Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is "a man of peace," the reactionary Christian fundamentalist who occupied the White House told reporters April 19, even as he headed up America's most aggressive military campaign since the 1967 Lebanon War. Sharon's coalition government had been right to extend the fighting around the refugee camp, where Sharon's forces had gone on a rampage after encountering stiff Palestinian resistance that challenged their forces' advance, Human Rights Watch estimated that 50 to 80 Palestinians out of the 10,000 originally inhabiting the camp were killed. According to Sharon, the Israeli forces were "merely in self-defense." And he went on to say that his military campaign since the 1982 Lebanon War, Sharon's three-week invasion of Palestinian-ruled areas of the West Bank left hundreds of civilians dead, thousands wounded or displaced, and the entire infrastructure of an embryonic Palestinian state in ruins. While Sharon's coalition government, which includes the Labor Party, termed these actions a "war on terror," they constituted a war crime.

As the dust cleared, all eyes turned to the Jenin refugee camp, where Sharon's forces had gone on a rampage after encountering stiff Palestinian resistance that challenged their forces' advance, Human Rights Watch estimated that 50 to 80 Palestinians out of the 10,000 originally inhabiting the camp were killed. According to Sharon, the Israeli forces were "merely in self-defense." And he went on to say that his military campaign since the 1982 Lebanon War, Sharon's three-week invasion of Palestinian-ruled areas of the West Bank left hundreds of civilians dead, thousands wounded or displaced, and the entire infrastructure of an embryonic Palestinian state in ruins. While Sharon's coalition government, which includes the Labor Party, termed these actions a "war on terror," they constituted a war crime.

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Economy of choice

The word that feminist writer Rickie Solinger finds the most politically damaging is "choice." Her new book Beggars and Choosers: How the Politics of Choice has "naturally" been equated to male freedom. It is important to understand the difference between freedom and choice. Solinger takes the view that "freedom" is the act of choosing, whereas "choice" is the ability to choose.

Solinger believes that the empowerment that came out of the 1970s and 1980s allowed women with experienced shame and powerlessness as teenagers. They recognized that they were coerced into paying for their "mistakes." In many cases, the coerced women became the company of a lost child. They have organized "Concerned United Birthparents." These women are challenging racism against women who just don't know what life is like anywhere else.

Women Worldwide

Nurses in Sydney, Australia have received overwhelming public support in their campaign to save nurse patients and conditions that women in Sydney, Australia have received over maternity railway stations in Sydney and collected more than $30,000, all of which will be spent on a new training center to be presented to the New South Wales government at the end of May.

A Kenyan gynecologist has taken on the "taboo" of abortion, currently illegal throughout most of Africa and traditionally forbidden, in an effort to save a woman's life. Dr. Ovono performs abortions using a loop that is new to the Kenyan law that allows the procedure if performed safely to save a woman's life. Dr. Ovono says he is saving a woman's life if she terminates the pregnancy she planned on ending herself with a dangerous method.

Women's co-ops in Chiapas

(A young woman from Chiapas, Manuelia Diaz, spoke to News & Letters recently about the cooperative she has been a part of. The cooperative is a member of the National Women's Network Cooperative. We have translated her remarks from Spanish.)

I'm from Chiapas, here as the president of my cooperative, our cooperative was born with a big idea. We organized our cooperative because the women have many needs and problems. We have no money or food or education. The women in San Cristobal, which is真是 San Cristobal, where we had to sell everything we owned to make the trip to Mexico City, so we could look for markets besides San Cristobal. It is important to understand the difference between freedom and choice. We are doing what we are doing. We demanded that we be in control of our own money and have social and political power, even in our own independent co-ops.

After the 1994 uprising in Chiapas, women began to participate more directly in political matters, specifically meetings and roadblocks. That was a significant change from before, when women primarily stayed at home. The governmental co-ops were run by men who made decisions, and the women did not work. Now women have taken responsibility for decision making and the direction that things are going. We make cotton and woven bags, also hangings, napkins, decorative covers, pillow cases, changing tables, cribs, even Zapastita dolls. We use back strap looms and we color the threads into the actual fabric, which looks super. It takes a lot of work to do the weaving, but we also need to care for our homes and families. Sometimes I must go to the market to get things done, but then I have all the other chores I must do and if I don't go to the market, there is a lot of work for women, especially when you have young children to take care of. It's difficult because there is so much work.

Often we have no housing, or there is no work, or there are no opportunities for women to make a living. The only job that is possible for the women is to go out and work on the plantations. But even if you have a trade, you don't get the minimum salary for their weavings. They take classes in accounting and calculate the price, for example, of one pillow case and if they get the minimum it would be 200 pesos per pillow case. They sell it at 135 and 50% stays in the community to pay rent for the store, electricity, transportation, and the administration of the products and administrative costs for the coop representing 40% of the sales. In the U.S. they can make a little bit more but it's still not a fair price. Even though economically it's not fair, culturally it's important because the women get the ability to go to the market and mix with the women together and talk. Women have developed a training center to help develop skills they never had before. There is a peel room there that is for the women to learn and we also have a sewing machine that women can learn about. Women also learn how to spread information to other areas concerning our cooperative. We've built a new training center which is not in San Cristobal but closer to the women. In the new center there will be young women who haven't been involved before so that they are very excited to us.

