

# THE COLLEGE VOICE

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## MANUFACTURING DEMOCRACY



## IN THE NAME OF WESTERN VALUES

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**TRUTH IS NEVER FOR SALE !**



# MANUFACTURING DEMOCRACY

## *In the Name of Western values*



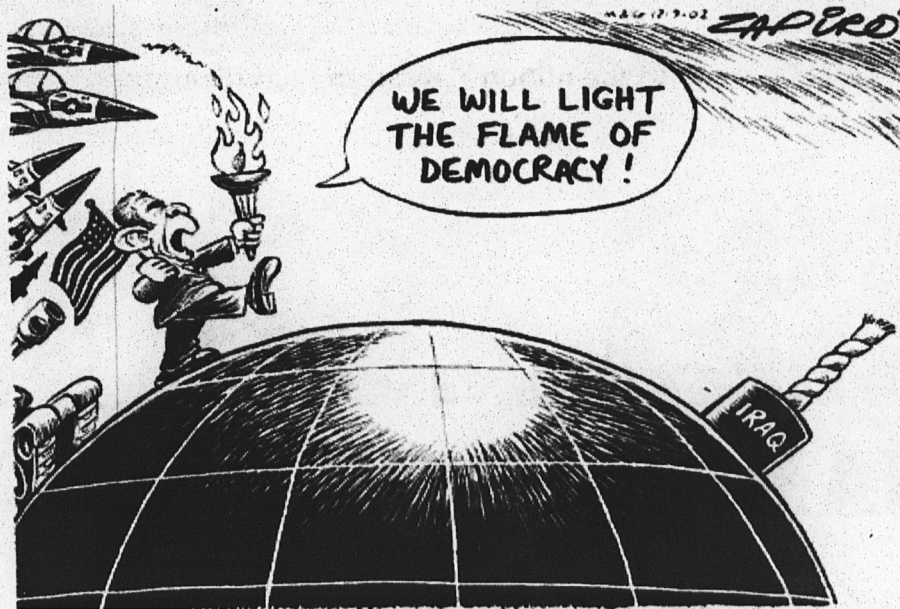
GHANIM KHALIL

Democracy, as commonly known, refers to the rule of the people, by the people, and for the people. It is a system of government people come together and agree upon. It is a political/social organism based on the core values of the society and its vision of itself. Democracy, therefore, can't be imposed from top to bottom or from the outside in; it must be grown from within. In other words, no single nation, however meritorious in its own self-vision, can impose a system of government on another. The case of Iraq is a reflection of this point.

Under Saddam Hussein there was tyranny. People lived according to an imposed system that didn't represent what they believed in. It was a socialist system that cracked down on opposing views and ruthlessly tortured, bombed, and killed thousands. There was little accountability when it came to human rights. It is well known that Saddam's police would make overnight visits to households suspected of opposition and take men away to be interrogated, some never to return. The system of control based itself on the division of the Iraqi people (Sunni versus Shi'ah versus Kurd). It was the rule of a few (Ba'thist Party) over the countless many, despot style.

Since the U.S. led war on Iraq began, much has changed – but only in name. In reality things have remained the same. The Iraqi people are still living under tyranny (of a different kind). They live under a military occupational system that

doesn't represent what they believe in. It is an imposed system that has cracked down on opposing views and led to torture, bombing, and the continuing death of thousands of Iraqis. In most accounts, there seems to be little accountability when it comes to the human rights of the occupied. It is less well known that American troops make overnight visits to households suspected of opposition and take men away for interrogation, some of who may still be in prisons like Abu Ghraib. The system of control also bases itself on the division of the Iraqi people (secular versus religious, foreign versus indigenous). It is the rule of the few (occupational authorities) over the countless many, also despot style.



From a socialist dictatorship Iraq has turned into an "American appointed" authoritarianism. Even now that governing power is handed over to a handpicked council of Iraqi figures, the U.S. continues to pull the strings. The dozens of new bases currently being built in Iraq are a clear indication of this. With all the planning and hoping, there is still no credible exit strategy offered by President Bush. Like the many post-colonial regions of the world since the end of World War II have demonstrated, even when an occupying government

officially departs, it leaves behind considerable political and economic influence. The Prime Minister of Iraq, Iyad Allawi, has ties to the CIA and MI6 and was responsible for the false '45 minute WMD' claim. Sheikh Ghazi Ajil al-Yawar, a tribal leader, is the less powerful President. Both were named by the Iraqi Governing Council, who themselves were picked by U.S. authorities.

Many Americans, unfortunately, are not aware of the particulars that have influenced Iraq since the fall of Saddam, but are quickly able to robotically mimic the now disproved reasons for war, as if they are still valid reasons. The filtered information coming from the Pentagon, White House, and embedded journalists offers a simplistic story that merges

unintentionally "aid and abet the enemy". Pointing out the hatred and irrational fears of "others" outside our "civilized system of beliefs and practices", on the other hand, is open for anyone, quite naturally.

The manufacturing of democracy in the name of western values is an attempt by a few neoconservatives to create an enterprise of "cultural re-ordering" that will enable the U.S. and its allies to utilize the natural and marketable resources in the area and at the same time expand its authority in the region for coming centuries. No nation, however powerful and rich, sacrifices billions in wealth and their troops to "bring democracy" to a region far from its immediate location, unless there is significant material gain in return. This is nothing new and we shall call it by its proper name: imperialism. The use of this term sometimes invites disapproval, yet in no way is it inappropriate in this case. According to the Cambridge International Dictionary of English, Imperialism is, "a country's efforts to have a lot of power and influence over other countries, esp. in political and economic matters". High-level neoconservatives in the current government themselves have long called for foreign policies that ensure American imperialism as the "benevolent hegemony"<sup>1</sup> necessary for the U.S. to unleash the "cavalry of the new American frontier"<sup>2</sup> (the U.S. armed forces). War on Iraq is another chapter of this dangerous saga.

The American empire is not aspiring to anything the British Empire didn't aspire to before it, except it has the military technology to execute its strategies more rapidly and efficiently. Military success is never a complete success, as the Iraq affair is now demonstrating. It must be complimented with a cultural/political triumph



that will enable post-war success to materialize the intended multiple benefits of overseas control. President Bush calls it "winning the hearts and minds" of the targeted subjects. The occupied have often called it subjugation. Nevertheless, according to this imperial game, when you have their hearts and minds you can go about doing what one of the fathers of neoconservatism, Norman Podhoretz, has proposed: "the long-overdue internal reform and modernization of Islam", which requires the, "stomach to impose a new political culture on the defeated parties."<sup>3</sup> The accusations coming from the Muslim world that this is a war against Islam has a solid basis coming straight from the mouths<sup>4</sup> who influence the Bush administration, which unconvincingly continues to maintain there is no such war.

In similar vein, Paul Bremer, the former authoritarian appointed by the Bush administration, eliminated the chance and right of the Iraqi people in building a government based on their beliefs and self-vision, when he halted the efforts of Iraqi members of the provisional government to base its constitution on Islam. For Bremer, and many other U.S. government officials, Islam can never be allowed a strong position in Iraq, because that would be the ultimate setback in the cultural/political war on the faith. It also shows the myopic views these men have of Islam and its possible functions in politics and culture. Was it not the rule of Islam that created 700 years of tolerance and progress in pre-modern Spain (Andalusia)?<sup>5</sup> This particular history never really has served the men of cultural/religious war on either side.

To enforce (western) democracy suited to American imperialism is not only a flawed strategy, but also one that will be repelled violently until it is abandoned. Only then can Iraq be truly free and able to build a system of government beneficial to its population. If the different sects within Iraq begin to fight each other (which is another belief repeated to justify U.S.

authoritarianism in Iraq) then we need only to be reminded of how Americans almost completely wiped out the native Indians that once lived all over what is now the United States. Internal conflict is always a possibility, but it doesn't in any way justify authoritarianism – American or Arab. Yet, in the post-Saddam Iraq, there has been previously unexpected unity between people of different backgrounds and there are promising attempts by local leaders to work together and rebuild Iraq for each other.



Now we come to the notion of spreading western values. This is a major part of the "war on terrorism" and the war on Iraq. According to President Bush's National Security Strategy, part of the war on terrorism is "a battle for the future of the Muslim world. This is a struggle of ideas and this is an area where America must excel."<sup>6</sup> Culturally speaking, this reveals more about what the NSS authors think of Islam, than terrorism and its threat to America. The State Department's fascination with defining Islam from a hostile Orientalist perspective is also nothing new. Worse yet is to form actual policies towards the Muslim world from them. The ideological background to the current attitude to Islam and Muslims from within the Bush administration can be traced to men such as Bernard Lewis,<sup>7</sup> Samuel Huntington, and Daniel Pipes – all three of whom have been known to author skewed views of Islam. Here is the rationalization for an "us versus them" mentality so commonly expressed in the

media and universities of America. The troops seem to reflect this mentality in a perverse way. During the holy month of Ramadan when Muslims observe daylong fasting, Abu Ghraib prisoners were forced to denounce their religion, eat pork, drink alcohol, and stimulate themselves in front of female soldiers.

Western values, whatever one considers exclusively western, have their basis in western history and therefore, in western cultures and beliefs. To use them as a yardstick to measure non-

western civilizations and cultures is unwarranted and arrogant. In western countries individuals are elected to govern their societies according to their understanding of and loyalty to Western oriented law, society, and values while in Muslim societies individuals were elected according to their understanding of and loyalty to Islamic law, society, and values. Certainly, many in the western world confuse western civilization with "progress", though the idea of progress itself depends on the notion of human advancement based on a set of pre-constructed values and beliefs. Every civilization defines progress according to its own way of life and this is the reality of a multi-cultural world we must come to respect. A present definition of progress the global community may be inclined to consider, is not merely advancement in technology, medicine, and leisure, but more so how well we are able to survive without destroying each other and ourselves in the process of discovering each other and the secrets of

the physical world. Perhaps, from this perspective, we can see the futility of the present project – the American manufacture of democracy in Iraq, since it is bolstered in the name of western values, which in turn sustains a dichotomy between Muslims and the western world. Finally, manufacturing democracy in Iraq has come at a great cost the world can't ignore. The Bush administration (in compliance with the neoconservative objectives) has substitute international law with the law of power, introduced the dangerous policies of preemption and unilateralism, expanded its defense budget in order to create ever more lethal chemical-biological-nuclear weaponry, and in violation to its own constitution has curbed civil rights to an unprecedented degree. All of these things happen in nations well on the way to terrorizing others. The future of the United States is too unclear to be certain that it will become like the society Orwell described in his '1984', but this is no reason not to sound-off when we see the misuse of authority. Right now, one of the most apparent misuses of authority is in Iraq.

#### NOTES

1. William Kristol, *Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy*, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 75 No. 4, July/August 1996

2 Neoconservatives use these exact words. See the following site: <http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf>

3 Norman Podhoretz, In Praise of the Bush Doctrine, Commentary, Vol. 114 No. 2, September 2002

4 Besides Podhoretz there is Eliot Cohen, James Woolsey, Daniel Pipes, Charles Krauthammer, William Bennett, Michael Ledeen, and David Wurmser.

5 Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World*, Pay Back Books, New York, 2002

6 Quoted from the White House website. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>

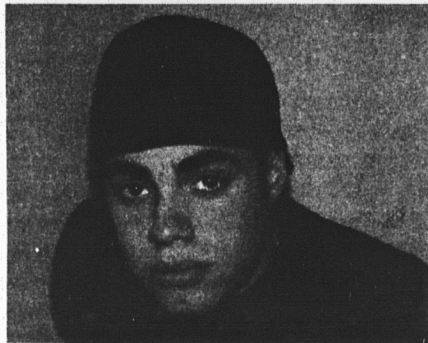
7 Lewis is one of the chief scholars who advise the neoconservatives on Islam and was an advocate of making war on Iraq. Time magazine recently stated of him, "No scholar has had more influence than Lewis on the decision to wage war in Iraq." (Time, April 26, 2004)

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# The Dreadful Degradation of Darfur:

## Where and What is the Darfur Region?



NILES FRENCH

As peace talks look promising to end the thirty year civil war in the largest country in Africa, a large scale onslaught is being carried out by several warring factions in the western corner of the Sudan. This province is called the Darfur region because of its major ethnic group of peasant farmers known as the Fur. (Dar =abode, Darfur =the home of the Fur.) Darfur shares borders with Libya in the North, Chad in the West, and the Central African Republic in the South West. Because of its borders and diverse historical rule, Darfur shares a diverse multitude of people. In the 21st century, Darfur has been subject to some of the most heinous acts of ethnic violence in the world. There are non-Arab communities that include the Masalit, Berti, Barga, Bergid, Tama, and Tunjur peoples. There is also a strong presence of Arab groups in Darfur. Most of the Arab populations in Darfur are nomadic cattle herders that dwell in the southern and eastern zone of the region. Some of the Arab groups are the Mahariya, Irayqat, Mahamid, and the Beni Hussein. Since Darfur is mainly an agriculture society and is relatively far from the capital Khartoum, it has become increasingly economically irrelevant to the Sudanese government. Farmers that make up over sixty percent of Darfur's population (Darfur's population is about four million) are desperately poor and do not have that many opportunities to elevate themselves out of despair. The bloody civil war coupled with the impoverished economy has send Darfur into a chaotic cesspool of tribal and governmental warfare. The international community and surrounding countries stand confused on what to do with the visceral quagmire that has engulfed Darfur.

### Darfur History

The Islamic sultan Dali was a great grandson of the first Tunjur king Ahmed-el-Makur. Dali has remained a decorated figure in Darfur society. Dali's mother was a Fur which created a union between non-Arab indigenous tribes and Arabs. The great

grandson of Dali was Soleiman who ruled from 1596 to 1637. Until the late 17th century, there were separate kingdoms and rulers in Darfur. In was under Ahmed Bahr (1682-1722) that Darfur became an Islamic state. Under Bahr, Darfur became rich because of a large territory and an immense amount of trade between various peoples throughout the region.

The state was essentially prosperous but had several rulers due to sultanate armies being defeated on several occasions. Egyptians then conquered the important province of Kordofan in 1821. Darfur as a whole was still under Fur rule but the people had lost some power because of the emerging Egyptian regime. The Fur lost their complete power when the Egyptians seized the whole state when the Darfurians were defeated in the late 19th century. A Sudan government was recognized in 1899. Ali Dinar stayed as the Sultan by paying an annual tax. During World War I, Dinar tried to expel foreign powers but was defeated as British rule took over. From 1899 to 1955, the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium ruled most of the Sudan. This was an agreement between Egypt and England that dominated the decision making and economic benefits of the Sudan. Sudanese leaders were either suppressed are forced to act as puppet regimes under the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. It was not until 1956, that Sudan gained its full-deserved independence.

### The Warring Players

Darfur has not really enjoyed a peaceful time in its existence, but rather has endured the many problems of war. Ethnic war in its present form in Darfur goes back to when a water drought forced Zaghawa and Arab nomadic groups were forced in the Fur region of Darfur. This war raged on without a peace conference for six years. An estimated 5,000 Furs and 400 Arabs were killed in this time. Conflict crossed borders when former Chadian President Deby was given support by the Zaghawas (one of Darfur's ethnic groups) on the Sudanese side of the border after being pushed out in a coup in 1990. A harsh civil war has escalated in the 21st century in Darfur including several parties that are all fighting. The Sudan Liberation Movement Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) took up arms in 2003 against the Sudanese government. The main reason for doing so is because of the Sudanese government neglect of the region of Darfur both politically and economically. It is also meant to combat the governmental militias that have



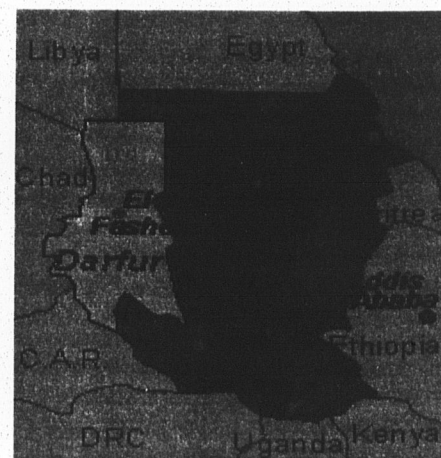
A Sudanese child plays with sand on the border after fleeing across the border into Chad, in eastern Chad, right on the border with Sudan, January 26, 2003. Tens of thousands of Sudanese refugees have poured across the border into Chad since December, fleeing a series of attacks by horse-riding 'Janjaweed' militiamen and bombardment by government planes. REUTERS Antony Njuguna

continually attacked the farmers of Darfur. This has caused kidnapping, looting, killing, and a mass relocation of people to nearby countries. The Sudanese government maintains that they do not support the militias (commonly known as Janjaweed) that have been eradicating the province of Darfur. The Janjaweed routinely steal humanitarian aid and cattle. They are Arabs that are recruited as mercenaries by the Sudanese government. It has been proven that the government does support the Janjaweed, industrialize the area (that would further plummet the farmers into despair), and further their stronghold on the large country. None of these groups are part of the (Intergovernmental Authority for Development) IGAD peace talks which are trying to create peace between the Sudan's People Liberation Movement (SPLA), which is different from the SLA, and the Sudanese government. The conflict in Darfur can seriously impede the peace progress for the whole country because of the other groups' disregard for respecting treaties and opposition killing. The warring factions could also threaten the stability in Chad since there are now groups in Chad aligning themselves with different factions in Darfur. This is creating an influx of military arms across borders as well as further killing.

