

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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WORKSHOP TALKS

Why do risky jobs?

by Htun Lin

"The capitalist mode of production produces, thus, with the extension of the working day, not only the deterioration of human labor power by robbing it of its normal moral and physical conditions of development and function. It produces also the premature exhaustion and death of this labor-power itself. It extends the laborer's time of production during a given period by shortening his actual lifetime."

—Karl Marx

Since Marx wrote those words, we workers have fought and won the battle for a normal eight-hour working day. Because we have now been made to compete with offshore production in dictatorial countries, we're fighting the same old battles and losing those gains, often with the help of union bureaucrats condoning restructuring schemes.

U.S. workers are now experiencing what Third World workers everywhere have: toiling under the despotism of an exploitative system based on layers of subcontracting. Muslim women in Malaysia, making Nike shoes in Korean-subcontracted factories, are no longer the only ones suffering from such a system.

A case in point is a U.S. worker, Mario Echazabal, who worked at Chevron's California refineries for some 20 years as a subcontractor. He applied to Chevron for a permanent position with benefits and greater job

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BLACK/RED VIEW

Bush's Black museum

by John Alan

While it was not in the headlines or announced on the six o'clock news, on Dec. 28 President Bush signed legislation to establish a presidential commission of 23 members to create a National Museum of African American Culture in the mall in Washington, D. C. This legislation was introduced by Rep. John Lewis, and quickly sailed through both houses of Congress. During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, Lewis was a militant leader of SNCC and thought that the idea of the 1963 March on Washington was unduly tame.

Whoever these commissioners may eventually be, they should be aware that they can't separate African-American culture from the African-American history of freedom struggles. And if they do so, they would be guilty of presenting an African-American culture outside of the unique life of a nation divided into two races since the 17th century.

Culture is not merely a work of art, a novel, a painting or music. It is a whole way life, filled with contradiction, alienation and the will of many people to overcome the contradictions and create a world without estrangement.

The Abolitionists and the runaway slaves created a substantial culture, which opposed the culture of slavery by organizing a permanent attack against the institution in newspapers, pamphlets, books and mass meetings. They used every available cultural form to put American slavery on trial.

For example, during the bitter debate over the fugitive slave law and whether or not the U.S. Constitution was pro-slavery, Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote and published *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the most popular anti-slavery novel. Whether you like Stowe's novel today or not, for its time it was a great leap forward in American culture when the new self consciousness of the opponents of slavery refused to merge with state power

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World capitalism faces global economic slump

by Andrew Kliman

Despite the recent talk about the "end" of the recession in the U.S., the global economy is in an unusually "synchronized" slump—a fact that is bound to have a long-term impact on developments here at home.

According to the most recent figures, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has fallen for three straight quarters in Japan and two straight quarters in Germany—the world's second and third largest economies. GDP is also falling in France, Italy, and Austria, and its growth is a miniscule 0.1% or less in Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. The "emerging economies" in which GDP is falling include Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Israel, and Turkey.

Official Russian government estimates indicate that its economy, too, either failed to grow or contracted in the final quarter of 2001. The Asian economic crisis of a few years ago spread to Russia in 1998, causing it to default on its loans and devalue the ruble. Yet the Russian economy rebounded sharply, mostly because the price of its oil exports tripled and the collapse of the ruble cheapened its exports, making them more competitive in the world market. Now that oil prices have fallen and the ruble's value has stabilized, the Russian economy may again be heading downward.

Absent from the list of declining-GDP countries is the U.S. The U.S. may or may not have pulled out of its recession, which began last March. Most, though not all, measures of economic activity have recently turned upward. Preliminary figures indicate that GDP rose at a 1.4% annual rate in the fourth quarter of last year after falling by 1.3% in the third, though it is possible that revised figures will show that the decline continued. The official definition of a recession, however, is not based on GDP but on trends in employment, industrial production, and other measures of economic

activity.

In any case, the real questions are whether the recovery in the U.S. will be strong or weak, and indeed whether the beginning of an economic upturn during the last month or two is sustainable.

UPTURN OR DOWNTURN?

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan told a congressional committee at the end of February that "An array of influences unique to this business cycle ...seems likely to moderate the speed of the anticipat-



Independent Media Center / Spain

Over 300,000 protested in Barcelona, Spain, on March 17 in the largest anti-globalization protest to date (see page 12).

ed recovery." The economy, in other words, will not recover rapidly from the recession. He predicted that the unemployment rate, which stood at 5.5% in February, would continue to rise and eventually reach 6 or 6.5%. Many private-sector economic analysts, such as Ian Shepherdson of High Frequency Economics, agree that "this will be a jobless recovery," at least in its early stages.

Others are projecting that the recovery will be a "profitless" one as well. A failure of profits to rebound would be particularly significant because profits fell

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Israel-Palestine crisis at boiling point

Words can barely convey our outrage at the actions taken by Ariel Sharon and the Israeli government against the Palestinians over the past month. In its most massive military operation since the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Israel carried out a series of deadly attacks against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank in March that killed over 160 and wounded hundreds. Sharon's bold declaration that the aim of the operation was to kill as many Palestinians as possible was underscored by his refusal to allow ambulances into the refugee camps to remove the wounded, which included many children and infants.

Israel's assault, temporarily cut short by the tepid intervention of the Bush administration, shows that Sharon has not changed one iota since he presided over a massacre in Lebanon in 1982 of over 800 Palestinians. As the Israeli publication *Ha'aretz* put it in an editorial on March 5, Sharon's "deeds and failures show that the fate of the Israeli state is to a large extent in the hands of unbalanced people."

It isn't alone that Sharon's government must be overthrown in order to put a stop to this bloodshed. It's that he is a war criminal who must stand trial for the bloody deeds committed over his sordid career.

BUSH'S BELATED 'INTERVENTION'

The Bush administration put the brakes on Sharon's all-out offensive by mildly rebuking him and sending its Middle East envoy, Anthony Zinni, back to the region to impose a ceasefire in mid-March. However, nothing is more illusory than to think that Bush has suddenly become concerned about the Palestinians. The only thing that motivates him is his drive to widen the "war against terrorism" into a permanent war against anyone he deems opposed to U.S. interests. The next target of a potential U.S. military attack is

Iraq. Sharon's offensive threatened to undermine U.S. plans by focusing world attention on the Palestinians, at a moment when the U.S. wants everyone to be thinking of Saddam Hussein.

The plain fact is that if it were not for the carte blanche that Bush gave to Sharon over the past year, the massive Israeli assault of the past weeks would never have happened.

Sharon's all-out war on the Palestinians has become a complete siege of the occupied territories, with U.S.-supplied tanks, helicopters, and F-16 fighter planes. Since September 2000, when Sharon started the current stage of the conflict by making an armed visit to one of the holiest sites in Islam, the Harem Al Sharif, 1,200 Palestinians and 350 Jews have died.

The Bush administration responded to this carnage by disengaging from the effort to even appear that it was trying to bring the parties together. Each time the administration made a faint-hearted pretense to "reengage" on the issue of Israel-Palestine, it allowed Sharon to subvert it. That was true late last year, when Israel killed talk of a resumption of negotiations by assassinating a leader of the Islamic fundamentalist group Hamas, even though Hamas had suspended suicide attacks against Israel for two months after September 11. That was true last December, when Sharon issued more punishing restrictions against Palestinians just as the U.S. spoke of possibly getting reinvolved. And that was true in January, when Israel announced its interdiction of an arms shipment supposedly intended for the PLO, just in time to derail an earlier mission by special U.S. envoy Zinni.

The more the Palestinian Authority has condemned terrorist attacks, including September 11, the more Sharon has provoked terrorist attacks against Israel through assassinations of Palestinian political leaders, the virtual house arrest of Arafat, and intensified air and ground attacks on innocent civilians in the West

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EDITORIAL

Recapturing the Reason of women of color

by Maya Jhansi

The weekend of March 16, I went to the Color of Violence conference held in Chicago at the University of Illinois, attended by 1,400 mostly women of color from around the world. While there were a lot of great things at the conference (see article on this page by Angee Moorer), there were also some serious problems that came out in some of the sessions, particularly in the workshop I attended called "War and Militarism."

Woman as Reason

Over the past few months, women in the U.S. have become visible in the anti-war movement in their support for the work of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA). RAWA has held a very principled stand against both the policies of the U.S. and the rabid Islamic fundamentalists that have ravaged the country. While the anti-war movement in Chicago and other parts of the country debated whether or not to take a stand against the attacks on the World Trade Center, hundreds of women flocked to show their support for RAWA. Women in the U.S. and all over the world heard RAWA as a genuine human voice of freedom and democracy.

WHERE'S THE FEMINISM?

That is why I was surprised at the panel on "War and Militarism" to find that only the speaker from RAWA took up the problem of religious fundamentalism. The speaker who took up the anti-war movement here in the U.S. focused only on U.S. policies, arguing that the Left in the U.S. had not done enough to educate the people on U.S. culpability in Afghanistan. This is hardly true, since the main focus of the anti-war movement has been U.S. imperialism.

The anti-war movement, rather, has neglected the issue of fundamentalism, and has not tried to solidarize with women fighting against it. An important case in mind is the plight of Safiya Hussaini, who was condemned to death by stoning for adultery in Nigeria and was just freed (see page 11).

At a feminist conference, I would expect a panel on "War and Militarism" to focus on women's lives; I would expect to learn about women's resistance to war and militarism. But there was hardly any discussion of struggles of women against fundamentalism and war. One of these speakers even called Islamic fundamentalism an "image" concocted by the West! Two speakers addressed the plight of Palestinian women; however, both talks were marred by rhetoric about the supposed "Zionist-Imperialist" plot to destroy the Arab world. Many people, myself included, are horrified by the vio-

lence perpetrated by Sharon against the Palestinian people—but to talk about Israel as an "illegitimate, racist settler state" ignores the two worlds in Israel and the work of people like Women in Black.

I felt very confused that this kind of Old Left and cultural nationalist and even anti-Semitic rhetoric came to dominate a panel at a feminist conference.

How could this happen? It shows that the Women's Liberation Movement is not exempt from the problems of the Left, but is part of the contradiction. We have to work to make sure that the category of "women of color" not be reduced to an empty identity politics, a shiny new package for old ideas that the Women's Liberation Movement once challenged.

ENVISIONING WOMEN AS REASON

U.S. women in the 1960s and '70s, including Black, white, Chicana, Native American women, came out of the Left and challenged its narrow vision of freedom from within the Left, which had subordinated women's liberation to the more "important" problems of race, class and nation. Women of color in the 1970s and '80s challenged the way the feminist movement began to narrow itself in the same way, self-limiting its vision of freedom to increasingly narrow definitions of gender oppression.

As the statement issued by the Combahee River Collective, a Black feminist organization founded in 1974, declared: "Black women are inherently valuable. Our liberation is a necessity, not as an adjunct to somebody else's, but because of our need as human persons for autonomy." To the Combahee River Collective, identity politics was not separate from a liberatory agenda. They had a vision of total social transformation. "If Black women were free," they wrote, "it would mean that everyone else would have to be free, since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression."

It is this revolutionary impulse inherent in the Women's Liberation Movement that has to be recaptured for today.

While Bush plans out the nuclear destruction of the planet, and Al Qaeda and other fundamentalists continue to wreak havoc on the lives of women, it is important that feminists and anti-war activists not fall into the ideological traps that destroyed many great movements of the past. We need to make sure that the profound concept raised by the Women's Liberation Movement of transforming human relations and not just external structures of oppression is not lost.

International Women's Day 2002: new struggles, new challenges

Chicago—The Chicago International Women's Day 2002 Planning Committee held a forum called "Women Confronting Fundamentalism Globally" on March 9 at Roosevelt University. Approximately 100 people were in attendance.

The event was organized to develop the international feminist movement inspired by the struggles of women of Afghanistan, particularly RAWA, since the September 11 terrorist attacks in the U.S.

By taking on the theme: "Afghanistan is Everywhere," our intention was to show how women around the globe, including in the U.S., are battling fundamentalism wherever it exists—be it in reactionary state policies or on the streets at the scene of a clinic blockade or gay bashing.

By bringing together ethnically diverse speakers, African American, Iranian, Indian, Afghan and Lebanese, we hoped to build feminist solidarity across borders and within this country, to gain a theoretical perspective to move forward as a global movement.

It was a tall order to fill but beginnings were made. Dr. Madhuri Deshmukh talked about the situation of South Asian women and about the uniqueness of what the Women's Liberation Movement has shown: that the revolution we seek must involve a reorganization of human relationships at the most personal level.

Both she and Dr. Janet Afary spoke about women's struggles within other liberatory movements necessary for women's freedom—like national liberation movements—and yet how freedom for women has been betrayed by these same national movements.

Dr. Afary made it a point to discuss how many women's organizations within Iran are portrayed as feminist when in reality they are women's organizations in compliance with Islamic mandates, that never call into question sexism.

This became a point of contention when Dr. Laila Farah changed her planned presentation to respond to Afary and Deshmukh. In critiquing the savior mentality of bourgeois western feminists, Dr. Farah ended up putting cultural concerns above women's liberation.

However, Dr. Farah was in the minority as Deborah Benford of Affinity Community Services, an African-American lesbian and bisexual women's organization, spoke on racism, homophobia, and sexism not just from the right, but from within liberation movements.

Yasmeen Shorish of the Women's Alliance for Peace and Human Rights in Afghanistan spoke on her organization's call for a war crimes tribunal to bring to justice all who have committed war crimes—from the Russian invasion, to the mujahadeen, to the Taliban.

Nitrice Johnson, executive director of the Chicago Abortion Fund, gave a brief report on reproductive health in the U.S.