We have some girls that have involved who are 9-10 years old, and we have a broad span of ages, going up past 50 years old. Some of the younger women speak Spanish so they can go to various fairs and sell the goods. Some young women don't want to marry. They want to work, they want to have work, they want to move to the city. They often get these skills through the co-op as well. In this way they are challenging racism against the rural Indian women within the broader Spanish speaking culture.

Women didn't participate in much, but after many more things were opened up. We put to use the Zapastita women said we "have a right to to the market and if we can't move to the city, they often get these skills through the co-op as well. In this way they are challenging racism against the rural Indian women within the broader Spanish speaking culture.

Women's co-ops in Chiapas

Chicago—I attended a workshop entitled "Policing Motherhood" at The Color of Violence Conference in Chicago. The four panels of speakers and their presentations on a variety of issues: the concept of reproductive freedom and engaged in serious dialogue with the audience about whether or not to fight to broaden the mainstream abortion rights movement, or to form their own movement, reflective of the concerns of women of color.

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MAY 2002

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The speakers con­

---End---

Working Women for Freedom

In 1976 three women put together an original pamphlet of working women speaking for themselves about abortion. We recently lost one of the authors, Mary Holmes, a long-time comrade and friend, to cancer (see page 5 to learn more about her). We know that her commitment to human freedom will live on.

"Because women think their own thoughts, they are every bit as 'intellectual' as professionals who delude themselves that all originality resides in their thoughts. It is my contention that women, here and now, whether in productive work in the home, or in political activity or just thinking things through, are hewing new paths to liberation, and it is their stories that must be told and become the basis of the new action and the new theory. Let the deed and the dialogue begin."
Los Angeles—April 29 is the tenth anniversary of the Los Angeles rebellion, where the "not guilty" verdict was delivered for four LAPD officers, the beating of Rodney King was broadcast throughout the city. As word spread, the city burst into a spontaneous opposition to police brutality, a series of protests and demonstrations, fires and stealing. Selected images were repeatedly televised throughout the nation.

Another factor may have been a Korean man with a handgun who would protect his store from any intruders. A second factor may be the presence of a white power driver, Reginald Denny, at the corner of Florence and Normandy Streets. The TV replayed those selected scenes (accompanied by a spine of verbal horror against the uprising) over and over, so that they became imprinted on the minds of a fearful population. Thus, the notion of the rebellion's stored-up rage, caused by years of unemployment, exploitation, poverty, racism, and police beatings, became.

There was little or no coverage of over 50 people killed, mostly by police and national guardsmen. None of them were prosecuted. Nor was there attention to Latali Harsha, a young black girl shot in the head and killed in a Korean-owned store. imagen stained a can of orange juice. In those days there was a high level of mistrust and antipathy between Korean merchants and their black customers.

I do not recall any news coverage that expressed the outrage felt by the demonstrators. Over 1,200 were arrested for relatively petty charges, mainly stealing, and many unemployed march and workless northcoast labor learned that the police protected large corporate shopping centers and the affluent Westside. In many cases scenes described the burning and looting of stores as "just watching."

Among those prose was the remorseless beating of Reginald Denny and the trial of Darnell Whitter, a young Black man. He had disappeared six months earlier, and was found guilty of "robbery with violence." The issue of police brutality remained.

Los Angeles rebellion, 1992

We are the working class," stated one worker in a March 11 mass demonstration in Liaoyang in China's northeast. Over 5,000 workers of Liaoyang Ferro-Alloy, in particular workers laid off and retired over the last three years, defied police intimidation to picket and blockade streets. Their demands related to issues of back pay and denial of benefits stolen and withheld from them for more than a year.

This demonstration represented the government's thumbing its nose at enterprises which, since the end of 1998, have led to 25 million layoffs in the last three years, and workers targeted a local official as the symbol of the government's policy of deliberate bankruptcies, as well as official corruption, since he had already clandestinely sold off the plant to private interests in Liaoyang.

Zhaiming and Gu Baoshu. To add your voice to the discussion, write for information.

Illegal firing now OK

Chicago—The Supreme Court decided 5-4 in favor of Bashe Chemical workers. On March 21, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) on March 27 to deny back pay to a worker who had been illegally fired for union organizing. An illegal firing now OK. John D. Joe Castro admitted that he had entered the United States without documentation, he had used a friend's Texas birth certificate to gain employment.

The Supreme Court said that Castro himself had portrayed his arrest as illegal and as gaining employment. He had used the crimes of September 11 to burden immigrants. The entire argument is that these other laws take precedence over labor law as a minimum. The activity of labor is seen as having little value, but is moral.

