

IRAQALYPSE NOW

By now, bombs are already falling over parts of Iraq. The long-anticipated US assault on **Saddam Hussein's** kingdom may not yet have begun, but hostilities are being carried out just the same. Warplanes of the American and British air forces have been engaged in combat, to one degree or other, with Iraqi anti-aircraft weapons over the northern and southern "No-Fly Zones" for years. Soon, there aerial engines of destruction will have a lot of company. *A lot of company.*

The weapons inspectors, mandated by the United Nations and initially opposed by the United States in favor of immediate military action, have stated that their task of searching for Iraq's elusive "weapons of mass destruction" may require months, perhaps even a

year, to complete. No one is expecting US President **George W. Bush** to give them nearly that long. The saber-rattling of the Bush administration, from verbal warnings to the establishment of land bases for attack to the repositioning of warships and

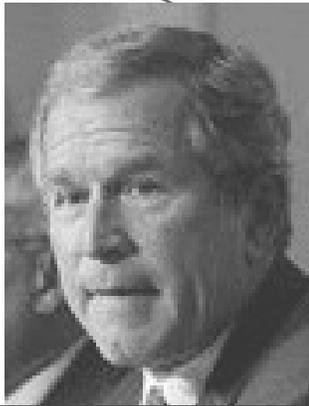
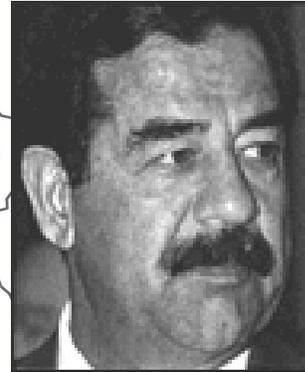
American troops by the tens of thousands, indicates an intention to lay Iraq low sometime during the next two months. While Saddam maintains his veneer of bravado, his people are covering in fear, preparing themselves for the American tempest that is to come, bringing with it yet another long period of suffering for the

impoverished populace. After then-President **George Herbert Walker Bush's** 1991 Persian Gulf War, affectionately known as "Operation Desert Storm", was concluded, critics who had advocated an American charge

into the heart of Baghdad and the execution of Saddam predicted the US would be back. Now, with his son as Commander-In-Chief, that prophecy stands ready to be fulfilled.

How did the situation come to this? What are the official, and unofficial, reasons for the escalation in hostilities to the brink of war? Who, exactly, is Saddam Hussein, and why are we saying such terrible things

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"Sistas are doin' it"

A look at International women's day

The following report was compiled largely from information provided by www.infoplease.com, which features a very informative web site about International Women's Day.

International Women's Day (IWD) has been celebrated for over ninety years, first organized by **Klara Zetkin** in 1911. It was commemorated for the first time on March 19, 1911 as socialists from a variety of European countries held a series of strikes and marches.

Zetkin and **Aleksandra Kollontai** took part in the most famous International Women's Day march on March 8, 1917, a

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Illinois Gov. Ryan Shows Some Guts

"What I can't understand is why the courts can't find a way to implement justice. ... So here we have four men, who were wrongfully convicted and sentenced to die by the state for crimes the courts should have seen they did not commit."

Thus, Illinois Republican governor **George Ryan** ordered the immediate release of three men--Aaron Patterson, Madison Hobbey and Leroy Orange--and the exoneration of a fourth, Stanley Howard, who is serving time on another charge. The four had been sentenced to die for crimes that a review of the evidence indicates they did not commit.

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about him? And what does this impending conflict say about the future of the United States, the so-called Middle East, and by extension, the world?

Keeping Traq of the Crisis

This report will almost certainly be out-of-date by the time it is published, probably by the time it is submitted to our printers. However, we will attempt to provide as current a status of the situation as we can.

Reports of "evidence" of weapons of mass destruction indicated that weapons inspectors had found one case of empty warhead casings on January 16, apparently capable of carrying conventional, chemical or biological agents, buried under dirt and bird droppings in an area not far from Baghdad. According to former UN weapons inspector **Scott Ritter**, interviewed on PACIFICA RADIO'S *PeaceWatch* program on January 17, the casings were possibly obtained between the late 1980's and early 1990's, and may never have been used. In late February, several long-range "scud"-type missiles with a range of about 100 miles were also found. Both occasions caused Bush administration spokespersons to declare Iraq to be in material breach of *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441*, which forbids them from possessing weapons of mass destruction, and further insisted that Iraq prove that it had destroyed all said weapons.

The inspectors insist that their January report was just the first of several, that another report will come in March, and that the entire inspection process will take from ten months to a year to complete. Meanwhile, the Bush administration has announced plans to continue mobilizing armed forces, already over 100,000 strong, for commencement of an invasion in February.

Iraq and 9-1-1: Making The Connection

It was only a matter of time. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Bush administration officials have attempted to determine, then construct, and when necessary concoct out of thin air, a connection between Iraq and the 9-1-1 terrorists. US Attorney General **John Ashcroft**, White House Spokesman **Ari Fleisher** and National Security Advisor **Condoleezza Rice** have continuously made statements to the public about Iraq's supposed alliance with key members of **al-Qaida**, the terrorist organization now almost universally considered to have engineered and executed the September 11th attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center. This alliance supposedly includes having plotted with al-Qaida on their terrorist attack as well as keeping up a steady supply of chemical, biological

and, sometime soon, nuclear weapons for their use. The White House Brain Trust keeps up a steady drumbeat of accusations that Saddam Hussein and **Osama bin Laden** are best pals, old friends, bosom buddies and comrades-in-arms.

For the American people, that often seems to be good enough. After all, they are all Arabs, all Muslims, all friends of the Palestinians in their struggle against Israel, all being targeted by the United States for their despotic and terrorist aims. Surely they must be in cahoots not only for the September 11th atrocity, but for future terrorist attacks.

The only problems with that line of reasoning are that, as a secular state, Iraq is seen by many in al-Qaida as an adulteration of pure Islam, and apparently several high-ranking al-Qaida operatives "would love to see Saddam dead", according to one report heard over NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO. Bin Laden supposedly had asked Saudi Arabia's **King Fahd** to deny use of its air bases to the United States for the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and to instead provide him with the means to enter Iraq and kill Saddam himself.

Bush apparently felt the need to act. He held a special public news conference in Cincinnati, Ohio to take his case directly to the American people. There, he outlined his case against Saddam: he is an ally to the September 11th terrorists. There is proof of this, he said. Saddam has "unmanned drones", airplanes operated by remote control, which can be used to attack American targets. Saddam has used chemical weapons against American soldiers. Saddam is probably behind the anthrax attacks in the United States. Saddam is planning more terrorist attacks. And finally,

Saddam is pursuing "newcular" weapons for use in attacking the United States and conquering the world.

The only problem with Bush's address, other than his constant butchering of the word "nuclear", is that his own CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY stated, only a day after that speech, that many of the President's claims at best cannot be proven and, at worst, are not true. The "unmanned drones", for example, belonged to the United States, and the anthrax outbreaks that closely followed 9-1-1 have been traced no farther than two US military bases. The September 11th terrorists were mostly Saudis, not Iraqis, and apparently no solid connection has yet been made between Iraq and coordinated terrorist activity, although reputed terror bases have been determined to be operating somewhere in northeastern Iraq, in territory primarily controlled by Kurdish opposition. This brings us to the question of Iraq's "weapons of mass destruction". Years ago, the United Nations Weapons Inspectors had been expelled from Iraq, charged with spying rather than searching for weapons. When the United

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States began its saber-rattling, the inspectors were organized yet again. Iraq claimed to have no weapons, but the US was nonetheless preparing to go to war. Enter UN Secretary General **Kofi Annan** to negotiate for the return of the inspectors. Under the leadership of **Hans Blix**, they would return to scour the Iraqi countryside in search of weapons. As of this writing, they have found only the empty canisters mentioned above, despite a number of "surprise" visits to Iraqi government buildings, palaces and public and private spaces. Still, the Bush administration is mobilizing its military machine as if war were a foregone conclusion. One Iraqi official described it as the United States refusing to "take 'yes' for an answer."

Viewing Iraq in its Historical Context

Despite the American tendency to believe that history, or at least any history worth knowing, only began when the United States was involved in something, Iraq has a long history of culture, as well as war and conquest. Our companion piece, *Five Thousand Years To Desert Storm*, presents a brief timeline of the history of Iraq, compiled from several sources. While space does not permit us to go into deeper detail with regard to some of these dates and facts, we may have cause to examine several of them in greater detail in a future issue, and some of them will be dealt with further as we examine theories about the psychological state of Saddam.

Craquing Saddam's Psyche

"The world's best known and most hated Arab leader" was born on April 28, 1937 in the village of **al-Awja**, just east of Tikrit in north-central Iraq. In an ethnically-diverse country where family and clan allegiances are of the utmost importance, his Tikriti origins would rule him as surely as he would ultimately rule his countrymen. According to one analysis, his village upbringing, which, with its small, isolated groups taught him to feel alienated from others and to zealously guard his territory, has as much to do with his behavior as his desire for power does. The result is, according to enemies at least, a tyrant who seizes power first by careful maneuvering and then by brute force, then builds walls and security networks to maintain his precarious position.

At the age of nineteen he joined the BA'ATH PARTY. Three years later, he participated in a failed attempt to assassinate Prime Minister **Abdul Karim Kassim**. He fled to Syria and Egypt for several years, finally returning in 1963 when the Baath Party was in control. After the Ba'ath Party was overthrown later that year, Saddam was imprisoned until a 1968 coup that restored the Ba'ath Party to power. He then used his developing skills as an interrogator to gain a high government post. At this time, he began to build his vast intelligence and security network. Finally, after years of supporting President **Ahmed Hassan Bakr**, Saddam took advantage of political tensions as well as his skills as a manipulator to succeed Bakr as president.

There are a number of historical references to Saddam's ruthlessness as Iraqi President. He reportedly has a penchant for the use of public executions to punish and discourage political dissent. One infamous example is a highly theatrical July 18, 1979 meeting of the Revolutionary Command Council, at which close to a third of the Council's members were fingered as traitors involved in a "Syrian plot" to topple Saddam. According to reports, the suspected traitors were removed from the meeting hall as other Council members trembled and wept in fear. The suspected traitors would be taken before firing squads and shot. The

entire spectacle was captured on videotape and widely distributed for the people of Iraq to see.

Of course, Saddam would likely remain an unknown to most Americans had it not been for two ill-fated military campaigns: the 1980 Iran-Iraq War for control of the **Shatt al-Arab River**, which over eight years cost his country billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of lives; and the August 2, 1990 invasion of Kuwait, which led to the 1991 Persian Gulf War, a conflict that left Iraq in shambles, its people dying from starvation and disease, but with Saddam still in power. To this day, he insists that the Gulf War ended in victory for Iraq and that no attack from the West will topple him.