Although there was little discussion about fundamentalism in the U.S., it is a major threat. There was a call to continue dialogue throughout the year on these issues.

—Sonia Bergonzi

Memphis, Tenn.—"Women Moving Beyond Violence: Military, Terrorist, and Domestic" was the forum that Voices for Peace and Women's Action Coalition sponsored for our celebration of International Women's Day. The talks presented a deep view of women's condition and our struggle for a more liberated reality.

Marquita Bradshaw from Youth Terminating Pollution spoke about the effects of military pollution on women. Bradshaw had done a survey of students at Hamilton High School—a school that, unbelievably, was built directly over a drainage ditch where waste from the Memphis Defense Depot flows.

She interviewed 14 to 21-year-old women in three zip codes near the school. The results she reported made the audience gasp: 23% reported miscarriages; 7% infertility; 12% diagnosed with breast cancer; 2% diagnosed with ovarian cysts; 4% had uterine cancer. Fully

Women build movement at 'Color of Violence'

Starting on Friday, March 15, one of the largest gatherings of women of color took place at the University of Illinois Chicago. This historic event lasted three days and drew 1,400 women from the Americas, Africa, Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, South Pacific and Canada. The Color of Violence Conference was organized by Incite! Women of Color Against Violence. The first conference took place in April 2000 in Santa Cruz, California.

Incite! is a national activist organization of radical feminists of color advancing a movement to end violence against women of color and their communities through direct action, critical dialogue, and grassroots organizing. The main theme of this year's conference was "Building a Movement."

Although topics of plenaries and workshops like "Organizing in Communities of Color" and "Re-politicizing the Movement" seem straightforward, the theme of the conference seemed to be about how to overcome the varying obstacles facing women of color, the incarnations of violent war tactics used against our different cultures to create impediments to any revolutionary movement before it is born.

As a sister of color interested in change, I will dis-

Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey



Independent Media Center

More than 150 demonstrators in New York City commemorated International Women's Day with a protest against global injustices focusing on the world's sweatshop workers—80% of whom are women. Their march wound through the East Village and Soho pausing for a moment of silence at the site of the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist fire that killed 146 mainly immigrant women workers.

* * *

With the 1996 Welfare Reform Act up for renewal this year, welfare rights activists marched in Washington, D.C., March 5, protesting three proposals of President Bush: 1) an increase in funding from \$50 million to \$135 million for abstinence-only sex education programs with no discussion of contraception; 2) financial incentives to states to force single mothers into marriage, and 3) a new subminimum wage with no workers' rights as part of the workfare program.

43% of those she interviewed talked of problems with their reproductive systems. Bradshaw termed this "an epidemic" that young women are organizing themselves to fight.

Terry Moon from News and Letters Committees spoke on "Women in Afghanistan," detailing how women are fighting the dehumanization foisted on them by the Taliban and Northern Alliance. She concluded that "Women fighting for freedom from multiple oppressions challenge the Left to look further than who we oppose, to what we are fighting for, and what is our vision of the future."

Elizabeth Shelley, founder of Survivors of Abusive Relationships (SOAR), began: "The women I work with sound like the women in Afghanistan. They too are treated like things, like possessions. They have no property, no rights, they are sexually abused—some passed around to other men by husbands or boy friends. One in four women in the U.S. is abused; one third of all homicides in Memphis spring from domestic abuse...As Bradshaw said of women suffering from military pollution, this too is an epidemic."

The discussion took up the necessity to create a Memphis movement against police abuse as well as the need to rethink what revolution means.

—WAC member

cuss the important message I got out of the three-day conference. Even though I have, from the time I was very young resisted the effects of racist tactics, I had not always been able to recognize them as so.

I know that many, like myself have been purposely denied access to the vocabulary, awareness, and critique needed to validate the soul-felt desire for Revolution. We have been, through the churches we trust and the public education system we rely on, taught to doubt and reject the very ideas designed to help us.

The first time I became aware of the true nature of racism, the epiphany hit me like this, "Racism isn't about me being less intelligent, less capable, or emotionally impotent; racism isn't about African Americans being evil, violent, irresponsible and incapable of addressing the needs of the diverse body of humanity. Racism is about losing a war waged against a people who are advanced enough to always be perceived as a threat if ever they were to regain their power."

Creating awareness of the many incarnations of violence, to encourage resistance and solidarity across unique particulars through the venue of healing spaces, is truly radical.

—Angee Moorer

Immokalee tour for Taco Bell boycott

Memphis, Tenn.—The Coalition of Immokalee Workers came to Memphis for the last stop on their national Taco Bell Truth Tour. Fifty workers and their student supporters stepped off their buses to spread the word, along with their Memphis supporters, of the unfair, often inhuman working conditions under which they pick tomatoes in Florida.

We began the day at the National Civil Rights Museum. After a rally there, we marched three miles—chanting and beating drums and pots and pans—to a Taco Bell. There we rallied again 100 strong, bringing the Immokalee workers' message to the Mid-South. Throughout the day, young Mexican, Haitian and Guatemalan women and men uttered the words of Martin Luther King Jr.

Mathieu Beaucicot—I came to Florida from Haiti in 1992. I pick tomatoes there for Six-L's, which pays \$5.15 an hour. I'm here to fight for changes and help my family, to pay for education, insurance and food for the children. Taco Bell buys tomatoes from Six-L's. Our struggle is the same as Dr. Martin Luther



Coalition of Immokalee Workers on national tour in Chicago march with supporters to Taco Bell.

King's. We have come together with students and with people like you to break the chains of slavery that we face as workers in the field.

On our Haitian flag it says, "Union is our strength." If we fight together, there's no wind, no storm, no force that can beat us. We here are the wind of liberty. We're heading home soon, but that liberty will continue to blow through this country until we win our fight.

Last night, when we were surrounded by police in Little Rock, we felt stronger than ever before because we thought of Martin Luther King and all those who have come before us and how they had to fight that kind of oppression. As King said, if one of us falls, the struggle does not fall.

Gaurav Deep Arora—It's important for students to be involved in this movement, especially because young people 18 to 24 are the prime consumers for Taco Bell. Taco Bell spends \$220 million a year to make us eat their food, so we have a right to demand the food is not produced under conditions of slavery.

It's fitting that we're here in front of the Civil Rights Museum because of the role of students in the Civil Rights Movement. We have to carry that on. We have an important role to keep on fighting for fair work. The workers are teaching the students something our schools don't: to challenge power.

Julia Gabriel—Many times people buy tomatoes that look very pretty, but they don't know the sweat and blood in those tomatoes. The boss sometimes abuse the workers. There are workers in a kind of slavery, who are not allowed to leave the camps.

When I came to the U.S., in the labor camps of South Carolina, I lived the most terrible things you could imagine in the tomato and pepper fields. That's why we're fighting for a better life. In Los Angeles the police tried to break us up and throw us out. If they throw us out of here, we're coming back again and doing another tour.

Hector Vasquez—Comrades, this is the precise moment when workers here are demonstrating their solidarity with the workers in the fields. Workers have lost their lives in struggles all over Latin America. We have to see that capital has a false face that covers up human beings. This means that this struggle is for us, for our children and for the children of our children.

Lucas Benitez—It's great to see the solidarity with us here in Memphis. It's an honor to close this tour at a place that is sacred for us. Many years ago Dr. King came here to support workers who were struggling against the city for a better wage. Today we do not have the slightest doubt that, if he were here, he would be with us too.

It's time to say no more sweatshop labor!
—Boycott supporters

Transport workers beat fixed election

Brooklyn, N.Y.—Those dirty New York City Transit management guys told the union chair, who they control like a puppet, who to vote for in the union election. The election was rigged for management. I was going to run for depot chair as a bus driver for 12 years with two years as shop steward. I am a safety liaison and knowledgeable about compensation issues. It caused too much confusion for the membership so I stepped down.

The election vice chair told people not to vote for us, stating if we ran against him, then we all would lose. He said it would be good to have him in office because the boss likes him and can talk to him. He used personal information about the other candidates as part of his campaign. This man has not taken any classes and does not know the rules.

The depot chair has resigned three times but management coached him and had him reinstated. He was just not up on safety issues, including oil spills. Workers were getting one or two days on their record when they should have gotten a warning. People sometimes ended up getting the wrong compensation form.

Surprise! We won the election for depot chair! The vote was two to one for us. When I threw my support behind our candidate, we really got our campaign moving. It was difficult because of the attempts to back management-leaning candidates. I'm the compensation navigator now, and I've handled three cases. The road is going to be rough ahead, but through our efforts to organize, we are going to make this thing work for the union.

It's necessary to go back and tell the history of the Transport Workers union. People have to see how we used to get beat up for fighting for our rights. We can't let management take our rights away from us by controlling the depot chair.

—Shop Steward, Transport Workers Local 100

Homelessness is now a full-time job

Chicago—Neoliberalism, or naked capitalism free of social restraints, has been accelerating since the mid-1970s. The push for deregulation of industries—trucking, airlines, utilities, and capital itself—began with Jimmy Carter and has picked up speed now with George W. Bush.

Deindustrialization brought structural (permanent) unemployment. Land speculation and rents have skyrocketed as politicians move to attract high-tech businesses and the wealthy back into the cities. Mass homelessness and overcrowded housing have resulted, worsened in this present recession.

TRAMP TRAIL

In 1995, I had my first direct experience with homelessness. I became familiar with the "Tramp Trail" in central Chicago. Within a mile, a person could eat two or three meals a day, with three overnight shelters nearby. Upon learning the ropes, one did not have to travel far to fulfill the most basic necessities. Other social services were also within walking distance.

Near the Loop, a homeless person could obtain an answering service (the phone number is relatively cheap). One could try to find daily work at the many offices, restaurants and stores in downtown Chicago. The Fulton Street (meat and fish) Market and day labor establishments were also near the shelters. In 1995, there were also cheap hotels and rooming houses in the area.

Chicago, like most cities, does far more to push poor people out of the central city than it provides affordable housing. Close to the central city, affordable public housing is being replaced by expensive lofts, condominiums and townhouses. To help facilitate this development, the city forced overnight shelters to move away or close down. Now a homeless person cannot get the services needed in one area. That means you need a pass for the Chicago Transit Authority for \$20 a week or \$75 a month.

There is breakfast served at a Salvation Army mission four miles north of the Loop, and lunch northwest of the Loop Monday through Friday. There is a supper served near there seven days a week. But other meals are served on given days at various times. Most food pantries are of little use to the homeless because they have no place to cook.

DAY OF FASTING

Ironically, Sunday is the worst day for church soup kitchens. It is a day of fasting for the homeless. In the soup kitchens, if you cannot come the hour they serve, find another location or you don't eat. In some locations, later in the hour the food has run out.

The overnight shelters have limited space. In some cases you have to come late in the afternoon to sign up for the night. While volunteers do try to accommodate people, I have seen people turned away in temperatures below 20 degrees.

These facilities run by charities on donations and donated labor, what George W. Bush praises as volunteerism, is a system of inadequacy. Asking the average person to donate to these charities is not enough, since most of the resources of this society are controlled by less than one-fifth of the population. Plenty exists in the U. S. to provide food and housing for everyone, but to paraphrase Woody Guthrie, this is mighty thin soup.

—D.D.

Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

security. But Chevron turned him down once they discovered that he had a liver problem. They said further exposure to chemicals would damage his liver. Under-terred, he reapplied, but this time, Chevron not only turned him down, they went ahead and fired him as an independent subcontractor.

Chevron had absolutely no problem with this man being exposed to chemicals on the job for 20 years, until he decided to become a permanent employee. So he sued, using the Americans with Disabilities Act. The lower court sided with the worker. Chevron appealed to the Supreme Court.

During the Supreme Court hearing, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor suggested that this was a "very strange case," because "why would anyone want to do a job that might kill them or at least cause them serious harm?" This question could only be asked in a world completely imbued with the separation between mental and manual labor.

One may ask why every day workers do expose themselves to well-known harmful situations in 1001 ways. One may also ask why it is such a mystery to great "legal minds" such as O'Connor that workers don't just walk away from it all. Every concrete labor task, every job, exists under capitalism not for the benefit of the worker but only insofar as abstract-labor contributes to an ever-growing accumulation of capital.

Workers, as a category, can't "just walk away." For every worker that successfully walks away, two more fill his shoes, at perhaps half the pay and twice the speed. Even when we "walk" temporarily, as in a strike, the ultimate goal is to return to the workplace in much improved conditions.

On the other hand, a company like Chevron reserves the right to walk away from its 20-year relationship with a worker. It is not the health of Echazabal that Chevron is concerned about. His firing is not meant to minimize this employee's health risks.

When capitalists talk about "minimizing risks," they mean financial risks. The collateral damage of this process is the worker and "the premature exhaustion and death of ... labor-power." After Chevron gets rid of this worker, having enjoyed his labor for 20 years, with absolutely no obligations for his health or welfare, the same harsh conditions of labor remain intact on the shop floor.

There human beings are treated as so much used up equipment to be discarded to make room for a whole new generation of "human capital" to be harnessed to the next generation of super fast machines. That's why workers can't just walk away.

Paid or unpaid, all labor is forced labor—every minute of it. Under capitalism, workers do not have a choice. The only real choice workers have as a class is the ongoing struggle to regain control of not only the fruits of our labor, but also the labor process itself.

The case of Mario Echazabal may seem like that of one lone worker, but it is the plight of workers everywhere. Where capital has the prerogative to move swifly anywhere it pleases, workers are increasingly trapped. Marx foresaw the power of expanding capital to "tear down every Chinese Wall."