Mr. Castro was denied his right to back pay because of his "illegal" activities. The company was given less than 14 days to appeal to the Court in a quick decision. It did so, in effect, violating labor law.

While the employer's activities and reactions have used the crimes of September 11 to burden immigrants with greater restrictions, the left must insist that the actions of a few cannot delegitimize the collective actions of the vast number of American citizens who have been in the United States looking for work. Since this case changes the way the NLRB treats immigrant workers, it is necessary that a greater effort be made to change the legal regime for immigrants and their families. We must demand "Amnesty Now."

—D. D.

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IMMEDIATELY
The Power of Negativity

Selected Writings

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The Power of Negativity: The Power of Negativity

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya

MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

On the occasion of May Day we reproduce excerpts of a letter written by Raya Dunayevskaya on April 8, 1980. It previews a talk she was to give on April 8, 1980 in commemoration of May Day and Marx’s May 5 birthday. The talk was given as she was completing her third major work—Rosa Luxemburg: The Dialectical Power of Negativity. The full letter as well as the outline of her lecture can be found in The Rosa Dunayevskaya Collection, 6454-6456.

The question, the serious question, is the attitude of their acknowledging “orthodox Marx—critique”?—RD

No, it’s a great deal worse, for it was not only those who deviated but those who were “orthodox,” “sinners,” and revolutionary. No wonder Lenin said there is no such thing as a “sincere” materialist. What made them believe otherwise is that they were not petty-bourgeois individuals but were reducing their own individuality to the Universal of socialism, as was “proven” by the fact that the most important part of their program was to “apply” it to the concrete situation as they saw it. The most common mode of self-delusion and of creating illusions for others is, in knowledge, to presuppose something as being well known, and to accept it as such. Knowledge will not be possible unless we are aware that this is happening, refuses to be bogged down in all arguments (Phenomenology of Mind).

Take, for example, the fact that all of Marx’s works have the title “critique” in them. We certainly know that from the time he was working with Arnold Ruge and trying to start a new magazine Medicine, in 1839, that he was working with Arnold Ruge and trying to start a new magazine Medicine, in 1839, that the question, the serious question, is the attitude to that point of unity of philosophy and revolution.

That point is crucial...for the whole march of his historico-political writings ever since, doesn’t get published. Sixteen years pass, a new, “grammatical Marxian Party” (the International) is headed by Karl Kautsky, Isbel, Emil Bernstein—and a new program, the Erfurt Program, is published. Em­phasis is still alive and it is clear that pro­gram, as Raya sees that program, is still alive and that it is clear that Marx’s critique of the Erfurt Program is now budge despite all discussion” (Phenomenology of Mind).

The full letter as well as the out­line of that lecture can be found in The Rosa Dunayevskaya Collection, 6455-6456.

On the Dialectic

Joan Donahue

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MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

"In general, what is well known, pre­cisely because it is well known, is not to be taken as a cliche Marx's statement that "Labor in the white skin can be free only as long as in the black skin it is not."—RD

"Theodore von Lassalle, founder of the first major workers’ party in Germany in 1863, was later denounced by Marx as "a future worker’s dictator."—Editors.

"The accursed individualistic, orthdox Marxists who think State and Revolution is no more than a ‘rewrite’ of Marx’s analysis of the Paris Commune...is not merely a profound misunderstanding of the best biographies of Marx—Fraz Mehring—shut­ting all doors to any conception of what a new con­sciousness of thought Marxism was. Class struggle, yes; bril­liant, yes; a founder, yes; but that shouldn’t keep "the new generation" (I’m referring to August Bebel) from writing rather angrily about the "two old men in Lon­don," more or less literally. August Bebel was referring to the need for a "unified Party" predetermining over theoretical quibbling.

Bebel was referring to the need for a "unified Party" predetermining over theoretical quibbling.

"It is directed to the destruction of demo­cracy whereas they followed the true intellectual forebearers of the Paris Commune—Proudhonists and Balzacians—when they said a word, it is clear that Marx at that time was not the same as "proven" by the fact that the most important part of their program was to "apply" it to the concrete situation as they saw it. The most common mode of self-delusion and of creating illusions for others is, in knowledge, to presuppose something as being well known, and to accept it as such.

Knowledge will not be possible unless we are aware that this is happening, refuses to be bogged down in all arguments (Phenomenology of Mind).

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Mary Obet, who wrote under the name Mary Holmes, died from lung cancer April 4 at the age of 86. She had lived a rich life, deeply involved in every movement in Marxist-Humanism for more than 50 years. Her activism, her writings, her travels, all were devoted to creating that revolutionary philosophy.

Refusing the alienation of capitalism is not merely a nihilistic "no" to the present order. Franklin Domanski notes that "the death of the subject" becomes the determining element in both the "new human relations" and the "new human society" (p. 4). This is due to Habermas' rejection of the revolutionary subject, a mistake which led Habermas to wholly untenable positions. "Ignoring decades of mass revolt and creativity, Habermas' totalitarianism appears as if it had originated from above in the pre­former and glint of Marxist-Humanism.