The Nebuchadnezzar Façtor

Saddam's image apparently is extremely important to him. According to reports, anyone wishing to see a large-scale likeness of the Great Uncle need not look far. Portraits and statues of Saddam, often twenty feet high or more, are prominently displayed in public areas. Songs, stories and poems professing an undying allegiance to and love for Saddam can be heard in the marketplace and on the street.

Saddam reportedly is obsessed with establishing his place in history. He supposedly commissioned genealogists and writers to construct a link to the Prophet Mohammed's daughter **Fatima**, as well as to write a copy of the Qur'an in Arabic using several pints of his own blood. He allegedly seeks to follow the example of **Saladdin**, the Islamic hero of the Crusades. Some see Saddam as another **Adolf Hitler**, but a closer comparison is being drawn to **Josef Stalin**, with Saddam owning an entire library of books by or about the Russian dictator. Historians say, however, that he more likely fancies himself a twenty-first century version of the ancient Babylonian King **Nebuchadnezzar**, conqueror of the southern kingdom of Judah in the sixth century B.C.

Perhaps Saddam sees himself ultimately bringing his dream of an Arab empire to fruition, demonstrating to the entire world the superiority of Arab history and culture by creating a modern-day Babylon to dominate the Middle East.

Preparing to Attaq Iraq

Meanwhile, US armed forces continue to mobilize. By late January, the number of soldiers in the Persian Gulf area topped 100,000, complete with aircraft carriers, armored personnel carriers, fighter jets and, most likely, a fresh supply of depleted uranium warheads similar to those used in the previous Persian Gulf War.

International opinion is still in a state of some disarray. Saudi Arabia paused before finally granting permission to the US to utilize its air bases. Turkey seems to back the US, but demonstrations there seem to indicate that the Turkish people oppose Bush's war. France and Germany resisted the US's war plans for some time. Bush's strongest ally at the moment is Great Britain, with Prime Minister **Tony Blair** consistently voicing his support for toppling Saddam, but the citizenry are becoming increasingly critical, referring to Blair as "Bush's Poodle".

Protests and Public Opinion

On Saturday, January 18th, a crowd estimated by some in the hundreds of thousands converged on Washington, DC from over 20 cities to wish a happy birthday to the **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** Their gift was, perhaps, the best thing they could give him: a massive protest against the Bush administration's planned war on Iraq.

Organizers from **International A.N.S.W.E.R.** (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) offered estimates of up to a half-million participants, while more conservative observers believed at least 120,000 protesters came to the nation's capital. Among news services covering the march were CNN and the Pacifica News Network. The Washington, DC Police Force was present, but due either to their confidence in the nonviolence of the protest or their unpreparedness for the large turnout, their numbers seemed smaller than for previous protest marches. At any rate, we saw no significant disturbances or arrests during the march.

The Baltimore group boarded five buses at the **All Peoples Congress Hall** in Baltimore at 9 AM and proceeded to downtown Washington, DC. At The Mall, just west of the Capitol Building, the turnout was impressive. Buses from New York and points in the Midwest had not yet arrived, yet the entire area was packed. It was somewhat reminiscent of the October 16, 1995 MILLION MAN MARCH, except that this time, the marchers were Black, White, Red, Yellow and Brown. They were male and female. They were young and old. They were here from spiritual movements, activist movements and feminist movements. They were radicals, revolutionaries, communists, liberals and conservatives who disbelieve in war. They braved sub-freezing temperatures to listen to speakers such as **Rev. Al Sharpton** ("Mr. Bush hung Dr. King's picture up in the White House last year. But he needed to hang up Dr. King's words!"), **Rev. Jesse Jackson**, **Brother Ashwa Kayugi** of the CAIRO CONFERENCE ("They will tell you that the Arabs hate America. Most Arabs, like most Americans, hate exploitation!"), Vietnam Veteran **Ron Kovick** (*Born on the Fourth of July*), actress **Tyne Daly** representing ACTORS UNITED TO WIN WITHOUT WAR, several community activists and **Jeremy Goldman**, a member of Parliament and of the STOP THE WAR COALITION in Great Britain, who promised continued protests and marches in London and "every other European capital."

A Former Attorney General Speaks

Former Carter Administration Attorney General **Ramsey Clark** of the New York City-based INTERNATIONAL ACTION CENTER stirred the crowd with his analysis. He offered a solution to Bush's war plans that comes straight out of the Constitution: "It's called impeachment! The Constitution says the President and the Vice President, as civil officers of the United States, shall be removed from office upon impeachment for, and conviction of, treason, bribery and other high crimes and misdemeanors. Impeachment appears six times in the Constitution. ... While they lived under (English king) George III ... They accused him of all the things George Bush wants to do now, usurping the power of the Constitution and the people. Being above the law. Treating anybody any way he wants to. No civil laws, no civil liberties, nothing. It was imperative to the Founding Fathers that the power be in the Constitution to remove the President for high crimes and misdemeanors. [They had] waged a five hundred year struggle to free themselves from the tyranny of the monarchy, and they didn't want the President here to usurp the people, and put their heel on the backs of the people. ...

Next was a sort of a call-and-response, or rather a question-and-answer, between Clark and the assembled crowd. "Has he waged war, first-strike and pre-emptive, on his own? In defiance of the United Nations?" he asked.

"Yes!" screamed the marchers in response.

"Is that an impeachable offense?" "Yes!"

"Has he threatened to use nuclear weapons?" "Yes!"

"Is that an impeachable offense?" "Yes!"

"Has he authorized and condoned assassinations, summary executions, kidnappings, secret holdings, unlawful detentions, bribery?" "Yes!"

"Are those impeachable offenses?" "Yes!"

"Has he undermined international law and the Constitution? Is that an impeachable offense?" "Yes!!"

"Then let's impeach him!"

As he announced the creation of a web site to call for Bush's impeachment, a chant began. "Impeach Bush! Impeach Bush!"

Posters and Pictures of Protest

A number of imaginative protest signs had been prepared by the marchers, including a photo of an Iraqi woman with the caption, "Are You Willing To Kill Her To Get Saddam?" and another poster that read, "Regime Change Begins At Home." Still another spoke to the mental capacity of Resident Bush: "The Emperor Has No Brains."

After the speakers had finished their remarks, the mass of humanity proceeded through several Washington neighborhoods, along Pennsylvania Avenue, down Eighth Street, to M Street, past a Marine barracks and to the Navy Yard. Along the way, a small counter-protest waved signs saying things such as "If You Support A.N.S.W.E.R. You Support Terrorism" and "Fry Mumia" (aimed at death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal).

The march ended at about 4:00 PM without major incidents. Sunday and Monday's events, while drawing much smaller crowds, did result in several arrests, as protesters on Sunday apparently got a little too close to the White House.

This would set the stage for more marches, including the history-making Peace March in New York City on Saturday, February 15, sponsored by BLACK VOICES FOR PEACE, UNITED FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL A.N.S.W.E.R. and other organizations. Close to half a million protesters gathered in New York that day, as well as a million in London, England and millions more in cities around the world. Despite these impressive numbers at home and abroad, many mass-media commentators branded the demonstrators "communists" and "not representative of America", while Bush has flatly refused to make policy decisions based on the equivalent of "a straw poll".

The George and Saddam Show: The Propaganda Machines Continue

The Bush propaganda machine is continuing its one-dimensional argument in an attempt to push their war. *We've told you a thousand times. Saddam will not disarm. He's a liar. He's evil. He's the Devil incarnate. War is the only way!*

Meanwhile, a prominent Iraqi state-controlled newspaper, reportedly run by Saddam's son **Uday**, gleefully trumpets the worldwide protest movement as an indication that *The people of the world have turned against the United States and embraced us. They see us as the heroes and the United States as the villains. The United States, not Iraq, will be revealed as the isolated nation doomed by its own evil nature. We will win!*

Both sides seek to obscure is the fact that the protesters are concerned about the *people* of Iraq who will be subjected to war and the *people* of the United States who will be exposed to terrorism, *not* their respective leaders.

As usual, the analysis of Iraq most Americans see is based on the notion that its history begins, for all intents and purposes, with the evil Saddam Hussein. In our next article, we will offer a brief glimpse at the region's long, convoluted history.

FIVE THOUSAND YEARS TO DESERT STORM: An Iraq Timeline

The following information, covering five thousand years of Iraq's history through the first Persian Gulf War ("Operation Desert Storm"), comes from a variety of sources, including *The Fire This Time* by Ramsey Clark; a document from LexicOrient, compiled by Tore Kjeilen; and a chronology compiled by Larry Kerschner, kerschnerl@steckmedical.com.

In this summary, 'Mesopotamia' is used for the region, while 'Iraq' is used from the time of the Arab conquest.

BCE (Before the Christian Era):

3100 BCE: The civilization of Sumer exists, with city-states, which develops systems of irrigation, trade and writing.

2350: The Akkadian kingdom is established.

1950: Sumer is invaded by Elamites and Amotites.

1590: The Kassites take power.

1168: The Elamites drive the Kassites out.

1120: Babylon becomes a strong power.

1000: The Arameans move into the Mesopotamian region.

669: Babylon is destroyed by the Assyrians.

629-539: New Babylonian kingdom is established under the Chaldeans.

614: Assyria falls.

539: The Mesopotamian region is conquered by Persians, under Cyrus the Great.

331: Alexander the Great conquers the region.

312: The Greek Seleucid dynasty reigns in Mesopotamia.

192-188: War between the Seleucids and the Romans.

64: The Seleucid dynasty falls apart, and Mesopotamia is conquered by the Persians. Mesopotamia becomes one of the richest provinces. Persians were the elite, while the Semits represented a clear majority of the population. The Semits spoke Aramaic, but there were several other peoples in the region.

AD, or CE (the Christian Era):

627: The Byzantine invasion occurs, and the region is weakened politically and economically.

637: Muslim Arabs defeat the Sassanids, and Mesopotamia is overtaken after only one year.

680: Battle at Karbala, where the Shi'i leader Husayn is killed when claiming the leading position in the Caliphate. The battle becomes the final schism between two variants of Islamic peoples, the Sunnis and the Shi'ites, or Shi'is. Various changes in leadership follow.

762: A new capital for the Caliphate is founded, placed on the river Tigris. The new city is called Baghdad, and grows quickly into a beautiful city.

809: Civil war. Baghdad loses its position for some time, as there are several coup attempts on the Caliph.

819: Stability returns.

836: Samarra becomes the new capital of the Caliphate, because of the threat from Turkic mercenaries.

865: Civil war erupts.

870: Stability is restored.

892: Baghdad is returned to the position as capital. The control is now restricted to Iraq alone.

1935: The Nahrawan canal, the source of the irrigation system, is destroyed by the Iraqis themselves, in order to prevent invasion. It is never repaired.