Some bureaucrats offer temporary nationalistic and anti-environment solutions. While they may gain a few jobs here and there, they end up isolating our struggles. But if we see our various plights concretely, it means seeing them universally, as one struggle. We have nothing to lose but our collective misery and a whole new world to gain.

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From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya
MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

Editor's note

The escalating violence in the Middle East, prompted by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's effort to destroy any hopes for a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, makes this an important moment to revisit Israel's invasion of Lebanon of 1982—when Sharon presided over a massacre of hundreds of Palestinians. The following is excerpts of Raya Dunayevskaya's "The Need for a Total Uprooting: Down with the Perpetrators of the Palestinian Slaughter," which appeared in the October 1982 issue of *News & Letters*. The piece included material first delivered as part of a Perspectives Report by Dunayevskaya to the 1982 national convention of News and Letters Committees. Note is by the editors.

September 19, 1982

The crocodile tears of Ronald Reagan—and even any genuine outrage he may have felt at the slaughter of the Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps—will not wash the blood from Begin-Sharon, who paved the way for the butchers of Saad Haddad's private army and the breakaway Phalangists.* Nor can they clear Reagan of responsibility for the neo-fascistic acts perpetrated in Lebanon. Nor can they excuse the whole Western imperialist camp which so hurriedly pulled out its so-called international peace-keeping force the minute the PLO guerrillas and their leaders were safely out of west Beirut. The truth is that a solemn pledge was given to the PLO for the safety of the unarmed civilians, which included women and infants as well as men. In varying degrees all of them bear responsibility for the fact that the so-called "law and order" they brought to Lebanon was a form of holocaust, instead.

The only serious opposition to the barbarism is seen in the mass demonstrations within Israel, demanding the removal of the Begin-Sharon government. But that, too, is only a beginning. Even if the Labor and peace parties gain power, that will not change the state-capitalist nature of Israel which resulted in the neo-fascistic Begin-Sharon regime. Nor can we forget that the reason he gained a clear majority was due to the support of Guela Cohen's extreme Right party, Tehiya. In exchange for its three votes, Tehiya was guaranteed several thousand new homes in the occupied region; seven new settlements on the West Bank; and Sharon's sponsorship of the idea of settling the West Bank as if it were part of Israel.

It was precisely for that aim of annexing the West Bank that the latest imperialist venture into Lebanon was taken. It is not just the PLO Begin-Sharon are out to destroy, but the very idea of Palestinian national self-determination. The whole talk of so-called autonomy in the Camp David Peace Treaty was a sham and a snare. This is not the time for any "half-way houses." The Begin-Sharon government must be overthrown!

The events are moving so fast that we no sooner confront one horror than we are confronted with a worse atrocity. Thus, the latest atrocities came only three days after Israel's invasion of west Beirut that immediately followed the assassination of the President-elect, Bashir Gemayel. Far from its claim that its mission was "the restoration of law and order" in the "sovereign state of Lebanon," Israel's goal was the same as in its first invasion of Lebanon in June—not the "sovereignty" of Lebanon, but the establishment of a puppet regime there, under the illusion that its army could destroy the idea of freedom...

Did Israel think that the invasion of Beirut could accomplish its aim of totally destroying the PLO? Even that Great Delusion—which matches the Grand Illusion that an insignificant puppet like Haddad could be installed as ruler over the whole of Lebanon—did not seem to exhaust General Sharon's schema for the Middle East.

The fantastic lengths to which Begin-Sharon were willing to go included entering the Soviet Embassy itself, and risking nothing short of a confrontation between the two superpowers. Even if that proves to have been only a symbolic gesture with which they wished to threaten the U.S., does Israel wish to imitate the Nazis and translate "Deutschland über alles" as "Eretz Israel über alles"?

ISRAEL'S INVASION OF LEBANON

Nothing but horror and utter disgust characterizes the world's reaction to Israel's gruesome invasion of Lebanon. Each day of the endless string of Israel's lying excuses for the destruction of that land—from the claim of securing a "25 mile security zone" for Israel and empty talk of the PLO as "terrorists" at a moment when, not the PLO, but Begin-Sharon's Israel was the one committing the atrocities; to the claim of being for Lebanon's "integrity" as a nation, freed of Syria's and the PLO's invasions only heightened and widened the world's opposition to Israel's attack.

History will not forget such barbarism. Opposition, and even putting an end to these uncivilized acts, cannot, however, be sufficient unto the day without, at one and the same time, showing how it had resulted from a transformation into opposite of what Israel was at birth in 1947-48, and what it is today.

How quickly forgotten (if, indeed, Begin or the Irgun

Stop the slaughter of the Palestinians!

ever knew them) are the true origins of the idea of an "Israeli nationality." The Nazi holocaust, which they invoke today for reactionary purposes, is the fact of history that changed the position of Marxists who had always been for cultural assimilation to the point where nothing deviated from straight socialist goals. (See Leon Trotsky's articles on why, though still fully opposed to Zionism, he now, i.e. 1937—had to be for a "homeland for the Jews." That was the Marxist position on Israel, on the question of national self-determination.)

The same was true for those who weren't Marxists. A good essay by a liberal, Alfred Friendly, describes the shock of today, even of those who still favored Israel in the war of 1967. In "Israel: Paradise Lost" (*Manchester Guardian*, July 11, 1982), Friendly recalls the 1967 war, when he was for Israel and when the attitude was how temporary the occupation was: 1) As one Colonel put it, "There won't be any struggle getting Sinai back to Nasser quickly"; 2) A short while later, Israel enthusiastically accepted UN Resolution 242; 3) Israel categorically denied the Arab accusation that the Zionist objective was a so-called "Eretz Israel," as the Bible expressed it ("a realm extending from the Nile to the Euphrates"), insisting instead that only the "crazies" talked about "Eretz Israel" in that Biblical manner. But, in fact, says Friendly, we were soon to see the "Dayan Plan" which proposed "garrison settlements," which was followed by the "Allon Plan" which talked of Biblical Judea and Samaria, and now we have the "Likud-Sharon Plan" or "the triumph of the Eretz Israel boys." The result is the genocidal invasion of Lebanon.

This transformation of Israel into an imperialist state is a very different point of departure from what we have always used as proof of the transformation into opposite when we pointed to the first workers' state into a state-capitalist society. It is true that this, too, is a state-capitalist society. It is true, also, that, at its birth, it certainly wasn't anywhere as clear a social revolution as was 1917.

Methodologically as well as practically, the point here is that we could—and did—express the contradictions at its birth. We refused to be silent even when we most enthusiastically supported the establishment of "a homeland for the Jews," by pointing sharply to the fact that the land contained the presence—as a minority, it is true, but a presence, nevertheless—of the reactionary Irgun, whose leader was the terrorist, Begin. What a transformation into opposite of the Israel of "Exodus," 1947-48, into the imperialistic state-capitalist Israel of 1982-83!...

It is good that a peace movement has arisen in Israel demanding an end to Israel's invasion of Lebanon at once. It is even better that some of that Left has raised the question of self-determination for Palestinians in Israel—or, rather, the part Israel occupies illegally. (Indeed, what Israel is now trying to annex is Palestine.) But that, too, will hardly solve much if, at the same time, a new banner of genuine liberation is not unfolded....

WHY BEING AGAINST WHAT IS, IS INCOMPLETE WITHOUT STATING WHAT ONE IS FOR

History warns us of other periods which give us historic proof that mere opposition to such monstrous degeneration does not lead to new societies. On the contrary. It only assures the transformation of that type of bare opposition into one form or another of a half-way house. That is true both when we look at the failure of bourgeois democracy and when we look at fascism. Both brought on World War II. Such a victory over fascism only laid the ground for the restoration of state-capitalism—Gaullism as well as Stalinism. Indeed, state-capitalism became a universal.

As we know from World War I, even the magnificent opposition that was successful—the Russian Revolution—once it didn't spread beyond national borders, ended in the transformation of the first workers' state into its opposite, state-capitalism.

Today, we cannot evade asking: What Now? Is the PLO the absolute opposite of Israel, or just one more narrow nationalism? In our age, when a nuclear war threatens civilization as we have known it, we cannot, must not, accept half-way houses as the

answer. Nor do I mean only

outright nuclear holocaust. Rather, the immediate crises of today are both in the "Love Canals" of the world and at the point of production.

CONTRADICTIONS IN THE LEFT

We cannot satisfy ourselves with detailing only what we are against or with enlarging atrocity stories...Nor should our support of the Palestinians for self-determination and the PLO as a bargaining agent lead us away from reexamining what happens to aborted revolutions—in this case, specifically Lebanon and specifically as aided by the PLO in the 1975-76 Civil War there. Which is why we correctly entitled our Philosophic-Political Letter (August 6, 1976): "The Test Not Only of the PLO But of the Whole Left."

Because the Left did not meet that challenge but followed the PLO is one substantial reason for the totality of the crisis today. Just at the point when there was a near success by the indigenous Lebanese Left, and the outcome of the 1975-76 Civil War hung in the balance, the PLO insisted that the concentration must be, not on the native ruler-oppressors represented by the so-called Christian, i.e. neofascist, Phalangists, but on Israel alone, though at the moment Israel was nowhere present in Lebanon and Syria was all ready to invade.

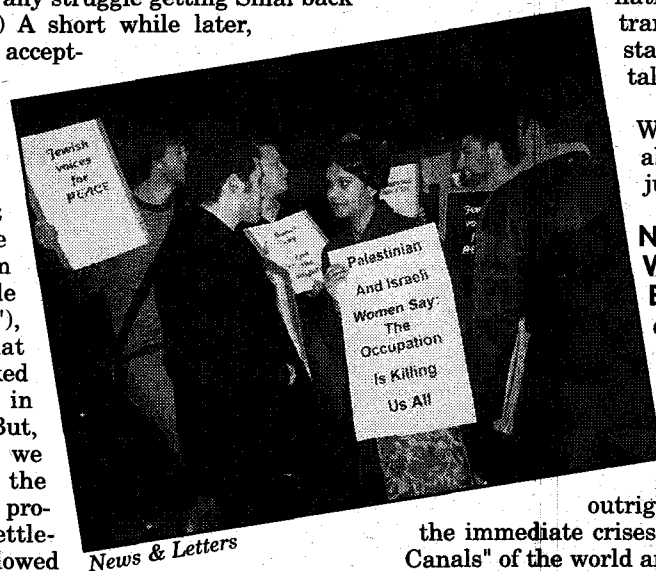
It is Syria the PLO had dubbed "liberators" instead of a new imperialistic force. The great tragedy was that the whole Left—indigenous Lebanese under Jumblatt, Stalinists, Trotskyists—followed the PLO lead. Here is what we wrote in that Philosophic-Political Letter:

"The New Left, born in the 1960s, so disdainful of theory (which it forever thinks it can pick up 'en route'), has a strange attitude toward imperialism. It is as if imperialism were not the natural outgrowth of monopoly capitalism, but was a conspiracy, organized by a single imaginary center, rather as the Nazis used to refer to the Judeo-Catholic-Masonic Alliance, or Communists under Stalin to the conspiracy of the Trotskyists and Rightists in league with the imperialist secret service." (And even, it should now be added, as Khomeini now refers to the U.S. and Israel as the Great Satan.)

"Evidently nationalism of the so-called Third World is of itself revolutionary even when it is under the banner of a king, a shah, or the emirates, or the Syrian Army. Thereby they canonize nationalism, even when it is void of working class character, as national liberation.

"It is not that class is the sole characteristic of national liberation movements that revolutionaries can support. It is that the working class nature is its

(Continued on page 5)

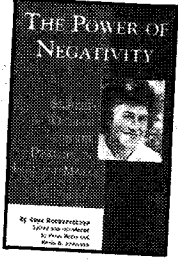


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ESSAY The non-dialectical Marxism of Hardt and Negri

by Kevin Michaels

It would be difficult to identify a recent book of radical theory that has gained as much publicity as Michael Hardt's and Antonio Negri's *Empire*. The book, recently issued in paperback, has been widely reviewed and even appeared in a favorable light in the pages of *Time* magazine. Its publisher, Harvard University Press, advertises the book with claims that its popularity makes it impossible to locate on the shelves of bookstores in New York City.

Such attention would be easy to dismiss if the book was intended to appeal to the prejudices of commentators who have written off the idea of revolution. Instead, *Empire* is a serious essay in revolutionary philosophy and practice. *Empire* is an important book because it is about ideas and because its authors intend those ideas to be the theoretical basis of a revolutionary movement against capitalism.

Empire is a collaborative effort between Hardt, a literature professor at Duke University and Negri, a radical theorist and foe of the Italian state. Negri was a leading figure of the fierce Italian revolutionary Left of the 1970s called *autonomia* that threatened the interests of both the corrupt government and the large and conservative Communist Party. He was convicted on flimsy evidence in 1983 of complicity in some of the acts of political violence of the time and fled for his safety to France, where he supported himself for years as a university lecturer and theoretician. He returned to Italy in

1997, hoping in vain that the collapse of the longstanding institutional pillars of Italian politics, the Christian Democrats and the Socialists, would permit an amnesty for those falsely convicted of crimes during the tumultuous time referred to as the "years of lead." He is currently serving his sentence under house arrest.

THE THESIS OF EMPIRE

The focus of *Empire* is on the question of what Hardt and Negri term sovereignty. By this they mean not just the concept of the political power of the nation state, but instead the political and social constitution of the contemporary world. The authors argue that the world has passed from a stage characterized by the model of the imperialism of the old European powers to one in which no single power dominates totally, and yet the world is still totally dominated. The United States plays a leading role in this new arrangement, but sovereignty is shared by a panoply of international political, financial and non-governmental organizations. The authors call this new scheme of things Empire.