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One important feature of the present crisis, the only source for new human beings, is the very capacity of so many contemporary theorists—revolutionary subjectivity—a matter upon which this collection has much to offer. We will miss her.
The question about whether the U.S. should be the "policeman of the world" was answered by George Bush by using the events of September 11 to turn the U.S. into the "judge, jury and executioner of the world." The present U.S. administration claims it is the right to overthrow unsympathetic regimes or leaders, whether in Iraq or Venezuela, and to interfere in any country's internal affairs if they feel U.S. corporate interests might be jeopardized. "You are with us or you are against us" it makes it simple to declare anybody guilty of harboring a terrorist, of supporting terrorism, of harboring, training, and even decorating Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma bomber, the U.S. itself qualifies as a terrorist state.

Giorgio Vancouver

Bush called for Sharon to voluntarily "show restraint" while he did everything possible to enable Sharon to continue his criminal blitzkrieg against the Palestinians. It reminded me of his calls for industry to "voluntarily" study the problem of worker safety while workers were forced to get hurt by the thousands. Like with his father in his "chosen country," there is as much "voluntarism" in corporate America and in Sharon alike as there is in a weaselly's hunger to devour anything in its path.

Hospital worker California

The Catholic hierarchy took the position that the mission of their institution was more important than the lives sacrificed when a peaceful priest is moved to another parish.

Politically, it would be easy for the U.S. justice system to indict and convict criminal priests. But when the U.S. is on a mission like getting rid of the Church, government sacrfice unloved to fix it. If it is wrong for the Church and the Catholic Church to live in transparent lies for the sake of institutions, for institutions like the Church, it would be wrong for institutions like a world government.

John Alam's column in the April N&L was missed. It presented an important and more principled view of the law that addresses violence against children. It enriched the idea of freedom of expression for the Black movement, while America wouldn't have all the civil rights they are now struggling to defend.

Saheed New York

There's as much "voluntarism" in corporate America and in Sharon alike as there is in a weaselly's hunger to devour anything in its path.

The April 20 demonstrations in D.C. that brought out tens of thousands, I liked that the issues were diverse—globalization, Israel/Palestine, home nuclear weapons, the School of the Americas and more. The demonstrators moved from signs and speeches about one issue to another, learning new terms and concepts. Murderers of the Philippines, the torture of civilians in D.C. that keeps repeating the word "terror" as if it applies to any U.S. chief of staff doesn't speak of the state terror committed by the Israelis.

Outraged Jew Canada

I ran into a large group of pro-Palestinian protesters in Dearborn, home to many Middle Easterners, and had an impulse to stop and pass out the last things I needed—left,far, deader and bad. Issues interfere with one another in the desire to boil over every issue. Integrated and put all of our issues together. It stimulated people to feel we can accomplish something.

Subscriber Detroit

... Running Raya Dunayevskaya's 1982 "Stop the slaughter of the Palestinians" in the editorial section ... "Before we go out, we have to realize that the people ... and children. How can the so-called "civilized" Jews just not letting ambulances, food boats, clean water on, not looking up, off water and electricity, and keeping hundreds of thousands of Palestinian ... for the sake of what? But ... doesn't speak of the state terror committed by the Israelis.

Terror Moon Memphis

PUNISHING THE POOR

Some reality is needed to challenge Bush's march toward empire. The welfare. The whole emphasis on marriage as the solution to child poverty is quite disturbing. While it's true that statistics say children with both a mother and a father do better and have fewer illusions that the demonstrations will just work. They are struggling for something beyond jobs.

American worker California

Thanks for your support during our very successful Truth Tour in March. As you know, the struggle for dignity and fairness in the fields continues. We hope all who can will join us for a full day of action on Thursday, May 10, in Louisville, KY for the annual stockholder meetings of Tricon, Taco Bell's parent company. We'll be picketing the corporate headquarters in Louisville. In the afternoon we will be marching, singing, leafleting, and talking with folks at several Taco Bell restaurants in the Louisville area. We will conclude the day in a joint event with Kentucky Jobs With Justice. You can be back on the road by early evening. Email us at TBtruth@earthlink.net for specific directions and directions and meet us in Louisville.

Coalition of Immokalee Workers Florida

... I know you don't often mention the Right to Work campaign. The "finance reform" seems to require that it be kept quiet. I believe the abstract issue of constitutional rights, namely the First Amendment. Last Sep- tember, Bush signed a "right-to- work" law, which was partially touted as limiting political contributions from "Chinese workers" such as PRC, abortion rights, and so forth. So far, the broad base of the "right-to-work" move is to keep public school teachers salaries among the lowest in the U.S. and in the state of Oklahoma.

MULTIPLE HATE CRIMES

The beautiful murals on the Women's Labor Party campus, which hosts several nonprofit activist groups, were vandalized by being spray-painted with the words "kill Arabs" in foot-long let­ters. The mural is a pastiche of famous women throughout history including Georgia O'Keefe and Rigoberta Menchu. The community is trying to come help them clean up.