### The Darfur Tragedy and Hopeful Future

The UN is currently saying that

Darfur is becoming comparable to the Rwandan genocide. "I think some people are using the term ethnic cleansing and I would say that is not far off the mark," says Mukesh Kapila, UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan. "The term (ethnic cleansing) is being used by certain people because its one group of people organizing themselves to do away with another group of people," continues Kapila. In February of 2004, the northern Darfur city of Tawilah was attacked. Over 200 people were killed as well as 150 women. Two hundred women were taken. Over 100,000 refugees have left their homes for neighboring Chad while another 100,000 people are thought to have lost their lives. The refugees continued to be attacked in Chad by the Janjaweed. "Civilian casualties and serious human right violations are routinely reported. This is unacceptable and must stop," said Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations. On the other side, the JEM and SLA groups met in Chad with the Sudanese government on April 9th of 2004 to try and initiate peace talks separate from the IGAD peace talks. This might help stop the attacks by the Janjaweed as well as the rebel attacks on military installations by the JEM and SLA armies. A cease-fire was agreed upon under the watch of the UN and African Union. A spokesperson for Kofi Annan says that, "he trusts this agreement will result in an immediate cessation of hostility and an end to attacks against civilians." Two days later, prisoners of war on both sides were released and no attacks have happened since before the cease-fire. The 45-day agreement will automatically renew itself as long as no one picks up arms. The peace talks for the Darfur region are important for the whole area surrounding the Sudan as well as guaranteeing the well-being of all its inhabitants. Darfur has been a bleak situation but now is hanging by a thin thread that can possibly save the country of Sudan.





# THE BILL O' SMILEY FACTOR

OMAR HAMMAD

B.O.: Welcome to the Bill O'Smiley Factor. Today we have a very special show for you. So let me tell you what we have lined up. Today on the O'Smiley Factor, we ask the question does Mickey Mouse have ties to Al-Kieda? It has been reported that Mickey has changed his name to Mickey Mohammad and his #2 man is believed to be Goofy of the infamous terrorist group "The Goof Troop". What does this mean to our country and more importantly to the Disney world? Also on The O'Smiely Factor, we have a special report on Mahatma Gandhi. Man of peace or anti-American communist? But first, we have a real special treat for you guys. Making time in her busy schedule to see us is Ms. Condeeleeza Spice. I am so glad to have you hear with us. Condi, as always, it is a pleasure.

C.S.: Thanks Bill. I must say your show and Blind Date are the only shows I watch on television.

B.O.: Well to hear that from your mouth means a lot to me Candy- I'm sorry I mean Condy.

C.S.: It's ok Billy, you can call me Candy. (winks)

B.O.: Well since that is settled Candy (smiles at her), I need to ask you some serious questions but, you don't have to answer them if you don't like them, ok?

C.S.: Ok.

B.O.: Well a lot of people out there- not me- but a lot of people want to know why you refused to testify at the 9/11 commission hearings when you were first asked?

B.O.: I had plans that day.

C.S.: I really, really, really don't want to pry into your personal life but, for the sake of the communists and

atheists out their, like the Dixie Chicks and Tim Robbins, who will say I didn't ask you the tough questions, can you be more specific?

C.S.: Anything for you Billy Boy. Well, to tell you the truth, I was up the night before watching the Matrix DVD trilogy set and it got me so depressed. I was really pulling hard for Mr. Anderson, I got so distraught so I had to make myself feel better. I went to my shelf and popped in my favorite movie of all time- 1984. I only watched the beginning though cause I was so tired.

B.O.: Well that makes perfect sense to me. You see you stinky smelly liberals, she had plans that day, you guys are never satisfied. This poor woman is depressed and you continue to pick on her.



C.S.: Thanks Billy Boy, you're so sweet.

B.O.: Anytime Candy (blushes). But more questions for now. Candy, do you have any idea where the WMDs can possibly be?

C.S.: Actually Bill, you and your viewers are going to be the first to hear this news. The President and I have come up with a plan to send the former hero police chief, Daryl Gates and some members of the LAPD to search for the weapons. So, I am sure we will plant the- darn it- I mean find them soon. At first, I made numerous attempts to contact the A-team but my hard working staff alerted me that

it was only a TV show.

B.O.: That was a great show, especially the time Hulk Hogan was on it. That was so cool.

C.S.: Totally.

B.O.: Totally. Next question is from a stinky liberal from Oklahoma who emails the O'Smiley Factor. "Ms. Spice, can you please explain why the Bush administration has classified thousands of documents on what the White House knew about Al-Kieda before 9/11?"

C.S.: Well, it's so we don't get in trouble. Like A Duh!

B.O.: Another stinky liberal question asks, "Ms. Spice, can you explain the role you had in overthrowing the democratic Govt. of John-



Bertrand Aristide in Haiti?" What useless communists' questions are you guys giving me? You don't got to answer that Candy.

C.S.: It's ok Billy. Well, saying that the white house had any involvement in the coup- darn it- I mean the overthrowing of President Aristide is like saying we had anything to do with what happened to Chile in 1973.

B.O.: Ms. Spice, now that we have gotten the useless questions out of the way, I'm going to ask you the questions that are really on everyone's minds. Are you ready?

C.S.: Like Freddie.

B.O.: What is your favorite color?

C.S.: White.

B.O.: It's not a color but a great choice indeed.

C.S.: Totally.

B.O.: Totally. Next question what was your favorite TV show of all time?

C.S.: Hmm. It would have to be between Sister, Sister and Homeboys from Outer Space. It's just too tough to call Bill. (laughs)

B.O.: (laughs) Ok, we'll let you go on that one. I sure hope the stinkin' communists don't complain that I let you off easy. Next question, what is your favorite movie?

C.S.: Like I told you before Bill, 1984. This movie is a true inspiration on what society could be if we just try hard enough. (Holds back tears) I am also a huge fan of anything with Carrot top.

B.O.: Ms. Spice, I don't want to alarm you but, I heard he is a communist.

C.S.: What a shame.

B.O.: Indeed.

C.S.: Indeed.

B.O.: Well Candy, it has been a great pleasure. But I know you have to go now to your busy schedule. As always, it has been a pleasure.

C.S.: Thank you Billy sweetie. We must do this again even though you ask me such tough questions.

B.O.: I know Candy, but it's my job. That's it for this segment of the O'Smiley Factor but, we still have more to go. We will have the Mickey Mouse story as I promised but first, we will take a look inside the sick mind of some guy with an Arab name.



# CSI STUDENT REPORT BACK FROM PALESTINE



NATALIE SHAYA

On Jan 3, 2004 everything changed for me. I participated in a demonstration in Budrus, a tiny village with 1300 people located on the Green Line (a ceasefire line that was created as a result of '48 war) on the Northwestern border of the West Bank. The villagers of Budrus were leading a nonviolent peaceful resistance to the Israeli occupation.

Like the Native Americans and their reservations, the Palestinians are fighting for a small patch of land to call their home. Like the Africans in the Apartheid, Palestinians too seek freedom and a place without checkpoints and curfews that give the Israeli soldiers the power to run the lives of the Palestinians. The Palestinians ultimately seek a place where they can live in peace.

Many Americans and Israelis feel that these regulations are necessary for the safety of the inhabitants of Israel and for the survival of Israel as a Jewish State. However, the occupation endangers the lives of Palestinians AND Israelis.

I have always encountered signs in America telling me to hate and loathe the Palestinian "terrorists," but at that moment, on Budrus soil, I could not. In Budrus, I met with the most courageous, peaceful, and warm individuals. I had the honor of living with the family of Ayed Morar, head of the Popular Committee Against the Wall in Budrus.

They empowered themselves on many levels through peaceful demonstrations. Imagine this: Israeli's, Palestinians, and Internationals walking hand-

in-hand chanting "Free Free Palestine" and "La La Engidar" ("No, No to the Wall" in Arabic).

Unfortunately, at the conclusion of the Jan. 3 demonstration, while returning into the village, Israeli Soldiers armed with tear gas, sound bombs, and rubber bullets met the villagers of Budrus. This resulted in four internationals and dozens of Palestinians hit, all while they were simply trying to return home.

Despite the threats, the beatings, and the uprooting of their olive trees, the Palestinians continue to resist the wall and occupation peacefully. The building of the wall would result in the uprooting of over 500 olive trees. The olive trees are a source of economic stability for many villages in the West Bank as well as a sacred symbol existing for hundreds of years. Many villagers believe that cutting the tree is a direct attack on their culture, family, and general way of living.



The trees in Budrus are located in a deep valley. At the present time the wall has not been built due to the non-violent resistance of the wall. Throughout history, walls have been built for security purposes such as The Great Wall of China and the Berlin Wall. History shows that building walls only results in anger, oppression, and the opposite of what they were originally intended for; security. Optimally and what

is being strived for is NO WALL.

There are many ways that have been done to make this happen. Many have chosen the path of violence and attacking the citizens of Israel. Others, such as the Villagers of Budrus have chosen the path of Non-Violent peaceful resistance to the wall. You heard me correctly: No stone throwing, No bombings, nothing. They will not regress to fighting fire with fire. They will instead fight the fire or the hatred with peace.

Morar feels as though the Israeli occupation of Palestine will turn the village of Budrus and many others into a Ghetto, building an enclave. All municipal services such as hospitals, universities, and other employers, which are in the city, will be shut out to the people of the village. In addition, thousands of olive trees will be uprooted and thousands of dunums of land will be taken by the construction of the wall. According to a villager in Na'aleen; a nearby village of

down our olive trees."

Of course, there are always two sides to every story.

The justification of the wall is to provide security for the people of Israel.

It is important to understand that the Israeli Soldiers are fighting for the safety of their nation, fighting for its continued existence as well as are Palestinians.

Israelis are being forced to live in fear at the threat of the minority violent radicals who are left to believe that violence is the only way. I tend to lean towards Ghandi's words "An Eye for an Eye Leaves the World Blind."

Naomi Chazan; drafter of the Geneva Accord and previous member of the Knesset (Jewish parliament), feels that peace has not occurred between Israeli's and Palestinian leaders because of the unwillingness of the two to trust each other. "It is the conversation of the Deaf." The Israelis are struggling against the dismantling of Israel and the Palestinians are struggling from Liberation from Israeli Occupation.

In Tel Aviv, where Former Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin was murdered, stood a picture of the word Shalom, dripping with blood. Filled with discouragement, frustration and worry, I realized that peace was unattainable, especially alongside hate.

Shlomo Gazit, Advisor to Shimon Perez on Palestinian Affairs states "I don't believe in Peace; in the kind that is perfect. There is not going to be a Political Settlement in the Middle East where all will live in Peace. To think this way is unrealistic.

The continuous peaceful demonstrations in Budrus prove to me, Gazit, and many others that peace can be attained. They are being used as a model for other villages stating very successfully and strongly that peaceful resistance to the occupation and the wall is possible and effective.

Budrus, "the mentality of the occupation is to kill the people to give the land to other people."

These people are willing to risk arrest, beatings, and death for the preservation of their home and their freedom. Because as one villager put it with applause and consent from the group "We are not against Israel, not against the Jews, We are against the occupation, against the soldiers who want to cut



# WHO'S WHO?

## NILES FRENCH

Does the majestic and equally historical name, Benjamin Banneker, ring a bell when you hear it? If not, it certainly should. The name Benjamin Banneker has been discussed in various fields such as astronomy and literature over the last two hundred years.

Benjamin Banneker was self-educated and found immense success in an astounding array of fields in the late nineteenth century. He has solidified himself in American history through his many inventions and published articles. He also was the founder of the *Farmer's Almanac*. Banneker was an effective figure throughout the colonies and furthered his accomplishments even after America gained its independence.

In 1791 he headed a team to survey the land of the Federal Territory (which is now Washington DC) and developed a map that would be the key of reference that all of America used. In the 1780's, Benjamin began studying and experimenting in astronomy. He successfully predicted a solar eclipse in 1789 while gaining prestige and notoriety in the world of science. Perhaps his biggest achievement was building the first watch in America in 1753. It was a wooden pocket watch that was fully functioning which lead to tremendous breakthroughs for watchmakers in early America. Banneker is also best known for publishing six annual editions of the *Farmer's Almanac*. The issues were out between 1792 and 1797. They included a wide variety of legitimate information about medicine, agriculture, weather calculations, and lists of ocean tides.

Benjamin Banneker was a significant trailblazer in the world of science in early American history. His roots have made all of his achievements that much more admirable. Benjamin Banneker was an African American who was the son of a former slave that had a

thirst for knowledge and yearned to know how the environment worked at an early age. He was born in Maryland in 1731. He began studying on his own about classic literature and plays. Perhaps, his biggest contribution and yet least talked about; is his role as a political thinker.

Banneker was an outstanding and fair social critic of the time who questioned the "founding fathers" on many occasions. His biggest critique and opposition came in the form of a formal, but friendly letter written to Thomas Jefferson in one of Banneker's almanacs. His social commentary and political awareness exhibited in the letter is remarkable because of the time it was written. Most people are familiar with the enormous acclaimed work of Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, and WEB Dubois. All of these brilliant men made extraordinary, but different contributions to America that went on way after their influential lives. However, they were all born in the nineteenth century and carried out most of their work in that time-period. Banneker was helping to set the stage for the future Douglasses and Dubioses that would follow Banneker by being an active African American in the eighteenth century. Banneker showed that an African American or freed slave was equal to any white person and thus strengthened his own arguments as well as others that would follow.

His ideas and marvelous concepts were seen in his letter to Thomas Jefferson. On August, 19th of 1791, Banneker wrote an open letter to Thomas Jefferson addressing freedom and race in the newly formed America. Many have questioned the irony of Jefferson writing the Declaration of Independence (that so clearly states that all people are created equally) while owning slaves. This age old debate is still discussed two hundred years later after the fact; and Banneker was challenging this sentiment all those years

ago. In regards to Jefferson writing the Declaration of Independence, Banneker said, "You [Jefferson] publicly held forth this true and invaluable doctrine, which is worthy to be recorded and remembered in all succeeding ages: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equally.'"



Here Banneker is acknowledging that Jefferson agrees that all people are born free and should be entitled to have all the same opportunities that could lead to a prosperous life. Banneker then pulls the rug from under Jefferson by showing the contradiction of his actions. He adds, "but, Sir, how pitiable is it to reflect, that although you were so fully convinced of the benevolence of the Father of Mankind, and of his equal and impartial distribution of these rights and privileges, which he hath conferred upon them, that you should at the same time counteract his mercies, in detaining by fraud and violence so numerous a part of my brethren," referring to African Americans-free and enslaved. A statement filled with absolute truth that describes the harsh mental scar that was created by the free white man enslaving another shackled black man. Man enslaving man. This was the brilliance of Banneker. He was a true social critic of the time. He was well aware of the history and reasoning for Jefferson wanting to leave England.

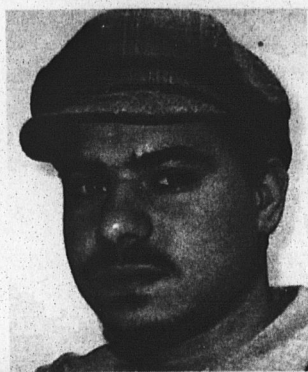
"Sir [Jefferson], suffer me to

recall to your mind that time, in which the arms and tyranny of the British crown were exerted, with every powerful effort, in order to reduce you to a state of servitude: look back, I entreat you, on the variety of dangers to which you were exposed." Banneker understood that all men were created equally and experience different degradations over time. He knew that the plight of man could be erased through care and educating one about the other. Here Banneker is the actor of the humanist. He also understood the identity of one's self within their race. He knew that African-Americans were equal to whites and possessed a rich culture. He knew that future Americans who were black would have their own shops, literature, communities, and be successful at it. Most of all, he was proud of it.