This argument is not without its merits. The collapse of the U.S.S.R., the U.S.'s rival pole of power in 1991 did not grant the U.S. untrammelled sway over the entire globe. The U.S. has to contend with entities such as the European Union and its component states

as well as strong regional powers like China, while at the same time pursuing a course of internationalism in its own interest through its efforts toward the liberalization of global trade.

Similarly, the international trade and economic bodies the anti-globalization movement expends so much energy in opposing also function as new theaters for contention between state powers. While economic liberalization is the professed agenda of these organizations, the conflicts that take place within them reveal how strong the pressure is to preserve the advantages the long-industrialized countries possess across the economic spectrum, at the expense of what the economists call the "emerging markets."

Furthermore, Hardt and Negri downplay the readiness with which the U.S. rebels against the current of this centerless world order and forces other countries to dance to its tune.

The vigor with which the U.S. continues to pursue its anti-terrorist campaign after the September 11 events is the most salient example of the unilateralism of George W. Bush that chafes the leaders of continental Europe so regularly.

ANTI-DIALECTICS

It is ultimately not the thesis of *Empire*, however, that makes the book problematic. Instead, it is the book's theoretical underpinnings that make it a flawed work.

Hardt and Negri are deeply influenced by the work of two poststructuralist thinkers: Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. It is this influence that places *Empire's* authors in the awkward but not unprecedented position of being Marxists who are fundamentally at odds with what Marx characterized as the heart of his critique: the Hegelian dialectic.

This hostility is most clearly expressed in the manner in which Hardt and Negri conceive of the positive side of the new state of Empire. They argue that the new globalized forms of sovereignty and capitalist production have brought into existence a new revolutionary subject called the multitude. Because Hardt and Negri have great disdain for all forms of dialectical thinking, especially the important dialectical concept of mediation, they praise how the multitude simply exists. For them, the multitude is great because it just is. The authors believe that Empire has the merit of having dissolved mediations such as the state and

that now the multitude can simply confront Empire and, solely through practical experimentation, overcome it.

While Hardt and Negri are full of appreciation of subjectivity and its potential as well as the power of labor as a human category, they reject the negative power of these concepts. Labor for the authors is "the living power of being" (p. 468, note 4) rather than the negative process by which the subject changes the objective world and, in turn, is changed by the same world he or she helped to create. They fault Marx's theory of value as being a theory of measure and argue instead that labor is beyond measure. This non-dialectical conception ignores the concept of value as itself a mediation, one created by humans in a historical process and one that will be in turn overcome by humans in a continuation of that process.

The manner in which Hardt and Negri describe the immeasurability of labor is in fact the same manner in which Marx, in the *Grundrisse* (the chief source for the "Marx beyond Marx" to which Negri is committed to developing) describes labor "when the narrow bourgeois form has been peeled away," that is, when the mediation of value has itself been mediated.

The authors' claim that Marx's theory of value has been made obsolete by Empire is in keeping with their belief that "reality and history... are not dialectical" (p. 131). While they make explicit their desire to go beyond Marx, their hostility to dialectical thinking undermines any claim on their part of continuity with his work. In any case, the continuity they most explicitly discuss is one with the compromised word "communist." It is ironic that Negri, a revolutionary distinguished by his lifelong opposition to the theory and practice of the Italian franchise of official Communism, should make a statement to the effect that all the revolutions of the twentieth century have been victorious (p. 394). They did contain victorious moments, but in truth their heritage is characterized by an important dialectical category: the transformation into opposite.

Without doubt, Guy Debord, the Situationist and dialectician, would object to the enthusiasm with which Hardt and Negri cite his work. Whatever his other faults, Debord had a keen appreciation for the way a concept can be corrupted and pressed into service for a cause at odds with its original purpose. While

Hardt and Negri exhibit no interest in the young Marx and his critique of communism for being "not the real form of human development," one would think that the authors would be more sensitive to Debord's concept of the recuperation of ideas than to appropriate a term like "Communism," which is weighted with so much repressive baggage.

HUMANISM

Integral to the Hegelian heritage of Marx that Hardt and Negri reject is humanism. The authors are themselves not hostile to humanism. They have a great appreciation for the emergence of the humanism that was integral to the secularization of society and the birth of science. They commit themselves, however, to a rejection of the humanism that they argue contributed to the emergence of what they describe as the problems of modernity, among them Eurocentrism and colonialism. Because the authors want to overcome the antagonism that postmodern theory has towards subjectivity and humanism, they posit what they term a "materialist telos" that will rescue the early revolutionary humanism for the multitude, ignoring totally however, the explicit humanism of Marx.

The "thoroughgoing naturalism or humanism" of Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* is evidently too Hegelian for Hardt and Negri to deal with. The continuity of explicit humanism into the work of the mature Marx is, needless to say, passed over in silence as well.

The sum of these perspectives lacks a concreteness that undermines the entire project the authors champion. For them, the multitude exists and despite the impossibility of communication between individual struggles, it will somehow overcome Empire. What the authors commit to is a list of three demands for the multitude to take up: the right to global citizenship, the right to a guaranteed income and the right to what they call reappropriation, or the control over all the new means of production and communication integral to Empire—in short, what used to be called socialism.

These demands, especially the first one, are worthy ones and if the anti-globalization movement were to take up even one of them, it would represent a significant development. The demands, however, are weakened when simply thrust into the hands of the multitude, which lacks any theoretical understanding about their potential. To the authors, the multitude has achieved its greatness as a result of the contemporary needs of capitalist accumulation and not as a result of any theoretical development of its place in history, its own history, or its potential. The demand for a right to global citizenship—which could be conceded by the part of the bourgeoisie that realizes its own need for the mobility of labor—would have an enormous impact if it was understood as an explicit rejection of the nativism of sections of the official labor movements and the integrality of struggles in highly advanced capitalist countries with those in less advanced ones.

Responsibility for this theoretical development, however, seems to be non-existent. The authors have developed a theory, but the practical experimentation they look forward to is to be undertaken by a figure they call the "militant," an itinerant revolutionary turned loose to play in the nooks and crannies of Empire. The closest the authors come to an organizational framework for this figure is two brief mentions of the American variant of anarcho-syndicalism, the Industrial Workers of the World. A new and more intriguing kind of organization—one distinct from both spontaneous forms of organization that arise out of mass struggles and the vanguard party form that Negri himself helped to overcome in the 1960s—in which theoretical development is itself an animating force, lies outside the scope of the authors' interest.

Empire is an important book and it appeared at an important time, the birth of the anti-globalization movement. The concepts central to the book—political power, subjectivity, humanism, philosophy, new forms of capitalist production—are of vital importance to those active in this movement. The book's contribution is that it unapologetically takes up these topics in a serious way and, in addition, that it has had some success in generating some response within a movement that is in great need of theoretical discussion. Its severe limitation, however, is that its content may serve to help reinforce the anti-globalization movement's bare pragmatism and antipathy to theoretical development through its focus on the simple existence of the revolutionary subjects that make up the multitude. A widely heard argument for a non-dialectical Marxism makes the need for explicit continuity with Marx's Hegelian roots more important than ever.

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Empire by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Protest against the World Trade Organization, Seattle, 1999.



From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

(Continued from page 4)

essence and it is that the revolutionary and international impact emerges from masses in motion.

"This does not mean that we give up the struggle for self-determination, Palestinian especially. It is that we do not narrow our vision of the revolutionary struggle for a totally different world, on truly new Humanist foundations, the first necessity of which is the unity of philosophy and revolution."

As has now become painfully clear, Begin-Sharon, bent on the mad delusion that an army can kill the idea of freedom, were not stopped even though their invasion of west Beirut assured a clear road for the massacre of hundreds upon hundreds of Palestinians by Major Haddad and the breakaway Phalangists. Just as the Polish masses never forgave Russia during World War II for staying outside the gates of Warsaw in 1944, waiting for the Nazis to complete their destruction before they moved in to "save" them, so the masses of the world will never forgive Begin's Israel for the Lebanon massacre.

What is necessary is to see that the opposition to this horror does not stop with being against Begin-Sharon. It must demonstrate what it is for—which can only be the total uprooting of the state-private capitalism that brought this horror into being, and the unfolding of the kind of "revolution in permanence" that Marx projected, and will not stop until we have truly human relations.

*The Phalange was a far-right wing grouping in Lebanon's Christian community, which was allied with Israel during and after the invasion. Saad Haddad was a Christian rightist who led an Israeli-controlled militia in Southern Lebanon, until Israel's withdrawal several years ago.—Editor

SEARCHING FOR AN ALTERNATIVE TO BUSH'S 'PERMANENT WAR'

The threat of nuclear annihilation is more ominous than it has ever been, with the recent disclosure that the Pentagon is considering the use of tactical nuclear weapons not only against President Bush's declared "axis of evil" comprising Iraq, Iran and North Korea, but now extended to include Libya and Syria, as well as China and Russia. During the Cold War with Russia, the danger of nuclear war was held in check by the fear of mutually assured destruction. That standoff no longer exists. It leaves the U.S. as the only superpower—evidently free to think the previously "unthinkable."

**Alarmed
Flint**

The War Resisters League has just sent out a letter enclosing their most popular flyer on "Where Your Income Tax Money Really Goes." Along with it they really dramatized the situation by describing the recent picture in *The New York Times* showing Secretary of War Rumsfeld receiving a check from a group of middle school students for \$10,187.93 to help rebuild the Pentagon! Can anyone imagine sending money to the Pentagon? The students clearly wanted to do something to help in our recovery after the September 11 horror. But here is what the WRL asked everyone to think about:

What is \$10,187.93 to the Pentagon? About two seconds of the war in Afghanistan; one hour's flying time for a B-52; a small portion of training, equipping and sending one U.S. "advisor" to teach Filipinos how to fight terrorism.

Their email address is wr@igc.org for those who want more information.

**WRL supporter
Illinois**

Carrying signs opposing U.S. military action in the Middle East, some 200 protesters from the metro Detroit area rallied on March 9 in front of the Army recruiting station in Dearborn, a western suburb, with a large number of residents from the Middle East. Their signs declared: War is Terror; Peace for all Children; Bombing Civilians is Terrorism; and War Does Not End Terrorism, War IS Terrorism. The organizers of the various participating groups, including Detroit Women in Unity against War/Women in Black, vowed to continue their protests on a monthly basis throughout the Detroit area.

**Observer
Detroit**

I'm shocked even though I'm not surprised that a bill currently being considered by the state Senate would require students from countries linked by the

U.S. to terrorism to check in with local police monthly. One of the September 11 pilots was here on a student visa and that's their excuse. What's next? With Timothy McVeigh in mind, will they have all U.S. vets register with the police, or everyone with an Irish name, or what?

**Youth Activist
Memphis**

I question the space you devoted to attacking a lame duck like Phil Gramm in the article in March about the students' protest when he spoke at a college in Memphis. Gramm doesn't have a chance at anything political ever again in his life, while we have a near-Nazi in actual power in Washington and soon even newspapers like *N&L* may be banned. I know you're thinking "it will never happen here..." But I see them wiping their feet on the Constitution already.

**Ana Lucia Gelabert
Texas**

How do we project an alternative that people can believe in? People recognize the crisis and their precarious position. The real problem is the sorry Left. It was striking that at the recent anti-WEF demonstration in San Francisco those who bought *N&L* and would talk with us about it were primarily those from other countries, like one Israeli youth, another youth from Germany, and a Mexican supporting the Argentina revolt. But it was difficult to talk with American youth there. I felt that the Left has so tarnished the discussion of what is Marxism that it was hard to engage people even at this anti-capitalist demonstration. Some claimed to be too busy to discuss any ideas. How do we get through that the problem isn't lack of action or military might or the riches of the ruling class, but knocking down the ruling ideology of capitalism.

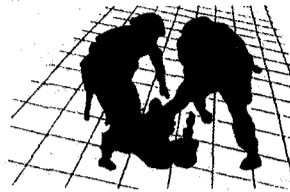
**Activist-thinker
San Francisco**

The most frightening terrorists in the world today are not in some foreign country but right here in the Bush administration in Washington, D.C. I have lived through the Great Depression of the '30s, World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, Gulf and Cold Wars, but I have never felt the fear I am experiencing today. It is very clear that Bush and his cohorts are determined to establish a Pax Americana unlike anything attempted before. To do that they have to make sure the masses of America are under complete control. That is why they have a double offensive as we have already seen in the repressive civil rights legislation put into effect behind

READERS' VIEWS

the smoke screen of "national security." They have to be stopped.

**Old Radical
Michigan**



**JUSTICE
AND
ABNER
LOUIMA**

I was driving in my car when the news came over NPR concerning the exoneration of three out of four police officers in the beating and torture of Abner Louima. I actually pulled into a driveway off the road and sat there with my mouth open because I could not believe what I was hearing. Not only was I shocked that this kind of "judgment" was even under consideration, but then heard it claimed that the police were denied their rights to a fair trial! In Chicago there was barely any coverage in the media. Then this week three police officers here were found "not guilty" in the beating death of a prisoner, a "verdict" evidently being rendered countless times all over the country. Are we being told that this is what the term "homeland security" means?

**Erica Rae
Chicago**

The exoneration by tabloids here of police involved in the Abner Louima scandal has greatly increased tensions and divisions between the Black and white working class. Preying on pro-police sentiments of working class whites following the September 11 attacks, this kind of reporting outrages the African-American community and effectively divides a sizable population along racial lines.