Women's liberationist San Francisco

... For the first time, the 1994 Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act is being applied to a case of violence based on sexual orientation. A federal law that addresses violence against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people on federal property. It also increases the severity of the crime and allows for the introduction of evidence of the victim's sexual identity, including, motivating.

John Alicious Portland, Oregon

The Anti-hate fund of this is that the Attorney General has stated that this law makes it easier to request the death penalty. It's important to understand that even a minor crystallization of a new class of full time job just surviving. It may look like you're trying to milk the state or when you're trying to just survive. This writer is working hard but losing the fight. My partner and I think of people as the result of a horrible system that makes people who are only a little better off their source of survival. You can't give money to everybody who asks without something else. Those who are the most responsible for creating the situation don't ever have to run into these people. The problem is lost when just getting active to feed people.

R. F. Price Melbourne, Australia

... I wish N&L had more discussion of the way forces like the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico, have developed an indigenous, traditional concept of the seizure of power. The Zapatistas' struggle is more about fighting for the indigenous to "capture" the state machine to transform it. That makes it to us questions of power and force, on which history has taught us much. Let's have readers' ideas on these issues with us.

Multiple HATE CRIMES

... I've been part of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign for years. The Bush administration and the Republican party campaign for "finance reform" seems to require that it be kept quiet. I believe the abstract issue of constitutional rights, namely the First Amendment. Last September, Bush signed a "right-to-work" law, which was partially touted as limiting political contributions from "Chinese workers" such as PRC, abortion rights, and so forth. So far, the broad base of the "right-to-work" move is to keep public school teachers salaries among the lowest in the U.S. and in the state of Oklahoma.

Women's Liberationist San Francisco

... For the first time, the 1994 Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act is being applied to a case of violence based on sexual orientation. A federal law that addresses violence against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people on federal property. It also increases the severity of the crime and allows for the introduction of evidence of the victim's sexual identity, including, motivating.

John Alicious Portland, Oregon

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I think the essay on Hardt and Negri in the April N&L was too kind to them. I find their work full of postmodernist jargon. What is the point of using words like "the multitude" to define mass struggles? It effaces the differences between different revolutionary subjects.

Activist
New York

Capital has invaded every aspect of everyday life and the struggle against it has become universal as well. That's why I find the concept of "the multitude" attractive. It gets us away from the old way of organizing revolutions. A real in the unions would be welcome but it remains a distant dream. New ideas and new ways of doing things are long overdue. But the most reactionary ideas remain a powerful current as can be seen in the efforts here to generate a strong law and order debate. The main winners in this debate are the moment are the far right and the new-fascist groups.

Bob
Oakland

I must point out one error in the excellent Lenin article on "Women fight terror and war in South Asia and the Middle East" (N&L March 2002). Current conditions in Afghanistan are not "beginning to wear away the confidence of Afghans" because people never had any confidence in that Northern Alliance-dominated, U.S.-imposed government. They experienced the same kind of powerlessness as the Taliban and know them to be just as guilty of exhibiting populism. Welfare programs explain why is many have not abandoned the burqas. They don't feel safe. The Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan has consistently warned that the new government is not to be tolerated.

In addition to all the countries Maya Thalasni discussed, women's groups are active in combating the repression being imposed in the name of "fighting terrorism." In the Philippines women's groups predominate in opposing the recent neo-institution of U.S. troops in their country. In Afghanistan, Indonesia, women are very active in the independence movement and oppose the government's recent imposition of religious law and dress codes.

Women's Liberation
New York

The bigger problem with Negri and Hardt, in my view, is that they don't discuss the problem of the failed revolutions of the 20th Century. In fact, the revolutions succeeded simply by virtue of proving the power of "revolutionary subjectivity." But unless we confront the reasons for the failure of the 20th Century revolutions to get beyond the limits of capital, we'll keep on repeating their mistakes. It's time to sing psalms to "subjectivity" but the key question remains—what happens AFTER the revolution? A thousand attended a socialist alliance conference in London. The main tendency at the Socialist Alliance conference connected the organization to the abolition of capital and creation of a new society. The others did not get beyond diatribe against New Labour and creation of a new organization. The conference raised more questions than answers, although the attendance of a thousand was reflective of the general resurgence in union struggles which has brought the connection of the unions to New Labour to the forefront.

Patrick
England

HAVES AND HAVE-NOTS

This is how the World of Haves and Have-nots is divided. The Haves: More necessities, more leisure time, more money to spend, more schools, more places to travel willingly.

The Have-Not: Less necessities, virtually no leisure time, barely a chance to go to one school, barely allowed to stay where they are now.

Conclusion: The world has a recipe with the needed ingredients to set the world on fire literally and physically. The only question left is when?