"Sir [Jefferson], I freely and cheerfully acknowledge, that I am of the African race, and in that color which is natural to them of the deepest dye; and it is under a sense of the most profound gratitude to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, that I now confess to you, that I am not under that state of tyrannical thralldom, and inhuman captivity, to which too many of my brethren are doomed, but that I have abundantly tasted of the fruition of those blessings, which proceed from that free and unequalled liberty with which you are favored; and which, I hope, you will willingly allow you have mercifully received, from the immediate hand of that Being, from whom proceedeth every good and perfect Gift." A magnificent statement that needs no introduction. Benjamin Banneker vastly contributed to future American generations through his dedication for knowledge and perspective of the equality. So next time you look at a *Farmer's Almanac* or think of "founding fathers," make sure to include and recognize a true American pioneer; Benjamin Banneker.



# WHY BLACKS SHOULD NOT SERVE IN THE UNITED STATES MILITARY



AYMAN EL-SAYED

6. We want all black men to be exempt from military service.

*We believe that Black people should not be forced to fight in the military service to defend a racist government that does not protect us. We will not fight and kill other people of color in the world who, like black people, are being victimized by the white racist government of America. We will protect ourselves from the force and violence of the racist police and the racist military, by whatever means necessary.*

1966 Black Panther Party 10 Point Program and Platform

Amadou Diallo could have been a member of the United States marines, army, air force or National Guard. Abner Louima could have been a soldier in the army or marines who fought in the first gulf war. Patrick Dorismond also could have been a US soldier. These three black men I just mentioned were victims of Police Brutality in the United States. Amadou Diallo was murdered by the NYPD who shot at him 41 times and hit his body with 19 bullets. Abner Louima had a New York police officer beat him up and shove a plunger in his rectum damaging Louima inside body parts. The cops brutalized and killed these black men without knowing who they are, where they came from, whether they were in the army or not, served in the first gulf war for "our freedom", the police officers don't even know the names of these black men they have just murdered.

Why should black men in America or any other people who are mistreated in the United States fight for the United States? Think about it, let us say Amadou Diallo was a soldier in the first gulf war and fought in the United States army. One night he is coming home late from work, four cops say he is a suspect,

the cops tell him to turn around, when he does the cops shoot him 41 times or one time. Let us say they beat him up Rodney King style. Rodney King could have been a veteran or a current soldier in the US army or marines. Why should young black men go to fight for the United States in Iraq and treat Iraqis like how the cops treat young black men in America, as suspects and walking targets?

The racism in America is rampant and now Arabs, Muslims and South Asians have joined the list of victims. African Americans are disproportionately locked up in jail; they are victims of police brutality, and racial profiling. Many African Americans have been locked up for a long time and then released because they were innocent. There are hundreds of innocent black people in jail and on death row, some have been released but many are still unjustly locked up.

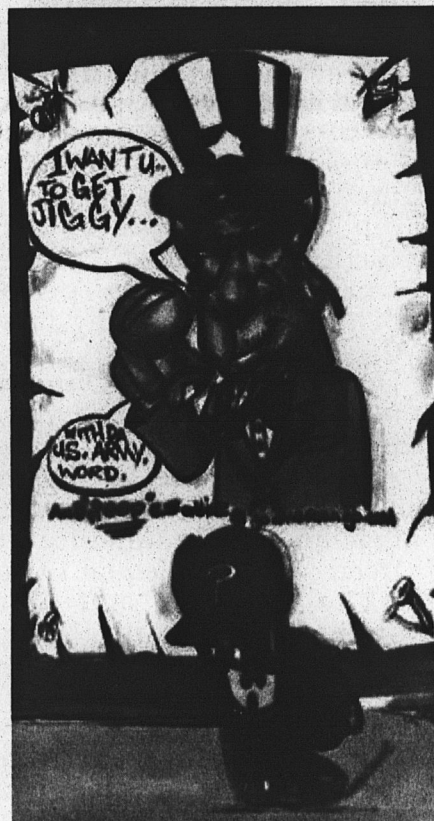
Police Brutality has not stopped after 911. In fact police brutality has increased and now Arabs, Muslims and South Asians are victims of police brutality, racial profiling and harsh treatment. On January 24, 2004, 19 year old Timothy Stansbury was murdered on the roof of his building in Brooklyn. He was going to a birthday party with his friends in the adjacent building. Two cops were patrolling the roof, they were trying to open the door to go down Timothy's building, Timothy and his friends were going to the roof, when Timothy opened the door at the top of the stairwell, a NY police officer shot him in the chest.

Several police officers in California were also caught on tape using excessive force on young black men, banging their heads on the hood of the car, pepper spraying them and beating them with batons. The US Army is doing the same to people all over the world and currently to people in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Iraq and Afghanistan, American soldiers have tortured prisoners. American soldiers have shot down unarmed Iraqi men, women and children.

The NYPD, LAPD and police departments all across the United States act like terrorist organizations when they operate in poor and black communities. On June 16,

2003, 16 residents of Tulia Texas were released after spending 4 years in jail. The police carried out a drug bust and arrested 46 people in Tulia, Texas. 40 of the 46 arrested were black.

Tulia is a town of 5,000 people. The 40 black Americans arrested represent 10% of the black community in this area. Tom Coleman, a racist cop carried out a phony drug bust without providing any evidence or drugs as proof. Tom Coleman received a Texas Lawman of the Year award after making the arrests. He has been indicted for perjury and is being investigated by the FBI. The prisoners were released, 12 of them were given 250,000 dollars so they don't sue county officials. The fact that 40 African Americans were locked up, some for 4 years shows the racism in this country. This would never have happened to forty white Americans.



My point in all of this is that the United States only wants young black men to serve in the army to kill and get killed. Why should Black Americans go to Iraq or Afghanistan to occupy someone else's land, Iraqis and Afghanis are not the ones sticking plungers in Black American rectums and Iraqis and Afghanis are not the ones shooting unarmed black men. It is cops in the United States who are doing that and many of them do not go to jail. The Black

community in America needs to have their own army to protect them from terrorist racist cops.

Black Americans are only used by the United States government as cannon fodder in wars. Many black Americans join the army for economical reasons, they need to pay for college and have families but it is still not worth risking their lives. Black Soldiers get shot at by people in the country they are occupying and by "fellow" American cops who also shoot young black men but for no justified reason.

7. We want an immediate end to police brutality and murder of black people.

*We believe we can end police brutality in our black community by organizing black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our black community from racist police oppression and brutality. The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives a right to bear arms. We therefore believe that all black people should arm themselves for self defense.*

1966 Black Panther Party 10 Point Program and Platform

Don't be fooled by military recruiters, find out what you are really getting into, here are some websites to check out:

1. Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors  
<http://www.objector.org/>

2. War Resisters League  
<http://www.warresisters.org>

3 AFSC-Youth & Militarism Program  
<http://www.afsc.org/youthmil/default.htm>

4. Women Against Military Madness  
<http://www.worldwidewmm.org/>

If you are currently serving in the United States Armed Forces and want to know your options, check out these organizations and websites:

1. Support Network for an Armed Forces Union  
[www.join-snafu.org](http://www.join-snafu.org)

2. GI Rights Hotline  
1800 394-9544  
<http://girights.objector.org>



# Chavez announces big steps forward for Venezuela

## *New people's army, land to poor*

BERTA JOUBERT-CECI

It was a wake-up call. On May 9 Venezuelan forces surprised 150 Colombian paramilitaries who had been hired to assassinate President Hugo Chávez. They were apprehended on the farm of opposition leader Robert Alonso, architect of the "guarimbas"--violent street blockades staged by supporters of the Venezuelan oligarchy. Alonso is a counter-revolutionary who comes originally from Cuba.

It was a reminder that U.S. imperialism, joined with the Colombian and Venezuelan oligarchies, has not ceased to conspire to oust President Chávez from office--both in the open, through a failing recall referendum, and in secret, as this incident reveals.

The leaders of this paramilitary grouping are also leaders of the vicious Autonomous Self-Defense Forces of Colombia. To date 130 Colombian paramilitary forces have been arrested in this operation. Their plan to kill Chávez has been brought to light through extensive interrogation.

They were to kill and decapitate the Venezuelan president. Then they planned to send his head to Cuban President Fidel Castro. As part of the assassination/coup process they would fire on Miraflores, the presidential palace, creating chaos in Venezuela.

Only the vigilance of the Venezuelan police and National Armed Forces (FAN) prevented the counter-revolutionary plot from reaching its goal. But with so much at stake and given the relentless quest of the bourgeoisie to regain its previous power, the police and the FAN are not enough.

Beginning early in the morning on May 16, one week after the plot was brought to light and the paramilitary troops arrested, thousands of people poured onto the broad Bolívar Avenue in Caracas to participate in a March for Peace and Sovereignty and Against Paramilitarism and Terrorism. They were eager to hear Chávez himself address them.

The march had been called by many different popular organizations with varied political affiliations and perspectives, including labor unions, political parties, and student, peasant and other social movements. All were united in their loyalty to and support of the Bolivarian Process--and all were intent on sending a message that the people themselves are not going to allow an assault against their revolution.

So significant was this march that Chávez canceled his Sunday Aló Presidente television program to be at the demonstration. His speeches--really a dialog with the audience--usually last for hours and are listened to very attentively by the masses. They stay as long as he talks, and respond very actively with applause, cheers and loudly chanted slogans. This is because his talks are a combination of history class and presentation of action plans.

The May 16 speech was a particularly important one. Chavez announced a new phase of the Bolivarian Revolution. While formally declaring the revolution to be anti-imperialist, he made a call to the masses to be an army for the defense of the revolutionary process.

Stating that the revolution is "just beginning," Chávez encouraged the crowd to always think and reflect on the events that occur and put them in a historical perspective. Always ask, he urged: "Where are we? Why has it happened?"

He explained the dangerous and unipolar character of U.S. imperialism after the fall of the Berlin wall and the break-up of the Soviet Union, and its viciousness after the Sept. 11 events. He differentiated neoliberalism from imperialist adventures by the United States, stating that neoliberalism--the effort to invade countries via economic measures like the Free Trade Area of the Americas, with the aid of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank--is not having the success the bourgeoisie hoped for in Latin America and the Caribbean. Therefore, he said, Washington is reverting to old-style imperialist military invasions.

Referring to the revolution's newly declared anti-imperialist character, he said: "And that gives it a special content, which forces us to think and act clearly not only in Venezuela but in the rest of the world," adding that "with the Constitution in our hands, we have to take actions ... for example, the expropriation of lands to put them in the hands of those who really need them."

Chávez said, "We cannot permit [ourselves] to be absorbed by a conservative spirit; either we are or we are not." He went on to spell out the different laws that have been enacted and should be enforced, like the Land Law and the Supreme Justice Tribunal Law. This last one will allow, after careful review, the removal from the courts of counter-revolutionary elements who are still part of the justice system and are sabotaging the Bolivarian process.

The strongest call was for forming a popular army to defend the revolution as part of the three lines of action of a newly created "Comprehensive National Defense" strategy.

Saying that "the time has come to revolutionize the national security and defense, the time to reconceptualize and reorient," Chávez quoted Mao Zedong: "The people are to the army, what the water is to the fish." He added that "like the fish in the water, the Bolivarian soldiers should be together with the people."

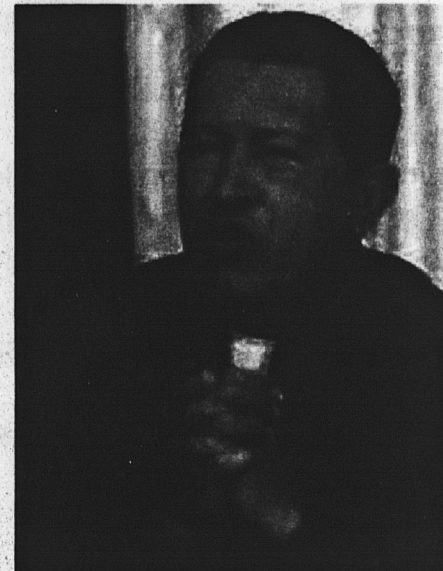
He went on to say, "I call on all the Venezuelan people to incorporate themselves into the national defense, the territorial defense, the defense of the national sovereignty; and of course I not only make a symbolic call to the people; no, as head of the state, as commander-in-chief of the armed forces I have already begun to give the orders to open the channels, in order to open the massive popular participation into an integrated national defense."

The FAN has been ordered to select and summon retired military professionals as part of the active reserve to "incorporate them into the tasks for popular organization for the defense of the country in each district, in each ravine, in each island, in each field, in each university, in each factory, in each jungle, in each place where there is a group of patriots, there they must be organizing themselves."

Explaining how this has already begun, Chávez said: "For example, in old Tacagua, I found one day, when I was there, a gentleman who came with his family to greet me, and he said to me: 'My Commander, how are you?' He turns out to be a retired sergeant of the National Guard. I told him: 'Compañero, look throughout all this ravine for all the reservists, [and] in the first place organize a squad, organize a company, organize a battalion, make the list in a notebook.' A computer is not necessary because sometimes we are stuck with this technology. Simón Bolívar organized an army without computers and airplanes."

The National Defense Strategy's other two lines of action are: strengthening the military by increasing the number of troops nationally, for which Chávez has already assigned 20 thousand million bolívares (approximately \$1 billion U.S.) for the FAN and the National Guard, and weeding out counter-revolutionary elements in the armed forces.

In a display of compassion and understanding of the roots of the problem in Colombia, Chávez



mentioned that some of the paramilitary forces were children who had been forced into the ranks of the paras by extreme poverty and lack of opportunities in their own country. He said these children are not in a military prison like the adults arrested, and that they will be returned to their parents. He added that after consultation with the National Council for the Defense of Children and Adolescents' Rights, it had been decided that these children could stay in Venezuela if they wish to, and receive free education in an effort to save their futures.

The Bolivarian Revolution is at a crossroads, with all the elements, particularly the strength of the peoples' commitment to it, in place. However, U.S. imperialism is fiercely advancing with plans to destroy it. As Chávez himself recently said, it is very strong but not yet irreversible, as the Cuban Revolution is.

Venezuela, along with Cuba, is a beacon to all the dispossessed masses in Latin America and the Caribbean who are rising up for the first time in considerable unison, realizing that U.S. imperialism and its "free trade" will never be the answer to their needs and their misery. On the contrary, it is the health care, education and development of employment offered by these revolutions that give hope to the millions of people in deep poverty, not only in the region but worldwide.

This is a huge threat to the bourgeoisie. They will not let it go on voluntarily. It is an urgent task for the people of the United States to not only offer unconditional solidarity to the Bolivarian Revolution, but to actively organize here and demand as loudly and clearly as possible from the U.S. government: USA, hands off Venezuela!



# COLLEGE VOICE WHO WE ARE

## WHAT WE STAND FOR

**Purpose 1.** We, in the College Voice, stand for rational and informed views that encourage people to investigate for themselves the stories behind the political, social, and environmental events that shape our times.

**Purpose 2.** We stand for speaking up for the oppressed and persecuted in all nations regardless of race, color, creed, or gender. Very often, the oppressed among us remain voiceless. Therefore, we aim to give some of them a voice.

**Purpose 3.** We stand for revealing news and information lacking in the organized media that are pertinent to purposes 1 and 2.

## WHY WE STAND FOR WHAT WE STAND FOR

**Statement 1.** We believe that rational and informed views (the quality of information) are more accurate and significant than just any or all views (the quantity of information).

**Statement 2.** We believe that human beings are all equal even though we are influenced by different ideologies and trends. However, some of us are oppressed by others, and so we see it fit to expose the nature of the oppression.

**Statement 3.** We believe that nationalism often obscures the greater and more honorable human functions of humanitarianism. One example of this obscurity is the self-censored views media corporations have on various subjects and events due to the fear of losing funding and support from narrow-minded groups of people. We believe it is important for us to follow the spirit of humanitarianism in place of nationalism.

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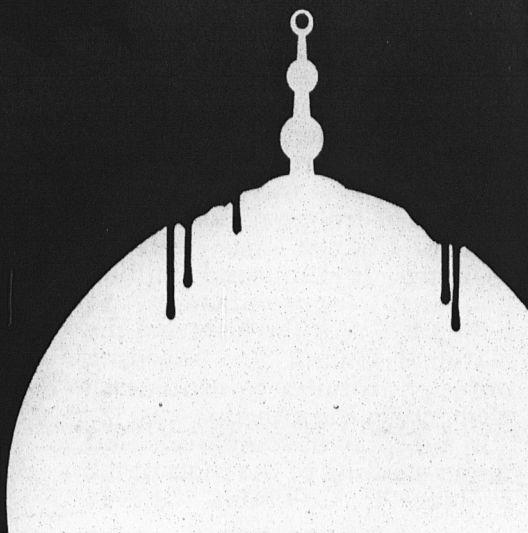
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**We welcome readers' views and criticisms.**

## AMERICAN CRUSADE

"This crusade—this war on terrorism—is going to take a while..." President George W. Bush, September 16th, 2001.