945: Baghdad is taken over by the Caspian people Buyids, who were Shi'is who had earlier taken control over much of Iran.

1055: Togrul Bey, of the Turkic Sunni tribe Seljuks, drives the Buyids out of Baghdad, and the period of the Seljuk kingdom starts. From 1060 the Seljuks form a sultanate.

1258: After a number of unsuccessful attempts, Mongolia finally captures Baghdad. The city is destroyed, citizens are massacred, and the Caliph executed. The economy of Iraq is destroyed for centuries.

1405: Iraq falls under control of Turkish tribes from Anatolia.

1508: Iraq is put under Iranian control.

1533-34: Iraq is conquered by the Ottoman Empire, bringing peace and economic stability.

17th century: British, Dutch and Portuguese interests get a foothold in trade in the region.

18th century: Mamlukes are used to suppress tribal uprisings and Iranian infiltration, and they stay to become a local ruling dynasty.

1831: Iraq is back under direct Ottoman rule, as the last Mamluke ruler is deposed.

Around 1870: Modernizing activities in Baghdad, tramways are introduced, as well as regular steamship services.

Late 1800s: British control the Middle East in order to have a land route to India.

1904: British Navy shifted from coal to oil, a resource that is plentiful in the region.

1914: As a part of World War 1, British forces invade southern Iraq.

1916: British and French in Sykes-Picot Agreement arbitrarily draw national borders in Middle East. Southern Mesopotamia including Baghdad was to be administered by Great Britain. Arabs were, needless to say, upset by this secret agreement when it was published by the Russian government in 1917.

1917: British forces invade Mesopotamia and occupy Baghdad; Iraq becomes a British Mandate.

1918: Great Britain uses systematic aerial bombardment for first time in history to put down rebellions in Iraq.

1920: Arabs of southern Iraq start military actions towards the British. The British respond militarily in the beginning, but soon realize that it will be impossible to control the area.

1921: Prince Faisal of Hijaz (now southwestern Saudi Arabia) wins a popular election, with 96% of the ballots, and is declared king of Iraq August 23. Destabilizing influences include battles for independence by the Shi'is in the south and the Kurds in the north and disruptions by Arabia and Turkey. British forces stay in the country, largely because of a request from King Faisal.

1921: British Colonial Office draws line across Southern Iraq, creating Kuwait to prevent Iraq access to Persian Gulf.

October 10, 1922: Alliance with Britain is signed.

1925: Elections for a parliament are held. Concessions to search for oil are given to international companies.

1930: A treaty declares that Iraq shall become independent starting in 1932.

October 3, 1932: Iraq is declared an independent kingdom with King Faisal in power. Iraq is admitted to the League of Nations, a precursor to the United Nations (UN).

1933: King Faisal dies. His son, Ghazi, succeeds him.

1936: Iraq begins attempts to establish a Pan-Arab agenda in the region, involving suggestions to merge Arab states. A treaty of non-aggression is signed with Saudi Arabia.

1939: King Ghazi dies.

1941: After a war of 4 weeks, Britain regains control over Iraq and takes steps to ensure establishment of a pro-British government.

1943: Iraq declares war on the German-headed Axis Powers.

1945-46: Unrest erupts among the Kurds, believed to be supported by the Soviet Union.

1947: A treaty is reached with Transjordan on mutual military and diplomatic aid.

1948: After Israel declares its independence, Iraq joins other Arab states in their attacks on the new country.

Late 1940s: After World War II, British power begins to wane and America steps in. In 1948, George Kennan of the US State Department makes a telling statement: "The US has about 50% of the world's wealth but only 6.3% of its population. In this situation we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security. To do so we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and daydreaming, and our attention will have to be concentrated everywhere on our immediate national objectives. We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford the luxury of altruism and world benefaction. We should cease to talk about such vague and unreal objectives as human rights, the raising of living standards and democratization. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are then hampered by idealistic slogans, the better."

Around 1950: Iraq enjoys a strong increase in oil revenues.

1951: Mohammed Mossadigh takes power in Iran and declares that they will control their own oil.

1953: After 2 years of U.S. sponsored sanctions against Iran, the CIA supports a plot to overthrow Mossadigh and place the Shah in power. American Gen. Norman Schwartzkopf Sr. helps Shah develop SAVAK secret police.

1953: Direct parliamentary elections take place in Iraq. King Faisal II assumes the throne. He was only 3 years old when his father died.

1954: Political instability reigns as the US tries to enhance its influence in Iraq.

1955: The Baghdad Pact, a military-security agreement, is made, initially including Iraq and Turkey, later Britain, Pakistan and Iran.

February 12, 1958: The Arab Union of Jordan and Iraq is formed, with a common premier minister.

July 14, 1958: A military coup is led by the general Karim Kassem, where Iraq's king, crown prince and prime minister are killed.

July 15, 1958: A new government is proclaimed, the Arab Union with Jordan is declared dissolved, and Iraq seeks close relations with the United Arab Republic, which was established by Egypt and Syria earlier that year. Kassem acts to keep up Western confidence by not interfering with the oil production.

1959: Iraq withdraws from the Baghdad Pact.

1960: Iraq makes claims on Kuwait, which received its independence from Britain that year.

February 8, 1963: Kassem is overthrown by a group of officers, mainly from the Ba'ath Party. Abdul Salam Arif becomes the new president. The CIA is implicated as having aided the coup. Saddam Hussein becomes the director of the regime's "torture center".

April 13, 1966: President Arif dies, and is succeeded by his brother Abdul Rahman Arif.

1967: Iraq's relations with the Western powers worsen following the Six-Day War.

July 17, 1968: President Abdul Rahman Arif is overthrown, and Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr becomes the new president. Iraq moves further away from the West, with improved relations with the Soviet Union. The Ba'ath Party establishes control of Iraq.

1970: After years of unrest, the Iraqi government agrees to form an autonomous Kurdish region, and Kurds are let into the cabinet.

1971: Borders to Jordan are closed, as a protest to Jordan's attempt to curb the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

1972: Iraq announces the nationalization of oil. US President Richard M. Nixon plots with the Shah of Iran to arm Iraqi Kurds. Iraq is placed on list of nations supporting terrorism.

March 1974: Fights erupt between government forces and Kurdish groups backed by Iran.

1975: Settlement of Iraq's border disputes with Iran causes Iran to stop aid to the Kurds, and the revolt is crushed. Concerning the Kurds who were left in the lurch, Henry Kissinger said, "Covert operations should not be confused with missionary work".

1979: The Shah is overthrown in Iran. US National Security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski publicly encourages Iraq to attack Iran to take back the Shatt-al-Arab waterway.

June 1979: President Bakr is stripped of all positions and put under house arrest. Saddam Hussein becomes the new president.

August 1979: About 400 members of the ruling Ba'ath Party are said to have been executed. There is new unrest among Kurds, inspired by the Islamic revolution in Iran. Relations between Iraq and Iran are worsened.

1980: The "Carter Doctrine" states U.S. will intervene militarily to protect U.S. access to oil.

September 17, 1980: The agreement on Iraqi-Iranian borders from 1975 is declared null and void by Saddam, who claims the whole Shatt al-Arab and its rich landscape.

September 22, 1980: Iraq invades Iran.

1981: Israel bombs a nuclear reactor outside Baghdad.

1982: Iraq is removed from terrorist nation list.

1984: U.S restores full diplomatic relations with Iraq. Pres. Reagan authorizes intelligence sharing with Iraq, despite US knowledge that Iraq is using poison gas to stop Iranian "human wave" attacks. At the same time, U.S. begins sharing intelligence and selling weapons to Iran.

1985: Oliver North allegedly tells Iran that U.S. will help Iran overthrow Saddam Hussein.

1986: U.S increases aid to Iraq.

1987: Norman Schwartzkopf Jr. is named head of CENT-COM. US bombs Iranian oil platforms.

1988: Cease-fire is signed between Iran and Iraq. Center for Strategic and International Studies begins 2-year study predicting the outcome of a possible war between U.S and Iraq.

August 20, 1988: Cease-fire with Iran. Iraq rebuilds its military power, much with bank credits and technology from Western Europe and the US. Iraq initiates brutal actions against its Kurds, where poisonous gas is used to kill thousands of civilians.

1989: War Plan 1002, originally conceived to counter a Soviet threat, is adjusted to name Iraq as the main threat in the region. The Plan is renamed 1002-90.

January 1990: CENT-COM stages computer games testing 1002-90. A US War College report states that "Baghdad should not be expected to deliberately provoke military confrontations with anyone. Its best interests now and in immediate future are served by peace".

February 1990: Schwartzkopf tells congress of the need to increase U.S. military presence in the Gulf region.

May 1990: At the Arab summit Saddam accuses Gulf states of waging economic war against Iraq. The Iraqi economy has been devastated by the war. Iraq had borrowed billions to wage war against Iran. The price of oil was down because Gulf states were dumping oil on the world market. Kuwait was slant-drilling with American equipment into Iraqi oilfields. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia at the behest of the U.S. demand immediate repayment of loans to Iraq.

July 1990: Saddam accuses Kuwait of conspiring to destroy Iraq's economy. Iraqi troops mass on the border.

August 2, 1990: Iraq invades Kuwait. The United Nations demands a withdrawal by January 15, 1991.

August 3 and 6, 1990: The UN passes Resolutions 660 and 661 condemning Iraq and imposing trade and economic sanctions to "restore the authority of the legitimate government of Kuwait." At this time Iraq imports 70% of its food. (For U.N. resolutions, see: gopher://gopher.undp.org/11/undocs/scd/scouncil)

August 7, 1990: The US convinces a reluctant King Faud to accept US troop deployment.

August 8, 1990: The US dispatches 40,000 troops to "protect" Saudi Arabia. Iraq announces it is annexing Kuwait.

August 12, 1990: Iraq suggests withdrawal of its troops from Kuwait be linked to Israel withdrawal from occupied territories. The US rejects this proposal. A later proposal to withdraw troops not linked to Israel is also rejected.

September 2, 1990: Iraq begins rationing food.

September 25, 1990: The UN imposes interdiction on air traffic to and from Iraq.

November 8, 1990: With no significant change in the crisis, the US doubles the number of troops in the area to 400,000.

November 29, 1990: The UN authorizes use of force if Iraq doesn't voluntarily leave Kuwait by January 15, 1991.

December 22, 1990: Infant mortality has doubled due to the sanctions.

January 9, 1991: The US threatens destruction of Iraq if it is not out of Kuwait by January 15, ironically the birthday of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

January 12, 1991: Congress authorizes the use of force if Iraq has not withdrawn by January 15.

January 16, 1991: A US-led international invasion of occupied Kuwait and Iraq is launched from bases in Saudi Arabia. Bombings were followed by movements of land troops. Tens of thousands of Iraqis are killed, and most of the military infrastructure is destroyed together with much of the civilian infrastructure.