**Outraged citizen
New York City**

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IDEAS AS UNIVERSAL

We just celebrated the 131st anniversary of the Paris Commune, which could be called an opposition that was not "effective" in the sense that the Communards didn't win. But its meaning keeps re-emerging in the world and in the way it changed Marx's thinking. The categories Marx made of the Commune come alive in Dunayevskaya's critique of Leopold Senghor, (March 2002 *N&L*) for making an amalgam of "effective" opposition.

**Marxist-Humanist
Oakland**

•

A WORKER'S LIFE IN 2002

Most of the poorer people here in rural North Carolina have been hit very hard by the cutbacks and freezing of welfare programs that are essential to their survival. I have seen people near death because of the freezing of the Medicaid program that provides gasoline vouchers so people can get to the doctor. That can be a distance of 25 miles and there is no public transportation.

**S. Rose
North Carolina**

I am 10 and a half and was coming home from a movie with my dad when I noticed the Immokalee workers' protest and was handed two flyers. I read one and gave the other to my mom. I completely agree with the terms and conditions they are asking for. I don't know if I am old enough to protest, although my parents agree as well. I just want people to know I support these workers and will do whatever I can to help.

**Youth
Tennessee**

The Workshop Talks article in the March *N&L* on the "Truth of John Q." points out that assaults in Emergency Rooms and hospitals are on the rise, and gave a bigger picture of what's going on than the movie itself did. The powers-that-be are concerned only with the need

for more security, not with getting to the source of the problem. We need to look at "crime in the suites, not the crime in the streets." The real threat in the workplace is not John Q. It's in the "commodity fetishism." Everything militates against you having a dignified and productive work life, but you don't have anyone to take it out on. The violence on the street has an insidious source.

**David Mizuno'Oto
Oakland**

•

CONDOLEEZZA AND DUBOIS

When I read in a Readers' View that the NAACP was planning to honor Condoleezza Rice, I could feel a distinct rumbling beneath the earth, which could be nothing less than W.E.B. DuBois turning in his grave.

**Subscriber
Canada**



ARGENTINA

The most interesting outcome of the crisis here were the people's assemblies taking place mainly in Buenos Aires and big cities like Rosario or La Plata. It is a spontaneous way of politics, a kind of direct democracy where people of diverse ideology, age, and class meet periodically at a public place like a park to discuss public matters and produce papers to be put forward. Members of the traditional parties see these meetings as a challenge and blame them for producing "chaos." Real democracy remains our biggest utopia.

**Observer
Argentina**

There is something profound about what is coming out from the movement in Argentina, yet there is a hesitation in the leaders about where the movement is going. The vanguardists' answer is always the need for a central party. Independent intellectuals, because they don't have a relation to workers, talk only about the past, and look to Peron with rose-colored glasses. They have no confidence in where things are going today. We say that what is needed is not to hand people simple answers to what's wrong but to ask them to dive into hard questions.

**Mitch Weerth
California**

The article in the January-February issue of *N&L* on "Argentina's Crisis" goes straight to the point. That's exactly how we feel here in Buenos Aires—as if a slow earthquake were taking place, and we don't know when it will stop and what will be left afterwards. We have to keep moving, there's no other choice for us now.

**Mora
Argentina**

•

ON THE BRITISH SCENE

The Trades Union Council here has announced its concern over the treatment of young workers. What is the matter with organized labour? Has no one noticed that this is the norm? Rogue employers are wide-spread starting with the government itself. Witness the recent disputes at the department of transport. Bullying goes on throughout all industries. Deaths in the construction industry continue to rise. Pension rights are eroded. Older workers find it increasingly difficult to find work while women will now have their working life extended to age 65. Those still working have the worst conditions in Europe. Young people may draw the conclusion that rights are little more than a myth. The links with the Labour Party have cost workers dearly.

**Patrick Duffy
London**

马克思主义 与自由

REMEMBERING CHINESE PHILOSOPHER WANG RUOSHUI

Thank you for the "In Memoriam" to Wang Ruoshui published in your January-February issue. I would like to include it in the web site set up for him. The address is www.wangruoshui.com.

You might like to know that he had an English name, Walter, given to him by his high school English teacher. He told me it came from German and meant warrior. Actually, he was a warrior all his life. He was born in 1926. The Japanese invasion cast a heavy shadow on his childhood and made him become a patriot. The world of books gave him a pure mentality and a heart filled with love.

He attended a Yale in China program in high school and developed his early interest in philosophy. Through participating in the student protest movement of "anti-hunger, anti-persecution, and for freedom and democracy" in the late 1940s he joined the underground Communist Party. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, he became an editor of the *People's Daily* and worked there for more than 30 years.

He experienced the loss of self identity during the Personality Cult to Mao, and became a dedicated mouthpiece of the party-state. He gradually resumed his independent thinking in the early 1970s. When he lost his membership in

the Party in 1987, he felt as if he was liberated once again and published his most important works after that.

He thought it was his responsibility to write about what he had witnessed as a journalist and his analysis as a philosopher. He devoted his later years to this unfinished career. He never felt hopeless or powerless, continuing to write and publish both in China and abroad. Even in his last days, he still dictated his thoughts to me on three issues: first, the reasons for the failure of the Chinese democratic revolution; second, his rethinking on Engels' classic explanation of the fundamental question of philosophy; and third, on the tragedy of Premier Zhou Enlai and his relationship with Mao Zedong.

After he passed away, his friends at the Fairbanks Center of East Asian Research at Harvard set up a "Wang Ruoshui Book Fund" and will host a symposium on May 15 about the role he played in the post-Mao era.

**Feng Yuan
Cambridge, Mass.**

Editors note: The graphic above comes from the cover of the Chinese edition of Raya Dunayevskaya's 'Marxism and Freedom,' for which Wang Ruoshui wrote the Preface.



WOMEN'S STRUGGLES 2002

When I read the March lead describing atrocities against women in South Asia and the Middle East, I was reminded of Margaret Atwood's chilling novel, *Handmaid's Tale*, which portrays religious fundamental patriarchy taken to its logical extreme in the U.S. I now realize that this was not a "futuristic" story after all, but a contemporary one.

R.H. Canada

In her lead article in the March issue, Maya Jhansi pointed out that Bush stopped contraceptive aid to Afghanistan. It shows the Talibanism right here in Bush's ideology. The continuing discussion among women worldwide shows that the determinant for the future is not militarism, is not the war, but humanism.

R.B. California

The "Women Moving Beyond Violence" forum here was amazing in that women from many different backgrounds spoke on different topics, from environmental racism to domestic assault to the situation of Afghan women. It showed the movement of the dialectic in women's fight for freedom. Marquita Bradshaw, a young Black woman founder of Youth Terminating Pollution, said that since the squeaky wheel gets the grease she was going to keep on squeaking while having a "total confrontation of isms." She said she saw youth rising up again. I say, keep squeaking, Marquita!

Brown Douglas Memphis

Maya Jhansi's article in the March issue on "Women fight terror, war in South Asia and Middle East" rightly pointed to the "honor" killings as part of the terror there. It reminded me how

"honor" killings were part of the way slavery was enforced in the U.S. when a Black person could be killed on the spot for offending a white's "honor." While it was really murder, such killings were part of the "chivalry" of the South and not prosecuted. The legacy of the "chivalry" is the fact that the U.S. is the most violent society in the world to this day.

Urszula Wislanka Oakland, Cal.

Readers of *N&L* would want to know that April 13 is a national day of protest against what are being called Crisis Pregnancy Centers, which are in reality the abortion fanatics' way of luring women looking for information about pregnancy into their clinics. What they will get instead of help is an anti-abortion tirade full of outrageous lies—such as abortion causing breast cancer! The Women's Action Coalition in Memphis is planning to protest in front of one of these phony clinics with information leaflets and a skit. There is a web site for those who want more information: <http://hometown.aol.com/dbauer7478/cp.cprotest.html>.

WACer Memphis

We appreciate your continued efforts in bringing out issues that affect the marginalized in society, the majority of whom are women and children. The availability of such information facilitates our efforts for policy change and prioritization on issues that affect women. *N&L* is a welcome addition to our resource center.

Juliet Were Oguttu ISIS Program Director Uganda

AN APPEAL FOR HELP FROM ISRAEL

Israel is my country but I do not recognize it these days. I just received an email from a Palestinian woman calling for urgent action to stop the Israeli attack against her people that does not even allow doctors and ambulances to

get injured people to hospitals! All day we hear reports of inhumane acts carried out by the Israeli army. Israeli peace and human rights activists have been working at a frenzied pace at every level. We are trying to get the Israeli public to understand that violence is only the symptom but the underlying disease is "occupation." The situation is shocking. We need help desperately to bring this horror to an end.

Gila Svirsky Coalition of Women for a Just Peace Jerusalem

WHO HARBORED SAVIMBI?

Isn't it strange that Jonas Savimbi was offed just when the whole world's attention is on terrorists after September 11. Just when we are about to go after not just the terrorists, but "all who harbor them and support their evil deeds." Mr. Savimbi is no longer with us to tell us exactly who harbored him. He would have been a valuable witness in the Hague to tell us how extensive was the behind-the-scenes network that enabled his "evil deeds." He could have told us all the money sources, CIA agents' names, Pentagon connections—the whole network which allowed him to roam and terrorize for over two decades.

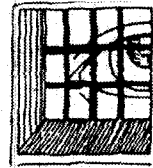
Hospital worker California

CHICAGO'S TRUE HISTORY

Chicago celebrated 165 years as a city on March 4, 2002. Never mind that 58 years have been subtracted from the total of the actual founding year (1779). Maybe that's because Mr. Jean-Baptiste Point DuSable, under the law of the U.S., is considered Black. Although he was from Haiti and of African descent, he was never a slave either in Haiti or the U.S., but how could the powers that be give complete credit to a non-white man for his part in the history of Chicago? Even today, Mayor Richard M. Daley refuses to give Mr. DuSable his complete reward. Please don't mention DuSable Museum because a private citizen started that in her house. Please don't men-

tion DuSable High School, because the African-American community demanded it. All the City of Chicago public offices, as well as its grammar and high schools, were closed March 4 for a holiday to honor General Casimir Pulaski, who commanded patriot troops in the American Revolution and died in 1779. But there was no mention of Mr. DuSable who made a permanent residence in what is now downtown Chicago the year Pulaski died. There is no statue to Mr. DuSable and no doubt never will be so long as the city remains racist and Daley remains its mayor.

George Wilfrid Smith, Jr. Chicago



VOICE FROM THE INSIDE

I truly love your paper. Without it I would be in the dark about the atrocities that are being committed not only abroad but to our own Constitution and Bill of Rights, all in the name of anti-terrorism. It seems as if some American Gestapo has run wild and the Department of Corrections has run with it. I have witnessed prisoners of Arab descent being denied the little we prisoners have coming, and even saw a couple placed in segregation for supposed investigation to see if they had Al Qaeda links! Black and white prisoners who are Sunni Muslims are harassed verbally and receive more than the routine shakedowns and strip searches. I am not a Muslim or of Arab descent but I know that Muslims and Arabs are not all terrorists. I am Irish. That means that with some I too have a strike against me. I'm enclosing four 34-cent stamps in hopes it will cover some of the cost of sending me your pamphlet *Voices from within the Prison Walls*.

Prisoner Missouri

Editor's note: All contributions to our Donor's Fund are used to send N&L and requested copies of our pamphlets to prisoners who lack funds. Can you help?

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Zimbabwe's dictator Mugabe plays upon western hypocrisy

by Ba Karang

U.S. President George W. Bush, who came to power not through the ballot box but through a Supreme Court decision, was among the first Western leaders to condemn the recent Zimbabwean elections. The reaction of the British Prime Minister was not unexpected either.

One wonders why the people of Madagascar are taking to the streets to regain their stolen election victory while the West stands by and looks on. The people of the Ivory Coast fought and won back their stolen election, resulting in property destruction and loss of life, without the West reacting—other than to claim that the political victory of the Ivorians was undemocratic. And even after the U.S. State Department criticized the recent parliamentary elections in Gambia, it failed to react to the situation. Within a short period it announced a normalization of relations between the two countries.

Many elections on the African continent are criticized for not being free and fair—like Kenya's—with-out these countries suffering from talk of western-imposed sanctions. Western leaders are practicing a double standard. Mugabe himself will not suffer from any sanctions imposed on the country, and he cares little about the suffering of the Zimbabwean people.

Mugabe often says that the British Prime Minister suffers from a "colonial hangover." One could say that he made the best use of this colonial hangover, not only by bringing up the land issue so late in his rule but by making use of anti-colonialist rhetoric.

REACTIONS OF AFRICAN RULERS

The Zimbabwean elections pose a problem for the South African government. This is not only because South Africa is striving to become a superpower in African political and economic life. South Africa has not solved its own land problem, which was the backbone of the struggle against the apartheid regime. There is no doubt that the Zimbabwean land crisis is being followed by Black South Africans. Sooner or later the South African government will have to react to the pressures building up on this issue.

Daniel Arap Moi, Kenya's president, has always insisted that Western imperialism manipulates the opposition against his corrupt and brutal government. He was one of the first to congratulate Mugabe for his election victory. Whether Nigeria's half-hearted support for Mugabe is part of manipulating its relationship with both the West and Zimbabwe, or a line of confrontation with South Africa in its drive to assume the leading position in African political and economic affairs, will become clear sooner rather than later.

One thing is certain—South Africa and Nigeria have the economic potential to stand up to Western pressure. Nigeria is a significant trade partner of the U.S., mainly in oil. Nigeria and South Africa provide the West with a huge market. At the same time, they are growing industrial nations that look to the African continent as a potential market. Hence the importance, in their eyes, of having political influence in it.

If Nigeria or South Africa try to stand up to Western pressure in favor of Zimbabwe, they will do so for domestic consumption and their continental interests.