George Wilfrid Smith Jr.
Chicago

Caught in a spiral of violence today are the workers of the whole world. The accelerating terrorism began one and a half years ago when Sharon, pro-}ted by his army, visited an Islamic mosque and provoked all the violence that followed. Yet where is the discussion of the fundamental causes of the clash—the vast disparity of daily living conditions between the haves and have-nots. It is not only between Israelis and Palestinians but throughout the whole Middle East between the rulers and the ruled. The class differences exist in all countries and are only a reflection of religious, racial or cultural differences.

Asian American
Los Angeles

The Illinois Department of Corrections is so corrupt that I cannot figure out why the federal government does not touch them. Now they claim they cannot raise their prices due to the recession. I doubt the details (jobs) they do, because of the state of low wages. But if you look at their prices, you will see that profits on sales from commissary stores are expended by the department on special benefits of committed persons, "which shall include but not be limited to the advancement of inmate payrolls." So how could any budget crisis stop the prisoners' pay check? When wake up to doing something with the state budget? I would like to read up on revolutionary history but have no funds for books. Thanks to the donor who paid for my sub to N&L. I do know what is going on today.

Prisoner
Illinois

Editor's Note: All contributions to our special Donor's Fund are used to send N&L and requested copies of our pamphlets to prisoners who have no funds of their own. Can you help out?

PRISON VOICES

The Marxist-Humanists of the London Corresponding Committee were the only tendency at the Socialist Alliance conference that connected the organization to the abolition of capital and creation of a new society. The others did not get beyond diatribe against New Labour and creation of a new organization. The conference raised more questions than answers, although the attendance of a thousand was reflective of the general resurgence in union struggles which has brought the connection of the unions to New Labour to the forefront.

Marxist-Humanist
England
Venezuelan coup attempt fails but raises key questions

Venezuela’s elite successfully ousted Hugo Chavez from his presidential post on April 11 in the midst of a general strike that had only two days to reinstate less than two days later after even bigger protests. The military, which coordinated with Latin America immediately condemned the coup, while the U.S. rushed to offer its support to the new regime on its first and only full day in power.

The whirlwind of events on those two days had been developing since last November, when Chavez used his “fast track” powers to enact 49 new laws that have alienated workers from him. Oil workers had their strikes doomed illegal and school teachers are sick of his attempts to militarize education. When 160,000 teachers went on strike in late January, the strike was declared illegal. Overriding everything in the process that has only worsened during Chavez’s time in power.

What saved Chavez on April 13 was not only the mobilization, but the fact that the elite has yet to recon­struct its old two party system that ruled the country from 1958 to 1998. The Social Christians and Democ­rats are still divided, and that explains why the bourgeoisie has turned to organizing mass events through Fedecamaras. They’re sure to be getting some help from the U.S. in the coming period.

On the other side looms a greater question that needs to be addressed, how can the so-called Boliv­arian Revolution, which has not been able to change structural conflicts in the process that has only worsened during Chavez’s time in power.

Repression in Indonesian provinces

In the provinces seeking independence from Indone­sia, there has been marked by increased military presence and killings. The Megawati government reiterated its commitment to exterminate the rebellions in Aceh, Maluku and Central Sulawesi, and the president herself ordered the military not to worry about human rights violations in the process.

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Cuts hurt prisoners

Joliet, Ill.—All college academic and vocational classes throughout the state of Illinois and at all of its 13 prison institutions (IDOC) were abruptly terminated as of Dec. 21. The only classes available are mandated GED curricula. Prisoners must now pay to take classes while they are once returning to society. College classes greatly aid prisoners to find employment and not to return to prison.

For several months, there was a hiring freeze for many of the state's 2,500 prison guards. Positions are now open. Prisoners who are being hired once again are not only carrying the workload but also the financial burden. Staff salaries at the IDOC are paying for these college classes thanks to prisoners' commissary purchases, are being taken out of the prison budget.

Late in 1997, Arizona began moving Death Row prisoners to a super-security facility. There, prisoners are held in small, separate cells for 23 hours a day with almost no interaction with other human beings. In Florida, prison officials recently added a heavy mesh to the outside of the facility that no one can see.

In November, 1999, prisoners were given some hope when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the case of Rumsey v. Spain, 119 S. Ct. 1310 (1999), that prisoners have a right to a meaningful opportunity to seek reduction of their sentences. The bottom line is that prisoners are receiving the same level of care and treatment as those in the general prison system.

In Oklahoma, which led the U.S. with 18 executions in 2001 (due, in large part, to laboratory evidence manufactured by now-disgraced police chemist Irenee Gilchrist), Death Row prisoners are housed in an underground facility where they never see direct sunlight. In Texas, condemned men were previously held at the O. B. Ellis State Prison in Huntsville where they could work, four hours a day, see out of their cells, and enjoy recreation together. In 1999, a few months after an unsuccessful escape by seven Death Row prisoners, the condemned men were moved 70 miles east to Allan B. Polunsky State Prison at Livingston. There, they are locked up virtually all the time, have no view out of their cells, and make only brief, solitary visits to the recreation yard (women are held in a separate prison near Gatesville.)