February 13, 1991: A US attack kills 1,500 civilians at Al-Amariyah shelter.

February 15, 1991: President George Herbert Walker Bush urges the Iraqi people to overthrow Saddam.

February 21, 1991: Russia announces that Iraq has agreed to full and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. The US rejects the plan and says that if Iraq is not out of Kuwait by noon on February 23 a ground attack will proceed.

February 23, 1991: The ground assault begins.

February 26, 1991: Iraq announces its troops are withdrawing from Kuwait. The US reportedly bombs a road that would be used to retreat and kills thousands from the air, including civilians, in what is called a "turkey shoot".

March 3, 1991: A cease-fire is agreed between the allied international forces and Iraq.

March 1991: The 24th Mechanized Infantry reportedly slaughters thousands of Iraqi soldiers in a post cease-fire battle. No Americans die.

March 1991: US-encouraged rebellions against Saddam are put down.

April 3, 1991: The UN Security Council passes Resolution 687, which states that upon "the completion by Iraq of all actions contemplated in" specific paragraphs of the resolution, "the prohibitions against financial transactions ... shall have no further force or effect." The paragraphs cited have to do with weapons inspections. Other paragraphs in the resolution have to do with "return of all Kuwaiti property seized by Iraq" and Iraqi liability for losses and damage resulting from Iraq's occupation of Kuwait.

April 1991: Iraq suppresses rebellions in the south by Shi'is, and in the north by Kurds. Millions of Kurds flee to Turkey and Iran. US, British and French troops are eventually moved into northern Iraq, to set up refugee camps, and protect the Kurds from the Iraqi government.

IRAQALYPSE NOW: Some General Conclusions

Iraq has had a very long and difficult history. One group after another has taken control of the region over the past five thousand years, including Britain and the United States (the current leaders of the charge to war) in this century alone. Colonial powers drew boundaries that forced together ethnic and religious groups, such as the Kurds, Sunni and Shi'i, that had been in conflict with each other for generations. Leaders rose and fell in near rapid-fire fashion, lending an air of instability to the whole region. Out of all this steps Saddam, whose often-brutal style has been described by some as the only means to maintain any kind of stability in such a diverse and contentious country as Iraq. And now, his near-total hold on power and the knowledge that he has enemies inside and outside his country have turned him into a paranoid dictator who uses any means available--be they chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, brutality and deceit--to keep them all at bay. His reputed preoccupation with history's conquerors and dictators, especially Stalin and Nebuchadnezzar, convinces him that he will be revered in generations to come as a great leader, even if he is reviled today as a bloodthirsty tyrant.

Across the Atlantic Ocean, US President Bush, having himself taken advantage of a muddled political situation to, in some peoples' minds, "steal" the White House from Democratic Party nominee Al Gore in November 2000, sees himself fulfilling the place in history sought by his father, that of finally bringing about his *New World Order* and ridding the world of international terrorism, specifically Saddam and bin Laden. Perhaps he even sees himself as the great leader who will bring the world out of a difficult time by winning *World War III* and furthering the spread of so-called "democracy" (under the rule, of course, of the US, World Trade Organization, etc. But more on that one later) around the world. Like Saddam, he and his staff reveal a *portion* of their information and their plans, but not *all* of them, to their own citizens, and yet he expects unwavering loyalty from his people. They consistently reaffirm their willingness to decide on their own, backed by their unrivaled war machine, to use military

force if the rest of the world refuses to agree to their plans, and God help anyone who gets in the way.

They show their paranoia in the way they react to contentious declarations by Iraq and North Korea. US officials refuse to admit the role of their earlier threatening remarks and saber-rattling rhetoric (the "Axis of Evil" and such) in heightening tensions, yet they use North Korea and Iraq's defiant claims to their right of self-defense, such as the willingness to wage "total war" in the event of a US attack, as indications of the exclusive barbarity of North Korea and Iraq. The recent discovery of several Iraqi missiles, while a disturbing indication of other possible hidden weapons, will now be over-used in an attempt to justify war. Meanwhile, peace-loving Americans, including several Hollywood celebrities currently urging a "virtual march" on the White House via the Internet and those who participate in mass protests against the "mad dash to war", are increasingly being painted by the major media as terrorist or communist sympathizers who are unrepresentative of American values, and even diplomats of foreign NATO countries who warn against a premature US attack are now questioned about their motives. But, just in case that doesn't do the trick, perhaps the time has come for the US Justice Department to seek even more powers to detain political dissidents, citizen and non-citizen alike, and even to strip targeted individuals of their US citizenship to facilitate

deportation or to avoid the responsibility to uphold their civil rights, such as the right to a trial.

Let us not confuse opposition to the war on Iraq with any allegiance to Saddam's regime. Indications are the vast majority of war protesters have no sympathy for Saddam whatsoever. Their concern primarily lies with the *people* of Iraq who will suffer if and when the United States launches its war, which is expected to dwarf Operation Desert Storm in scope. Considering the numbers of Iraqi civilians who were killed by US science's "smart bombs" in the last Persian Gulf War, current claims that this attack will topple Saddam without harming Iraq's civilians are likely to be dismissed as the stuff of science fiction. Besides, the *aftermath* of the first war killed more civilians than the war did, after the water purification systems had been destroyed and disease and starvation ran rampant. And what of the *political instability* that will be created? It is the *Iraqi civilians'* lives for whom the protesters fear, as well as the immortal souls of Americans who give unquestioning approval to yet another act of genocide that could bring us all one step closer to Armageddon.

We are living in dangerous times, everyone. Do the concepts of a grievous war, increased surveillance, the establishment of nationwide identification systems and the creation of New World Orders begin to sound familiar? We suspect that a lot more people will be picking up the Book of Revelation soon.

International Women's Day, [continued from Page 1]

strike "for bread and peace" led by Russian women in St. Petersburg. Eventually, Kollontai persuaded Soviet premier Vladimir Lenin to make March 8th an official communist holiday to celebrate "the heroic woman worker. It is still celebrated in Russia today, much the same way Mother's Day is celebrated in the United States.

IWD started in the United States at about the same time, but its popularity dwindled until the women's movement in the 1960's. In 1975, IWD was recognized by the United Nations (UN).

Despite the international recognition and increased popularity of women's issues, from political opportunities to employment rights to birth control to protection from harassment and violence from men, a number of critical issues still exist that, in various parts of the world, have kept women in a position of servitude, bondage and other forms of oppression. The UN and IWD have focused on these issues to increase awareness and bring about change in the conditions faced by women around the world. According to the infoplease.com web site, some of these issues are:

- (1) According to some reports, about 25,000 **brides are burned to death** each year in India because of insufficient dowries. The groom's family will set the bride on fire, presenting it as an accident or suicide. The groom is then free to remarry.
- (2) In a number of countries, women who have been raped are sometimes killed by their own families to preserve the family's honor. **Honor killings** have been reported in Jordan, Pakistan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and other Persian Gulf countries.
- (3) According to the WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 85 million to 115 million girls and women have undergone some form of **female genital mutilation**. Today, this practice is carried out in 28 African countries, despite the fact that it is outlawed in a number of these nations.
- (4) **Rape as a weapon of war** has been used in Chiapas, Mexico; Rwanda, Kuwait, Haiti, Colombia, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere.

Even in what we like to refer to as "modernized" and "civilized" societies, a number of issues in women's rights still exist. Some are due to long-held spiritual beliefs, some spring from the role of women as the bearers of children, and others are based on the still-lingering perception of a woman's physical (and to some people intellectual) inferiority.

(1) **Women in positions of spiritual leadership.** While there are women in positions of leadership in a number of more liberal Christian churches, many in the fundamentalist Christian community speak out regularly against the practice. Passages from the Bible itself are often quoted in detail to show that original Christian doctrine disallows women to hold pastorships. In Muslim communities, there seems to be a clear distinction between duties that are to be performed by women and those reserved for men, primarily those in leadership. Do these examples of long-established religious doctrine violate the United States Constitution? The answer, at this time, seems to be "no".

(2) **The abortion controversy, and the related birth control debate.** This is a particularly hot issue in the religious community. A pregnant woman's right to choose what to do with her own body is seen in constant conflict with the right of the unborn fetus to be born into the world. Ever since the controversial Supreme Court *Roe v. Wade* decision which granted women the right to a safe, legal abortion in 1973, so-called "Right-To-Life" groups have used a variety of tactics to intimidate doctors who provide abortions, including killing a few and bombing a number of planned parenthood clinics. Meanwhile, a number of organizations, from conservative Christian and Muslim congregations to many in the Pan-Africanist community, oppose abortion on grounds that it is, in effect, the killing of a human being; that the religious texts often condemn it; or that a people subjected to a cultural war need not contribute to it by extinguishing potential lives. Still, the most vocal opponents of abortion are largely male, and that leads some to wonder whether the motives involved do

not also include denying women their right to control their own bodies.

(3) Women's positions in the military. The perceived physical inferiority of women, and an admittedly male chauvanist refusal to submit to female authority, have limited women's opportunities to hold positions of leadership in the military.

(4) Continuing impediments to women's achieving political and corporate power, or the "glass ceiling". This is a result of the same "old boy's network" that has served to limit opportunities for Afrikan people and other ethnic groups in terms of their opportunities to "climb the corporate ladder" and gain positions of political leadership. Just as opportunities for Afrikan people to become mayors and governors have been few, far between and fleeting, so it is for women.

The following is a brief timeline of key events in the American Women's Rights Movement, from information provided to www.infoplease.com by **Ann-Marie Imbornoni**.

1848: The first women's rights convention is held in Seneca Falls, New York. A set of 12 resolutions is adopted calling for equal treatment of women and men under the law and voting rights for women.

1850: The first NATIONAL WOMEN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION takes place in Worcester, Mass., attracting more than 1,000 participants. National conventions are held yearly (except for 1857) through 1860.

Dec. 10, 1869: The territory of Wyoming passes the first women's suffrage law.

1890: The NATIONAL AMERICAN WOMAN SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION (NAWSA) is formed from the efforts of **Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell** and others, and wages state-by-state campaigns to obtain voting rights for women.

1896: The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORED WOMEN is formed, bringing together more than 100 Black women's clubs. Leaders in the Black women's club movement include **Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, Mary Church Terrell, and Anna Julia Cooper**.

1903: The NATIONAL WOMEN'S TRADE UNION LEAGUE (WTUL) is established to advocate for improved wages and working conditions for women.

1913: **Alice Paul** and **Lucy Burns** form the CONGRESSIONAL UNION to work toward the passage of a federal amendment to give women the vote. The group is later renamed the NATIONAL WOMEN'S PARTY. Members picket the White House and practice other forms of civil disobedience.