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) failed to pose a tangible opposition to Mugabe's ZANU party.

Black/Red View

(Continued from page 1)

and wealth and began to distinguish itself from them.

The culture created by Abolitionists makes freedom its actual goal and not a hope or a theory. They built an organization to make the North a haven of freedom for runaway slaves and an underground railroad to carry them there. This encouraged many slaves to devise their own ingenious methods of escape, such as using forged free papers to prove their status as a free person if it became necessary. Fredrick Douglass, the most famous of ex-slaves, used a sailor's free papers to board a train from Maryland to the North. In other cases, men disguised themselves as women and women disguised themselves as men.

The continuous underground resistance and open rebellion against slavery and the culture created by slaves and Abolitionists brought on the American Civil War and, at the same time, changed the original purpose of that war from preserving the Union into a war to abolish slavery.

As we know, the freedom culture promoted by the Abolitionists didn't survive very long after the emancipation of the slaves; it was brutally replaced by a rapacious culture of monopoly capitalism, white supremacy and lynching.

The immediate reaction that many Southern African Americans had to this regime of terror was to organize and migrate to Kansas. On the other hand, Booker T. Washington, the influential head of the Tuskegee Institute, urged African Americans to stay in a segregated violent South and work hard to develop its capitalist economy. This division between Washington's economic philosophy and African-American

It seems to have shied away from the land issue and never took it as a serious problem for ordinary Zimbabweans, who mostly live in rural areas. Solving the land issue is seen by many of them as a way forward in dealing with the country's crushing poverty.

They have a right to believe this, since the white minority who took the land from them remain the most prosperous people in the country. Ordinary Zimbabweans are the laborers on these farms, the nannies and housekeepers for their owners, who though a minority remain the dominant economic force.

MUGABE'S COMPROMISED OPPOSITION

The MDC seems to have been more interested in addressing issues of concern to the white minority.



March for land reform in South Africa

These are without doubt serious concerns. But the MDC has not linked the land issue to poverty and political oppression. Mugabe's use of the masses' anger with the colonial/white minority rule of the past should not have prevented the MDC from defending the interests of the most deprived.

The white minority support for the MDC and the involvement of past colonial masters in the elections was a heaven-sent blessing for the dictator Mugabe. He made a calculated move by having MDC members arrested, detained, and charged on the eve of the elections, on the grounds that they were collaborating with the former colonial rulers. The failure of the MDC to provide a historical perspective to explain the suffering of the Zimbabwean people may be the reason we did not experience another Ivory Coast or Madagascar after the election results were announced.

Things are not going to get better for ordinary Zimbabweans, who have suffered a great deal even without sanctions. Sanctions would do no more than force Mugabe to use his powers to solve the land issue in a way that might not be in the interests of the legal owners of the land.

Redistributing the land to its rightful owners and turning them into private farms might be a shortcut to solving the economic problems facing Zimbabweans. Zimbabwe still would need new capital, which Mugabe does not have. The appetite of the corrupt bureaucracy might not survive sanctions, especially if Mugabe decides to interfere with its criminal activities. Even if he decides to do so, he will act with the full knowledge that his power will be undermined.

The elections and its results present a new objective situation to Zimbabweans. It only confirms a suspicion long held by many Africans, that Western imperialism is still alive.

Bush's Black museum

masses acting on their own thinking generated a debate among African-American leaders for decades.

TASK WAS TO DEFINE CULTURE'

W.E.B. DuBois thought that Washington's philosophy of voluntary surrender asked African Americans to give up their political power, civil rights and higher education. However, when hundreds of thousands during World War I and the 1920s left the South, on their own volition, to live and work in urban areas of the North, it made the debate about Booker T. Washington's accommodation philosophy vanish into thin air.

This historic migration by African-American masses at the same time was a change in their self-consciousness. Alain Locke, a prominent African-American intellectual at that time, wrote that the result of the migration was the birth of a "New Negro." According to Locke, this "New Negro" was freeing himself from the degrading negative images imposed upon him and finding himself as he really was, a people with a rich culture. Locke wrote: "The task of the New Negro was to define his culture and his contribution to what had been thought a white civilization."

Locke wrote those words when the Harlem Renaissance was booming. A time when African-American novelists, poets, artists, jazz composers, musicians and dancers were creating a new vibrant culture rooted in their own experience. Today, African Americans still must emphatically define their culture not only as museum pieces that show their integrality to American culture, but their contribution to enrichment of the idea of freedom in an area in which white civilization has been impoverished.

Velsicol tragedies

Memphis, Tenn. — I showed people from *News & Letters* houses where people have died from cancer, where children were born with birth defects, where people have had heart disease and illnesses that affected the brain—most houses in this neighborhood near a Velsicol chemical plant that manufactures pesticides whose use is banned in the U.S. We talked to one man who had three different cancers and three of his brothers and sisters had cancer. Even the lady who was interviewed on TV on the day of the explosion at Velsicol last year is dead now (see March 2002 *N&L*).

Another lady with kidney disease died young, and left four little children. The day she died, their grandfather walked the children to the corner store to buy them some candy, thinking he was easing the pain a little bit. I looked at those little children's eyes. I never will forget it.

Velsicol has shown no concern whatsoever. When I talked to them at a meeting in February, the plant manager, Glenda Akins, said that dioxin was released in the air in a minute amount. But she admitted that even a minute amount could cause cancer. They have a hazardous waste incinerator and they're trying to get a permit to increase the amount that they burn. The amount that they're burning now is causing catastrophic problems. They don't intend to stop. There were times when Velsicol passed its inspections and times when it didn't. There were leaks and they keep violating the laws. One guy who works at Velsicol told me, "They're not going to tell you the truth." And he is one of those mixing the chemicals.

Velsicol workers get tested every six months for the diseases that those chemicals can cause. Akins told me that they couldn't afford to pay for medical checkups for everyone in the neighborhood. I said, "Some people have their own insurance, why don't you just give them the list of chemicals so they can show the doctor?" She said, "I'll send the paperwork." I haven't received it yet. That was well over six weeks ago.

Nobody in the neighborhood is employed by Velsicol. They found carcinogens in Cypress Creek, right next to my house. My dad worked in the backyard all the time. Before he got ill and died, he got around better than me. He could run like a young man. He was diagnosed two months after the explosion with leukemia and multiple myeloma at the same time. Within three months he was dead.

I can't say it's racism because it's not going to just affect me. It's going to affect people everywhere. I told Akins, you might run to Cordova, Germantown, wherever you live, but it's going to get you too because the wind is going to carry it there.

What I would like to see is that Velsicol either buy us out or move to President's Island, an area that was allocated by the government for manufacturers. They can afford to move and clean up the mess they made.

—Nurse

Queer Notes

by Suzanne Rose

International demonstrators from Amnesty International and Al-Fatiha, which represents gay Arabs, handed out leaflets at a Washington luncheon hosted by the Council on Foreign Relations. They were protesting the presence of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The leaflets condemned Mubarak and the Egyptian government over the arrests and trials of 42 gay men at a boat party on the Nile last summer. Twenty-three of the men have been sentenced to hard labor. The protesters also condemned the Bush administration for failing to raise human rights concerns at a previous meeting with Mubarak.

A Toronto judge spent two hours criticizing Toronto police for violating the rights of women during a raid on a lesbian bathhouse. Saying they were acting on a complaint that illegal activity was taking place, five male officers entered the Club Toronto baths. The male officers went through the five-story building for over an hour, despite the fact the women were in various states of undress.

The employment rights of British gay men and lesbians could be severely compromised if the government goes ahead with plans to exempt religious groups from proposed legislation outlawing discrimination in the workplace. The new legislation covers sexuality, religion, age and disability. The Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association says that thousands of jobs controlled by religious bodies could be denied to "out" gays and atheists.

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Riots in India leave hundreds dead, thousands homeless

Fundamentalists turned parts of the western state of Gujarat in India into killing fields in the week following Feb. 27. Allegedly in retaliation for an attack on Hindu revivalists by Muslims, which left 58 mostly women and children dead, mobs, spurred on by the organized Hindu Right, ransacked the homes, businesses and places of worship of Gujarat's Muslim citizens. Over 700 were killed in some of the most brutal acts that India has seen in its 55 year history.

In the wake of this brutality, more than 35,000 have been left homeless and are now living in refugee camps in their own home state. Muslim businesses remain shut down in several towns, and property owned by Muslims has been destroyed or damaged.

Many in India feel that the riots in Gujarat were not spontaneous mob actions, but a planned, systematic, ideological attack on the Muslim minority. The Gujarat state government, headed up by a Hindu fundamentalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), did virtually nothing to stem the tide of violence, and remains unapologetic about the inactivity of the police in the face of the violence.

Although India has seen many clashes between Hindus and Muslims, these most recent riots signal something new and ominous. It is the first time that such violence has unfolded under a central government headed up by a right-wing Hindu fundamentalist party, with overt ties to militant, terrorist organizations such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). At no other time have India's secular ideals been so thoroughly threatened.

Following on the heels of the Gujarat massacres, the RSS issued a statement calling for Indian Muslims to "behave" and work to "earn" the respect of the nation

which is nothing less than a threat. The VHP meanwhile has announced its intention to travel to 750 dif-

ferent cities with the ashes of the Hindu victims of the Godhra train massacre.

The roots of the current conflict go back to 1992, when the BJP, which had no electoral clout, led a mob in the destruction of a 16th century mosque in the city of Ayodhya. Since that incident, which led to the death of over 2,000 people all over South Asia, the BJP has legitimized itself by winning a majority of seats in the parliament, and by forging ties with other regional parties. Some believe that the Gujarat riots were a response by the Saffron Brigade (a term used to designate Hindu fundamentalists) to the serious losses that the BJP suffered in recent assembly elections in four states.

The Supreme Court handed down a verdict that preserved, for the time being, the secular ideal by preventing groups like the VHP from holding religious ceremonies on the disputed land surrounding the mosque.

There have been many peace vigils and marches all over India, and calls for the resignation of the Chief Minister of Gujarat state, Narendra Modi, as well as the Home Minister, L.K. Advani, the leader of the movement that destroyed the mosque in 1992. This shows that the BJP has not succeeded in destroying the secular and humanist voice in India. It is misleading to state, as the western press does time and time again, that though the India "claims" to be secular, the majority of Indians are "Hindu." This ignores the fact that Indian culture and identity is not bound by any one religion. Although Muslims are a "minority," they are an integral part of the identity and culture of the Indian nation. One can no more separate Muslim from Indian, than Black from American.

People are demanding an end to the communalism and militarism that the BJP-led government has fomented for the last five years. With the possibility of nuclear holocaust looming large in the region, there is no time to lose.

—Maya Jhansi

Stop immigrant detentions



On National Immigrants' Rights Day, Feb. 20, demonstrators outside of the Federal Building in New York City protested the detention of immigrants without charges since September 11.

Israel-Palestine crisis at a boiling point

(Continued from Page 1)

Bank and Gaza.

Through all this, the Israeli Labor Party has provided a "left" cover for Sharon by joining his government, thereby destroying its last shred of legitimacy.

After Bush's Jan. 29 State of the Union address in which he named Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as members of an "axis of evil," the administration gave Sharon a green light to do anything he wanted to the Palestinians. Where Bush spoke of fighting a "permanent war" against "terrorism," Sharon now spoke of a "continuous war" against the Palestinians.

The Bush administration then went even further, by outlining a revision of U.S. military strategy in a secret report calling for the use of nuclear weapons against Iraq, Iran and North Korea, as well as Russia, China, Libya and Syria. The document, which proposes developing new nuclear weapons for conducting preemptive nuclear strikes against a host of nations, has shocked even the closest U.S. allies.

PALESTINIAN QUEST FOR PEACE

Despite these retrogressive moves, the past months have also seen some of the most explicit statements from Yasir Arafat and the Palestinian Authority's security chief Mohammed Dahlan on the terms of negotiations for peace with Israel. In an article published in *Ha'aretz* in January, Dahlan clearly stated that if Israel were to withdraw to its pre-1967 borders, recognize Palestinian sovereignty over the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, and help to work out a just resolution for the plight of Palestinian refugees, the Palestinians would make peace. This was followed by an article by Arafat in the *The New York Times* on Feb. 3 in which he articulated the same position.

The fact that neither mentioned the return of Palestinian refugees to Israel but a just resolution which could involve monetary compensation to resettle the refugees in a Palestinian state gave the impression that a majority of Palestinians may have reconsidered the issue that had broken some earlier negotiations.

It was at this point that Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Abdullah announced that he has in hand a new peace proposal in which Arab regimes would recognize and establish "full normalization of relations" (later changed to "full peace") with Israel in exchange for its withdrawal to its pre-1967 borders.

There is no doubt that Saudi Arabia, a totalitarian misogynist and fundamentalist regime which has been discredited because of its ties to the September 11 terrorists and its sponsorship of the Taliban, views this proposal as a way to regain credibility and international support. Furthermore, this move also reflects the Saudis' fear of the power of Islamic fundamentalists opposed to them who are using the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to strengthen their base.

Nevertheless, the ramifications of Saudi Arabia's proposal are extremely important. The Palestinian Authority, Syria, and Egypt have all backed it. Abdullah has also expressed his willingness to negotiate further to recognize the Jewish neighborhoods of Jerusalem and the Wailing Wall as Israeli territory.

What was Sharon's response? He launched a brutal attack on the Palestinian refugee camps in Jenin and Nablus. Then, on March 13, Sharon invaded Ramallah

and the Jabalyah refugee camp in Gaza. Ramallah is the nerve center of Palestinian society. It is now practically destroyed. All men from 15-45 were rounded up, blindfolded, stripped to their undershirts, and had identification numbers written on their arms. It was only after a Knesset member who is a Holocaust survivor objected to this Nazi-like behavior that the army stopped writing numbers on their arms.