As conditions on the nation’s Death Row becomes less humane, more and more prisoners are asking to be executed early. Death penalty opponents believe that the tough conditions and the virtual isolation from human contact can lead into depression and mental illness that death becomes an attractive alternative.

Late in 2001, there were approximately 3,700 men and women on Death Row in 38 states and in the federal prison system.

According to Amnesty International, 98 people had “volunteered” for death sentences since 1994, the U.S. Supreme Court removed the barriers to capital punishment in 1976. Two-thirds of these “voluntary” executions were carried out since the Supreme Court’s, in which the death penalty cases point to the increasingly harsh environment on death row as the primary reason for the jump in voluntary executions.

An Arizona lawyer who asked not to be named commented on the situation when he said, “We're asking the prisoners can no longer live like that and still be human or feel human emotions. An inner darkness sets in. The environment that we live in, it makes only want you to die but gives you the feeling you have no choice.”

A former guard on Texas’ Death Row said he understood why prisoners wanted to die. “Quite a few of them feel that way when you are treated inhumanely,” said the guard, who resigned late last year because he found the work distasteful.

Yolanda Torres, a Texas defense penalty defense lawyer, said: “With inadequate medical and psychiatric attention, I have prisoners with personality changes in them which is what’s leading to suicide.”

“It’s distressing that the only time you can get what amounts to a state-assisted suicide in the U.S. is on Death Row,” noted Abraham Benowitz, director of Floridians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty. At last count, four voluntary executions were in the Florida pipeline.

—Roger Hummel

Death Row prisoners 'volunteer' to die
Capital fans global warming, puts human habitat at risk

(Continued from page 1)

sive have been the environmental struggles and the demonstrations against global capital that this opposition is the element that links this rift between the U.S. and Europe.

But such a view distorts scientific facts, his ideology
does conform to objective reality—not the laws of
nature but the laws of capitalism: everything is subordinated to
the logic of capital. Rejecting measures to prevent the
growth of production, he declared that "economic
growth is the solution to the problem." No one has
described this mentality better than Karl Marx

Capital, which has
such "good reasons" for
denying the need to
assure the survival of
capitalism,..is trying to plan to evacuate its population as environmental
dangers are expected to fall dis-
"conventionally, environmental, anti-globalization and indigenous peoples
mouvements have been gathering in such international
summits as Seattle, Davos, and
Marrakech, Morocco, demonstrations were held from
South Korea to the Netherlands. Even in Marrakech,
where authorities had forbidden their planned street
protests, the protestors gathered outside the venue and
set up a table inside the con-
derations have formed around the
new category of "climate justice" linking the
problems of concentration of power, climate change,
racial justice, workers' rights, and opposition to the
international economic system. (See "Kyoto Treaty
Scandal," December 2001)

While most of the mainstream environmental
groups see Kyoto as too feeble but still important as a
"first step" toward creating a new international
framework, the environmental justice movement is
seeing it as a chance to organize around the new

cation became under sharp public critique for rejecting
the Kyoto Protocol, and for failing to achieve any
comfortable compromise with the West. The
diplomatic veneer that normally covers meetings of
ministers, the depth of the environmental crisis shattered
the consensus that had been achieved at
Kyoto. While Canada and the U.S. succeeded in keep-

33%

The Bush non-plan is only the latestAmendment to the Kyoto Protocol, signed at
the 1992 Earth Summit, forcing removal of
binding goals and deadlines. Industrialized countries
pledged to limit their emissions to 1990 lev-
ela by the year 2000, but actual U.S. emissions
slipped to an all-time high in 1999.
The uselessness of that
Voluntary Treaty signed in 1991
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From Alarm to Protest

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emissions of all the others.
In the first week in April over 125 Palestinian men, women, and children as well as other Middle Eastern people, demonstrated on a busy street corner here, protesting the Israeli occupation of Palestinian areas. The demonstration was almost frantic, with people screaming until they were hoarse or lost their voices. A woman explained why the demonstration had such a desperate tone. Her family lived where some of the heaviest fighting was being carried out and she didn’t know and couldn’t find out if her relatives were alive or dead.

Israeli soldiers were not letting ambulances through, injured people were bleeding to death in the streets, people were running out of food and some already “had nothing and were naked in the streets.” The demonstration, she explained, was to report to the world what the Israeli government was doing to the people under its occupation.

Three time zone reports which only give the official Israeli point of view. She was trying to get the truth of the situation of the Palestinians under siege, she said.

Signs and chants revealed the diverse nature of those in attendance. Some equated Zionism with racism and terrorism, and chanted “Down with Israel,” revealing that they either had no understanding of the growing peace movement within Israel, or that they had succumbed to hatred and wanted Israel and all the Jews within it to be driven into the sea.

Kids in Pakistani jails

I am sad to report from Lahore that the police authorities have suddenly reneged on their reluctant permission to activists for visiting children in jail.

