

Justice Rising

15168 Caspar Road, Box 14
Caspar, CA 95420
707-964-0463

jr@thealliancefordemocracy.org

Jim Tarbell

Editor and Layout, *Justice Rising*

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.

The Alliance for Democracy

P. O. Box 540115

Waltham, MA 02454-0115

Tel: 781-894-1179

Email: afd@thealliancefordemocracy.org

www.thealliancefordemocracy.org

Nancy Price and Lou Hammann

Co-Chairs of the AfD National Council

Copyright ©2008 Alliance for Democracy

Letters to the Editor and Future Issues

Justice Rising received several letters to the editor about the last issue on *Migrants: World Citizens or Corporate Slave*. We are making a section on our website for letters and a place for readers to respond or discuss *Justice Rising* along with a *Justice Rising* blog.

The next issue of *Justice Rising* will be on *Food: Corporate Control or Grassroots Food Sovereignty*. Contributions are welcome. The deadline is September 15. Nancy Price and Ruth Caplan will guest edit the issue after that looking at the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America.

Justice Rising

"Where a community...is not satisfied with the service rendered or the rates charged by the private utility, it has the undeniable right...to set up...its own governmentally owned and operated service."

—Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1932

The sun and wind are part of the Commons. It only makes sense that the public use them to generate electricity. But corporations have an iron grip on electrical production for their own ends. Since the late 1800s, Wall Street financiers and electricity suppliers have understood that selling electricity is a road to riches. Their wealth is dependent upon keeping centralized generation of electricity under their control and charging prices that allow them to pay off their huge capital investments. Decentralized wind and solar electrical production would free us of their death grip.

Politicians like Franklin Roosevelt realized that corporate ownership and commodification of electricity leads to high energy prices. The public outcry pushed for public ownership of production and distribution of electricity.

Corporate power used massive public relations campaigns and political manipulation to defeat this early public-power movement. In place of public utilities, they created an oxymoron—regulated corporate monopolies. Then they successfully controlled the regulators and set the prices.

Now, the destruction of the environment and skyrocketing fuel prices have ignited a new round of public-power advocacy, which is promoting decentralized wind and solar-energy production. Corporate utilities are fighting these innovations because they threaten corporate profits by decentralizing power generation, rendering their old, polluting, centralized generators obsolete. Public entities, on the other hand, concerned about the public good, understand the external costs of energy production—most especially global warming—and appreciate the value of decentralized wind and solar power generation.

Groups like Citizens for Local Power (see page 15) are sprouting up across the country to take advantage of this movement. The establishment of Community Choice Aggregation allows local municipalities to get into the power utility business without buying the wires and poles. Public utilities can generate sustainable electricity. But corporate utilities, Wall Street financiers and large-scale electric generation manufacturers oppose these efforts. As one energy consultant advises, without strong political will, public ownership will never happen.

Political will has made public ownership of electricity happen in the rest of the world. It is time to make it happen here. Citizens must take the energy away from the corporate behemoths and claim it as grassroots power, forever.



Water, Nature and the Alliance for Democracy

by Nancy Price

Corporate capitalism is destroying fresh, regional water systems in the quest to get oil out of tar sands. Now Bush wants to exploit the oil shales of Western states that will similarly impact local and regional water sources. Enabled by complicit governments, corporations commodify, privatize and profit from almost every aspect of nature. AfD's "Tapestry of the Commons" project brings a new focus to the concept of "the Commons"—what to consider part of "the Commons" and what principles might apply to the use and sharing of "the Commons."

With AfD's focus on the water commons, we propose a definition of "the Commons" that includes:

- the rights of nature—in this case water—and the

obligation of communities to protect these rights for the ecosystem for seven generations;

- the community's right to use water to promote the common welfare,
- denial of the rights of corporations to take water from the community to sell for profit; and
- more broadly denying corporations the ability to use Constitutional law to deny the rights of people and nature.

See www.tapestryofthecommons.org and email Nancy Price—nancytprice@juno.com for a presentation. For AfD's Defending Water for Life in Maine and the new Defending Water for Life in Oregon project websites see our Defending Water for Life Campaign at www.thealliancefordemocracy.org