee, and milk sales are static, and bottled water outpaces all other beverages, including coffee and milk, and is second only to soda pop.

Bottled water may soon top the list because the beverage-makers have agreed to limit sales in elementary and intermediate schools to bottled water, juices without artificial sweeteners and non-fat milk products by the school year 2009-2010. As expected, an International Bottled Water Association spokesperson said this "reflects an opportunity for the bottled water companies!"

This great success of the bottled water industry is not just the triumph of American consumer capitalism bringing together the persuasive power of advertising and public relations with clever and persuasive text and images. This is the culmination of corporate efforts to refurbish their image and role in society.

After the challenge to corporate power by the 19th century Populists had been safely squelched by the regulatory regime of the first half of the 20th century, corporations set out to reassure the public and politicians that bigness posed no threat to democracy and American values. More importantly, considered now by the courts as persons, the "corporation" set out to prove they were "good neighbors," looking after our needs and welfare. That they had soul!

Today, we must challenge corporate power promoted by this image and demand that water be protected as a commons, not commodified in bottles for profit.

Please call Nancy Price 530-758-0726 or Ruth Caplan 202-244-0561, if you would like to get involved in the Defending Water for Life campaign.

Resource: Roland Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business*, (1998).

The Big 3 Bottlers

Nestlé/ Nestlé Waters/ Nestlé Waters North America

Nestlé is the world's largest food and beverage corporation with annual sales over $70 billion. Nestlé entered the bottled water market by buying Perrier in 1992. Today, Nestlé Waters is established in 130 countries and markets 77 different brands produced in 33 countries. In the U.S. Nestlé Waters North America was #1 in bottled water sales in 2004 with sales of almost $2.7 billion. U.S. brands include Arrowhead (CA) , Calistoga (CA), Deer Park (PA & FL) , Ice Mountain (MI), Ozarka (TX), Poland Spring (ME), and Zephyrhills (FL), which primarily use spring water sources.

Coca-Cola/Dasani

Coca-Cola is a household name around the world, but many people don't know that Dasani bottled water is a Coke product. Dasani is just municipal water with some extra treatment. Coke conveniently draws water from municipal systems near its existing bottling plants. After forming a joint venture with Danone Waters of North America and then buying out Danone's share in 2005, Coke gained full ownership of Dannon, Sparklets and Alhambra brands, becoming #2 in bottled water sales in North America . Coke's bottled water sales in U.S. was still less than half of Nestlé's sales in 2004. Coke has not diversified into non-beverage products.

PepsiCo/Aquafina

PepsiCo ranks as the fourth largest food and beverage company in the world. It began bottling Aquafina in 1994, well ahead of Coca-Cola. Today it has 33 Aquafina bottling sites in US and Canada where, like Coke, it draws municipal water and then adds extra treatment. Pepsi claimed that Aquafina was the best-selling national brand of bottled water in 2003, getting around Nestlé's multiple brands. In 2004 it had $936 million in sales compared to Coke's $1.3 billion.

Victory for Water & Life

In Barnstead, New Hampshire

On March 18, the townspeople of Barnstead, New Hampshire voted in favor of the "Barnstead Water Rights and Local Self-Government Ordinance" in their Town Meeting, with only one dissenting vote. The ordinance not only bans corporations from taking water from Barnstead except for local use, but it also denies them corporate personhood. The preamble harks back to the days of the American Revolution:

> "We believe that the corporatization of water supplies in this community—placing the control of water in the hands of a corporate few, rather than the community—would constitute tyranny and usurpation; and that we are therefore duty bound, under the New Hampshire Constitution to oppose such tyranny and usurpation."

We are therefore duty bound, under the New Hampshire Constitution to oppose such tyranny and usurpation.

The AfD's Defending Water for Life campaign's New Hampshire organizers worked with citizens in Barnstead over the past year to achieve this victory. This came in the second year of our New England campaign to help communities prevent the corporate privatization of their municipal water/sewer services and stop bottled water companies like Nestlé from appropriating the towns' water in order to profit from bottled water sales.

As we watched towns in New Hampshire and Maine try to keep out the bottlers by using the traditional regulatory approach, even by passing what seemed like very strong local ordinances containing what seemed like insurmountable obstacles, we saw how little real power these approaches actually gave to towns to control their local water resources, their commons, their patrimony. We saw how state laws and regulations were failing these communities. We knew that we needed to develop a strategy based on the work of the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) and their Democracy School (see box) which concentrates on the corporate actor not the regulatory action.

Barnstead was selected as the first town to implement this model because the Town Meeting had voted the previous year to take action to protect their water. The documentary *Thirst* had also been shown, drawing a large local turnout. Barnstead is near Nottingham and Barrington which, along with Save Our Groundwater, have been trying to stop a bottling operation using the regulatory mode. It also shares a high school with Alton, where a permit to sell 250,000 gallons per day of town water to an unnamed bottled water operation was recently approved and is just south of where Crystal Geyser Roxanne has gotten permission to expand its bottled water operations.

At the suggestion of local citizens, the Barnstead Selectmen invited our organizers to one of their weekly meetings and then to make a detailed presentation to the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board. There it was suggested that a lawyer named Thomas Linzey, who was doing interesting work with rural communities in Pennsylvania to keep corporate hog farms out of their towns, might be willing to come and provide some advice. The Selectmen decided they wanted to invite Linzey to meet with them and tell about his work with the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF).

Thomas came to Barnstead on a Sunday afternoon in late October and told the story of his work. The Selectmen asked questions and then everyone broke for homemade soup and bread. Coming back together, Thomas looked across at the Selectmen and asked, "So what do you want to do?" The Chair of the Board of Selectmen looked back and said, "We want you to help us draft an ordinance to protect our water" and told the citizens present that the Selectmen were right in step with Thomas on this issue.

And so the ordinance was drafted. The Selectmen approved the drafted ordinance, but to make this truly democratic it was important that the whole town support the measure. It was agreed to bring the ordinance to the Town Meeting in March.