To all who may be interested! Anyone interested in political issues, social issues or religious issues, we have just the thing for you! A theatre company geared toward the Arab-Muslim community. The plays, the actors, but anyone, I mean EVERYONE who loves the theatre, who loves to write or direct or act or be involved in any way, can- can be involved. We need to do this. It would be a great opportunity for anyone who wants a voice; who wants to help another's voice be heard. So, if this is your passion, your desire, something you would like to do for fun, please contact Shereen via e-mail at [Lucyflava@aol.com](mailto:Lucyflava@aol.com). If you would like to know more about what my ideas are for plays or how I want this to work out, just e-mail me... Thanx!



# TORTURE AT ABU GHRAIB AND THE MURDER OF NICK BERG

## APOLOGY NOT WANTED, JUSTICE DEMANDED

A rule of common sense ought to be 'If I didn't commit the sin, then I should not apologize'. This is in reference to the Abu Ghraib "prison scandal" or what honest observers call the torture scandal and the murder of Nick Berg. The images the American public has seen about the prison abuses are only a tip of the appalling iceberg. What has not been shown is far more significant, in terms of revealing what International Amnesty and Human Rights Watch have described as "systematic", from Guantanamo Bay through Iraq and all the way to Afghanistan. Torture, once deemed horrific is now making its comeback.

However, it is mistake for any American to apologize for it, except the individuals and groups held responsible

for it, (like the soldiers involved, contract mercenaries employed by the U.S., intelligence officials involved in the prisons, and the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, who it now



appears gave the go-ahead for such abuse and torture to begin). No American, who has nothing to do with what the government and U.S. military are doing, should apologize for what happened. In the same

vein, no Muslim should apologize for 9/11 or the murder of Nick Berg, who had nothing to do with either. Enough of the apologies and let us move on to the issue of justice. Justice must prevail, if humanity is to prove itself a race of rational beings. For justice to prevail, people must give up "sides" and uncover what our shared values demand - the truth. (No people on earth value falsehood over truth, except in rare occasions).

On the other hand, less people seem to actually follow their own values. This is exactly the problem that has plagued humanity since the beginnings of civilization.

To value truth for itself is a cherished value, often spoken, yet not often practiced. The Iraqi torture and Berg's murder should be about justice and truth, not which

civilization or people should apologize to the other. Certainly, there are many people who see these issues as part of the great "image war" between the Western (American-led) world and the Muslim world. It would be fruitful to realize that there are not two (or more worlds) divided by religions or cultures, but one world - the one we all live in, together, as one race of human beings. The fact that the centuries old propaganda war between the West and the East will continue in the unforeseeable future is certain, but what isn't so certain is how many people will have the courage to detach themselves from this war and engage in the fight for truth and justice.

## TIME TO COME CLEAN ON NICK BERG

First, the murder of Nick Berg is unjustified and the murderers must be brought to justice, whether they are "good" or "bad" Muslims, depending on who is doing the labeling. Assuming the murderers are who the CIA alleges (since when do we know which piece of intelligence is false or true since the intelligence failure of WMD's in Iraq?), then Muslims must confront the elements in their societies that justifies, as well as, promotes murder in the name of God, by

condemning it as a punishable crime and ardently seeking to eliminate the mentality that accepts or even suggests such acts. Any lapse in this regard, including silence, is to reveal a depth of ignorance and density of the extremist mentality within the Muslim world.

Second, to be sure, not everything about the media coverage of Nick Berg's murder makes sense. To put it more critically, there are too many unanswered questions. Why was Nick in U.S. custody? Why do

the Iraqi police dispute the official Government claim that Nick was in their custody for days? Why does all the evidence support Michael Berg's (the father of Nick) claim that he was in U.S. military custody? Why was Nick wearing a U.S. orange prison suit? Why did U.S. intelligence mistranslate a statement his killers made to include the words al-Qaida? Is the link between Nick and accused 20th hijacker /terrorist Zacarias Moussaoui just a coincidence?



These and various other questions deter the stability of the official account of Nick's murder. This is significant because since 9/11 there have been many shifty official accounts from the cause of the collapsing towers in NYC to the existence of Iraqi WMD, and the explanation of Nick's murder just made things even shiftier.



# ART





# POETRY

## "Phenomenal Woman"

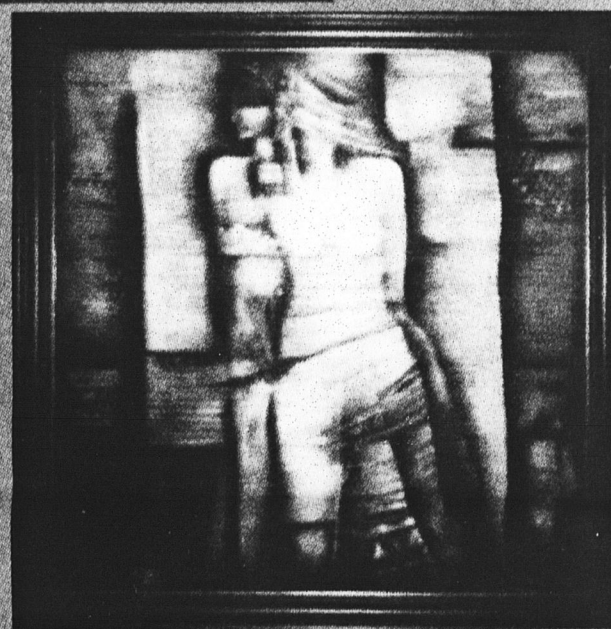
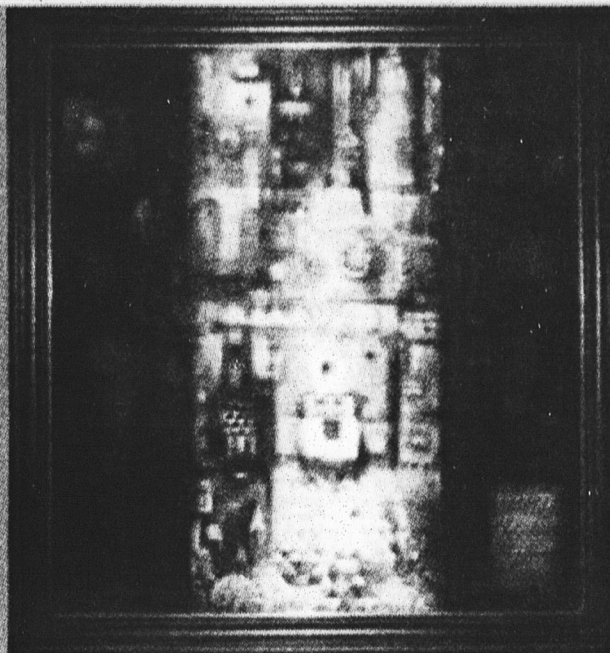
From the beginning of time, art has been an incredible form of expression. Art has been used as a form of language, as with the Ancient Egyptians. There are many forms of art, for example, photography, painting, drawing, and sculpture.

Batool Al- Fekaiki was born in 1952 in Iraq. In Baghdad, Al- Fekaiki received her BA from the Institute of Art. Due to the Gulf War, Fekaiki was forced to flee from Iraq to her now home in London.

Because of the tremendous tribulations Al- Fekaiki faced throughout her years in Baghdad, her artwork expresses the thoughts she has within herself and about the world she lives in. Although her world, as she knows it, is cruel and unjust, Al- Fekaiki's work challenges that notion. Her artwork is a place where her hopes and dreams awaken and become an aspiration to those who see it. Her work exemplifies faith and captures the beauty of human life. Al- Fekaiki's art is presented in drawing and oil on canvas.

Al- Fekaiki's works have been presented in many exhibitions in European and Middle Eastern countries. Her work has been seen in both group and solo exhibitions. Batool Al- Fekaiki is another woman who embodies the essence of being a woman. In Maya Angelou's words, she is a "Phenomenal Woman".

by Shereen Kandil



## "Friend"

One day at a time  
Knowing what I need  
I need the light that guides me through the  
darkest, wettest nights  
I need the hand that wipes the drops of  
wetness leaving my shut eye  
I need you, my friend  
Without a friend,  
there is nothing but loneliness  
nothing but hurt  
I need you, my friend to never leave my side  
because when all else fails  
I'll have you, my friend.

by: Shereen Kandil

## Bed-Stuy

Justice, we all know you's a blind-bitch!  
But for what reason are your scales  
deaf to the wails  
of the mother Stansbury  
Burying her son, another raisin in the sun?  
Strange fruit but no southern trees...

## Newscast

"And in other news, The Supreme Court today refused an appeal in the case of Justice vs. The United States.

Justice had sued her employer after an excoriating performance review, and suspension. Her lawyer even objected to the use of the word 're-view' saying it was part of a larger pattern of harassment about her disability. Justice is blind.

The high courts refusal means that a lower court's interpretation of the Americans with Disabilities Act will stand. And though blind and presumed hearing-impaired Justice will continue in her role even if she can't see the weight of items in her scale. Back to you Bill."

*Bed-Stuy and Newscast both contributed by Dwight Dunkley*



# The liberal "left" looks for the "lesser evil": Desperately Seeking Democrats

ROY ROLLIN

Now that the presidential primaries are behind us, every liberal and lukewarm "leftist" will be doing doubletime for "anybody but Bush," even though that "anybody" is John Kerry, yet another Bush-lite Democrat who differs with Bush on anything the opinion polls say it's safe to. Clearly it's a no-brainer that the Bush regime's layoffs, cutbacks, tax cuts for the rich, wars and repression have been a disaster for anyone who has to work for a living. But will activists be getting anything better, or even different, if they relegate their own struggles to the back burner in favor of putting a Democrat back into the White House? Will once again postponing the fight for independent class politics bring any tangible gains to the working class, let alone its most exploited and oppressed layers? And is continuing this policy in light of the record of the last Democratic administration, which was virtually indistinguishable from its Republican "rivals" on any and every issue of substance, a "realistic" road for the trade unions, the Black community or the anti-war movement? Just looking at the drastic decline in real wages and living standards that most working people experienced during the Clinton-Gore years, in spite of all the economic growth the Democrats boasted of, let alone the Democrats' staunch support of Bush's "war on terrorism," should provide an answer as to just how successful the path of "pragmatism" has proven to be.

## Democrats and Republicans: two parties, one class

Albert Einstein defined "insanity (as) doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result" each time. Yet for most self-styled "socialists" voting for the Democrats as "lesser evils" to the Republicans has become almost second nature by now, just as it is first nature for the AFL-CIO trade union bureaucracy and the middle class misleaders of the Black and womens movements they, in turn, look to for leadership. "We must stop the ultra-right at any cost" they cry every four years. Only unlike the John Sweeneys and Jesse Jacksons, many reformists fear that calling for a vote for the Democrats with a straight face will alienate the radicalizing youth that flocked to the anti-globalization and anti-war movements believing that "another world is possible" rather than in the "lesser of two

evils." So instead they clamour for a vote against Bush, which, in effect, means the same thing.

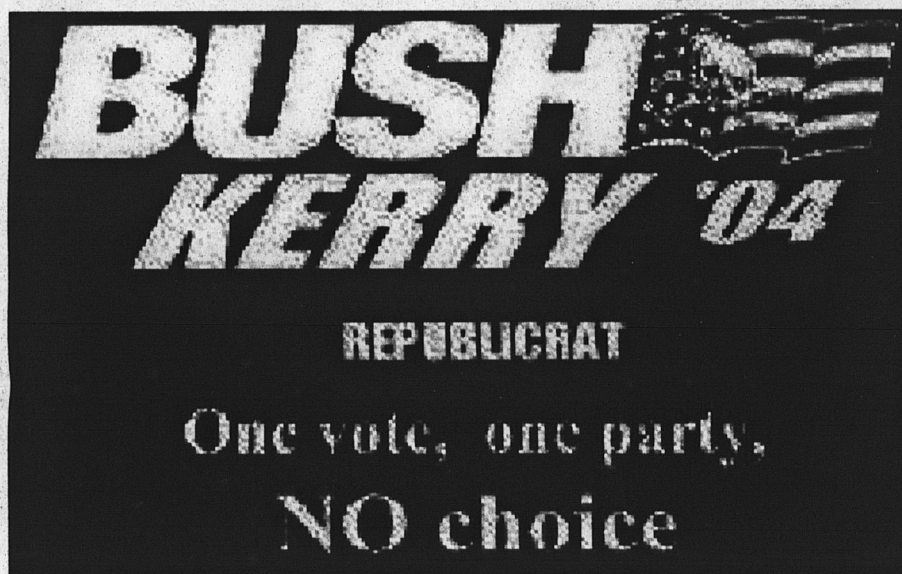
Taken out of the lofty realms of cyberspace "chat rooms" to "the politics of the possible" that the reformists are so fond of, that means any Democrat, no matter how little they may differ from Bush, will do. And Kerry, in fact, differs very little, having supported the war on Iraq and continuing the occupation. He also backed the USA PATRIOT Act and favors more tax breaks for the rich. For the Democrats, no less than the Republicans, are a party of, by and for the ruling rich, connected to the corporate kingpins by the purse strings of their campaign contributions and common class interests. Both have the same program of

perspectives of America's ruling rich. This is why no matter who gets elected little seems to change, except for the worse, insofar as working people are concerned. But how could it be otherwise? If none of the Democratic candidates have any solutions for the problems faced by working people and the poor, that's because they all support what causes them in the first place, capitalism. And under capitalist "democracy," the real decisions that affect the lives of working people are not ultimately decided in the Oval Office or in the halls of Congress but in the boardrooms of the biggest bankers and bosses on Wall Street, who then give their politician pals their marching orders.

war" candidates, he not only supported the war in Afghanistan but refused to vote in Congress against a resolution in favor of "unequivocal support" for Bush at the start of the Iraq war for fear of being seen as not "supporting" the troops.

Nor did Kucinich favor unconditional withdrawal from Iraq. Instead he prefers a UN figleaf for continuing colonialism just as he advocated continuing the UN's starvation sanctions as an "alternative" to war in the first place. This is hardly surprising. In 1998 Kucinich voted for Clinton's "Iraq Liberation Act" which called for "regime change" in Baghdad and allocated millions of taxpayer dollars to crooks and quislings like Ahmed Chalibi to carry it out. Kucinich, of course, knew he had no chance of getting the nomination. What he was really after was getting the anti-war movement and as many of those as possible who voted for Nader in 2000 back into the Democratic fold, or, in his own words, "bring(ing) third party candidates into the (Democratic) Party." Many of those who fell for the bait thought that a strong showing for Kucinich in the primaries would push the Democrats to the left. Far from it, it only pushed the "left" more to the right. The left is not about to capture the Democratic party. It will only once again be captured by it just as it was every other time it went for the "lesser evil" and were taken in by the illusion that by making peace with the status quo they were achieving some kind of influence over it.

Now that the more "electable" John Kerry has secured the nomination, the any Dem will do crowd finds itself stuck with some-one who voted for the USA PATRIOT Act and the war on Iraq and boasts that he "voted for the largest defense budgets in the history of our country." He also voted for Clinton's Effective Death Penalty and Anti-Terrorism acts. In spite of his occasional bouts of liberal rhetoric, Kerry is as much in hock to the "special interests" he vows to "take on" as Bush is. In addition to having supported NAFTA, Kerry has received more money from lobbyists than any other serving senator. At the same time, Kerry, the richest member of Congress, voted for Clinton's welfare repeal he lectured the poor about how their "indulgence and dependence" led to "public abdication and chaos." Nor does he advocate economic policies that will actually create a single



picking the pockets and paychecks of the poor and needy in order to further feather the profits of the rich and greedy, whether it's by waging wars overseas or war on workers' living standards at home. The only "difference" is that the Democrats think they can do a better job of it than Bush has been doing since 2001, even though they've gone along with him every step of the way so far. No-one epitomizes Democratic complicity in the crimes of the Bush gang better than NY Senator Hillary Clinton. This arch-opportunist even turned up in Iraq, a day after Bush and his rubber turkey did, to lend support to the occupation just as she couldn't help but join in the standing ovations for Bush and his war during the President's State of the Union address.

"Progressive" pundits, at publications like The Nation, may shake their heads in disbelief at the "spinelessness" the Democrats display before Bush. Spineless as they are, this has little to do with the failings of any particular politician, and a lot to do with the profit

## From clean for Dean to merry for Kerry?

Not too long ago most of the mainstream "left" quickly went clean for Howard Dean, even though the latter was little more than another Bill Clinton-style "New" Democrat, who, in his own words "think(s) it's pathetic that (he was) considered the left-wing liberal." When Dean was way out in front, many a self-styled "progressive" thought they smelled a winner and got on board the "Dean Machine's" bandwagon. While Dean may have picked up the support of much of the anti-war rank-and-file early on, the favorite son of most of the "left" leadership was "populist" congressman Dennis Kucinich, who picked up the support of many of the musicians, movie stars and academic celebrities (i.e., liberals pissed off with Clinton for shattering their illusions in the Democratic party) who supported Ralph Nader in 2000 but are too timid to do so now for fear of tipping the scales in Bush's favor. While Kucinich was portrayed as the most "radical" of the alleged "anti-



job. And this is the man the "left" will be portraying as the alternative to Bush come November.