1919: The federal woman suffrage amendment, originally written by Susan B. Anthony and introduced in Congress in 1878, is passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate. It is then sent to the states for ratification.

Aug. 26, 1920: The **19th Amendment to the Constitution**, granting women the right to vote, is signed into law by Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby.

1935: **Mary McLeod Bethune** organizes the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN, a coalition of Black women's groups that lobbies against job discrimination, racism, and sexism.

1936: The federal law prohibiting the dissemination of contraceptive information through the mail is modified and birth control information is no longer classified as obscene.

1946: The UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN is established to secure equal political rights, economic rights, and educational opportunities for women throughout the world.

1961: President John Kennedy establishes the PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN and appoints **Eleanor Roosevelt** as chairwoman. A 1963 report issued by the Commission documents substantial discrimination against women in the workplace and makes specific recommendations for improvement, including fair hiring practices, paid maternity leave, and affordable child care.

June 10, 1961: Congress passes the **Equal Pay Act**, making it illegal for employers to pay a woman less than what a man would receive for the same job.

1964: Title VII of the **Civil Rights Act** bars discrimination in employment on the basis of race and sex. At the same time it establishes the EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (EEOC) to investigate complaints and impose penalties.

1966: The NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN (NOW) is founded by a group of feminists including **Betty Friedan**. The largest women's rights group in the US, NOW uses legislative lobbying, litigation, and public demonstrations to fight sexual discrimination, especially in the workplace.

1967: Executive Order 11375 expands President Lyndon Johnson's affirmative action policy of 1965 to cover discrimination based on gender.

1971: *Ms. Magazine* is first published as a sample insert in New York magazine; 300,000 copies are sold out in 8 days. The first regular issue is published in July 1972. The magazine becomes the major forum for feminist voices, and cofounder and editor **Gloria Steinem** is launched as an icon of the modern feminist movement.

Mar. 22, 1972: The **Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)** is passed by Congress and sent to the states for ratification. Originally drafted by **Alice Paul** in 1923, it reads: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." The amendment died in 1982 when it failed to achieve ratification by a minimum of 38 states.

June 23, 1972: Title IX of the Education Amendments bans sex discrimination in schools, including athletics programs and professional schools.

1973: As a result of the controversial *Roe v. Wade* decision, the Supreme Court establishes a woman's right to safe and legal abortion, overriding the anti-abortion laws of many states.

1974: The **Equal Credit Opportunity Act** prohibits discrimination in consumer credit practices on the basis of sex, race, marital status, religion, national origin, age, or receipt of public assistance.

1976: The first marital rape law is enacted in Nebraska, making it illegal for a husband to rape his wife.

1978: The **Pregnancy Discrimination Act** bans employment discrimination against pregnant women. Under the Act, a woman cannot be fired or denied a job or a promotion because she is or may become pregnant, nor can she be forced to take a pregnancy leave if she is willing and able to work.

1986: In *Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson*, the Supreme Court finds that sexual harassment is a form of illegal job discrimination.

1994: The **Violence Against Women Act** tightens federal penalties for sex offenders, funds services for victims of rape and domestic violence, and provides for special training of police officers.

Many of us look at the efforts of the icons of the Women's Rights Movement, such as **Gloria Steinem, Susan B. Anthony** and **Bella Abzug**; or the heroic deeds of the strong Afrikan women such as **Harriet Tubman** (after whom Baltimore was re-named Tubman City by the Afrikan centered community), **Sojourner**

Truth and others. The accomplishments of political figures such as former Secretary of State **Madeleine Albright**, history-making Congresswomen **Shirley Chisholm**, **Carol Mosely-Braun** and **Ileana Ros-Lehtinen**; **Wilma Mankiller** (first woman chief of the OKLAHOMA CHEROKEE NATION) and others are also noted. This brief piece is meant to give an introduction to the history of International Women's Day and the the Women's Movement.

Local IWD Events Planned

As part of their continuing study of and advocacy for Human Rights, the *University of the Air* Radio Program (1:00 PM

Mondays, WOLB 1010 AM in Tubman City) and its moderator, **Professor Yanne Sangarey**, will hold a number of discussion groups, educational forums and celebrations of International Women's Day in the Tubman (Baltimore) City area, starting on March 8th. LEMELLE MIDDLE SCHOOL and other **Baltimore City Public Schools** will offer educational materials to their students, and several events will be held for the public. For specific information on event locations, dates and times of IWD events, listen to WOLB 1010 AM Mondays between 1:00 PM and 2:30 PM or call the station during the show at **(410) 481-1010**.

Dr. King's Prophetic Words

Beyond Vietnam: April 4, 1967, New York, NY

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered this speech one year to the day before his assassination. His words, spoken in the midst of the Vietnam War, are almost shockingly prophetic in the context of the impending war on Iraq. By simply placing the words "Iraq" and "Iraqis" where "Vietnam" and "Vietnamese" appear below, one can see the ominous warning Dr. King's words have for us.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I need not pause to say how very delighted I am to be here tonight, and how very delighted I am to see you expressing your concern about the issues that will be discussed tonight by turning out in such large numbers. I also want to say that I consider it a great honor to share this program with Dr. Bennett, Dr. Commager, and Rabbi Heschel, some of the distinguished leaders and personalities of our nation. And of course it's always good to come back to Riverside Church. Over the last eight years, I have had the privilege of preaching here almost every year in that period, and it is always a rich and rewarding experience to come to this great church and this great pulpit.

I come to this magnificent house of worship tonight because my conscience leaves me no other choice. I join you in this meeting because I am in deepest agreement with the aims and work of the organization which has brought us together, CLERGY AND LAYMEN CONCERNED ABOUT VIETNAM. The recent statements of your executive committee are the sentiments of my own heart, and I found myself in full accord when I read its opening lines: "A time comes when silence is betrayal." That time has come for us in relation to Vietnam.

The truth of these words is beyond doubt, but the mission to which they call us is a most difficult one. Even when pressed by the demands of inner truth, men do not easily assume the task of opposing their government's policy, especially in time of war. Nor does the human spirit move without great difficulty against all the apathy of conformist thought within one's own bosom and in the surrounding world. Moreover, when the issues at hand seem as perplexing as they often do in the case of this dreadful conflict, we are always on the verge of being mesmerized by uncertainty. But we must move on.

Some of us who have already begun to break the silence of the night have found that the calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak. We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak. And we must rejoice as well, for surely this is the first time in our nation's history that a significant number of its religious leaders have chosen to move beyond the prophesying of smooth patriotism to the high grounds of a firm dissent based upon the mandates of conscience and the reading of history. Perhaps a new spirit is rising among us. If it is, let us trace its movements, and pray that our own inner being may be sensitive to its guidance, for we are deeply in need of a new way beyond the darkness that seems so close around us.

Over the past two years, as I have moved to break the betrayal of my own silences and to speak from the burnings of my own heart, as I have called for radical departures from the destruc-

tion of Vietnam, many persons have questioned me about the wisdom of my path. At the heart of their concerns, this query has often loomed large and loud: "Why are you speaking about the war, Dr. King?" "Why are you joining the voices of dissent?" "Peace and civil rights don't mix," they say. "Aren't you hurting the cause of your people?" they ask. And when I hear them, though I often understand the source of their concern, I am nevertheless greatly saddened, for such questions mean that the inquirers have not really known me, my commitment, or my calling. Indeed, their questions suggest that they do not know the world in which they live. In the light of such tragic misunderstanding, I deem it of signal importance to try to state clearly, and I trust concisely, why I believe that the path from Dexter Avenue Baptist Church-the church in Montgomery, Alabama, where I began my pastorate-leads clearly to this sanctuary tonight.

I come to this platform tonight to make a passionate plea to my beloved nation. This speech is not addressed to Hanoi or to the National Liberation Front. It is not addressed to China or to Russia. Nor is it an attempt to overlook the ambiguity of the total situation and the need for a collective solution to the tragedy of Vietnam. Neither is it an attempt to make North Vietnam or the National Liberation Front paragons of virtue, nor to overlook the role they must play in the successful resolution of the problem. While they both may have justifiable reasons to be suspicious of the good faith of the United States, life and history give eloquent testimony to the fact that conflicts are never resolved without trustful give and take on both sides. Tonight, however, I wish not to speak with Hanoi and the National Liberation Front, but rather to my fellow Americans.

Since I am a preacher by calling, I suppose it is not surprising that I have seven major reasons for bringing Vietnam into the field of my moral vision. There is at the outset a very obvious and almost facile connection between the war in Vietnam and the struggle I and others have been waging in America. A few years ago there was a shining moment in that struggle. It seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor, both black and white, through the poverty program. There were experiments, hopes, new beginnings. Then came the buildup in Vietnam, and I watched this program broken and eviscerated as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war. And I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic, destructive suction tube. So I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such.

Perhaps a more tragic recognition of reality took place when it became clear to me that the war was doing far more than

devastating the hopes of the poor at home. It was sending their sons and their brothers and their husbands to fight and to die in extraordinarily high proportions relative to the rest of the population. We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem. So we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools. So we watch them in brutal solidarity burning the huts of a poor village, but we realize that they would hardly live on the same block in Chicago. I could not be silent in the face of such cruel manipulation of the poor.

My third reason moves to an even deeper level of awareness, for it grows out of my experience in the ghettos of the North over the last three years, especially the last three summers. As I have walked among the desperate, rejected, and angry young men, I have told them that Molotov cocktails and rifles would not solve their problems. I have tried to offer them my deepest compassion while maintaining my conviction that social change comes most meaningfully through nonviolent action. But they asked, and rightly so, "What about Vietnam?" They asked if our own nation wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted. Their questions hit home, and I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today: my own government. For the sake of those boys, for the sake of this government, for the sake of the hundreds of thousands trembling under our violence, I cannot be silent.

For those who ask the question, "Aren't you a civil rights leader?" and thereby mean to exclude me from the movement for peace, I have this further answer. In 1957, when a group of us formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, we chose as our motto: "To save the soul of America." We were convinced that we could not limit our vision to certain rights for black people, but instead affirmed the conviction that America would never be free or saved from itself until the descendants of its slaves were loosed completely from the shackles they still wear. In a way we were agreeing with Langston Hughes, that black bard of Harlem, who had written earlier:

*O, yes, I say it plain, America never was America to me,
And yet I swear this oath—America will be!*

Now, it should be incandescently clear that no one who has any concern for the integrity and life of America today can ignore the present war. If America's soul becomes totally poisoned, part of the autopsy must read "Vietnam." It can never be saved so long as it destroys the deepest hopes of men the world over. So it is that those of us who are yet determined that "America will be" are led down the path of protest and dissent, working for the health of our land.

As if the weight of such a commitment to the life and health of America were not enough, another burden of responsibility was placed upon me in 1964. And I cannot forget that the Nobel Peace Prize was also a commission, a commission to work harder than I had ever worked before for the brotherhood of man. This is a calling that takes me beyond national allegiances.