Thomas returned to Barnstead in February with Richard Grossman—well known for his writing on corporate power—to give a week-end Democracy School so more citizens could share in a deeper understanding of how corporations have come to exercise such power at the expense of the people. Local citizens then mobilized to talk to everyone in town about the proposed ordinance and to hand out copies a few days before the town meeting.

On the heels of the Barnstead victory, it is tempting to say that now every town in New England should pass a similar ordinance. To be successful, however, this effort requires patient organizing and a deep understanding of what our forefathers fought for in the first American revolution. That will not happen overnight.

CELDF Democracy School

Democracy Schools, begun by Linzey and Grossman in Pennsylvania and now taking place around the country, teach why democratic self-governance is impossible when corporations wield constitutional rights to deny people's rights. They teach a paradigm shift, from regulating corporate behavior to asserting our inalienable rights as a sovereign people over corporations. Attendees explore the limits of conventional regulatory organizing and learn how to "reframe" single issues to confront the rights used by corporations to deny the rights of communities, people, and the earth. Lectures cover the history of people's movements and corporate power. For more information and to register, see www. celdf.org

New Hampshire Supreme Court
Corporations Win Over the People

The battle between citizens advocating public trust protection of water and a corporate drive to commodify water for private profit is coming to a head in Hew Hampshire. For five years the citizens of Nottingham and Barrington, NH have been fighting USA Springs' proposal to pump water from the local aquifer and build a bottling plant, possibly to sell local water as far away as Europe.

Both towns and the citizens who formed Save Our Groundwater (SOG) worked diligently within the regulatory framework to make their concerns heard. They initially won when the state Department of Environmental Services (DES) denied USA Springs a permit. But their victory was short lived as DES soon approved a resubmitted USA Springs plan.

SOG's hopes rose when NH voters elected a sympathetic new governor. But in NH the governor does not have the power to appoint his cabinet. This is done by an antiquated Governor's Council not appointed by the governor at all. So Governor Lynch did not have the authority to replace the head of DES or the Attorney General. As a result, when SOG and the towns went to state court to appeal the DES decision, the Attorney General filed a brief in full support of the DES.

But it was not just a matter of who the officials were. The New Hampshire Supreme Court decision issued on May 19, 2006, makes clear the incredible burden the state regulatory regime places on towns and citizens. They have to show that the DES order is "clearly unreasonable or unlawful," because "all findings of [DES]...shall be deemed to be prima facie lawful and reasonable...."[1]

Thus incredible power is given to the DES by the state and virtually no power to the citizens. But wait, New Hampshire law (referred to as RSA-Revised Statutes Annotated) has very strong language about water as a public trust. It says in part:

> "The general court declares and determines that the water of New Hampshire whether located above or below ground constitutes a limited and, therefore, precious and invaluable public resource which should be protected, conserved and managed in the interest of present and future generations. The state as trustee of this resource for the public benefit declares that it has the authority and responsibility to provide careful stewardship over all the water lying within its boundaries."[2]

Yet, with a wave of the hand, the court agreed with the corporation and dismissed all arguments based on public trust. They based this decision on the fact that the public trust language appears in the chapter "State Dams, Reservoirs and Other Water Conservation Projects" and thus is deemed by the court not to apply to the chapter on regulating large groundwater withdrawals. No help for the towns from the state Attorney General on this one either.

In its conclusion, the court told the state legislature that it is up to them to change the law if they don't like the outcome, saying "to the extent that the statutory language upon which we rely remains in force, the legislature is free to amend it if it disagrees with our construction."

Now much hope is being placed in SB386, a bill expected to be signed by the Governor, which adds a public trust statement to the section of the code regulating large groundwater withdrawals.

Unfortunately the language greatly weakens the principles set out in Chapter 481 by setting the standard for protecting the public trust as private uses being reasonable "in light of the protected interests of the general public in the use and enjoyment of groundwater and other public waters by ensuring that no unmitigated adverse impact, as defined in this chapter, occurs."[3]

Contrast this with Barnstead NH. Rather than getting wrapped up in a failed regulatory system, the people have asserted their authority to prevent corporations from taking their water—period. Since the Barnstead ordinance does not rely on regulatory laws, the Supreme court decision does not apple to Barnstead.

[1] Supreme Court of New Hampshire Number 2004-601, p. 3
[2] Section one of RSA Chapter 481
[3] See http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2006/SB0386.html

The water of New Hampshire whether located above or below ground constitutes a limited and, therefore, precious and invaluable public resource which should be protected, conserved and managed in the interest of present and future generations.

SOG demonstrators in New Hampshire demand a STOP to the USA Water project photo: SOG

Bottled Water

Healthy Living or Toxic Accumulation?

While the bottled water industry wants us to think drinking water from plastics is the epitome of healthy living—the reality is quite different.

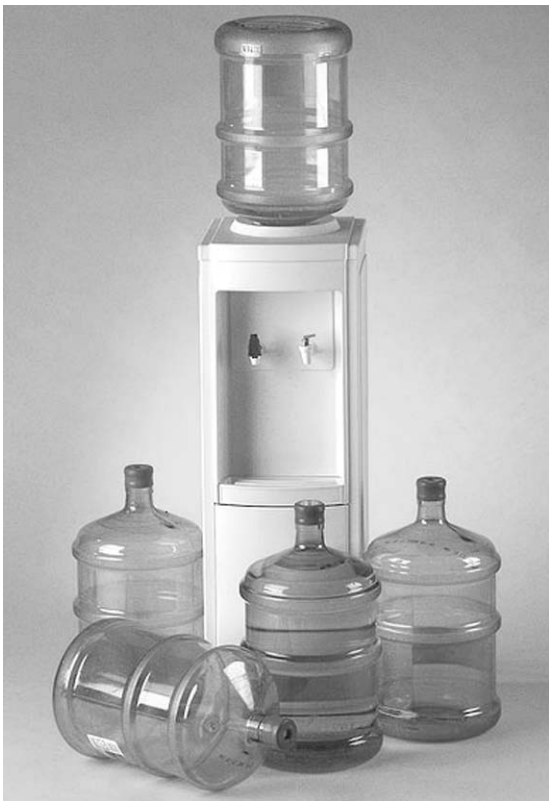
Labels on bottled water conjure up images of pure mountain streams and ice-capped mountains. But what are you really buying when you take that bottle of water off the shelf? Have you stopped to think about the plastic bottles? The plastic is made from petroleum and natural gas to produce chemical compounds, called resins. From creation of the plastic to formation of the plastic bottles, to storage of water in the plastic bottles, to final disposal, these resins create a world-wide toxic trail of land, air and water pollution—most of all, pollution of our bodies.