### **The New Democrats "Southern Strategy"**

With Kerry, another DLC stalwart, in the saddle, the Democratic drift to the right, which began with Jimmy Carter and took off big-time with Bill Clinton, continues. Aggressive imperial expansion abroad and economic austerity at home to pay for it, remain the only game in town insofar as the ruling rich are concerned and the Democrats are as committed to pursuing that agenda as the GOP is. Within the current context, any return to "New Deal" or "Great Society" social reforms would get them tarred with the brush of "class warfare" by the Republicans which is the last thing the "New Democrats" have in mind. For the only way that the Democrats can win, within the accepted framework of "interest-group" politics that both parties play by, is by out-bidding Bush from the right for the white "middle-class" vote, particularly in areas like the South and the Midwest, which Bush won in 2000. This means paying little more than lip service to those on its "left." In other words, continuing to ignore the interests of so-called "special interest" groups like workers, minorities and women by once again taking their votes for granted, since, once again, the organizations claiming to represent them came out for the Democrats early on. By giving their support to the Democrats in advance, the left is doing its small part to ensure that the Democrats continue to pursue that strategy. Thus the winning ad in MoveOn.org's "Bush in 30 Seconds" contest focused on the traditional middle class nightmare of deficit spending, rather than on the war, racism, repression and poverty that the Bush regime has hit working people with. While groups like MoveOn.org calls themselves "Democracy in Action," in reality they are little more than action for the Democrats instead.

### **Kerry on Bush: not pro-war enough**

While the mainstream media made Dean into an "anti-war" candidate in order to co-opt the anti-war movement into the safe confines of the Democratic party, Dean stated from the get-go that he would have supported invading Iraq if the U.S. had gotten the UN's blessing for it. He also supported "bring(ing) in 40,000 to 50,000 other troops...now that they're there." In other words, now that the US has got the oil that they went to war for in the first place, they sure as hell aren't about to give it back under a Democratic administration anymore than

under Bush. However all of the Democratic candidates in Congress, who had to put their money where their mouths were, voted to give Bush a blank check to wage war where-ever and when-ever he wanted to as well as for the patriot Act and Homeland Security. So Dean had to do as the "insurgent" stand-in even if was no more "anti-establishment" than any other multi-millionaire Wall Street scion might be. When the anti-war movement receded, the media turned on Dean in order to boost the fortunes of more "mainstream," i.e. pro-war candidates. Kerry, who voted for the war on Iraq, only turned "against" the occupation when Bush "fucked it up," and accuses the latter of "cutting and running" from the scene of the crime rather than sticking it out. Kerry aspires to "work to expand participation and share responsibility with other countries in the military operations in Iraq" and "increase the size of the U.S. Army in order to meet the needs of a new century and the new global war on terror." In other words, supporting the global war of terror that "meets the needs" of the same "new (American) century" that the Bush gang started, only in a more cost-efficient fashion. As if to distance himself from his supporters on the left who still haven't gotten it yet, Kerry let it be known that he doesn't "fault George Bush for doing too much in the war on terror as some do (but) believe(s) he's done too little."

The bottom line is that there remains as little difference between the Republicans and Democrats today as there was in 2000. Only after four years of Bush, the "left" is so desperate that any Democrat will do. Resurrecting the old "Popular Front" Stalinist shibboleth about "progressive" vs. "reactionary" capitalists and Social Democrat Karl Kautsky's pre-WWI claim that imperialism is bad business for capitalism, ex-sixties radicals now claim that Bush and the "neo-cons" are the exclusive representatives of the "war party" in Washington. This serves to justify pulling down the lever for the "lesser evil" once again. From within ruling class circles liberals like Teddy Kennedy complain how the Democrats were "fooled" by Bush's lies into supporting the war in Iraq. Yet who's the bigger fool, the one who leads or the one who follows? Kennedy "forgets" how he and the rest of the Democrats in the House were also "fooled" by both of his brothers' and LBJ's lies about Vietnam and Cuba back in the sixties. None of them, however, were fooled. They all fell in line behind the interests of the empire...which is what they are in office to do in the first place

even if a few naive nitwits and limp-wrist liberals and "leftists" have yet to figure that out yet. Imperialism is a system, not a policy, which both bosses' parties are sworn to uphold.

### **When you put the Democrats first, the Democrats put you last.**

Four years ago the lack of any real differences between both bosses parties made it all the easier for Bush to steal the elections. For many, Gore's refusing to contest the GOP's Jim Crowing thousands of Black people out of their votes was, on the surface, the first of many capitulations the Democrats would make to Bush. However, Clinton and Gore had already spent their eight years in office capitulating to the Republican's right wing agenda on everything from "ending welfare as we know it" to bombing and starving Iraq (and Yugoslavia) to waging the "war on drugs" on Black and Latino youth to curtailing civil liberties with the "Effective Death Penalty" and "Anti-Terrorism" Acts, supported by "liberals" like John Kerry in the Senate. Today when the "progressive" milieu thinks that turning the clock back to the Clinton years would represent a step forward, it is more important than ever to remember that the same Democrats who went along with all the lies of the Iraq war couldn't even oppose Bush's coup for fear of questioning the legitimacy of a system, which they stand for every bit as much as the GOP does. Their return to the White House would just represent more of the same.

With all of the ruling rich agreed upon a common program of pillage and plunder, where are there any evils that are any "lesser" than any of the others to be found amongst both bosses' parties? Of course, the lesser evilists would be as hard-pressed to answer that question as they would be to explain how telling working people to vote for the political representatives of the bosses in every election is supposed to advance their struggles against those same bosses. Afterall, would they tell workers to elect their bosses as their union representatives? And just as workers need to be economically organized as a class in trade unions to take on the bosses economically, they need to be organized as a class in a party to do the same politically. However, the pro-Democrat AFL-CIO leadership devoted far more time, energy and resources fighting against Ralph Nader and the Greens in the eight days before the 2000 election than they did fighting Clinton's endless attacks on their members' living standards over the preceding eight years. And for the past four years the lesser-evil liberals haven't stopped fighting...against any

possible break with the Democrats in 2004. One can't help but recall what Malcolm X said about the relationship between Black voters and the Democrats back in the sixties, "you put the Democrats first, the Democrats put you last." Only it applies to all working people regardless of race.

### **Without struggle there is no progress, with the Democrats there is neither**

In 1992, 1996 and 2000, the leaders of the main "mass movements," held back struggle after struggle in order to get the Democrats in and then did more of the same to keep them there even when they were carrying out policies identical to those of the Republicans. Now they advocate the same thing within the anti-war movement under the guise of "beating back Bush." Yet it was only through militant mass action that organized labor, Blacks, women and gays ever achieved anything to begin with. Indeed, last year's anti-war movement proved that millions of working people were prepared to take to the streets and engage in political activism in a way that they would not have considered before. The task of the "left" is to continue to promote that kind of activism and to create an electoral alternative for them, not stampede them back into the dead-end of the Democratic party, the graveyard of every mass movement from the labor movement of the 1930s to the civil rights, antiwar and womens movements of the 1960s and '70s.

For the only way to really "fight the right" is to build the left! That remains as true today as it was four years ago and Ralph Nader's campaign, in spite of the shortcomings that stem from Nader's middle-class populism and economic nationalism, is a good place to start. As the only anti-war and anti-corporate candidate, Nader, again poses the necessary break from the Democrats. Or as Mumia Abu Jamal put it at the time of the 2000 elections, "it's past time to build a people's movement, a worker's movement, a radical and revolutionary movement that changes this sad state of affairs. Let us begin. Now" Unlike the middle-class muddleheads desperately seeking Democrats, Mumia recently wrote that "the solution ain't voting for some loser to betray you after election day; it's to organize, to rebuild unions, and make them truly international entities, to protect the interests of labor - globally!" Or as Frederick Douglas once said, "without struggle, there is no progress." Sticking with the Democrats only ensures that there will be neither!



# The Evil of the Liberian Civil War

HASSAN FOFANA

Liberia was founded by the American Colonization Society in 1822, for the return of freed slaves from America. Independence was gained on July 26th 1847 as the first black republic on the continent of Africa.

Some of the root causes of the Liberian civil war can be dated as far back as the foundation of the state, Liberia. Upon arrival of the Freed Slaves, there were African tribesmen who inhabited the land with their cultures and civilization. They received the Freed Slaves and their governing bodies wholeheartedly to their environment.

As the Settlers reached the Grain Coast (Liberia), there were growing demands by them to gain large control of the land which seemed very unacceptable for some tribesmen. On the other hand, there were some tribesmen friendly to the settlers. With the settlers on hand, they were now governed by proxy(ies) of the American government called, governors. Thereby, placing power into the lands of minute elites which gave birth to sectarianism. People were then recognized by who they were in society. Their little areas of governance became the power base of government and leaving the vast hinterland inaccessible to the seat of government.

The country became divided into classes: the proxy, the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous Liberians. The proxies were those that represented the United States government; the Americo-Liberians Freed Slaves that returned to the land. The indigenous were the tribesmen and the inhabitants of the land. Liberia has been faced with the kind of situation because of US foreign policy on Liberia, in the sense that the US had played some major deadly politics in the country

which has greatly affected the Liberian nation, its resources and people.

The United States used the soil of Liberia as a military base to support the US troops during World War I and II. The United States used Liberian soil to block communist regimes from not having influence in Liberia. It also used Liberia as a central point to establish what it called the omega international satellite operations. The US foreign policy divided the people of the Liberian nation into two groups, namely the country people and those of American descent. The US directly sponsored these people to enslave the people from about 133 years with a one party rule system.



The US mainly supported the Liberian civil war and provided logistical and military support to the late Samuel Doe, and on the other hand, they also gave rise and support to Charles Taylor National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), which is the main rebel faction in the Liberian conflict.

The practice of sectarianism, nepotism and isolation coupled with other mal-practices in society and in government for over a hundred years gave rise to the Rice-Riot in April of 1979 and the Military coup d'état in April 1980. These two power struggles or events

ushered in a new wave of violence and power struggle. The coup was welcomed by many Liberians, especially the indigenous. They saw the coup as an end to the one hundred and thirty three years Americo-Liberian rule and the birth of a new republic.

The new era was witnessed by wide spread corruption, tribalism, which became another form of sectarianism and witch-hunting and many attempted and aborted coups thereby sending many into exile. Disagreement between the head of government and a key member of the coup in 1980 which led to ethnic divide and violence which rendered the government unpopular locally and internationally. With the

unfriendly conditions between the government and a particular tribe (GIO) from the North western part of the country, the Americo-Liberians saw this as a political tool of penetration under the disguise of Liberating the people from the hands of the government so as to resurface into the political stream line.

Therefore, the Liberian Civil war was launched on December 24th 1989 under the band of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) which was headed by Charles Taylor. Sooner some prominent GIO tribesmen noticed the motives of the NPFL and

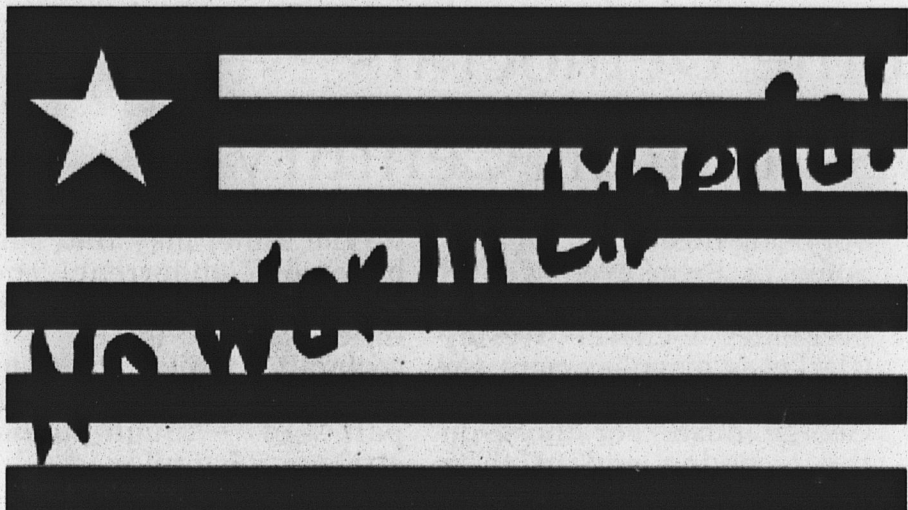
broke away thereby forming a splinter group called the Independence Patriotic National Front of Liberia (INPFL). This group was headed by Prince Johnson, who killed president Samuel Doe and toppled his government on September 9th 1990. The war claimed many lives and there was a wide outcry to stop the war. The Economic Communities of West African States (ECOWAS) met and sent peacekeeping troops to Liberia on August 15th 1996 as an end to bloody civil war.

The presence of the peacekeepers brought hope for some while, on the other hand, the NPFL did not want them because it had over 90% of the country and claimed it leader the president of the new republic. This led to the formation of many warring factions with the aim of reducing the territories and strength of the NPFL. All of these factions had different motives which the common people did not understand. Some motives were for vengeance and for others as means to empower themselves and exploit the nation.

On July 19th 1997 an election was held in which the NPFL won under the National Patriotic Party (NPP), Charles Taylor, the standard bearer. He won because many feared that he might launch another war if he had lost the elections. Mr. Taylor was given the chance to rule but did not deliver what he promised instead, he spread war to neighboring countries as to gain more power and control by exploiting the people of their resources. During his reign, security harassment, mass torturing, and secret killings, corruption and political manipulations was the order of the day. Potential politicians he perceived as enemies were killed and some were chased out of the country.

Government revenue was





collected and placed in his account. Mr. Taylor, constantly hunt for former rivals in the Liberia community conflict and remnants of the Does' regime and his insurgents into neighboring countries which gave rise to another round of war and destruction in the whole of a nation.

In December, 1999 another armed group emerged from the Northern section of the country, Lofa county, to be exact, against the government of Charles Taylor. As it is seen in the Liberian political history, this group came in as another liberating force to stop the carnage by Mr. Taylor. The group was one but because of political differences, it split into two groups. The main group which became known as (LURD), meaning the Liberian United for Reconciliation and Democracy, and the second group became know as (MODEL), Movement for Democracy in Liberia. The LURD group had control of 90% of the Liberian territories. With the intense fighting and international pressure, Mr. Taylor was asked to leave the country and go into exile in Nigeria as an alternative to end the war and bring peace to the land, since he was an obstacle. Taylors' departure enabled the warring factions and other political groups with the help of ECOWAS, the UN and the international community to strike peace plan in Accra, Ghana, which ushered a new interim government for two years. The interim government was inducted into office on October 14th 2003.