IF THIS NOT BE MADNESS

The plain fact is that Sharon is trying to rid the minds of Israelis and Palestinians of the very idea that they can ever live in peace with one another.

It is true that he says he supports a Palestinian state—albeit a "demilitarized" one on only 35% of the West Bank and Gaza strip, with the militarized Jewish settlements and army bases surrounding them kept intact.

But Sharon is not just trying to hold onto as much territory and settlements as possible. What irked him, like much of the Israeli Right, about the failed Oslo peace process is that it helped bring about a sea change in the thinking of Israelis and Palestinians. Many Palestinians dropped their opposition to Israel's existence and came out in support of a two-state solution. Many Israelis supported the creation of a viable Palestinian state, something that would have been unheard of a decade or two ago.

As filled with contradictions as Oslo was—most of all because Israel's rulers never faced up to the fact that no peace is possible without the full dismantling of the Jewish settlements—it did at least open a space in which Jews and Palestinians could consider some kind of mutual resolution of their perennial conflict. The very idea of such an eventuality, however, is what Sharon is determined to destroy. And to a large extent, his acts—and the terrorist attacks by Hamas and others on the Palestinian side—have succeeded in doing so. A recent poll showed that 46% of Israelis support evicting the Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza altogether; even more shocking, 31% favor the racist expulsion of all Arabs from Israel!

There is no doubt that those who fear an escalation of this conflict are the forces of ethnic chauvinism and religious fundamentalism, both on the Israeli and Palestinian side. That is why it is encouraging that in the face of such depravity a growing number of Israeli soldiers have refused to serve in the West Bank and Gaza. These "Refuseniks" have now grown to over 900 and have shaken up the political establishment.

Such genuine voices from below, on both the Israeli and Palestinian side, are the only force which can bring about a peaceful resolution. Whatever results from the efforts of the Bush administration to broker a ceasefire in order to help it to get on with "the real business at hand," its planned attack on Iraq, we cannot entertain any illusion that it will restrain the hand of Sharon—or that of other reactionaries waiting in the wings to take over, like former Prime Minister Netanyahu.

We must demand an immediate halt to all Israeli military operations, a full withdrawal from the occupied territories, and for Sharon and his cohorts to be brought to justice at an international tribunal.

—March 15, 2002

Nagpur peace march

Nagpur, India—*"Colour of blood is neither Green nor Saffron, it is Red"*

"We Want Peace, not Temple, not Mosque!"

"Say No to incitements of communal riots in the name of Religion!"

"Stop politics of Mandir and Masjid!"

These were the bold slogans that reverberated in the lanes of Mahal and Itwari in Nagpur on March 9. Hundreds of peace-loving secular-minded people of Nagpur belonging to all communities turned up in this peace march organized by Secular Citizens Forum, Nagpur to protest the killings at Godhra and the subsequent massacre and genocide in Gujarat in the name of religion.

The march received stupendous response from the common people, many of whom joined spontaneously. The participants were welcomed at many places of the entire route by traders and bystanders with flowers, garlands and drinking water. Enthusiasm and human warmth could be felt by the participants as well as the people who watched the peace march pass through the narrow, crowded, busy lanes of Mahal and Itwari.

The most prominent and the brightest feature of the peace march was the participation of a huge number of women carrying colourful banners and placards, giving lively slogans and singing songs of peace throughout the march.

Leaflets with the message of peace were distributed to the bystanders throughout the procession. Huge banners proclaiming "We want peace. Stop politics of Mandir-Masjid" were displayed. Slogans condemning the tendency of inciting communal frenzy, riots and massacres by religious fundamentalists were raised by the participants. They condemned the killings at Godhra and subsequent organized genocide in Gujarat with the connivance of a section of the police and administration.

This peace march organized by Secular Citizens Forum was the first of its kind in Nagpur after the Gujarat genocide and has definitely succeeded in making the presence of the secular forces felt in this city.

—Arvind Ghosh

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World capitalism faces global economic slump

(Continued from page 1)

even before the recession began, from 10.2% of GDP in 1997 to 9% in the third quarter of 2000. Then profits took their fastest nose dive since the Great Depression, to 6.8% of GDP by the third quarter of 2001.

Any rise in unemployment will add to the 1.4 million jobs that have already been eliminated since March 2001. An even greater number of manufacturing jobs, 1.7 million, 9% of that sector's total employment, have vanished since July 2000. As of January, 380,000 U.S. workers had been unemployed for so long that their jobless benefits had run out. This is particularly troubling because the welfare system no longer performs the safety-net function it performed in the past. Some 60% of poor children receive no welfare benefits.

In addition to those who are "officially" unemployed, another 4.2 million workers wanted full-time jobs but were working only part-time in February. An additional 1.4 million people were not counted as unemployed, even though they were available to work, merely because they couldn't find a job and gave up looking for one. If one counts these groups as unemployed, February's unemployment rate stands at 10.1% (up from 7.9% the year before), almost double the "official" rate.

Some analysts' forecasts are even more negative than those of Greenspan and Shepherdson. Felix Zulauf, who runs an asset management firm, said last month that he does "not think we are in an economic situation that allows for a sustainable recovery." Wynne Godley, a widely respected economist, argues that the U.S. economy will at best suffer from several years of "seriously subnormal growth," and that several more years of absolute decline is "easy to imagine."

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

Among the chief factors behind such negative outlooks is the fact that U.S. companies and consumers have been borrowing so much that their net saving is negative—they spend more money than they bring in—something that cannot be sustained in the long term. Starting in early 1992, when it stood at about 6% of GDP, net saving plummeted continuously and bottomed out at -6.2% in the third quarter of 2000.

The expansion of the 1990s was largely a matter of firms and consumers investing and consuming beyond their means. This could not and did not last forever.

Investment spending fell sharply in the latter part of 2000, and the economy sank into recession. By the third quarter of 2001, the savings rate had risen by 3.7 percentage points, to -2.5%. Despite its steep rise, the savings rate remains in negative territory, and its current level is therefore unsustainable.

Although investment spending has dropped substantially, consumer spending has not. Even in the wake of a stock market slump and a year of recession, consumers are still spending money faster than they are making it. Stephen Roach, chief economist at Morgan Stanley, quipped that "The swagger of the legendary American consumer is starting to look more and more like that of a drunken sailor."

Yet it isn't just perverse psychology that has propped up consumption during the recession. The Fed's unprecedented string of interest rate cuts, as well as tax rebates, zero-interest financing on motor vehicles, and other sharp price discounts, have kept consumer spending on a rising path. The zero-interest motor vehicle loans alone served to boost spending on vehicles by \$58 billion in the final quarter of 2001.

Yet if this and the other incentives to spend are temporary—and they all do seem to have run their

course—they can stimulate spending only temporarily. In fact, since the zero-percent loans induced consumers to buy new cars sooner rather than later, they will depress such spending in the months ahead.

The recent spending incentives have thus allowed the day of reckoning to be postponed, but it cannot be postponed indefinitely, particularly because the savings rate remains negative.

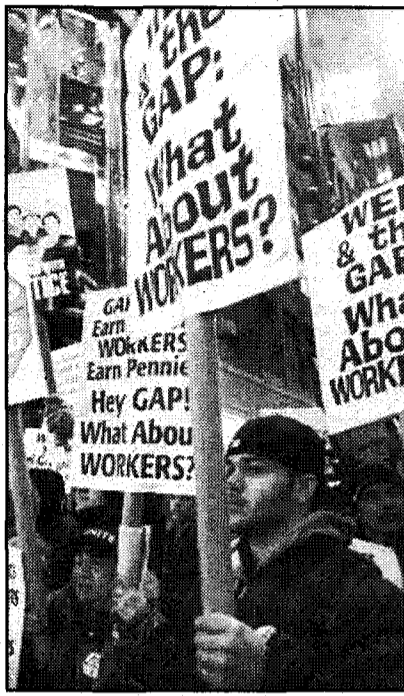
Thus the key question is how quickly spending will fall back onto a sustainable path. If spending growth slows down gradually over an extended period, we can expect an extended period of below-normal economic growth. If the savings rate moves back rapidly to a normal level, however, it is likely either that the apparent recent upturn will be reversed and the recession will continue, or that a new recession will follow quickly on the heels of the latest one. Such "double dip" recessions are common; a double dip took place during five of the six most recent recessions in the U.S.

Another factor that threatens to prevent a genuine economic recovery in the U.S. is that its trade deficit has recently hit an all-time high and might rise further. U.S. imports exceed its exports by so much that it has to borrow \$4 billion daily from abroad to make up the difference. Even a small decline in capital inflows could trigger a rise in interest rates and inflation, and a fall in the value of the dollar, and thus lead the economy into a renewed slump.

The present recession in East Asia, largely a result of the steep decline of Japan's economy, is yet another factor that might prevent recovery in the U.S., in part by depressing U.S. export earnings even further. In the final quarter of 2001, Japan's GDP fell for the third time in a row, and especially sharply, at a 4.5% annual rate. Business investment dropped by 40%. Industrial production fell by 15% last year, and now stands 10% below its 1989 level.

In January, bank lending in Japan fell for the fiftieth straight month and retail sales declined for the tenth. Unemployment, which stood at 3.3% four years ago, has risen steadily and now stands at 5.3%. Sluggish spending has led to serious deflation. Consumer prices in Japan fell every month during the past two years, and last year they fell by 0.7%. Given that inflation, not deflation, is the norm, this is a large decline.

When prices fall, so do sellers' incomes, and the loss of income makes it harder for them to pay off their debts. Thus if deflation in Japan continues much longer, the likely result is widespread business and



Protest in New York against World Economic Forum

Racism and the anti-war movement

Chicago—Recently, I pulled out of a local coalition here that was organized as a response to the post-September 11 anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiments in the Chicago area. With my walking out of a coalition that was designed to organize against racism, there are now no Black people active in it. The reason that I pulled out of it has to do with the status of integrated grassroots activity.

All my life I've had to struggle with questions from well-meaning liberal and progressive grassroots activists regarding "why aren't there more Black people involved." To me this question is much like an updated version of Rodney King during the L.A. disturbances asking "why can't we all just get along."

Many white activists do not realize that the risks of taking action are very real to the Black community. I recall when I gave a weekly commentary on public policy and social issues on a Black radio show when I was a teenager in Detroit that my grandmother would be so worried that something would happen to me that I had to start using an air-name. She was from the South, and like countless others in the Black community who supported the efforts for civil rights, she always kept in mind that one takes a risk in effecting change.

Every time a Black person speaks out and stands up for dignity or liberty, we place our personal safety and the safety of our families at risk. I beg to say that the severity of this is lost on the white vanguard activists.

Last fall the U.S. government walked out of an international meeting on racism in South Africa. Prior to it, a report was issued by the U.S. State Department on the status of racism in the U.S. This report chronicled the actions and public policy changes accomplished by Black activists. My point is that Black people in the U.S. are in the midst of a struggle that has

always effected changes in public policy.

Today the work of the Black community includes everything from child welfare workers, to corporate affirmative action efforts, to street demonstrations against police brutality—and yes, the peace movement. While there is a citywide peace movement in places like Chicago with few Blacks in it, there are many voices for peace within the Black community. We're facing two locomotives speeding on parallel tracks that never meet, because while they are going in the same direction their objectives are so different. One is working until change comes; the other is working everyday to make changes happen.

When I left the peace group in Chicago I don't think that they understood why. Nor do I think that white, well-meaning, liberal progressive folks understand that their purpose has to be about making change happen here and now. That is the only way you can show respect for the people you encounter.

Being relevant doesn't mean you lead a struggle. Being relevant means that you respect the place you are in and shoulder your portion of the work that has to be done and push forward the cause, instead of the cause of your particular organization.

Audre Lorde, the Black lesbian feminist writer, once said: "When I dare to be powerful to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid." Yes, as Black people we speak out at a risk, but not out of fear. If white, well-meaning organizations look around and wonder why their ranks do not contain more than one or two Blacks like myself, they are going to have to clarify their vision, and not just talk about how they are going to get more people to join them

—Marc Loveless

personal bankruptcies, as well as a wave of bank failures or even a collapse of the banking system.

Japan's banking system is already in dire straits, in part because of defaults on loans, but also in large part because the value of the shares of stock the banks own has plummeted drastically. The Nikkei stock price index has fallen by one-half during the past couple of years, and by three-fourths since the country's bubble economy burst at the start of 1990.

Although Japan's decline is much less steep than the decline of the U.S. economy during the Great Depression, it has lasted longer. Twelve years into Japan's slump, output, profits, and asset values are all much lower, relative to pre-slump levels, than they were 12 years after the U.S. Depression began.

This is occurring despite the Japanese government's massive employment of Keynesian policies. Short-term interest rates are close to zero, the basic money supply grew by 16% in the past year, and government spending has skyrocketed to the point that its debt now stands at 140% of GDP. (Moody's, a credit-rating firm, has threatened to downgrade Japan's credit-worthiness to the level of Botswana's.) Such policies supposedly "prime the pump," but they haven't done so.

On Feb. 25, U.S. Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill voiced a widespread sentiment when he said that Japan's economic situation "is not sustainable for too much longer a period of time. Something will give."

The deflation in Japan has spread to Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and China. China's economics minister recently conceded that, due to falling prices and weak demand from abroad, profits in the state sector of the economy will fall in 2002, as they did in 2001. Western analysts paint a gloomier picture, arguing that China's plan to revitalize the state sector has not succeeded. Official state-sector profits, they say, are positive only because creative accounting and lending by state banks boosts them artificially. Partly because of this, the four big state-owned banks are now insolvent by international standards.