Bodies Harmed Without our Consent

Tests of human blood, urine and hair document all types of toxic industrial chemicals—flame-retardants, Teflon, pesticides, and plastics—that accumulate in our bodies.

Plastic water bottles contribute to this total body burden. The most harmful chemicals include phthalates and Bisphenol A. Phthalates are found in PVC—Polyvinyl Chloride (#3) used for products like medical equipment, children's toys, and plastic wrap. PET (#1), the plastic most widely used for bottled water, is also a chemical compound with phthalate but there is not yet clear science about whether this is harmful or not. Bisphenol A is used to make polycarbonate plastic (#7) large jugs for home and office water coolers and for Nalgene bottles.

Recently, antimony, a chemical used in PET, was discovered to leach from the bottle right after being capped; and after 3 months, the level was 175 times higher than before bottling. Experts say more research is needed on antimony which is toxic and in high amounts may cause death.



Anyone for a nice cool sip of Bisphenol A?

Animal research and human studies document how these chemicals disrupt normal hormone system function, because of similarity with our body's own estrogen. This extra dose particularly impacts the precise timing and hormone signaling needed for normal fetal development. Alarmingly, tests of amniotic fluid, umbilical-cord blood of newborns, and breast milk show contamination. Not even the smallest, most vulnerable of us escape!

This new bio-monitoring science shows that not only a single chemical, but the cumulative impact of many chemicals in our bodies from conception to death, cause risk of long-term health problems and contribute to well-documented trends in disease.

This evidence shows:

- abnormal fetal development resulting in learning disabilities and hyperactivity in children
- bio-accumulation over a life-time leading to dementia and Parkinson's-like diseases
- disruption of hormone function, including thyroid; and insulin resistance related to diabetes
- genital abnormalities in boys, including DNA damage in sperm and low sperm counts; prostate cancer
- fertility problems and endometriosis in women, including miscarriage and pre-term birth
- early puberty in girls likely creating a pre-condition for breast cancer

Take Action: Stop Corporate Pollution Now and for Future Generations

- Support state laws to ban the use of phthalates and Bisphenol A such as AB 319 in California, which would ban their use in products, used by children under age 3.
- Expose corporate lobbying against such bans. In California, the petro-chemical-plastics industry is vigorously opposing AB 319
- If corporations announce they are voluntarily phasing out harmful chemicals, make sure they are not substituting other harmful carcinogenic and toxic chemicals.
- For action at the community level to bar corporate persons from harming the health and lives of real persons, study the "Corporate Chemical Trespass Ordinance" at the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund website that says in part "The deposition of toxic chemicals or potentially toxic chemicals within the body of any resident of Liberty Township is declared a form of trespass, and is hereby prohibited." http://www.celdf.org
- Use opensecrests.org to research and expose industry campaign contributions. www.opensecrets.org/
- Debunk the myth that bottled water is the healthy alternative!

For the latest science and more information see: Our Stolen Future, www.ourstolenfuture.org/ Environmental Health News, www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ Center for Health, Environment & Justice, www.chej.org/ and their BeSAFE PVC Plastic Campaign www.besafenet.com/pvc/

Ethos Water

Watch Out For Starbucks Greenwashing

Have you been in a Starbucks recently and noticed their Ethos Water? If so, have you stopped to read the label? "Helping children to get clean water" the label declares. By this they mean that five cents is donated to organizations helping people in underdeveloped regions get clean water.

Starbucks founder Jonathan Greenblatt is quoted in a *New York Times* magazine story *Big Gulp-How a Bottled Water Tries to Quench Consumers' Thirst to do Good*, saying:

> "The brand 'allows people to understand the world water crisis and feel as if they are connected to the solution.' ...writing a check is less effective in the long run than 'trying to build a movement to address this problem'....Ethos...' makes activism possible.'"

So what is wrong with that? First, it encourages the use of bottled water by making people feel good about buying bottled water when in fact there are very serious problems (see pages 3-8). But the marketing of Ethos Water as a socially responsible consumer choice raises additional concerns. In a letter to Ben Packard, Director of Environmental Affairs and Corporate Social Responsibility for Starbucks, the Sierra Club's Water Privatization Task Force put it bluntly:

> "We are concerned that while your marketing aims to make customers feel good about helping poor communities, bottled water actually puts the distribution of water into corporate hands, linking the price of water to the vagaries of the marketplace. While access to clean and affordable drinking water is certainly a serious problem, it can be exacerbated when private companies take over public systems and then avoid servicing poor areas. This in turn drives communities to depend on charities like Water Aid, one of Starbucks' supported charities, which is partly funded by Thames (now owned by the German energy giant RWE) and which is actively promoting privatization in US communities like Stockton, CA."

We don't need Starbucks to help make activism possible. We need people to stop drinking bottled water and start demanding water as a human right not a commodity for corporate profit!

Bottled water actually puts the distribution of water into corporate hands, linking the price of water to the vagaries of the marketplace.

Bio-Plastic: "Soil Not Oil" Corporate Image Make-Over

Water bottles that decompose. No more plastic bottles littering our roads and landfills. Less global warming. What could be better? This is what Cargill/Dow and Denver-based BIOTA want consumers to believe.