The mandate of the government is to make sure

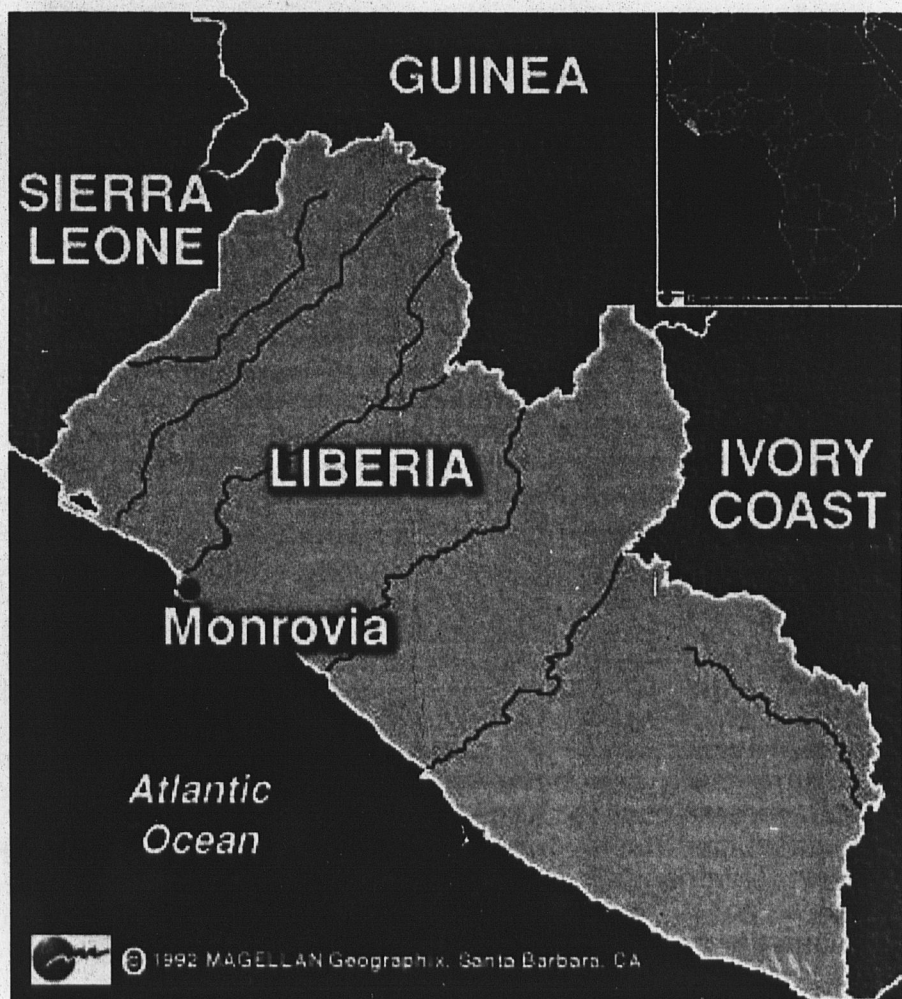
to work with all parties involved within the conflict toward the Liberian people which will lead to the total disarmament and a free election in 2006. During these difficult periods, Liberians need to work together and put their differences aside for the benefit of their country and its people. Most Liberians were killed because of their religious backgrounds and financial capabilities in the previous administration. Some of them were killed by firing squads, some drowned in the sea and rivers with their hands tied behind their backs. Others were sentenced to death through capital punishment, burned to death, or were butchered by knives, swords, hoes, diggers and other lethal weapons. Yet still others were poisoned through drinking water, food, and physically beaten to death by rebel forces. Bodies were found being eaten by wild animals. Some victims' body parts were served as meals, like their hearts.

Because of the revolution, I have been out of school since 1994. Since my arrival from Liberia, I have not received public assistance from any or any government agency because of the situation in present day Liberia. The civil war has brought heavy casualties to the people of Liberia since its beginning. It was in these wars my parents were killed for nothing, leaving me with nothing but frustration and depression because I do not have anybody to support me in my pursuit for education. I lost my biological mother on December 5th 1994 and my biological father two years earlier in 1992 to the civil war

which started in 1989.

Liberia was founded upon mutual statements between the American Colonization Society and the indigenous countrymen during the year of 1822. The name Liberia is derived from a Greek word meaning liber, which means freedom. Liberia was first called Christopolis during the middle of the 18th century. The nation of Liberia was formed as a secular state before the arrival of the pioneers from the United States of America. Liberia is a country which is bordered on the north by the Republic of Guinea, on the east by the Ivory Coast, on the west by the Republic of Sierra Leone, and in the south by the Atlantic ocean. Liberia is a founding member of the UN, (ECOWAS) the Economic community of West African States, the (OAU) Organization of African Unity which is now referred to as the "AU" African Union. Liberia's population is about 3-4 million and is its area is the size of Tennessee. Liberia is one of the smallest nations in Africa but has many natural resources including diamonds, gold, copper, gas, kerosene, timber, lead, bauxite, and natural rubber.

The capital city of the Republic of Liberia was named in favor of then American President James Monroe, the 5th President. Its national flag, anthem, and national activities are copied from the United States. She had a democratic form of government that is subdivided into the executive, judiciary, and legislative branches. This nation has been ruled on Christian principles from time to time since independence was gained. She was first recognized by Great Britain. The Liberian revolution of 1989 has claimed the lives of millions through violence and many more through starvation, poverty, and disease, while half of the population is in exile, refugee camps, and fleeing to other parts of the world (as reported by the World Health organization and the International Red Cross). Most Liberians who died during the war because of hatred, jealousy, and war crimes committed by the warring factions involved in the revolution. Many women were stripped naked and raped in the presence of their family members by unknown armed men because they were considered enemy forces.





# John Kerry and the Democrats'

## Project for a New American Century

ROY ROLLIN

Many of those on the liberal "left" who have jumped on board the "Anybody But Bush" bandwagon cite the current administration's non-stop saber-rattling and war-mongering as a justification for their doing so ... as if such behavior was the private preserve of the Republican right. In particular, they point to the "neo-cons" who serve as Bush's brain trust and whose "Project for the New American Century" (PNAC) for "maintaining global US pre-eminence and shaping the international security order in line with American principals and interests" has served as Bush's blue-print for further imperial expansion. Yet when it comes to defending and extending the empire, the Democrats are no slouches either. Nor have they ever been, something their own spokesmen don't hesitate to re-iterate whenever they get the chance to.

The already infamous Democratic Leadership Council, which master-minded the Democrats right ward lurch during the Clinton-Gore years, has its own think tank, the "Progressive Policy Institute" (PPI), which calls for virtually all of the same things the PNAC does, and in language that is almost identical to that used by their Republican "rivals." This is hardly shocking. Many of the PNAC "neo-cons" started their careers as Democrats, working for "Cold War" stalwart Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson in the 1970s before they jumped ship to join forces with Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. That these fanatics and firebrands of the radical right could switch sides so seamlessly illustrates just how insignificant the "differences" are between both bosses' parties. Thus a 19-page manifesto for the "New Democrats" calls for "the bold exercise of American power" as a the central point in "a new Democratic strategy,

grounded in the party's tradition of muscular internationalism that would keep Americans safer than the Republican's go-it-alone policy."

"Muscular internationalism" is nothing more than a polite parlor term for what used to be known as "gunboat diplomacy," i.e., aggressive imperialism. Similarly, words like "human rights" are far more effective when it comes to hoodwinking easily influenced intellectuals, who are always looking to justify to themselves their either supporting an imperialist

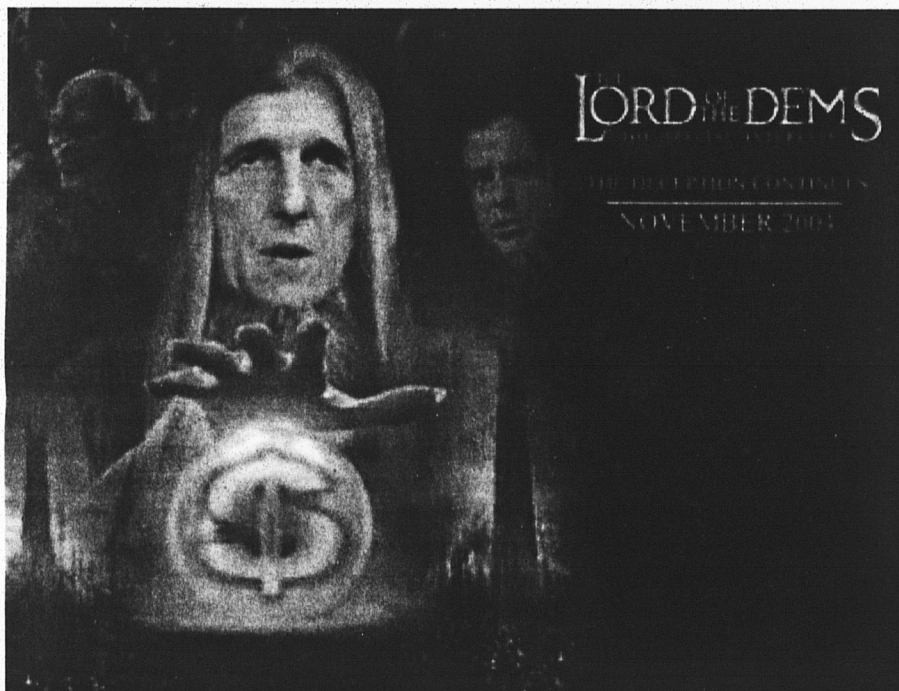
opposing Bush's war on Iraq. Some of them even wound up supporting the Butcher of Belgrade, General Wesley Clarke as a replacement for the Butcher of Baghdad, George Bush. For those on the receiving end of their destruction and devastation, however, it's just as ugly whether it's a Democrat or a Republican who carries it out.

When it comes to "boldly exercising American power," that is, waging wars abroad, the Democratic party has long been the preferred party of the ruling rich; from Wilson in WWI to FDR in

do the same) may find such behavior abhorrent, but those that they hope to put in office as a "lesser evil" certainly don't. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are, after all, part of "tough-minded strategy...championed by Truman...in the cold war."

While many of those on the liberal "left" may feel a bit uneasy about rubbing shoulders with the unabashed and unapologetic cold warriors and counter-revolutionaries in the PPI in their efforts to unseat Bush, the later, for its part, is "proud of our party's tradition of tough-minded internationalism and strong record of defending America." And no-one, it seems, is "prouder" of that "tradition" than John Kerry, the "anybody" who the "Anybody But Bush" crowd now finds itself backing. In his book, "A Call to Service," Kerry proclaims that "the time has come to revive a bold vision of progressive internationalism" that echoes "the tough minded strategy of international engagement and leadership forged by" past Democratic party administrations. While such acts of "international engagement" carried out under Democratic "leadership" as Vietnam and the Bay of Pigs may seem "progressive" to Kerry and the Fortune 500, in whose exclusive interest they were carried out, their victims know that they constituted plain old fashioned imperialism just as the war in Iraq does today.

Major General Smedley Butler, a Marine Corps officer who served under the "leadership" of Democrat Woodrow Wilson, was more on the money than Kerry when he described this "tough-minded strategy" as "the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefits of Wall Street (and) mak(ing) Mexico safe for American oil interests in 1914-5 (and) Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank ... to collect revenues in." Unlike Kerry, who hails this "tradition" as "progressive



war or voting for the "lesser evil." Hence they cite "the Republican's go-it-alone policy" as a key "difference" between the two parties and work themselves into a frenzy over whether uni- or multi-lateralism is a better vehicle for imperialism to implement its agenda with. Indeed, those who think that cluster bombs and depleted uranium are somehow more "moral" when they are served up in UN blue rather than just in the red, white and blue of Uncle Sam usually think that the Democrats are preferable to the Republicans as well. And that preference also extends to their wars. Thus, many of the "Anybody But Bush" crowd supported Democrat Bill Clinton's war against Yugoslavia in the name of "humanitarianism" while

WWII to Truman in Korea to JFK and LBJ in Vietnam to Clinton in Iraq and Yugoslavia. In addition to launching the "cold war" against the USSR after World War II, Democratic party politicians were behind most of the dirty deeds the CIA carried out to fight it during the sixties from the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba to "counterinsurgency" in Indochina to death squads in Central and South America. Indeed, it was a Democrat who atom bombed two Japanese cities in order to set the Soviets straight on who was to be boss in the post-WWII world. Some of the left-wing intellectuals who are once again holding their noses with one hand while they pull down the lever for the Democrats with the other (and urging the rest of us to



internationalism," Butler concluded that "war is just a racket ... conducted for the benefit of the very few at the expense of the masses."

For his part, Kerry (along with almost every other prominent Democratic party politician) helped to "revive" that "tradition" by giving Bush a blank check to wage war where-ever and when-ever he pleased. This included voting for the war in Iraq, which Kerry, who "fell" hook, line and sinker for all the Bush administration's lie about "WMDs," still thinks "was the right thing to do." And while Kerry now says that Bush "fuck(ed) up badly" in Iraq, his "tough minded strategy of international engagement" means being even "tougher" than Bush and sending in "another 40,000 active service troops" and "spend(ing) whatever it takes to be successful in Iraq."

Many anti-war activists from the 1960s may remember John Kerry as a spokesman for the Vietnam Veterans Against the War and recall his eloquent testimony before Congress on their behalf. Therefore his current views on that war should be of some interest to those in today's anti-war movement who are urging a vote for him. According to Kerry, "it's time to get over it and recognize it as an exception, not as a ruling example of US military engagements of the 20th century." For his part Kerry "got over it" a long time ago, having "voted for the largest defense budgets in the history of our country" and having supported "US military engagements" in Afghanistan and Iraq. The only difference between these imperial adventures and Vietnam that makes the latter "exceptional" is that in Vietnam the US lost. Indeed, the real reason Kerry wants the rest of us "to get over" Vietnam is so that we can join him in supporting future wars, since he, no less than George Bush, "will not hesitate to order direct military action when needed against terrorist groups and their leaders." Only according to those running the Vietnam war (mainly "progressive internationalist" Democrats like JFK and LBJ) those

Vietnamese who resisted American imperialism were "terrorist groups" as well. In 1971 Kerry, as an anti-war veteran, asked the Senate "how do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake" in Vietnam. In 2004, as a Senator, he has no qualms about asking one of the "40,000 active service troops" that he would send to Iraq "to be the last man to die" there.

Insofar as "defending America" goes, the Vietnam war, like the Iraq war, was no different than all the others that Kerry and the PPI are so "proud" of, an attempt to make the world safe for big business. Nor were any of them "mistakes." Just as imperialism is the continuation of capitalism in the epoch of international economics, war is the continuation of imperialism by more forceful means.

and suppressed democratic rights at home with "red scares" and witch-hunts. Bush, who was never elected in the first place, claims to be fighting for "freedom" in Iraq while stamping it out here. Kerry, who supported Bush in both of those endeavors, stands for more of the same, only in the name of "progressive internationalism." For the only "freedom" that "matters" to both bosses parties is the "right" of the same American corporations, who already can invest and exploit and pillage and plunder where ever and when ever they please in the US, to do the same thing in the rest of the world.

The Democrats, with John Kerry in the front lines, have made it a point of honor to continue to pledge allegiance to Bush's so-called "war on terrorism." They "differ"

terrorists in Washington and on Wall Street. They are intent on terrorizing the rest of the world into submitting to their dictates, just as they have already done to working people in the US. Seizing Iraq's oil and dominating the Middle East was as key a component of their game plan as is driving down American workers living standards.

For Kerry and the PPI, "President Kennedy epitomized America's commitment to the 'survival and success of liberty.'" Of course the "liberty" Kennedy was committed to included staunch support to dictators and death squads throughout the "Third World" and is historically "epitomized" by the Bay of Pigs and Vietnam. Kerry, sees himself following in the footsteps of his fellow Boston brahmin, who in the 1960 election, actually attacked Richard Nixon from the right, accusing him of not being tough enough on the commies and allowing, as vice president, a "missile gap" to unfavorably emerge between the US and the USSR. Needless to say JFK's missile gap was as real as Bush's "WMDs" were. Once in office, Kennedy proceeded to escalate the cold war against Castro's Cuba and the Vietnamese revolution.

Kerry, who accuses Bush of being too soft on "terrorism" would like to do the same thing in Iraq that JFK did in Vietnam by bringing in 40,000 more troops. So while Kerry's comparisons with JFK are certainly on target, should he get into office and have his way he may find himself being compared to Kennedy's successor, Lyndon Johnson. LBJ was undone by the debacle in Vietnam, but only after being passed off by the liberal left as the "peace" candidate vs the right-wing Republican Barry Goldwater in 1964. Like LBJ, Kerry is now being being pushed by today's liberal "left" as the "lesser evil." While the "Anybody But Bush" crowd appears to have forgotten most of what they may have learned from the left in the 1960s, some of them must at least remember Karl Marx's famous quote about history repeating itself...first as "tragedy," and then later as "farce."



When the Soviet Union was still around, this could be justified in the name of opposing "communism." Only the "communism" that Washington had in mind was not the supposed "threat" posed by the military might of the USSR, but the threat to their corporate interests posed by the workers and peasants of the world taking the resources of their countries into their own hands and out of those of American corporations who controlled them. Now, under the guise of fighting against "terrorism," the imperialists intend to take them back. In "cold war" days, the government claimed it was **d e f e n d i n g** "democracy"...while it supported dictators abroad

only insofar as the targets are concerned. As if to make that clear to those, like Noam Chomsky who still profess to see small differences (that) can translate into large outcomes." between him and Bush, Kerry proclaims that "the war on terror... is a clash of civilization against chaos; of the best hopes of humanity against dogmatic fears of progress and the future." While some Democrats may argue that the war on Iraq was a "diversion" from the "war on terrorism," it was, in fact, part and parcel of it and had little to do with "progress" and a lot to do with oil and empire. For the only thing that the "war on terrorism" has to do with terrorism is that it is being run by



# The Trafficking of Persons?



SHEREEN KANDIL

A multi-million dollar global industry is in bloom. It is the illicit trade of persons-trafficking. "Trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transporting, providing or obtaining, by any means, any person for labor or services involving forced labor, slavery or servitude in any industry, such as forced or coerced participation in agriculture, prostitution, manufacturing, or other industries or in domestic service or marriage," ([http://www.hrlawgroup.org/initiatives/trafficking\\_persons/](http://www.hrlawgroup.org/initiatives/trafficking_persons/)). In addition, according to the U.S. Senate Resolution 82, trafficking "involves one or more forms of kidnapping, false imprisonment, rape, battering, forced labor, or slavery-like practices which violate fundamental human rights,"

People who are vulnerable, mostly women and children in horrid conditions, are easily deceived into slavery. The women try to flee from poverty, war, abuse, or in some areas, gender discrimination, and try to seek jobs elsewhere. Traffickers manipulate and deceive these people, men, women and children, into forced slavery, marriage or prostitution. Most of these people are not treated as victims, but as criminals, while the traffickers avoid being held accountable for their actions. "It is estimated that every year several million women and girls are trafficked within and out of Asia and the states of the former Soviet Union alone. Over 50,000 women and girls (and thousands of men) are trafficked into the United States from these and other countries each year," ([http://www.hrlawgroup.org/initiatives/trafficking\\_persons/](http://www.hrlawgroup.org/initiatives/trafficking_persons/)). Because of the millions of trafficked persons, an estimated seven billion dollars in profits go to criminals involved in trafficking, according to the United Nations. Human trafficking

is more profitable and less risky than drug or arms trafficking in some countries because of the lack of laws that prohibits the trafficking of persons.