But even if it were not present, I would yet have to live with the meaning of my commitment to the ministry of Jesus Christ. To me, the relationship of this ministry to the making of peace is so obvious that I sometimes marvel at those who ask me why I am speaking against the war. Could it be that they do not know that the Good News was meant for all men—for communist and capitalist, for their children and ours, for black and for white, for revolutionary and conservative? Have they forgotten that my ministry is in obedience to the one who loved His enemies so fully that He died for them? What then can I say to the Vietcong or to Castro or to Mao as a faithful minister of this one? Can I threaten them with death or must I not share with them my life?

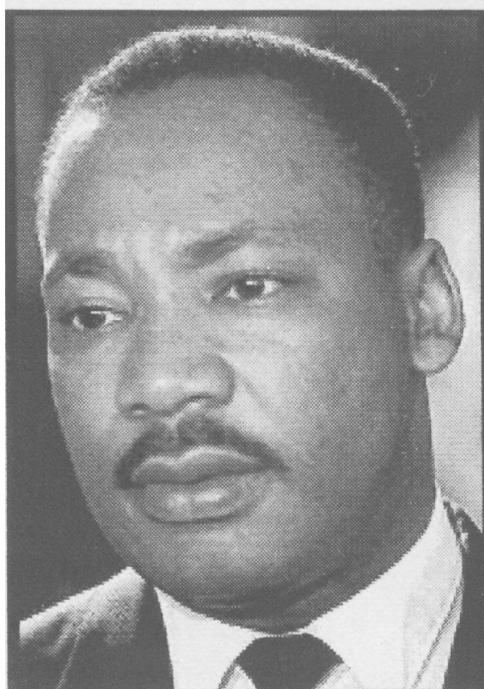
Finally, as I try to explain for you and for myself the road that leads from Montgomery to this place, I would have offered all that was most valid if I simply said that I must be true to my conviction that I share with all men the calling to be a son of the living God. Beyond the calling of race or nation or creed is this vocation of sonship and brotherhood. Because I believe that the Father is deeply concerned especially for His suffering and helpless and

outcast children, I come tonight to speak for them. This I believe to be the privilege and the burden of all of us who deem ourselves bound by allegiances and loyalties which are broader and deeper than nationalism and which go beyond our nation's self-defined goals and positions. We are called to speak for the weak, for the voiceless, for the victims of our nation, for those it calls "enemy," for no document from human hands can make these humans any less our brothers.

And as I ponder the madness of Vietnam and search within myself for ways to understand and respond in compassion, my mind goes constantly to the people of that peninsula. I speak now not of the soldiers of each side, not of the ideologies of the Liberation Front, not of the junta in Saigon, but simply of the people who have been living under the curse of war for almost three continuous decades now. I think of them, too, because it is clear to me that there will be no meaningful solution there until some attempt is made to know them and hear their broken cries.

They must see Americans as strange liberators. The Vietnamese people proclaimed their own independence in 1954, in 1945 rather, after a combined French and Japanese occupation and before the communist revolution in China. They were led by Ho Chi Minh. Even though they quoted the American Declaration of Independence in their own document of freedom, we refused to recognize them. Instead, we decided to support France in its reconquest of her former colony. Our government felt then that the Vietnamese people were not ready for independence, and we again fell victim to the deadly Western arrogance that has poisoned the international atmosphere for so long. With that tragic decision we rejected a revolutionary government seeking self-determination and a government that had been established not by China—for whom the Vietnamese have no great love—but by clearly indigenous forces that included some communists. For the peasants this new government meant real land reform, one of the most important needs in their lives.

For nine years following 1945 we denied the people of Vietnam the right of independence. For nine years we vigorously supported the French in their abortive effort to recolonize Vietnam. Before the end of the war we were meeting eighty percent of the French war costs. Even before the French were defeated at Dien



Bien Phu, they began to despair of their reckless action, but we did not. We encouraged them with our huge financial and military supplies to continue the war even after they had lost the will. Soon we would be paying almost the full costs of this tragic attempt at recolonization. After the French were defeated, it looked as if independence and land reform would come again through the Geneva Agreement. But instead there came the United States, determined that Ho should not unify the temporarily divided nation, and the peasants watched again as we supported one of the most vicious modern dictators, our chosen man, Premier Diem. The peasants watched and cringed as Diem ruthlessly rooted out all opposition, supported their extortionist landlords, and refused even to discuss reunification with the North. The peasants watched as all of this was presided over by United States influence and then by increasing numbers of United States troops who came to help quell the insurgency that Diem's methods had aroused. When Diem was overthrown they may have been happy, but the long line of military dictators seemed to offer no real change, especially in terms of their need for land and peace.

The only change came from America as we increased our troop commitments in support of governments which were singularly corrupt, inept, and without popular support. All the while the people read our leaflets and received the regular promises of peace and democracy and land reform. Now they languish under our bombs and consider us, not their fellow Vietnamese, the real enemy. They move sadly and apathetically as we herd them off the land of their fathers into concentration camps where minimal social needs are rarely met. They know they must move on or be destroyed by our bombs.

So they go, primarily women and children and the aged. They watch as we poison their water, as we kill a million acres of their crops. They must weep as the bulldozers roar through their areas preparing to destroy the precious trees. They wander into the hospitals with at least twenty casualties from American firepower for one Vietcong-inflicted injury. So far we may have killed a million of them, mostly children. They wander into the towns and see thousands of the children, homeless, without clothes, running in packs on the streets like animals. They see the children degraded by our soldiers as they beg for food. They see the children selling their sisters to our soldiers, soliciting for their mothers.

What do the peasants think as we ally ourselves with the landlords and as we refuse to put any action into our many words concerning land reform? What do they think as we test out our latest weapons on them, just as the Germans tested out new medicine and new tortures in the concentration camps of Europe? Where are the roots of the independent Vietnam we claim to be building? Is it among these voiceless ones?

We have destroyed their two most cherished institutions: the family and the village. We have destroyed their land and their crops. We have cooperated in the crushing of the nation's only non-communist revolutionary political force, the unified Buddhist Church. We have supported the enemies of the peasants of Saigon. We have corrupted their women and children and killed their men. Now there is little left to build on, save bitterness. Soon the only solid physical foundations remaining will be found at our military bases and in the concrete of the concentration camps we call "fortified hamlets." The peasants may well wonder if we plan to build our new Vietnam on such grounds as these. Could we blame them for such thoughts? We must speak for them and raise the questions they cannot raise. These, too, are our brothers.

Perhaps a more difficult but no less necessary task is to speak for those who have been designated as our enemies. What of the National Liberation Front, that strangely anonymous group we call "VC" or "communists"? What must they think of the United States of America when they realize that we permitted the repression and cruelty of Diem, which helped to bring them into being as a resistance group in the South? What do they think of our condoning the violence which led to their own taking up of arms? How can they believe in our integrity when now we speak of "aggression

from the North" as if there were nothing more essential to the war? How can they trust us when now we charge them with violence after the murderous reign of Diem and charge them with violence while we pour every new weapon of death into their land? Surely we must understand their feelings, even if we do not condone their actions. Surely we must see that the men we supported pressed them to their violence. Surely we must see that our own computerized plans of destruction simply dwarf their greatest acts.

How do they judge us when our officials know that their membership is less than twenty-five percent communist, and yet insist on giving them the blanket name? What must they be thinking when they know that we are aware of their control of major sections of Vietnam, and yet we appear ready to allow national elections in which this highly organized political parallel government will not have a part? They ask how we can speak of free elections when the Saigon press is censored and controlled by the military junta. And they are surely right to wonder what kind of new government we plan to help form without them, the only party in real touch with the peasants. They question our political goals and they deny the reality of a peace settlement from which they will be excluded. Their questions are frighteningly relevant. Is our nation planning to build on political myth again, and then shore it up upon the power of a new violence?

Here is the true meaning and value of compassion and nonviolence, when it helps us to see the enemy's point of view, to hear his questions, to know his assessment of ourselves. For from his view we may indeed see the basic weaknesses of our own condition, and if we are mature, we may learn and grow and profit from the wisdom of the brothers who are called the opposition.

So, too, with Hanoi. In the North, where our bombs now pummel the land, and our mines endanger the waterways, we are met by a deep but understandable mistrust. To speak for them is to explain this lack of confidence in Western words, and especially their distrust of American intentions now. In Hanoi are the men who led the nation to independence against the Japanese and the French, the men who sought membership in the French Commonwealth and were betrayed by the weakness of Paris and the willfulness of the colonial armies. It was they who led a second struggle against French domination at tremendous costs, and then were persuaded to give up the land they controlled between the thirteenth and seventeenth parallel as a temporary measure at Geneva. After 1954, they watched us conspire with Diem to prevent elections which could have surely brought Ho Chi Minh to power over a united Vietnam, and they realized they had been betrayed again. When we ask why they do not leap to negotiate, these things must be remembered.

Also it must be clear that the leaders of Hanoi considered the presence of American troops in support of the Diem regime to have been the initial military breach of the Geneva Agreement concerning foreign troops, and they remind us that they did not begin to send troops in large numbers and even supplies into the South until American forces had moved into the tens of thousands.

Hanoi remembers how our leaders refused to tell us the truth about the earlier North Vietnamese overtures for peace, how the president claimed that none existed when they had clearly been made. Ho Chi Minh has watched as America has spoken of peace and built up its forces, and now he has surely heard the increasing international rumors of American plans for an invasion of the North. He knows the bombing and shelling and mining we are doing are part of traditional pre-invasion strategy. Perhaps only his sense of humor and of irony can save him when he hears the most powerful nation of the world speaking of aggression as it drops thousands of bombs on a poor, weak nation more than eight hundred, or rather, eight thousand miles away from its shores.

At this point I should make it clear that while I have tried in these last few minutes to give a voice to the voiceless in Vietnam and to understand the arguments of those who are called "enemy," I am as deeply concerned about our own troops there as anything else. For it occurs to me that what we are submitting them to in

Vietnam is not simply the brutalizing process that goes on in any war where armies face each other and seek to destroy. We are adding cynicism to the process of death, for they must know after a short period there that none of the things we claim to be fighting for are really involved. Before long they must know that their government has sent them into a struggle among Vietnamese, and the more sophisticated surely realize that we are on the side of the wealthy, and the secure, while we create a hell for the poor.

Somehow this madness must cease. We must stop now. I speak as a child of God and brother to the suffering poor of Vietnam. I speak for those whose land is being laid waste, whose homes are being destroyed, whose culture is being subverted. I speak for the poor of America who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home, and death and corruption in Vietnam. I speak as a citizen of the world, for the world as it stands aghast at the path we have taken. I speak as one who loves America, to the leaders of our own nation: The great initiative in this war is ours; the initiative to stop it must be ours.