Using Cargill Dow's Nature Works™ PLA compostable corn-based plastic, Denver-based BIOTA launched BIOTA Spring Water in 2004 as "the world's first bottled water/beverage packaged in a PLAnet Friendly ™ bottle…manufactured from a 100% renewable resource, corn…not oil! " Their slogan is "Together we can make a difference one bottle at a time."www.biotaspringwater.com/

Now Coca-Cola and Nestlé are exploring bio-plastic bottles and packaging. And in Britain, Belu, using Cargill's Nature Works has launched their Natural Mineral Water as the U.K.'s first compostable bio-bottle that "comes from nature and can go back to nature." www.belu.org and click on "Our Story."

Like Starbuck's Ethos Water, Belu invites the consumer to join them in good works saying, "Everybody wants to make a difference, Now You Can." Belu donates 100% of their net profit to WaterAid, aiming to give annually as much as $1.8 million. http://www.wateraid.org

So should we all stock up on these "green" brands or is this another case of green washing? Most basic, this is still bottled water which means water is being commodified and sold at market prices. Local ecology suffers when the springs and groundwater are exploited. Then as Belu admits, the bottles have to be commercially composted, using a specific process, and consumers are warned, that if they do it at home, "you have to know what you're doing." Moreover, Australian scientists have raised concerns about harmful environmental impacts as bio-plastics decompose.

Then there is the use of GMO corn which gives corporate ownership to the seeds of life and which requires intensive use of petroleum-based pesticides and herbicides, adding more pollution to our bodies and water sources. Finally, the manufacture and transportation of the bottles requires more oil and energy, adding to global warming.

Let's not be fooled.

Why You Should Care

- Bottled water is the way corporations are taking the human right to safe, affordable, accessible drinking water and turning it into a commodity, sold at market prices to those who can afford to pay the price, often at 1,000 times the cost of tap water.

- With bottled water, the giant corporations, primarily Coke, Pepsi and Nestlé, are creating a parallel private distribution system over which they have full control from the water resource to the market shelf.

- More than 10 billion plastic water bottles end up as garbage or litter each year. We all pay for their disposal with our tax dollars.

- Bottled water introduces a whole new stream of toxic plastics from manufacturing the plastic and then rinsing the bottle that puts plastic dust into the waste stream, including also chlorine and disinfectants needed to flush water lines. Hormone disrupting chemicals used in plastic contaminate the environment, leach into our landfills and pollute our bodies.

- Bottled water is not tested by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration, which does no testing. While Coke and Pepsi use municipal water which is tested by EPA, Nestlé uses spring water which is only tested by the industry. When the Natural Resources Defense Council tested more than 1000 bottles of 103 brands, they found contamination, including synthetic organics, bacteria and arsenic, exceeding allowable limits in at least one sample from about one-third of the brands, . Check out www.nrdc.org/water/drinking/bwbwinx.asp.

What You Can Do!

- Avoid buying and using bottled water.

- Use a stainless steel water bottle. Refill it from the tap and carry tap water with you during the day.

- At public events, the office and home, offer pitchers of water. Ask your public officials to do the same at public meetings. Don't give the water bottlers free advertising.

- Inquire whether local restaurants are selling and serving bottled water. Educate them about the issues. Ask them to serve pitchers of tap water.

- Inquire whether your city or school district is negotiating or has signed an exclusivity contract for bottled water and other beverages. File a "Public Records Act (PRA) Request" to learn contract terms, minimum sales, advertising rights, and penalties or incentives linked to sales. See flier on Exclusivity Contracts at www.thealliancefordemocracy.org/water

- Make sure that your public works department provides good quality tap water and that it is available for everyone in your community at an affordable price.

- If for any reason your municipal water is not meeting Environmental Protection Agency standards or you have other concerns, buy a filter to attach to your faucet. Even the best filters are far cheaper than bottled water.

- Do a price comparison of local municipal tap water and bottled water brands at your local stores and publicize it. Ask your local food coop and other sympathetic stores to post the price comparison.

- Do a taste test comparing your local water and several brands of municipal water. For details go to www.thealliancefordemocracy.org/water

- Find out where the bottled water sold in your stores comes from. Find out what kind of impact the pumping is having on the environment.

- Show the documentary *Thirst* available from the AfD office and hold public forums to educate the community about the need for a strong local law to stop corporations from taking your water. Use the AfD flier at: www.thealliancefordemocracy.org

- Advocate for strict local, county and state groundwater laws to protect your aquifer, watershed, and other water sources from pollution. Work to identify local, actual and potential sources of pollution and advocate for enforcement of laws, penalties and clean up.

- Talk with your family and friends about the danger of toxic chemicals, including hormone disruptors, leaching into bottled water (see page 6-7).

- Expose the serious public health impacts of plastics production and disposal . Corporations have no right to pollute our bodies.

Water Out of the WTO: STOP GATS!

AfD's Defending Water for Life campaign is a leader in exposing how international trade agreements promote corporate water profiteering. Our *Trading Away Our Water* publication, with versions in both English and Spanish, has been widely used in the U.S. and Latin America. Ever since the WTO demonstrations and forums in Seattle, AfD has raised the alarm about how one WTO agreement – the General Agreement on Trade and Services or GATS – is a threat to local democratic control over water services.

We celebrated when the U.S. government refused the European Union's request that "water for human use" come under GATS rules. Unfortunately, this does not mean that we can stop worrying.

GATS negotiations are now in a critical stage as the pressure builds for the WTO to move ahead on much delayed negotiations to conclude the 2001 "Doha Round." One section of GATS on "Domestic Regulation" is especially troublesome. AfD has issued an action alert. We need you to act as soon as you read this newsletter! Go to www.thealliancefordemocracy.org for more information

Take Action NOW!

Write to the key officials at the office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) and cc your City Council members. Tell them that you do not want the WTO rules on GATS to trump local democratic authority to protect local water resources and to regulate the provision of water and sewer services. Use information from this *Justice Rising* to be specific about your concerns. Follow up with phone calls to your City Council members. Ask them to get in touch with the USTR right away.