The police are now demanding a five-year report of any organization that wants to visit children. This is a new move, insisting that only after a complete review will they allow activists to continue their work in the jails.

This is suddenly and without warning when the activists that found they could not visit jails pending “approval” from authorities. If the government is determined to monitor the work of these activists and organizations, the concerned authorities would have sought to work with them, instead of putting a stop to the valuable and necessary efforts they are making for an understanding of the real issues and the lives of the prisoners.

The refusal to allow activists from concerned organizations such as AGHS Legal Aid Cell and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan is a calculated effort to discourage their humanitarian work which exposes the brutal cruelty of an inhumane system.

—Hawa Bibi

Queer Notes

by Suzanne Rose

Iran is launching its first AIDS awareness campaign without the mention of gay sex. Facing a rapid increase in the number of new infections and fearing a major epidemic, the government has been forced to give its approval to an AIDS education program. The campaign took so long to reach the market because the government is determined not to allow discussion of gay sexuality.


"A youth who worries too much about the future"—Poster from 1968 uprising in France.

This May is the anniversary of the 1968 revolutionary uprising of students and workers in France. The events themselves strike a chord today with anyone interested in social movements and/or politics.

The book, Poetry Ruled the Streets: The French May Events of 1968, by Andrew Freedenberg and Jim Freedenberg, describes how the youth movement that transformed the image of the Left, shifted the political discourse, and a totally new relationship between politics and art. The 1968 uprising in France.

The enduring revolutionary legacy of Paris '68
1. **Italian general strike**

Some 15 million workers created the biggest general strike Italy has seen in decades on April 16. Factoiy workers, bank employees, professionals in all offices had all to shut down as workers came out to protest plans by the ultra-rightist government of Silvio Berlusconi to modify Article 18 of the labor law. Enacted in 1970 under the pressure of massive labor and student protests, Article 18 allows workers in companies with over 15 employees to contest any form of dismissal in the courts. This makes layoffs extremely difficult, giving the majority of Italian workers a unique type of job security.

The strike was so successful that it could not be shown on TV, since the networks were also shut down by strikers! In addition to the strike itself, some two million people, mainly in the streets, most of them under the auspices of the large reformist trade unions. However, the workers' movement also attracted hundreds of thousands to their demonstrations.

Several events led up to April 16. In March, two million workers had defended Article 18. Many trace the new stage of mass mobilization back to February, when over 40,000 people, including many students, had blocked Berlusconi's attempt to undermine the judiciary. He had submitted a proposal that would have given the "clean hands" investigation of corrupt politicians like himself and also removed police protection from judges handling Mafia cases. Others trace the new spirit of protest further back, to the anti-capitalist demonstrations at the G-8 Summit in Genoa last July. Berlusconi, who compares himself to Britain's Margaret Thatcher, clearly intends to discipline labor. So far, he has spared all attempts at negotiation. He has signed Article 18, claiming that his election by 45% of the voters in May 2001—vs. 44% for his left center opponent—that Berlusconi's attempt to impose his will on Italian workers, youth, and intellectuals see things differently. If Article 18 is annihilated, as he says it will be, workers have already shown that they can challenge Berlusconi, who seems to believe that we are still living in the retrograde Reagan-Thatcher 1980s.

2. **May Day**

All across France, a nearly unprecedented one million workers, students and even some farmers struck, too, out for the annual May Day marches organized by unions and the Left. This mobilization against Le Pen 17%, social democrat Lionel Jospin 16%, the conservative Jacques Chirac received 20% of the vote, was created so that the voices of minorities, women, youth and those discriminated against would be heard. The actual election results were as follows: Gaullist moral police or military offi­cers. Le Pen himself was a paratrooper during the Algerian War, where he received the charge of a fighter.

The young woman demonstrator’s sense of shame was a common feel­ing among the 100,000 French youth who came out in dozens of cities to protest Le Pen’s election. Many of them were too young to remember the more or less determined to make sure that Le Pen’s type of poli­tics are not the future that they will inherit from their elders. Describing how they organized it, the spontaneous demonstrations, one Black youth, clearly reassured by the outright, told French television: “Tribunal prosecutes Rwandan genocide

The International Criminal Court in Arusha, Tanzania continues to prosecute perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide, including the broadcast Jon-Bosco Barayagwiza and other media personalities are before the court, charged with incitement to genocide for their role in the 1994 massacre of 800,000 people, mainly from the Tutsi minority. Barayagwiza and others have been referred to the court as “co-frauds,” “stating we will kill you,” also broadening locations and locations. Despite the bureaucratic problems that have plagued the court—such as the trial is five years behind schedule—the prosecution has already slowed to foreign NGOs, and international media.

3. **Tribunal cases revealed**

Those who burn books will also burn people,” it was said in 1933. Something similar occurred under the Nazi regime in which 6 million people, mainly from the Jewish minority, were murdered by the Nazi state. In recent years, the world has become aware of the scale of the Holocaust, a term coined by Simon Wiesenthal.

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