This is the message of the great Buddhist leaders of Vietnam. Recently one of them wrote these words, and I quote: "Each day the war goes on the hatred increases in the hearts of the Vietnamese and in the hearts of those of humanitarian instinct. The Americans are forcing even their friends into becoming their enemies. It is curious that the Americans, who calculate so carefully on the possibilities of military victory, do not realize that in the process they are incurring deep psychological and political defeat. The image of America will never again be the image of revolution, freedom, and democracy, but the image of violence and militarism."

If we continue, there will be no doubt in my mind and in the mind of the world that we have no honorable intentions in Vietnam. If we do not stop our war against the people of Vietnam immediately, the world will be left with no other alternative than to see this as some horrible, clumsy, and deadly game we have decided to play. The world now demands a maturity of America that we may not be able to achieve. It demands that we admit that we have been wrong from the beginning of our adventure in Vietnam, that we have been detrimental to the life of the Vietnamese people. The situation is one in which we must be ready to turn sharply from our present ways. In order to atone for our sins and errors in Vietnam, we should take the initiative in bringing a halt to this tragic war. I would like to suggest five concrete things that our government should do immediately to begin the long and difficult process of extricating ourselves from this nightmarish conflict:

Number one: End all bombing in North and South Vietnam.

Number two: Declare a unilateral cease-fire in the hope that such action will create the atmosphere for negotiation.

Three: Take immediate steps to prevent other battlegrounds in Southeast Asia by curtailing our military buildup in Thailand and our interference in Laos.

Four: Realistically accept the fact that the National Liberation Front has substantial support in South Vietnam and must thereby play a role in any meaningful negotiations and any future Vietnam government.

Five: Set a date that we will remove all foreign troops from Vietnam in accordance with the 1954 Geneva Agreement.

Part of our ongoing commitment might well express itself in an offer to grant asylum to any Vietnamese who fears for his life under a new regime which included the Liberation Front. Then we must make what reparations we can for the damage we have done. We must provide the medical aid that is badly needed, making it available in this country if necessary. [Applause] Meanwhile, we in the churches and synagogues have a continuing task

while we urge our government to disengage itself from a disgraceful commitment. We must continue to raise our voices and our lives if our nation persists in its perverse ways in Vietnam. We must be prepared to match actions with words by seeking out every creative method of protest possible.

As we counsel young men concerning military service we must clarify for them our nation's role in Vietnam and challenge them with the alternative of conscientious objection. [Sustained applause] I am pleased to say that this is a path now chosen by more than seventy students at my own alma mater, Morehouse College, and I recommend it to all who find the American course in Vietnam a dishonorable and unjust one. [Applause] Moreover, I would encourage all ministers of draft age to give up their ministerial exemptions and seek status as conscientious objectors. [Sustained applause] These are the times for real choices and not false ones. We are at the moment when our lives must be placed on the line if our nation is to survive its own folly. Every man of humane convictions must decide on the protest that best suits his convictions, but we must all protest.

Now there is something seductively tempting about stopping there and sending us all off on what in some circles has become a popular crusade against the war in Vietnam. I say we must enter that struggle, but I wish to go on now to say something even more disturbing.

The war in Vietnam is but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit, and if we ignore this sobering reality,

[Applause] and if we ignore this sobering reality, we will find ourselves organizing "clergy and laymen concerned" committees for the next generation. They will be concerned about Guatemala and Peru. They will be concerned about Thailand and Cambodia. They will be concerned about Mozambique and South Africa. We will be marching for these and a dozen other names and attending rallies without end unless there is a

significant and profound change in American life and policy. [Sustained applause] So such thoughts take us beyond Vietnam, but not beyond our calling as sons of the living God.

In 1957, a sensitive American official overseas said that it seemed to him that our nation was on the wrong side of a world revolution. During the past ten years we have seen emerge a pattern of suppression which has now justified the presence of U.S. military advisors in Venezuela. This need to maintain social stability for our investment accounts for the counter-revolutionary action of American forces in Guatemala. It tells why American helicopters are being used against guerrillas in Cambodia and why American napalm and Green Beret forces have already been active against rebels in Peru.

It is with such activity in mind that the words of the late John F. Kennedy come back to haunt us. Five years ago he said, "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable." [Sustained applause] Increasingly, by choice or by accident, this is the role our nation has taken: the role of those who make peaceful revolution impossible by refusing to give up the privileges and the pleasures that come from the immense profits of overseas investments. I am convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin [applause], we must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.

A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. On

"In 1957, a sensitive American official overseas said that it seemed to him that our nation was on the wrong side of a world revolution."

--Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

the one hand we are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's roadside, but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring. [Applause]

A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth. With righteous indignation, it will look across the seas and see individual capitalists of the West investing huge sums of money in Asia, Africa, and South America, only to take the profits out with no concern for the social betterment of the countries, and say: "This is not just." It will look at our alliance with the landed gentry of South America and say: "This is not just." The Western arrogance of feeling that it has everything to teach others and nothing to learn from them is not just.

A true revolution of values will lay hands on the world order and say of war: "This way of settling differences is not just." This business of burning human beings with napalm, of filling our nation's homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into the veins of peoples normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody battlefields physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice, and love. A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death. [Sustained applause]

America, the richest and most powerful nation in the world, can well lead the way in this revolution of values. There is nothing except a tragic death wish to prevent us from reordering our priorities, so that the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war. There is nothing to keep us from molding a recalcitrant status quo with bruised hands until we have fashioned it into a brotherhood.

This kind of positive revolution of values is our best defense against communism. [Applause] War is not the answer. Communism will never be defeated by the use of atomic bombs or nuclear weapons. Let us not join those who shout war and, through their misguided passions, urge the United States to relinquish its participation in the United Nations. These are days which demand wise restraint and calm reasonableness. We must not engage in a negative anti-communism, but rather in a positive thrust for democracy, [Applause] realizing that our greatest defense against communism is to take offensive action in behalf of justice. We must with positive action seek to remove those conditions of poverty, insecurity, and injustice which are the fertile soil in which the seed of communism grows and develops.

These are revolutionary times. All over the globe men are revolting against old systems of exploitation and oppression, and out of the wounds of a frail world new systems of justice and equality are being born. The shirtless and barefoot people of the land are rising up as never before. The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. We in the West must support these revolutions.

It is a sad fact that because of comfort, complacency, a morbid fear of communism, and our proneness to adjust to injustice, the Western nations that initiated so much of the revolutionary spirit of the modern world have now become the arch anti-revolutionaries. This has driven many to feel that only Marxism has a revolutionary spirit. Therefore, communism is a judgement against our failure to make democracy real and follow through on the revolutions that we initiated. Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism. With this powerful commitment we shall boldly challenge the status quo and unjust mores, and thereby speed the day when "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain."

A genuine revolution of values means in the final analysis that our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Every nation must now develop an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in their individual societies.

This call for a worldwide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class and nation is in reality a call for an all-embracing and unconditional love for all mankind. This oft misunderstood, this oft misinterpreted concept, so readily dismissed by the Nietzsches of the world as a weak and cowardly force, has now become an absolute necessity for the survival of man. When I speak of love I am not speaking of some sentimental and weak response. I'm not speaking of that force which is just emotional bosh. I am speaking of that force which all of the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life. Love is somehow the key that unlocks the door which leads to ultimate reality. This Hindu-Moslem-Christian-Jewish-Buddhist belief about ultimate reality is beautifully summed up in the first epistle of Saint John: "Let us love one another, (Yes) for love is God. (Yes) And every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us and his love is perfected in us." Let us hope that this spirit will become the order of the day.

We can no longer afford to worship the god of hate or bow before the altar of retaliation. The oceans of history are made turbulent by the ever-rising tides of hate. History is cluttered with the wreckage of nations and individuals that pursued this self-defeating path of hate. As Arnold Toynbee says: "Love is the ultimate force that makes for the saving choice of life and good against the damning choice of death and evil. Therefore the first hope in our inventory must be the hope that love is going to have the last word."

We are now faced with the fact, my friends, that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. Procrastination is still the thief of time. Life often leaves us standing bare, naked, and dejected with a lost opportunity. The tide in the affairs of men does not remain at flood-it ebbs. We may cry out desperately for time to pause in her passage, but time is adamant to every plea and rushes on. Over the bleached bones and jumbled residues of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words, "Too late." There is an invisible book of life that faithfully records our vigilance or our neglect. Omar Khayyam is right: "The moving finger writes, and having writ moves on."

We still have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent co-annihilation. We must move past indecision to action. We must find new ways to speak for peace in Vietnam and justice throughout the developing world, a world that borders on our doors. If we do not act, we shall surely be dragged down the long, dark, and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without sight.

Now let us begin. Now let us rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter, but beautiful, struggle for a new world. This is the calling of the sons of God, and our brothers wait eagerly for our response. Shall we say the odds are too great? Shall we tell them the struggle is too hard? Will our message be that the forces of American life militate against their arrival as full men, and we send our deepest regrets? Or will there be another message-of longing, of hope, of solidarity with their yearnings, of commitment to their cause, whatever the cost? The choice is ours, and though we might prefer it otherwise, we must choose in this crucial moment of human history.

As that noble bard of yesterday, James Russell Lowell, eloquently stated:

*Once to every man and nation comes a moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth and Falsehood, for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah
offering each the bloom or blight,
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that light.
Though the cause of evil prosper, yet 'tis truth alone is strong*

*Though her portions be the scaffold, and upon the throne be wrong
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.*

And if we will only make the right choice, we will be able to transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of peace. If we will make the right choice, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our world into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. If we will but make the right choice, we will be able to speed up the day, all over America and all over the world, when justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.

The text of this and other speeches by Dr. King can be found at www.mlkonline.com.

Illinois Governor Ryan Shows Some Guts, cont'd from Page 1

The governor's next official act, and the last one he would take as governor of Illinois, was even more shocking. On Saturday, January 11, he ordered the sentences of all 156 inmates on the state's death row commuted to life without parole.

Three years ago, Ryan had been stunned to learn that, of the 25 men sentenced to die that year, 13 were exonerated of the crimes for which they had been convicted. This led Ryan to immediately impose a moratorium on executions while an in-depth study of the fairness of the state's death penalty by the *Chicago Tribune* was conducted. The results of that study forced Ryan to one inescapable conclusion.

"Because the Illinois death penalty system is arbitrary and capricious--and therefore immoral--I no longer shall tinker with the machinery of death," he said in the style of former Supreme Court Justice **Harry Blackmun**.

In an address at Northwestern University's law school, he noted that "the facts that I have seen in reviewing every one of these cases raised questions not only about the innocence of people on death row, but about the fairness of the death penalty system as a whole. The Illinois capital punishment system is broken. It has taken innocent men to a hair's breadth escape from their unjust execution."