Write to:
Ambassador Susan C. Schwab, US Trade Representative
Christine Bliss, Acting Assistant US Trade Representative for Services and Investment
USTR, 600 17th Street NW, Washington DC 20508

Water & Trade Action Alert

PRESERVE Local Authority to Protect Water Resources and Services
STOP the GATS Deregulation of Services before it is too late!

Negotiators for the World Trade Organization (WTO) are drafting new rules that will allow national, state and local regulations to be challenged just because they might be considered too "burdensome" to corporations. Under these "domestic regulation" rules—local and national laws protecting water and water services—could become violations of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).

With its recent decision against the European moratorium on genetically modified organisms, the WTO has proven it can undercut popularly supported regulations. WTO negotiators are now taking the provisions that have proven so successful in attacking regulations over goods and inserting them into the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS). Depending on which proposal is ultimately adopted, regulations that are either "too burdensome," "not relevant," and/or "not reasonable" will become violations of these new GATS rules on domestic regulation. The fact that regulations may not discriminate against foreign service suppliers will be no defense. This is not about "fair trade," it is about promoting corporate rights over people's rights.

What is at stake

"Domestic regulations" are being defined so broadly that there is no aspect of service regulation that would not be affected. Some examples are:

- Sustainability studies for bottled water production could be ruled "unnecessarily burdensome" and a violation of GATS rules on technical standards.
- If cities do not give "prompt" approval to sewage treatment plants or water systems, this could be a violation of GATS rules on licensing procedures.
- Standards for the treatment of wastewater could be considered "unreasonable" or "unnecessarily burdensome," and a violation of proposed GATS rules.

Some analysts are saying that all services, including the provision of drinking water, would automatically be covered. Other analysts are suggesting the rules would "only" apply to sectors where commitments have been made. This would still mean that sewage disposal would be governed by these rules, because many countries, including the U.S., have already made commitments in this service sector.

Negotiations on a Fast Track!

According to the present timeline, services regulation will be governed by new GATS restrictions by the end of this year. We must demand that "domestic regulation" of services not be included.

Remember: Water services are at risk as long as negotiators are contemplating "across the board" rules on services regulation. Even if rules are "only" applied to committed services, that means the construction of water pipes, sewage services, and services like mining and forestry services that impact water will be under these rules in a wide range of countries.

Action by concerned citizens has succeeded in getting the European Union to withdraw its demand that GATS rules cover "water for human use." Now the campaign must achieve a halt to the GATS negotiations on domestic regulation, which can only result in intolerable limitations on local and national authority to regulate water services and protect water resources.

Local and national laws protecting water and water services—could become violations of the General Agreement on Trade in Services

"Let The People Vote"

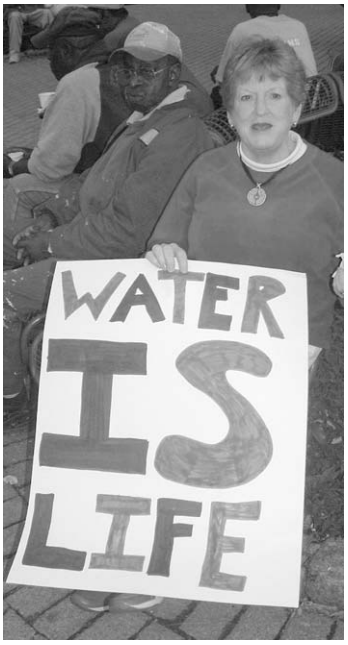
How Transnational Corporations Undermine Grassroots Democracy

This sign at a rally in Lexington Kentucky on November 8, 2005 says it all. photo: justicelist.typepad.com

"Let the people vote," exclaimed the citizens of Stockton California. They were speaking in opposition to the deal that German energy giant RWE's subsidiary Thames Water and Denver-based OMI made with the mayor that contracting with RWE/Thames/OMI to run their water/sewer system would bring cost-savings to the city. Flaunting a scheduled referendum on the question after citizens had collected the requisite number of signatures, the mayor had the city council vote on the contract before the people could vote. The documentary *Thirst* shows Mayor Podesta saying "Do I think the people should vote? Absolutely not!" as he ordered the police to close the doors on the spillover crowd chanting "Let the people vote!" *Thirst* also shows RWE's CEO speaking at the Third World Water Forum in Kyoto and saying they would never go where people did not want them.

"They backed down because we managed to elect some very 'pro-public water' candidates for the city council slate."

So what does RWE do when the mayor of a city does not want them? In Lexington, Kentucky, the mayor supported having the city buy its water/sewer system from RWE which had acquired the private system when it bought American Waterworks. In fact the city had been in court to set the price for the takeover by eminent domain. In the next election, RWE helped make sure that enough sympathetic council members were elected to reverse the takeover decision. The people wanted a vote. They collected the necessary signatures to have a special election in November 2005. RWE went to court to stop the election. They lost in the two lower courts then won in the state supreme court. The people could not vote in a special election!



Lexingtonian Mary Steckbeck makes a point. photo: justicelist.typepad.com

RWE was still in court to prevent a vote of the people in the November 2006 regular election. Meanwhile, RWE decided that water was no longer as profitable as their core energy business and began looking for buyers in Spring 2006.

Perhaps to shine up their tarnished image, RWE withdrew their court case. "As we continue to analyze the issue on condemnation, it's clear the issue is one that will continue to distract our community and our company," Kentucky American president Nick Rowe said in a statement. "The best thing for all of us is to let our customers vote."

Lane Boldman, with the local Sierra Club noted, "They backed down because we managed to elect some very 'pro-public water' candidates for the city council slate during our primaries last week. That means we will have a majority pro-public water Council come November. So if they didn't allow it on the ballot, they would invariably lose if the issue went to the council." She expects RWE to "start a negative media blitz again" to influence the vote. In fact by press time, she had already received a mailing from Kentucky American containing a return postcard for customers to send saying they are against condemnation. "I assume they are gearing up to collect names and emails for their next publicity blitz," she said.