This human rights violation, the trafficking of persons, occurs all around the world. It is a major global issue that has been overlooked. Some of the countries that have been involved in major trafficking, whether it is a country of origin, transit, or destination country, include, Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Germany, Israel, Poland, Turkey, Cyprus, Greece, the Federated Republic of Yugoslavia, India, and the United States- there are many, many more.



In India, for example, prostitution is legal. However, those who demoralize persons sexually or abuse someone for commercial reasons are committing an illegal act, under the country's Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act of 1986. Unfortunately, this law is not thoroughly enforced. "According to a 1994 report in Asian Age there are at least 70,000 women sex workers in Delhi, Madras, Calcutta, Bangalore and Hyderabad. 30% of these women are under 20 years of age. 40% are 20-30 years of age, and approximately 15% of them became prostitutes as children under the age of 12. In India, many innocent victims are forced into prostitution by their husbands or relatives. Some are tricked or enticed into prostitution," ([http://www.indianchild.com/prostitution\\_in\\_india.htm](http://www.indianchild.com/prostitution_in_india.htm)).

The prostitute is deprived of her earnings, she is whipped, kept in cages, and are occasionally relocated to many different brothels. They

cannot reveal anything personal, including their real names, they must accept every customer and treat all the same, and must keep themselves clean always. They are permitted one weekly vacation. The brothels are dirty with very little food and have escape doors for when there are police raids. The girls are not provided with medical care and must work constantly unless they are physically unable. Girls who are impregnated have to abort the child and do so, through dangerous and unclean means. Colored liquid is injected in affected areas of sexually transmitted diseases. Many of the diseases include syphilis, scabies, venereal wart, and HIV. "50 [million] of the world's 200 [million]

prostitutes who suffer from STDs are in India and they are mostly found to be affected by tuberculosis, meningitis, scabies, chronic pelvic infections, anemia, syphilis, cancrs, venereal warts, etc." (<http://www.pucl.org/from-archives/Child/prostitution.htm>). Because child prostitution is illegal (one must be 18 years of age or older), the Madams of the brothels do not take these children for medical care in fear of persecution. Not only does the child obtain physical problems, such as STDs, but their mental and emotional health is affected as well.

There are many organizations and human rights groups that try to find a way to help those in need. The problems they face are monstrous. In many areas, the government is apathetic to the problem of trafficking and are unwilling to help. In other areas, unfortunately, many officials or higher-ups assist or are traffickers themselves. "The police, the brothel

keeper, and pimps share the major part of the earnings of the prostitutes and the rest of it that percolates down to the prostitutes is a mere pittance. It is alleged that the police and abet the running of the brothels. They accept the hospitality, money and free use of the girls. The police helps the brothel keeper even by bringing back the ones who have run away," (<http://www.pucl.org/from-archives/Child/prostitution.htm>).

Something must be done! If you want to help or find out more on the issue of trafficking in persons, please contact one of the following:

## Organizations

Global Survival Network  
PO Box 73214  
Washington, DC 20009  
Voice: (202) 387-0032  
Fax: (202) 387-2590  
Email: [ingsn@igc.org](mailto:ingsn@igc.org)  
Website: <http://www.globalsurvival.net/>

Human Rights Watch  
1522 K Street, NW, #910  
Washington, DC 20005  
Voice: (202) 371-6592  
Fax: (202) 371-0124  
Email: [vandenm@hrw.org](mailto:vandenm@hrw.org)  
Website: <http://www.hrw.org/>

International Human Rights Law Group  
1200 18th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Voice: (202) 822-4600  
Fax: (202) 822-4606  
Email: [wrapali@aol.com](mailto:wrapali@aol.com)

Witness Project Lawyers  
Committee for Human Rights  
333 Seventh Avenue, 13th Floor  
New York, NY 10001-5004  
Voice: (212) 845-5252  
Fax: (212) 845-5299  
Email: [caldwellg@lchr.org](mailto:caldwellg@lchr.org)  
Website: <http://www.witness.org/>

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GAATW, Regional Meeting on Trafficking in Women, Forced Labor, and Slavery-like Practice in Asia and Pacific (Bangkok, Thailand: GAATW, 1997).

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# The Teapot Calls the Kettle Black

## The Hypocrisy of Anglo-American Policy Towards Zimbabwe

BRIAN LARA

"it is doubtful whether many of these beneficiaries are qualified to manage their new properties" BBC correspondent Barnaby Phillips on landless blacks settling white owned commercial farms

The former colonial masters of Zimbabwe - Great Britain - along with the United States, the EU and Australia, who all of course are known for their stellar record in "race" relations, are in a huff over the Zimbabwean regime's expropriation of large commercial white owned farms. These esteemed and powerful nations who in their respective histories have plundered the resources of countless Africans, Asians and Native peoples and have murdered as many, shamelessly, in the name of the supposed supremacy of their whiteness, their "civilization", their God-given right to do so no less, are now without so much as a blush turning around and calling the policies of Zimbabwe's government "racist". Let us put aside the glaring historical irony and take the accusations leveled towards Zimbabwe of "racism" by these fine gentlemen on face value.

It is in particular the issue of land reform that has the Anglo-American world all wound up. In today's Zimbabwe 70% of the best farming land is still owned by white farmers, who comprise a total of 0.6% of the total population. Needless to say, 99.4% of Zimbabweans are either landless or struggle to get on in drought-prone, dry land. This is the legacy of British colonialism in Zimbabwe, which it would be most instructive to examine in order to see this situation in proper historical perspective.

The British monarchy authorized a plot by the Englishman Cecil Rhodes to annex and colonize Matabeleland, Mashonaland and other surrounding territories in 1888. The British targeted the area for its ample reserves of minerals including gold. In 1890 the region was invaded by British mercenaries promised 6000 acres of land for helping to militarily subjugate the area. They established a white supremacist colonial-settler state dubbed Rhodesia similar to the apartheid of South Africa. Unlike the rest of the British Empire that won freedom after the second-world war, "Rhodesia" under its white extreme-right leader, Ian Smith,

in 1965 declared independence as a white supremacist state. This was not the sort of independence that black Zimbabweans had in mind. After a protracted and bloody war of liberation, the Smith regime initiated negotiations held in London as a way of avoiding deep going changes that could possibly end all white privilege. The so-called Lancaster House Agreement of 1979 was the product of these negotiations and was the foundation for the first post-apartheid constitution. Robert Mugabe, a prominent guerilla leader and his ZANU-PF gained independence by 1980. Mr. Mugabe was overwhelmingly elected in free elections in 1980 and remains president to this day.

Once elected he gave fair warning to British settlers that land reform will take place to redistribute the land to the millions of Black Zimbabweans whose ancestors had been forcibly pushed out into dry, barren and infertile land. He was hobbled however in his land reform efforts by the Lancaster Agreement based constitution that dictated that it could only be on a "willing-seller", "willing-buyer" basis and that compensation must be made at world market rates. But after more than a decade of faithfully following the economic prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and their former colonial master, Mr. Mugabe realized that his country did not have the resources to compensate the white farmers and meanwhile the majority of Black Zimbabweans continued to live and die without access to land and resources.

In 1992, the Land Acquisition Bill was passed in the Zimbabwe parliament; it primarily marked for expropriation large-scale commercial farmland. This would be redistributed to the majority of landless Black war veterans living on the worst communal lands or reserves. Mr. Mugabe called on Britain and the western donor nations to step in and provide their expatriates with compensation which they promptly refused to do. Britain not only refused to help but orchestrated a international campaign to cripple the Zimbabwean economy as a means of forcing out Mr. Mugabe from office. By 1999, Zimbabwe had openly rebelled against the policies of the World Bank and IMF. In 1999 it was declared in default

and its loans were terminated. Recently, the IMF and World Bank revoked Zimbabwe's membership.

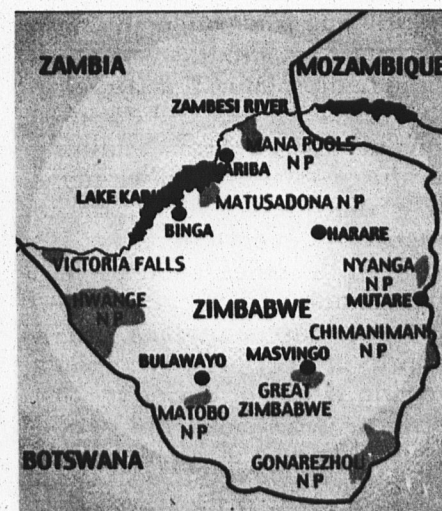
The Zimbabwean regime proceeded to allow the squatting of white owned farms by landless black peasants and legalized the process. Indeed it is the landless themselves who driven to desperation by poverty began the movement to squat the fertile white-owned lands. They were angry and frustrated with the Mugabe regime for not delivering on the promise of land reform that had been made to them back in 1980.

Mr. Mugabe is far from a well loved figure in his native country. His failure to redistribute land to the landless and his misguided faith in Western economic prescriptions has left the majority of Zimbabweans no better off than they were economically under the former racist dictatorship. Despite the hypocritical charges of racism, no less a figure than Ian Smith continued to own 10,000 acres of land in Zimbabwe as well as other former white supremacist officials. What Mr. Mugabe does have is the instinct for self-preservation, meaning of course preserving his power. Realizing that his faithfulness to his former colonial masters had created a groundswell of opposition to him within his own country and a popular peasant movement squatting white owned commercial land, he still appealed to the former colonial bosses to help. The old colonial masters were in the mood for a change and decided to let Mr. Mugabe's ship sink with him on board. The West cut off all aid to Zimbabwe suddenly discovering in Mr. Mugabe corruption (he was presumably not corrupt when he was following IMF policy). Naturally the economic crisis deepened as a result of the sudden cutoff of aid, but the West then placed the blame on Mr. Mugabe. In addition to all the imperialist intrigue, Mr. Mugabe had a severe drought to contend with from 2000-2002 threatening millions with starvation. Without missing a beat the Anglo-American imperialists blamed the effects of the drought on Mr. Mugabe. The food crisis was also blamed on the land reform program claiming that the take over of the white owned commercial farms was the cause. However the white farmers were largely producing cash crops like tobacco for export not food for the masses. But it is not surprising to hear from the

former colonialists reheated versions of the "white mans burden" fallacy implying that without the whites Zimbabwe can only go downhill.

The Anglo-American imperialists actively sought the victory of the opposition candidate in the 2002 elections. The major opposition in Zimbabwe is the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) headed by Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai, a coalition of labor, civic and other organizations. Mr. Mugabe's ZANU-PF party buffeted by a rise in popularity as a result of its dusted-off land reform program and perhaps a good bit of shall we say incumbency advantage pulled off a stunning victory. The British and the American's were besides themselves, charging voting fraud, declaring democracy dead in Zimbabwe and so on. However the African election observers from the Organization for African Unity and others from neighboring states gave the election a clean bill of health decalring it, "transparent, credible, free and fair". The European observers felt differently. But we must remember that Europe and America were not just impartial observers in this election but active participants seeking the downfall of Mr. Mugabe's regime.

Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai's MDC effectively became a conduit for western imperialist policy, perhaps unwittingly but a fifth column nevertheless. A real opposition would have condemned puppet masters in London and Washington and Brussels as well as the puppet in Harare and sought to build a movement that united the landless peasants with the urban proletariat. The MDC did have the urban proletariat in tow but under a program that like in Colombia with the oil workers worked against the national interest





# THE GOLDEN VOICE OF AFRICA

## NILES FRENCH

Sometimes called the Golden Voice of Africa, Salif Keita has had a rich and magnificent musical career spanning over four decades. Keita was born in 1949 in the African country of (the city of Djoliba) Mali and is a direct descendent of Sundiata Keita. Sundiata Keita was a warrior king who founded the Malian empire in the 13th century. Because of Keita's aristocratic bloodline, he is part of a traditional royal family that is prosperous and influential in Mali. Born an albino, Keita was ostracized by his kin and entire community throughout his life. In Malian culture, an albino is considered a sign of bad luck who should lead a life in relative solitude. He felt shunned and alienated growing up as part of the Mandingo noble family in Mali. Keita fell in love with music at an early age and began experimenting with different instruments as well as indulging himself in vocal practices. In 1967, he moved to Bamako and began performing at various nightclubs before joining a formal group two years later.

In this early part of his musical development, Keita was harnessing his powerful and versatile voice. Keita would later join up with Kante Manfila and form the Les Ambassadeurs. The group's reputation would spread throughout Africa and later evolve itself into an international sensation. In 1977, Les Ambassadeurs was awarded the National Order of Guinea by President Ahmed Sekou Toure. The group left in the late 1970's because of political instability in Mali, as well as the banishment of Keita by some of his family members. They later moved to Cote D'Ivoire where they continued writing their fabulous and hauntingly romantic songs. In 1984, Keita relocated to Paris where a Western audience would soon pick up the infectious vivacious sounds of Salif Keita. Keita was beginning to blend different European and Latin melodies with his indigenous musical background. The synthesis of the two (as well as other many influences- music from Ghana, Senegal, Guinea, and Portugal) has provided a tremendous array of

instruments including balafons (like xylophones), the kora, djembe drums, and a variety of African stringed instruments. He also used guitars (electric and acoustic), saxophones, flutes, and electronic samples. Keita also composes the majority of all his songs on most of the instruments.

A multitude of different types of music has been displayed on his many albums. In 1987, Keita released Soro through Island/Mango records and made a major splash in the realm of Afro-pop music as well as world music. Soro combined Western African rhythms, electronic synthesizers, ethnic voices, and upbeat tracks that broadened Keita's audience all over the world. Since Soro, Keita has released over ten albums and has continued to create diverse emotional music that anyone can relate to.

I saw Salif Keita at Irving Plaza in New York City in October of 2002 and will never forget the experience. Most of the people there were West African and spoke French. This particular tour was in

support of Keita's 2002 release, Moffou. Moffou refers to a pheasant flute in the Malian language. Most of the lyrics on Moffou are adaptations from griots. Griots are keepers of old Malian oral tradition that know historical and cultural stories that they pass throughout generations. I was not far from the stage and was able to see the amazing musicianship of Keita. He first came out and performed a song with an acoustic guitar. The music was very intricate and resembled a classic style that Keita displayed in a virtuoso type fashion. Many faster melodic songs were played as everyone danced on and off stage. Keita's band had about eleven members and all played their instruments fantastically. It was one of the best concerts I had ever gone to. It was more of an experience than an entertaining. His follow up to Moffou is expected soon, as well as a tour in North America. The Golden Voice of Africa is currently residing between Mali and Paris and continues to write his heart-felt songs.

## MARIJUANA: It's Serious

### LINA AKA NuNu

For a long time, teenagers have been turning to drugs when they have to deal with their problems [or because they like the way they feel while they're on the drug]. Kids of all ages are using drugs, such as, ecstasy, cocaine, and marijuana. The most common drug of the three is marijuana. Marijuana is the most popular because it's the most accessible and least harmful out of the three drug choices and is why it attracts so many teenagers and kids.

Marijuana is a drug made from the dry leaves and flowering tops of the hemp plant. It is illegal in most areas but that still does not prevent people from attaining the drug. Weed, another name for marijuana, is found practically everywhere. It's found in the cities, suburbs, and even schools. Most people, who start smoking marijuana, do it because of peer-pressure. Some even do it out of curiosity. All these reasons are not good enough because it impairs one's judgment.