Noting that one-third of defendants who were sentenced to die had been represented by attorneys who later had their licenses suspended or were disbarred altogether, Ryan said: "It's a shameful record, truly shameful. Innocent people were convicted for a crime they didn't commit. We nearly killed innocent people."

This represents quite a turnaround for a governor who had initially campaigned as a staunch proponent of capital punishment and who had voted to reinstate the death penalty as a state legislator 30 years ago.

Betrayal or Commitment to Justice?

Prosecutors and other political supporters felt betrayed by his decision. **Richard Devine**, Cook County State's Attorney, called Ryan's announcement "stunningly disrespectful to the hundreds of families who lost their loved ones to these death row murderers." Wheeling, Illinois Police Sergeant **Bill Stutzman** accused Ryan of showing "no respect to the victims' families, to police, prosecutors, judges."

We would like to answer that charge thus:

Gov. Ryan's action took courage that has been sorely lacking in public officials to date. In an effort to put forth a law-and-order image, too many from the governor's mansions to the black robes of the courts have ignored the cries of the wrongly convicted for decades. Many of the police, such as Chicago police commander **Jon Burge** in the cases of Patterson, Hobbey, Orange

and Howard, have been implicated in the torture of suspects to extract bogus confessions. And the cases of prosecutorial and judicial misconduct, resulting in defendants being denied their rights to proper representation and even being framed by fabricated evidence, are familiar to regular readers of **KUUMBAReport**.

In our opinion, Gov. Ryan did the only thing he could do. Our opposition to the death penalty is based on racial and class disparities in sentencing; the relationship between juries who are willing to sentence a defendant to death and their bias toward the prosecution, thus compromising the so-called presumption of innocence; and the fact that too many convictions have been overturned due to police, defense, prosecutorial and judicial misconduct. Cases such as those of veteran Black Panther **Geronimo jiJaga**, released after 27 years of imprisonment for a crime the FBI knew he did not commit from the beginning, and the five young men recently exonerated in the celebrated **Central Park Jogger case** after close to a decade of imprisonment, make it clear that the judicial system makes a habit of convicting the innocent. In death penalty cases, this often results in irreversible mistakes that cost innocent lives. **Kirk Bloodworth** and **Shabaka Brown**, profiled in **KUUMBAReport #20**, are heart-wrenching cases of the damage a wrongful conviction can do to a defendant and his family. **Shaka Sankofa**, executed two and a half years ago in Texas while **George W. Bush** was governor, was a particularly egregious case, his lawyer having slept through much of the trial, calling no witnesses, making no objections, presenting no evidence, and taking the case under the assumption that Sankofa was guilty. A two-day trial based on questionable eyewitness testimony and no reliable physical evidence sealed his doom as Bush, the Texas Board of Parole and Pardons and the US Supreme Court refused to review his last-ditch appeal.

We must reserve a special place, however, for the country's hard-line district attorneys and politicians who argue that to abolish the death penalty is "an insult to the families of murder victims." What these people are saying is that anyone who has lost a loved one to an act of murder must lose all sense of justice. Such a person must be so obsessed with exacting personal vengeance upon their loved one's murderer that they are willing to sanction the likely killing of the innocent just so they can see the executioner pull the switch on the object of their revenge.

As the Editor of this publication, and one whose own father was murdered in the hall of the school where he worked, let me state that such an attitude personally insults *me*. To state that I can only find closure for his murder, and for the murder of Ken Bridges (See last issue), through the spilling of yet more blood, is to say that I require one act of barbarism to compensate me for another. Add to this the fact that these inmates have been, in the vast majority of cases, not "let free" but *sentenced to life without parole*, and the charge of the right-wing that death penalty abolitionists are "coddling prisoners" goes out the window.

Michael Franti, leader of the musical group **SPEARHEAD**, is a strong anti-death penalty activist. His 2001 CD *Stay Human* is a powerful spoken-word and musical statement on the current state of the criminal justice system and the mad rush to execute prisoners. One quote from the CD from activist Jello Biafra states that "I've been against the death penalty since I was a very small child, for one simple reason. *What if they've got the wrong person? And what if it happens to be me?*"

Sources: *Chicago Tribune*, January 10-11, 2003; *Afro-Netizen Online News Service*.



Justice for Marshall "Eddie" Conway!

Marshall "Eddie" Conway is currently in the 32nd year of his incarceration in the Maryland prison system for a crime that he was never proven to have committed, and indeed he did not commit. As an important member of the Baltimore chapter of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, Eddie was targeted by local, state and federal police under the FBI's infamous counterintelligence program, known as COINTELPRO.

Despite being a model prisoner, infraction-free for over 20 years, Eddie has been repeatedly denied parole by the State of Maryland. Now, with the assistance of several State politicians, several support groups (Friends of Eddie Conway, the Marshall E. Conway Support Committee, Justice for Eddie Conway, the Organization of All Afrikan Unity-Black Panther Cadre and others), as well as his legal team, Eddie is seeking a new trial that would uncover the "dirty tricks" that were used to target and unfairly convict him of killing a Baltimore police officer in 1970. Eddie himself has repeatedly stated: "At no time in my life have I killed or attempted to kill anyone. I have no involvement in that incident. I'm innocent." The Baltimore City Council seems to believe him, having passed a unanimous Resolution in 2001 calling for a review of Eddie's case. However, outgoing Governor Parris Glendening



and the Maryland Legislature (despite the strong work of Clarence "Tiger" Davis and Salima Marriott) did not call for a review of Eddie's case.

What Can You Do To Help?

Write to Maryland Governor-Elect **Robert Ehrlich**, Lieutenant Governor-Elect **Michael Steele** and Maryland's State Legislators to demand that Eddie be granted parole or a new trial. Join or support the organizations fighting for Eddie.

To send correspondence to Eddie, write: Marshall E. Conway #116469, Box 534, Jessup, MD 20794.

To contact the Governor, write to: Governor-Elect Robert Ehrlich, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401; or call: **1-800-811-8336** (phone) or **410-974-3901**; faxes to: 410-974-3275. The Governor's e-mail address: governor@gov.state.md.us; the Governor's website: www.gov.state.md.us

To contact the Marshall E. Conway Support Committee, write: P.O. Box 41144, Baltimore, MD 21203-6144. Or call: 410-276-7221. Or call KUUMBA EVENTS and COMMUNICATIONS at **410-865-2723**. E-mail: kuumba@bellatlantic.net.

"All Power To The People"

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**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
 ACTIVITIES**

International Women's Day (IWD) is March 8th, 2003. A variety of educational, historical and cultural events will be held between March 8th and April 8th to commemorate **International Women's Month**.

LEMELLE MIDDLE SCHOOL is the focus of IWD activities, centering on their **Museum** and **Student Assemblies**, beginning **Friday, March 7th**.

Listen to *The University Of The Air with Professor Yanne Sangarey*, Mondays at **1:00 PM**, on **WOLB 1010-AM**, for more information on IWD and other activities. To reach the station, call **410.481.1010**.



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The Enlightened Warrior Conference
March 22, 2003 at MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY MURPHY FINE ARTS BUILDING
 Presented By OYO TRADITIONS Cultural Institute and ILE OGUN
Registration/Breakfast at 8:30; Program 9:00 to 4 pm

An Experiential Conference on Black Manhood in the 21st. Century In Collaboration with The Morgan State University Center for HIV Prevention, Evaluation, Policy and Research.

The Purpose of this event is to reconnect African-American males with the cultural/spiritual system that awakens the psycho-genetic "spiritual selves" of African-American males as a pre-requisite to re-shaping, co-creating and re-vitalizing their relationships and communities as African descendents within the Diaspora. This is needed, due to systemic effects that tended to destroy the African-American male spirit.

These include such examples as homicide, the addictions industry, Health Risk, Behavior, Disease, including HIV/AIDS, incarceration and juvenile arrests which involve up to 69% of African-American urban males and which cost more to maintain than academic scholarship. In our attempt to accommodate the brothers who would otherwise not attend (the brothers on the corner), we are asking Black Men to encourage these brothers to attend with you.

Conference fee includes: Breakfast and Lunch and Bring Your Drum if you have one.

At the Door \$10 for 15 years and up, \$5 for 5-14 years of age; In Advance \$8 for 15 years and up and \$4 for 5-14 years of age. Bring your son(s), uncle(s), brother(s), cousin(s) and father.

Honored guest speakers are **Babalawo Dr. Wande Abimbola**, world renowned Professor of Religion at Boston University and the author of several books. **Master Drummer/Drum Maker Priest of Obatala David Coleman** form New York. Also Included our **local Brothers Kumasi, Al-Duha, and Brother Ademola**. This conference is made powerful through the energy of "OGUN" and the brothers in attendance. Bring your stored up energy Brothers.

For more information contact: Ogunronke at iya_nemi@msn.com and or **410.9625210**.

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Dr. Anna Julia Cooper

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INTRODUCTION TO

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From Social Theory To Social Practice



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Structured within the framework of five (5) thematic sessions, **Introduction to African-American Nationalism** instructs its students in: (1) The definitive strategies of traditional and contemporary African-American nationalism, i.e., religious, political, economic, cultural and communitarian nationalism; (2) The roots of contemporary African-American nationalism found in classical African cultures and nation-states; (3) Critical analysis of key African-American social movements, theorists and organizers from the 18th Century to the present; (4) The African-American Cultural Revolution, i.e., the contemporary nationalist project of transforming the African-American population into a socio-politically conscious, committed and productive national community and (5) Training community organizers to serve as the nucleus of the cultural revolution.

Dialogue is centered on **African Communitarian Nationalism**. Communitarian Nationalism is the organizational and programmatic extension of the cultural nationalist movement of the 1960s, i.e., the ideological codification of the cultural revolution. Building on that ideological movement, African Communitarian Nationalism contends that "Indigenous and autonomous, local community organization is an indispensable prerequisite for continuity of the cultural revolution."

The primary purpose of **Introduction to African-American Nationalism** is to serve as an initial and ongoing ideological training institute, in order to develop a permanent circle of professional community organizers, who are conscious and capable of, and committed to the cultural, economic and political development of the African-American population of Baltimore, Maryland.

Seminar instructor is **Sanifu Onaje Mwananchi**. Mr. Mwananchi is a Baltimore-based community organizer and theatre artist. He has been an active student, organizer and teacher of African-American Nationalism for over 30 years.

Introduction to African-American Nationalism is conducted **Bi-monthly**, i.e., February, April, June, August, October and December. Each seminar runs for five (5) consecutive weekends, beginning the first weekend of its scheduled month. Registration deadline is 28 days prior to the first session of each seminar. Tuition is \$124 (new student) and \$63 (alumnus). Fifty percent is required upon registration (non-refundable) and the balance due no later than the first session.



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