ReWirE American Water

RWE's move to sell its water business opens up many opportunities for local communities to begin proceedings to take over their system. In fact this is already happening in seven towns -- Monterey and Felton CA, Urbana, Champaign, and Pekin IL, Gary IN and Chattanooga TN. Food and Water Watch has begun a campaign ReWirE American Water! Saying "We demand that RWE negotiate fairly with cities and communities interested in purchasing their local water utility. Having learned from communities' experiences with RWE, we demand that our local and state elected officials stand up for local ownership of water everywhere." To learn more and join the campaign, go to www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/corporations/reWirE

Public-Public Partnerships

Leading the Way to Well-Run, Democratic, Publicly Accountable Systems

The blush is off the rose when it comes to claims by transnational water corporations that they can provide water services more efficiently than the public sector. As communities and countries reject the failed corporate model, new public sector models are being developed, particularly in Latin America, to overcome bureaucratic inefficiencies and to create companies that are truly democratic by giving people a real voice in how the system is run. The goal is affordable, clean water for all, not just for those who can afford to pay more.

One way to achieve this goal is to share expertise on a not-for-profit basis by partnering well-performing public utilities with those needing to improve. These "public-public partnerships" are in contrast to the "public-private partnerships" which the corporations have promoted in order to profit from running public systems and move toward full privatization.

Public-public partnerships can be within countries or between countries. Public systems in Sweden, Finland, Japan and the Netherlands have all provided cross-border expertise to Eastern European and Southern countries. Waternet, Amsterdam's municipal utility, has provided non-profit expertise to developing countries for the last 30 years and presently provides the equivalent of six full time staff per year for this purpose. While providing advice, they respect the local operators and do not seek to control how they operate their system. Financial assistance is also sometimes provided through the Association of Dutch Municipalities.

This model could be used in the U.S. to help ensure that all public systems are well run. The other key elements are transparency and public involvement in determining priorities and ensuring accountability. Participatory budgeting, implemented in Porto Alegre and other municipalities in Brazil, serves as a model in this regard.

To read case studies of public-public partnerships and other initiatives to create efficient, democratic public systems from around the world, order *Reclaiming Public Water* published in January 2005 by Corporate Europe Observatory and Transnational Institute. Send a check for $15 made out to Food & Water Watch and mail to: Food & Water Watch, 1400 16th St NW, Washington DC 20036. Mark the envelope "Reclaiming Public Water."

As communities and countries reject the failed corporate model, new public sector models are being developed.

The Big 3 Water/Sewer Corporations Plus a Newcomer

Veolia Environnement/Veolia Water North America

Veolia Environnement began as a spin-off from the giant French corporation Vivendi when its CEO nearly bankrupt the company by going on a Hollywood buying spree and needed cash to cover its debt. Vivendi moved into the U.S. market in 1999 by acquiring US Filter, the largest U.S. private water services company, for $6.2 billion. After disappointing profits in developing countries, Veolia announced its goal of "Strategic refocusing on long-term contract business within the North American water operations." In 2003, Veolia claimed municipal contracts with 42 wastewater facilities and 26 water facilities in the U.S, accounting for $380 million in revenues.

Suez-Ondeo/United Water

Suez, formed in 1858 to build and operate the Suez Canal, today operates around the world with 91 million water customers and 49 million wastewater customers, using the trade name ONDEO for its water services. In 2001, Suez paid over $1 billion to buy United Water, the second largest U.S. private water company. Its contract with the city of Atlanta ended in a debacle of poor service with the mayor terminating the contract. Suez then instructed its companies to reach profitability within three years by reducing its financial exposure in emerging countries and increasing its investments in the potentially more profitable markets in Europe and North America.

RWE-Thames Water/American Water Works

RWE, a German multinational energy conglomerate, entered the international water business in 2001 by buying Thames Water in Britain and then buying most of ENRON's Azurix when Azurix went bankrupt. In January 2003, RWE bought American Water Works, the largest publicly held U.S.-based water utility with 16 million customers in 29 states and three Canadian provinces. With these acquisitions, RWE ranked just behind Suez and Veolia. Now that its energy business is heating up, RWE is looking to divest in its water business either by selling to private investors or through a public offering.

Aqua America

Aqua America is becoming an important U.S. player as it expands into new markets from its origin as Philadelphia Suburban. With an aggressive acquisition strategy in place, it now claims to be "the nation's largest U.S.-based, publicly-traded water company, providing water and wastewater services to approximately 2.5 million residents in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Texas, New Jersey, Indiana, Virginia, Florida, North Carolina, Maine, Missouri, New York and South Carolina."

The Right To Water Here At Home

Communities Fight For Social & Environmental Justice

Today, a severe drought combined with competing demands for water from agribusiness, industry and growing cities, have combined to put the historic acequia water rights in jeopardy

The question of whether water is a fundamental human right or a market commodity comes into sharp relief when poor communities, often communities of color, find their access to affordable, clean water out of reach as both industry and agriculture waste and pollute local water supplies and fast-growing urban centers suck water for lawns and pools. In California, the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water, and in New Mexico, the New Mexico Acequia Association, are helping communities fight for their rights.

CA: Water is a Human Right

In California, agribusiness and industry elites profit from the right to use water at very low cost. Today agribusiness is selling their right to use water to water-hungry cities at huge mark-ups. This market-based re-allocation, combined with pollution from agribusiness and industry, leaves poorer communities thirsting for water. Now they are fighting back, but it is not easy. Here are two examples.

In the Central Valley of California, home to large corporate farms, a small Hispanic community of farmworkers, near Fresno, with contaminated wells from pesticide runoff, organized and got county and state funds to dig one deep well accessing clean water and to build a public system. Still each house must pay $1000-$3000 to connect up —an almost insurmountable hardship without further assistance.