According to [www.drug-effects.com/effects-of-marijuana.htm](http://www.drug-effects.com/effects-of-marijuana.htm), there are short and long-term effects of marijuana. The short-term effects of using marijuana include: sleepiness, increased heart rate, paranoia, hallucinations, dry mouth and throat, blood shot eyes, impaired or reduced short-term memory, decreased social inhibitions, impaired or reduced comprehension, intense anxiety or panic attacks, and psychological dependence. Mainly, THC, the chemical found in marijuana, is what causes these changes and impairs brain function.

Some studies have shown that using marijuana regularly, for several months, or for a long time, may develop serious problems. The long-term effects of using marijuana include: enhanced cancer risk, decrease in testosterone levels and lower sperm counts for men, increase in testosterone levels for women and increase risk of infertility, diminished or extinguished

sexual pleasure, and psychological dependence requiring more of the drug to get the same effect.

The effects of marijuana high vary from person to person and from one time or another for the same individual. The high may consist of a dreamy and relaxed state, but sometimes depending on the person, marijuana can produce a feeling of panic and dread. It can harm memory and may interfere with learning. Marijuana is similar to smoking cigarettes because there is a high level of tar and other chemicals. The lungs get a big dose of chemicals that increase the chances of lung cancer later in life.

Some people think that smoking marijuana cannot lead to an addiction, but like every other drug, if they are over used, it can lead to one. Car accidents can occur due to the high attained by smoking marijuana. It is not worth risking your life and the life of someone else.

Some believe that marijuana is not the gateway to other drugs,

but for some people, it could be. There are people who are satisfied with the high they get from marijuana, and that keeps them doing it. On the other hand, there are people who are not satisfied with the high they get because they are accustomed to it and the feeling is not as strong any more. They have a tendency to try other drugs in order to gain the high they used to get from marijuana. People who are not satisfied with the high they get from weed usually begin using cocaine or other lethal drugs. When it gets that far, it is time to stop.

I think we should all live healthy and safe lives because we have only one life to live. We should achieve our goals and make our dreams come true, but we do not need drugs to hold back our dreams and our life. If you or someone else you know has a drug problem there is help out there, you just need to be willing to help yourself.



continued from back page

effort to create hatred towards the 6-8 million Muslims within America itself. A November 2001 piece named 'Danger Within: Militant Islam in America', by Daniel Pipes (Bush appointed board member of the United States Institute of Peace and a pro-Israeli columnist), argued that the American "Muslim population in this country is not like any other group" and that Muslims conspire to take over America.<sup>8</sup> Remembering the same arguments Nazis used against Jews, only a few picked up on his scare-tactic strategy. In a similar stream of thought sailed John Leo (author and senior columnist for the U.S. News and World Report), who, two days before the first anniversary of the September 11 attacks and at a time when New Yorkers were told to expect another terrorist attack, began to argue against tolerance within the United States in his 'The nation's tolerance is being carried too far'. His entire view is that Muslims have not proven 'their' loyalty to America and so 'we' must not be bothered about the backlash against them, thus turning the issue of assimilation into one big fraternity agenda. Instead, "We need a serious discussion about loyalty and assimilation", he writes, "What we are likely to get, though, is yet another massive cloud of hands-off nonjudgmentalism".<sup>9</sup> Certainly the sins of generalizing an entire population for the crimes of less than .001% of them is no serious matter in this case.

After the attack on Afghanistan came the war on Iraq. This unconstitutional and unconvincingly argued war was part of the initial total war mentality. Predictably, the Iraqi military was defeated and Saddam was deposed and then later captured. Despite the speedy efforts of reconstruction, both Afghanistan and Iraq remain in great disorder. The democracy peddled in both areas is artificial from the core. Now the situation in both theaters is certainly glum and American military presence will remain for years to come. This formula will only invite more chaos and more violence, understandably because a nation can't be free and at the same time have a huge unwanted foreign military presence (and no, the hand picked leadership of "free" Iraq in no way represent the millions of Iraqis). Thus, specific pro-war media commentators are readying the American population for a sustained American military involvement in this region by dismissing civilian casualties, "collateral damage", and the ongoing rebellions. When Americans learned about the Abu Ghraib

torture, murder, and abuses, which contradicted all they believed the Iraq war to be about, Zev Chafets countered with an article aptly titled, 'No time to get cold feet'.<sup>10</sup> His point was to clarify for Americans that, "No war is worth supporting if it can't be supported in cold blood." In other words, forget all that stuff about 12,000 plus civilian deaths, systematic torturing and abuse of prisoners (dozens of prisoners in both Iraq and Afghanistan were beaten to death), the destruction of Iraqi infrastructure, the lack of basic civil necessities of health and order, and the continuous rebellion of the Iraqi population. The important thing to Chafets is that, "this war can be won, but only with patience and self-confidence and the willingness to inflict as much punishment as necessary. In other words, in cold blood." Goebbels would be pleased. Rush Limbaugh, America's most popular radio personality, dismissed the torture at Abu Ghraib as "just boys and girls blowing off steam during a stressful situation. Let's not make an international incident out of it", and then blamed the victims: "These are the people that are trying to kill us".<sup>11</sup> (According to International Red Cross 90% of the prisoners at Abu Ghraib were/are innocent civilians mistakenly or falsely arrested)<sup>12</sup> Tucker Carlson, conservative host on CNN's Crossfire, minimized the importance of torture by comparing it with the murder of Nick Berg: "They're not really comparable, are they?" he asked Rep. Howard Ford (R-TN).<sup>13</sup> Perhaps non-white/non-American victims of murder and torture are lesser victims after all.

Politicians also dove into the sewers of dismissing the torture. On May 11, at the Senate Armed Services Hearing on Iraqi Prisoner Treatment, Republican Senator James M. Inhofe from Oklahoma whined how he was "more outraged by the outrage than we are by the treatment" of Iraqi prisoners. "Many of them probably have American blood on their hands", he continued, "And here we're so concerned about the treatment of those individuals".<sup>14</sup> Two days later Democratic Senator from Georgia, Zell Miller stated: "See, you cry for these prisoners, these people who would have beheaded Berg if they weren't in prison".<sup>15</sup> A week later, Harvard Law professor Alan Dershowitz reiterated the importance of legalizing torture on MSNBC's Scarborough Country. Reflecting on the Abu Ghraib scandal he remarked: "I think Americans want us to do it smarter, want us to do it better.

We could have done it a lot smarter... as long as we do it in a way that we can be proud and hold our heads up and say, yes, we did this."<sup>16</sup> By far the worst justification of total war and torture came from Bill O'Reilly, (one of the most popular conservative news personalities). In late May of 2004, he wrote a column vaguely advocating war in the fashion of Genghis Khan: "A divided America playing by obsolete rules of engagement is not going to win the war against Bin Laden and his mass murderers. We need to wake up and wise up. As Genghis Khan well understood, it is defeat the enemy or die".<sup>17</sup> Genghis Khan didn't separate combatants from non-combatants so why even think of mentioning him?

Fortunately, along with almost every human rights group in the world, there have been outspoken critics condemning the justifications for total war and torture. On March 9, 2003, former president Jimmy Carter warned the American public about how Southern Baptists and their zealous support for Israel was contributing to a "eschatological, or final days, theology" where the war against evil is waged on epic proportions (total war). This is one circumstance behind the "Profound changes have been taking place in American foreign policy, reversing consistent bipartisan commitments that for more than two centuries have earned our nation greatness."<sup>18</sup> Commenting on internal memos justifying torture House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi released a statement saying: "If these media reports are true, I call upon the President to disavow this legal advice immediately, and to make public the documents that contain it. Having served on the Intelligence Committee for 10 years, I know that the American people expect that their security at home and the safety of our troops overseas will be safeguarded by the best possible intelligence.

However, Americans also expect that intelligence to be obtained in a manner consistent with the law."<sup>19</sup> Democrat Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts also deplored the Abu Ghraib scandal, saying that: "Who would prefer that Saddam's torture chambers still be open? Shamefully, we now learn that Saddam's torture chambers reopened under new management: U.S. management."<sup>20</sup> (Pelosi's and Kennedy's statements must be viewed in the background of the most nastiest presidential race in history where Republican vs. Democrat war is distorting many of the political issues of our

times).

President Bush's total war on terrorism and eagerness to legalize torture (despite practicing it anyway) has left the American people with a choice between keeping up with the standards of civilization or sinking into the "normalization" process implemented by individuals who have little respect for international law and human rights. If the American people begin to approve of total war and torture as means to a cloudy end then no longer will we have the right to condemn other governments and peoples doing the same. Nor will we be able to explain to our children the crimes of against humanity carried out by tyrannical/fascist regimes of the past and present in a non-hypocritical way. People familiar with and committed to the U.S. Constitution, as well as international law, know that we are entering into a stage where the battle is not just between "us" and the terrorists, but also a battle between extremists wanting to legalize crimes against humanity and those who wish to hold on to their humanity.

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# LOSING "OUR" HUMANITY

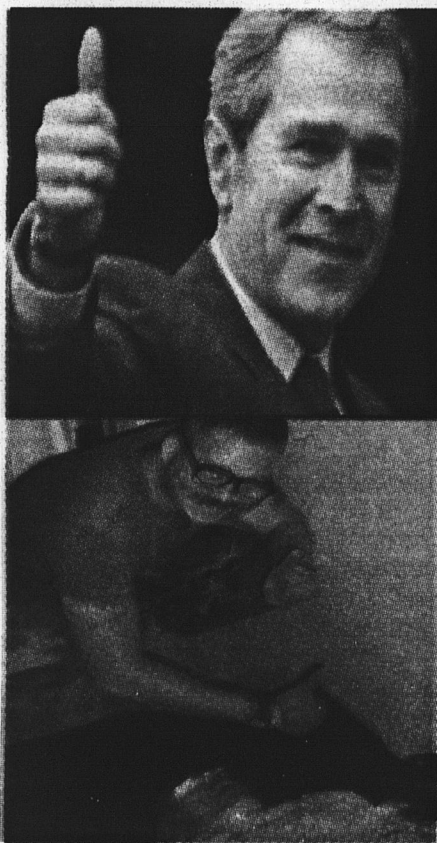
## *Normalizing Total War and Torture*

**GHANIM KHALIL**

"Total war" was a term used by the Nazis (Goebbels used it to rally Germans against the Allies, especially the Soviets) as they declared war on all of Europe and expressed their technological might in the most violent of forms. Along with total war came all sorts of cruelties, including torture, one of the tools of evil. In response to WWII the U.N. created laws to prevent torture. In Article Five of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, torture is defined as, "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."<sup>1</sup> No wonder today, among the things thought to be most deplorable in a civilized society is preemptive warfare (starting wars) and the systematic use of torture. These crimes are rightly placed under the category of human rights violations that sensible people must act against, as well as, denounce. Today, in America, it is hard to believe but sadly true, that some people have argued for torture to be legalized and utilized in circumstances that conscious legal experts argue will open the door to widespread human rights abuses. The normalization of these crimes is becoming evident in public statements made by various individuals who promote what critics consider to be ideals of totalitarian/fascist states overseas.

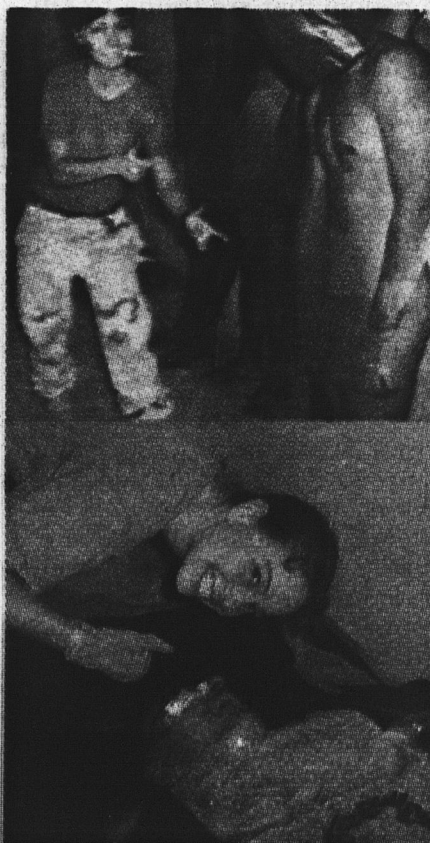
In the minds of some, preemptive warfare, torture, and domestic fear are effective tools of control and national security. What hampers this success are national and international laws that prohibit them. Despite these laws, violations occur in many "civilized" societies, carried out by seemingly ordinary people. Unlike modern televised warfare of missiles and tanks, torture is more of a hidden problem than a visual one. It is only when we are faced with photographic and video evidence that we see its horrible existence and try and come to terms with it. Though Amnesty International, International Red Cross, and Human Rights Watch have published reports of torture in various parts of the world for years, people generally are unmoved until it is in their faces in picture or video format. This is the power of modern image-based media. Public deplorability, however, is a public relations loss for those who see world conflict in terms of "cold-hard reality". These

cold hearts interpret the prohibition of torture as an obstacle to "total warfare", in the "post September 11 world". Americans tend to think "others", surely not "us", start wars and practice torture. There is a good reason for this, since documented evidence of how "others" have caused wars and long used torture for political and military purposes has been reported for decades in the American press. However, lately some media personalities, academics and politicians in America have carefully laid out the groundwork for justifying total warfare and torture – legally! They are thus trying to normalize these two crimes against humanity by explaining them argumentatively and rhetorically as necessary for the common good of America and civilization itself. Many citizens have passively accepted their explanations and have become "normalized" to this twisted mentality.



Richard Perle, (former Pentagon official and one of the architects of the war on Iraq), once expressed his views on the "war on terrorism" in the following way: "This is total war. We are fighting a variety of enemies. There are lots of them out there. All this talk about first we are going to do Afghanistan, then we will do Iraq... this is entirely the wrong way to go about it. If we just let our vision of the world go forth, and we embrace it entirely and we don't try to piece together clever diplomacy, but just wage a total

war... our children will sing great songs about us years from now".<sup>2</sup> What he argues here is not warfare to prevent terrorism, but the disregard for observing international law and the full use of American military power over several regions of the world in order to reshape the world according to his own vision, (another world war). His voice is not a lonely one. Three days after the September 11 attacks, in a column titled 'How the U.S. can win the war', Abraham M. Rosenthal (who is a deeply respected veteran news columnist and selective human rights advocate) strongly advocated bombing "to the ground" all the major cities in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Syria, Sudan, and "other" countries.<sup>3</sup> He proposed giving civilians living in these cities three days to evacuate their homes "because they would be bombed to the ground beginning the fourth day." On the same day, Michael Kramer (New York



Daily News columnist), wrote that, "Given the nature of Tuesday's horror – when terrorists murdered civilians in battle specifically designed to avoid engaging America's military – I favor retaliation in kind".<sup>4</sup> Three days later these commentators were joined by Zev Chafets, (founding editor of the Jerusalem Report Magazine and op-ed columnist for the New York Daily News), who, in a piece titled 'It's really war against the Islamic Axis', called for the invasion and control of the same exact six countries his

colleague Rosenthal named and adds that "if there isn't time" America should repeat "the Japanese model", which is to use profuse bombing (including nuclear) of military and civilian areas until the utter destruction causes complete submission.<sup>5</sup> Despite the fact that none of the civilians of these countries had anything to do with the September 11 attacks and it was still unclear who was really behind it, individuals like Perle, Rosenthal, Kramer, and Chafets, along with Dick Cheney, James Woolsey, Michael Ledeen, Norman Podhoretz, and Donald Rumsfeld, advocated the idea of savage warfare on peoples they generally know very little about. This is the head of a fascistic irrationality taking advantage of the fear and anger of the attack on civilian, economic and military targets in the United States. It wouldn't mean much, except for the fact that most of these individuals wield an influence on the government far greater than the ordinary American.

As an indefinite "war on terrorism" was declared, the total war objective was supplemented with unconstitutional ideas such as "preemptive warfare", "unlawful enemy combatants", and various methods of "softening up" captured prisoners (torture). The little evil tool of total war was well on its way of being utilized secretly at first, all in the name of national security (which no one can responsibly verify) and "unity". In November 2001, Harvard Law professor Alan Dershowitz proposed legalizing torture, causing worldwide controversy. Shortly after, White House legal counsel Alberto Gonzalez wrote a memo to President Bush declaring the Geneva Conventions "obsolete".<sup>6</sup> Then, on January 4, 2002, came Charles Krauthammer, (veteran columnist and ideologue of neoconservatism), and his dark and overly simplistic racist views of "our" enemies. In a Washington Post article named 'Where Power Talks', he suggested that power is the only thing Arabs and Muslims respect and so only through showing 'them' 'our' power will 'they' come to respect and obey 'us', thus converting millions of people into untrained dogs that must be subdued with demonstrations of U.S. military might.<sup>7</sup> In addition to this overseas effort, there was an

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## SUPER-PATRIOT ISSUE

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**TRUTH IS NEVER FOR SALE !**