China's revitalization plan has thrown about 70 million state-sector workers out of work. The official urban unemployment rate is only 5%, but Western scholars think it is actually about 25%. An estimated 170 million Chinese are either unemployed or "semi-employed," and China's recent entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) is expected to cause millions of agricultural workers to lose their jobs.

The failure of its revitalization efforts is particularly threatening to Chinese capitalism because, ever since 1989, the state has tried to spur economic growth in order to dampen social unrest.

This also seems not to be working. Bombings have escalated since the early 1990s. According to China-watchers Peter Kwong and Dusanka Miscovic, several Communist Party officials were assassinated, and 28 deliberate explosions occurred—at factories, police stations, train depots, and housing facilities—late last year, around the time China entered the WTO.

ARGENTINA'S DEEPENING CRISIS

Argentina is another country rocked by protests that its latest president, Eduardo Duhalde, has characterized as a "social time bomb." The East Asian crisis spread to Argentina in 1998, and its economy has never recovered. Indeed, the recession has deepened, causing foreign capital to flee. The government was forced, in December and January, to freeze bank accounts, default on its \$155 billion foreign debt—the largest such default in history—and allow the value of its currency to fall by more than one-half, which in effect makes the Argentine people poorer by one-half.

The unemployment rate is now about 25%, and 44% of Argentina's urban residents are now officially classified as poor. Sixteen percent of the country's people—twice as many as two years ago—are not getting their basic food needs met. The economy is not expected to turn around any time soon.

The Argentine working and middle classes have protested against these conditions and policies in various ways. The Congress building was set on fire, demonstrators fought police, and others obtained needed foodstuffs from grocery stores by nonmonetary means. Banks continue to be a target. Uruguay, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Peru are other South American countries that have been shaken by protests triggered by the region's recession.

Argentina was the richest country in South America only a few years ago. In light of its apparent economic success, advocates of free-market and neoliberal policies regularly pointed to it as a model for other "developing" countries to follow. They do so no longer and, within Argentina, free-market and neoliberal policies are widely blamed for the country's crisis.

The dismal experiences of other Latin American countries that tried to resist the world market, however, calls into question the notion that Argentina's people would be better off had it also done so. The country's legacy of Peronism and military dictatorship suggests that the failed economics of the recent past may well be replaced by something worse.

The movement against global capitalism must therefore not stop at opposing capitalism only in its neoliberal form. Fighters for freedom need to articulate a vision of a future in which the power that dominates over us, the self-expansion of value, and the recurrent economic crises it engenders, are abolished. This is the only liberatory alternative to the current state of affairs.

Angola 3 oppression intensifies

Oakland, Cal.—Herman Wallace of the Angola 3 has been sentenced to Camp J, the Louisiana State Penitentiary's solitary confinement/punishment camp, following a disciplinary hearing on Wednesday, March 13. Prison officials claim they found a small piece of metal in his cell during a shakedown on March 11. They claim the piece of metal, which Herman adamantly denies having, could be used to open handcuffs. Herman's cell was searched twice in one day on March 6th. Nothing improper was found.

Angola's "shakedown crew" then tossed his cell again five days later while he was outside on the yard. When he returned, officials notified him that they had charged him with possession of contraband.

At the disciplinary hearing, Herman challenged the authorities to give him and the officer who searched his cell a polygraph test, but his request was denied and he was found guilty. It was a case of Herman's word against a prison guard's.

As we all know, prison guards always win that argument (especially when fellow guards serve as judges). Several other prisoners were also charged following the search and found guilty of possessing items such as a jump rope and some empty styrofoam containers.

Everyone was sentenced to Camp J, but all but Herman and one other man had their sentences suspended. At Camp J, Herman will lose even the few privileges he is afforded in his current solitary confinement status, CCR. He has already been stripped of all of his property except for writing materials, a dictionary, and his copy of *Lockdown America* by Christian Parenti. He will be forced to wear shackles during his three-hours-per-week of solitary exercise in the fenced-in

cage that serves as a "yard." Phone calls will be limited to one a month and all visits will be behind a thick metal screen that is almost impossible to see through. The lack of air conditioning and minimal ventilation turns Camp J cells into sweat-boxes during the summer.

Herman will probably have to stay in Camp J for a minimum of six months. There is no fixed sentence; he has to "program" out through a step program that has a minimum of two three-month stages. He was sent there in 1999, along with Albert Woodfox and Robert

King Wilkerson, after the three participated in a hunger strike. At that time, the men were kept in Camp J for approximately 10 months because the prison refused to hold the classification hearings that were necessary for their return to CCR.

I have little doubt that Herman Wallace will survive this ordeal, but he is now 60 years old and there are limits to the amount of punishment any human being can take. On April 17, he and Albert Woodfox will mark 30 years in solitary confinement.

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jlkc911@lycos.com

www.prisonactivist.org/angola



Herman Wallace and Albert Woodfox

NCFAS

The National Coalition to Free the Angola 3 has issued a special T-shirt for fundraising purposes. They are made of heavy cotton, in red or powder blue with red writing, in large or extra-large sizes and can be purchased for \$17 (includes \$2 shipping) by sending a check or money order to It's About Time/Angola 3, P.O. Box 221100, Sacramento, CA 95822.

The threat of ten stamped envelopes

policies and procedures that are abusive even by normal prison standards.

The prison-industrial complex has also found ways to include the families and friends of prisoners in the charade by creating policies and procedures that create hurdles to control legitimate commerce. The result of this control is the "authorized vendor."

The purpose of these vendors—by doctrine—is to control the entry of contraband into a prison, but what they have become is a monopoly created by government that gives these authorized vendors unfair advantages since other vendors are restricted from competing for commerce from prisoners or their families. These authorized vendors generally make their money exclusively from prisoners and their families, in essence monopolizing prisoner trade for a few private companies that have ties to private prison concerns.

In addition to the stated contraband issue, there is an even greater incentive to require authorized vendors—or to purchase items directly from the prison: It allows companies to unload factory seconds on a market that does not have the option of choice, at inflated prices that range from 100-300% or more above wholesale.

DISALLOWING HUMANITY

This brings us full circle to how ten embossed stamped envelopes, family photographs, and magazines can be perceived as a threat to a prison. Information is power, and communication inside of a prison (to the outside) is perhaps the most regulated prison commodity. Every attempt is made by prison administrators to limit this aspect of prison life.

These restrictions come in a variety of ways: limits on stamp purchases; stigmatizing prisoners and their families by placing large, bold stamps on the front of envelopes signifying that the letter "originated from prison"; conveniently losing incoming or outgoing mail, or allowing unscrupulous prison staff to have access to prisoners' families' addresses, giving them the ways and means to harass those individuals. With policies in practice to lessen family and community support the prison-industrial complex can conduct its business with near impunity.

The danger of a stamp is representative, rather than justifiable. When restricted, it disallows intellectual freedom. The threat of a photograph is spiritual. When restricted it disallows humanity. The risk of a magazine is information. When restricted it disallows growth.

When Amnesty International has a fund-raising campaign, it sends along a little card that asks the recipient to sign and return. The card is then sent to political prisoners around the world to let them know that "they are not forgotten." Therein lies the true threat of ten embossed stamped envelopes. After all...if one well-placed letter can start a landslide of hope, ten letters could cause a revolution.

From the Texas gulag

The Allred gulag is one of the largest prisons in Texas, following a model plan used for dozens of units statewide. Thousands of men are housed here, but you would not know that by looking around. In the corridors, halls, and outdoor runways, deathly stillness, peace, and quiet reign. Once an hour or so, you may see a human wearing a gray uniform scurrying one way or the other. These are guards going to and from scheduled breaks.

The reason for the lack of activity is a "lockdown," a nasty, horrible, infamous word used in the correctional community to mean a total and complete freeze on inmate movement and activity.

No inmate is allowed out of his cell except for dire medical emergency. That's it! No recreation, no chow-hall, no visits with family and loved ones, no phone calls, no television, nothing. NOTHING!

Showers twice a week for three and a half minutes. The shower is a cage, which is padlocked the entire three and a half minutes. That's right; you are naked and showering in a padlocked animal cage.

Clean underwear twice a week. Clean sheets every three weeks. You are reading this while I sit on dirty sheets wearing dirty underwear in a tiny closet. Did I say dirty? I mean downright filthy. The pen, the joint, the Big House—you may think it's cool. Shit ain't cool; it's filthy. Dirt seeps through vents, through cracks in the wall, and under the door. Prisons are dirt-filled places, unclean and unsanitary.

The situation is made worse because we are provided no cleaning supplies to clean our tiny little cell. Don't misread this. I did not say cleaning supplies once a month. I said none at all. Think about your toilet, sink, floor, and walls if you had no Comet, Lysol, broom, mop or rags for months. What would they look like? What the hell would they smell like?

Guess where we eat? Yes sir! Right there in the same place we piss, crap, sneeze, cough, fart, vomit, and sleep. The very same place which is never cleaned and sanitized.

You're not going to believe this, but possession of prisoner-made detergent used in the kitchens or of prisoner-made disinfectant used over in the clinic is a major disciplinary infraction. If you like to kill germs and diseases before eating your food, it could cost you two extra years of your life in prison. Think about filthy, dirty, germ-covered food next time you pack a gun or boost those tapes from WalMart.

But don't stop there. It is so easy for me to digress. These cells are small, small, small. Two men are squeezed into every one of them. We're talking 24 hours a day, every day a week for week after week.

Our food? Put half a spoonful of peanut butter between two slices of bread which sat out all night. Put a slice of bologna on two more identical slices. Put all of that in a brown sack and take it outdoors. Do you know how to dribble a basketball? Dribble the ball for a while on the sack. Now you have prepared lunch.

Go to your nearest gas station and unpack your lunch on the restroom floor. Gobble up! Enjoy! Six hours later you get another sack. Guess what the difference is from lunch? This one is called "supper."

Far be it from me to complain though. Cause breakfast includes a treat. Six scrawny old prunes. Chow time! Oh boy!

Have I mentioned lonely? Do you know what lonely means? Not until you are locked in that tiny bathroom with your idiot cellmate who you want to strangle. No other contact at all with genuine humans. Everything you see, feel and hear is hard. Hard concrete, hard steel, hard crying in the night, hard bread on your sandwiches. No smiles, tears, babies, fun, laughter or clean comfortable clothes.

This hard environment is true isolation. It is called lockdown. Read my lips: No contacts, no phone calls, no visits, no mother. Try going two little bitty weeks; no, just go for two measly days without speaking to one single friend, loved one, homeboy, not even the check-out person at the grocery store.

It's hard. But that is true loneliness. You are all by yourself. No one gives a rat's ass about you. And even if they do care, you will never know it.

Enjoy your stay! Dirty, hard, lonely.

Lockdown!

—Michael S.

Safiya goes free!

As we go to press, Safiya Hussaifi has been freed by an Islamic appeals court in Nigeria. The judge alleged flaws in her original trial for adultery, which led to her death-by-stoning sentence under sharia, Islamic law.

In truth, Safiya is only alive and free because of pressure from women's and human rights advocates, both in Nigeria and around the world. This is a real victory, and a packed courtroom cheered as the verdict was announced.

But another Nigerian woman, Amina Lawal Kurani, has just been sentenced to death for the same "offense." The movements for human freedom and international solidarity will have to keep fighting as long as this perverse and anti-human interpretation of reality is allowed to stand as a continuous potential death sentence upon all women.

—Gerard Emmett

VIEW FROM THE INSIDE OUT

by Robert Taliaferro

What do ten embossed stamped envelopes, *Source* and *Vibe* magazines, and photographs of happy and healthy Black children have in common? They are all considered as contraband in a private prison run by the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA). In prison lingo the term contraband relates to anything that is considered to be a threat to the security of a prison.

Many would question that any of the above items would be a threat for they do not look to present a "clear and present danger." To the special committees that make up prison rules, however, they are more dangerous than a home made prison knife.

In the case of *Source* and *Vibe*, a prison memo which outlines them states that they depict gang-oriented material from time to time and, as a result, are now defined as "gang-related." In the case of the photographs and stamped envelopes perhaps it is because photographs allow one to feel a bit more human; and perhaps the envelopes allow one the resources to contact family and friends—giving the prisoner the opportunity to spend a few moments outside of the walls.

Private prisons, with no set guidelines for establishing policies and procedures, are hotbeds of abuse when it comes to their control efforts. One of the biggest problems with that is that private prisons can usually get away with things that would cause censure in publicly operated facilities.

Public prisons must promulgate rules that conform to legislated guidelines for the conduct of their employees, services rendered, and the establishment of prisoner rights. Private prisons, on the other hand, purport to follow standards established by the American Correctional Association (ACA), and are required to be certified by that association in order to operate or contract with states. The ACA, of course, is also a private company whose membership has a vested interest in the continuation of corrections, and it is a rare occurrence that the ACA will not certify a prison—even the worst managed.

Additionally, private prisons are—in theory—monitored by the contracting state (or the host state), but this monitoring process is usually a rubber stamp of the conduct and actions of the facility. After all, no state would ever admit that sending its prisoners to private prisons was a mistake.

INCREASING PROFITS AND CONTROL

Private prisons are operated like chain store subsidiaries of a larger corporation, and as profits are not what they used to be in the trade of people, there are incentives to cut corners in an already bare-bones operation.

In some private facilities this means longer hours for staff, prisoner deaths due to poor health care and improper procedures, hiring staff who are not qualified to work in the public sector, and the promulgation of