In one community in Monterey County, desperate, low-income residents were faced with exorbitant rate hikes by Cal-Am, owned by RWE. Rates increased from a $21 flat monthly rate to as high as $430. Unable to pay their water bills, they drove 150 miles to a Public Utilities Commission hearing in San Francisco to protest the excessive rate increases. As a result of their protest, the PUC reinstated a lower flat rate.

photo: Orihuela Digital

Now communities across the state, faced with pollution of their wells and other local water supplies, are coming together to demand safe and affordable drinking water. They are demanding that the state fund health studies to document and treat diseases caused by pollution in their communities and fund the clean-up.

NM: Managing Water as a Commons

In New Mexico, local Indo-Hispanic communities in this semi-arid region have for centuries relied on the traditional acequia system of irrigation and allocation among users, based on cooperative local self-governance. An "acequia" refers to the community of farmers that cooperatively maintain the ditches and share the water through custom and tradition so that community needs are met for irrigating crops and grazing animals. Water is directed into the *acequia madre* (mother ditch) so the *aquador* (water master) can allocate water to local users through irrigation channels.

As Paula Garcia, Executive Director of the New Mexico Acequia Association emphasizes: "we view water as the lifeblood of our communities because water brings us together as a community and water is essential to the continued survival of our way of life. Today, a severe drought combined with competing demands for water from agribusiness, industry and growing cities, have combined to put the historic acequia water rights in jeopardy." Competing water rights claims are ending up in court—a long, expensive process that pits the acequia communities against state and federal agencies. The New Mexico Acequia Association advocates using the acequia approach to resolve individual disputes rather than relying on courts and also using the concept statewide to prevent any one community or group of people from being disenfranchised and their way of life threatened.

As these communities stand up for their right to water as a matter of social and environmental justice, they become a part of the global movement for the right to water stretching from Cochabamba's mobilization against Bechtel to Rajasthan India's movement aimed at Coca-Cola to the villages of China polluted by factories feeding the global market.

Resources: Thirsty for Justice: A People's Blueprint for California's Water, The Environmental Coalition for Water, 2006 www.ejcw.org; The New Mexico Acequia Association www.acequiaweb.org

"The water is ours, damn it!" proclaims the banner above a celebrating Bolivian crowd photo: nadir.org

Looking South

Uruguay and Bolivia Lead the Way

Uruguay Voters Drive the Right to Water into Their Constitution

Saying that all people have the right to water is one thing, but actually making it a part of a nation's constitution is quite another. This is just what the people of Uruguay did when they voted in a national referendum on October 31, 2004, to amend their constitution. The vote came as a result of a two-year campaign led by the National Commission for the Defense of Water and Life, a grassroots network including Friends of the Earth Uruguay.

As a result of the vote, the Uruguay constitution now guarantees that piped water and sanitation is a fundamental right to be available to everyone in the country. Further, social considerations are to take precedence over economic factors in setting water policy, and for-profit corporations are banned from supplying water for human consumption.

Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians and co-author of *Blue Gold* was in Uruguay to witness this historical moment. She relates, "The night before I left I spoke to hundreds of people at a big public forum, assuring them that their work had been worth it and that we would take their constitutional amendment and use it as the basis of an international campaign. But the standing ovation and tears came when I ended my speech with the words affirming that on October 31 'Todos somos Uruguayos' – we are all Uruguayans."

When Thomas Linzey of the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, with whom the Defending Water for Life campaign works closely, says movements drive rights into the constitution, this is the kind of action he is talking about. When will the right to water be made part of a state constitution? Or the U.S. Constitution?

Bolivia Establishes First Water Ministry in Hemisphere and Calls for Water Out of All Trade Agreements

The story of the people's revolt in Cochabamba against Bechtel taking over their water system and charging outrageous rates has now been told many times, including in the documentary *Thirst.* Less known is the social uprising in El Alto in January 2005 which has led to steps which will force Suez to sever its contract with the city. Now the new government of President Evo Morales has created a Ministry of Water to protect the people's right to water from corporate predation.

Bolivian Minister of Water, Miguel Lora, spoke this past March at the International Forum on the Defense of Water held in Mexico City as a counter to the corporate-led 4th World Water Forum. He made clear that the Ministry's goal is to have all water companies operating in Bolivia be public and to have in place a public water model that is efficient and transparent. The Ministry will also be in charge of protecting Bolivia's water resources, looking at the cumulative impacts of concessions granted to mining, electric and oil companies, while respecting traditional knowledge, uses and cultural diversity.

Further Lora expects that including the right to water in the Bolivian Constitution will be on the agenda of the Constitutional Assembly when it convenes in August to rewrite the Bolivian Constitution. He will also press for an international right to water for all living things.

At the 4th World Water Forum, the new Bolivian government caused intense political debate about the Ministerial Declaration by insisting that four major points be included:

- Water is a human right.
- Water is a social/cultural good, not an economic commodity.
- Water must be excluded from all trade agreements.
- Water infrastructure can be financed by governments if they don't finance their military operations.

Despite the World Water Council issuing its report *The Right to Water* (see p. 1), Bolivia's insistence that the human right to water be included in the final World Water Forum declaration led to "fierce controversy during the two-day negotiations by government representatives from around the world." Support by Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Paraguay, Venezuela, Uruguay and some European countries such as Spain and Sweden was overcome by strong opposition from Mexico, the UK, the Netherlands, France and the U.S. In response, Bolivia, Cuba, Venezuela and Uruguay tabled a "Complementary Declaration" with their demands. See www.corporateeurope.org/water/mexicocity.htm for more information.

President Evo Morales has created a Ministry of Water to protect the people's right to water from corporate predation.

Culture Splash

Water and the Cultural Commons

by Jan Edwards

If we could step back from our cultural training and see Water as it really is, we would see one complete cycle—one Water—flowing through every living thing on earth and connecting us all to the whole. What should be our proper and true relationship to this Water Commons?

The historical development of the Cultural Commons has changed humans' relationship to Water from one of a gift of nature for all to share—towards a property relationship. In the beginning of life, Water was shared in common by all that depended on it. Plants and animals—including humans—took only what they needed at the moment. But as humans began to settle in one place, Water became a strong ribbon in our common tapestry and human cultural ribbons began to impact how Water was thought of, allocated and used.

As humans developed a common language, they named and categorized Water. Each naming separated the Water into fragments of the whole. With numbers, humans measured and metered Water. Money made it possible to set a monetary value to Water, and when this was done, changing it from a Common to a commodity.

Businesses profit and consumers are fooled into paying a hefty price for something that is priceless and yet free as our birthright.

Human knowledge grew and Water irrigated fields and turned wheels to grind grains grown in those fields. Water became less a force of Nature and more a resource for human civilization. Water became a tool and controlling Water an instrument of power.

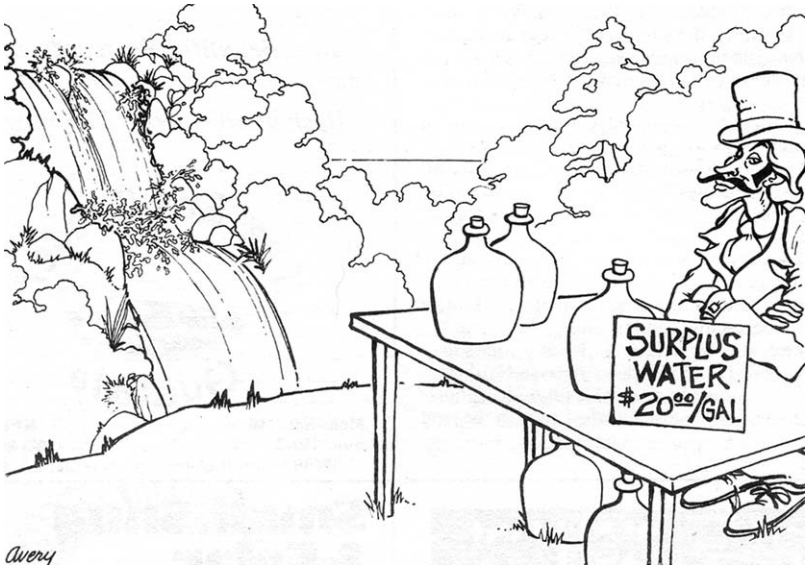
Wars fought for Water solidified ideas of "ownership" of Water, control of Water, and Water as a border. Development of Water-borne transportation allowed humans to move goods by Water and led to rules about who could navigate this river, fish this sea, cross this mote. This led to colonization of other lands and, once there, to "enclose" and privatize the Water Commons.

In art and literature, Water was objectified and stereotyped. Water was beautiful and fearful, mysterious, powerful and unknown. There were Water gods and myths of monsters. Water also came to represent purity and is integral to traditions from baptisms to rain dances. Recreation involving Water permeates our culture. We create snow for the purpose of skiing and chlorinate cement pools to swim laps in.

Water has become essential to all sorts of business. Water is big business, being bought and sold by multi-national corporations, which are now trying to push Water into the new trade agreements. But perhaps the ultimate example of the corporate co-option of Water is the branding and selling of bottled Water. Businesses use many aspects of our cultural commons to distort our proper relationship to Water, and Water to us. First there is the language, spring Water; then the numbers,one liter; and money; $3.99. All the knowledge of how to make the bottle of poisonous plastic that pollutes the very Water we so want pure is an application of scientific cultural commons. How the bottle travels, probably over Water to be filled and then again to be sold is also a cultural development. The Water source is captured and exploited. A bottling plant is built and polluted waste Water from the bottling is dumped into nearby streams. The media advertises and promotes bottled Water's virtues of health and fashion while reminding us of ancient fears of sickness from Water not sealed in plastic. Businesses profit and consumers are fooled into paying a hefty price for something that is priceless and yet free as our birthright.

Our Cultural Commons need not be the enemy of the Natural Commons. Many traditional cultures treated Water as a shared common. Even in the U.S. much of water law is based on the right to “use” not “own” water. We also have public trust doctrine to build on. We can turn our cultural creativity towards an understanding of who we are in relation to nature, and learn to see Water as a giver, and all of us as receivers, of a kind of Grace—Water Grace.

Jan Edwards is the creator of the "Tapestry of the Commons" which is online at www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org. She is a member of the Redwood Coast AfD. Contact her at janedwards@mcn.org



graphic: Bob Avery

Defending Water for Life

Our national campaign, "Defending Water for Life," fights water privatization and helps communities organize to keep water in the public trust. AfD activists testify at public hearings and speak to community groups about the importance of local control of water resources and infrastructure. We also can provide you with documentaries, literature, and information on proactive community organizing.

For more information about our Defending Water For Life Campaign, contact the national coordinator, Ruth Caplan, at 202-244-0561, rcaplan@igc.org, or the Western U.S. coordinator/AfD co-chair Nancy Price, at 530-758-0726, nancytprice@juno.com.

For a membership contribution of $50 or more, we will send you a handcrafted water-drop pendant. Wear it or give it to someone to show your support of water as a public good.

Yes, I want to join the Alliance for Democracy at the $50 level and receive my glass water drop pendant. Please send me the design I've checked below.

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_____ Blue swirls
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Water pendant designed by Jan Edwards

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Join the Gathering for
Our Communities: Our Water

Alliance for Democracy Defending Water for Life Campaign Partners with Mass Global Action to Sponsor Gathering of Water Activists and Workers from New England, New York and eastern Canada

The "Our Communities, Our Water" conference will be held September 22-24 on the University of Massachusetts campus in Amherst. It aims to:

- Protect our communities from corporate privatization of our water and sewer systems
- Protect our springs and groundwater from being depleted by corporations as they profit from selling bottled water or exporting bulk water
- Connect grassroots activists with public water workers to learn from each other and support each other
- Join with a growing global movement on the right to water for people and nature and understand the role of global institutions in denying this right
- Map out clear action plans for future collaborations and build a regional support network.

"We need to get to know each other as well as learn about the issues so we can build a strong network to take on the water barons," said AfD's Defending Water for Life Campaign coordinator, Ruth Caplan.

For more information and to register, go to http://www.massglobalaction.org