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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Honoring Mother Jones and all others, past and present, who guide us as we speak out, and as we fight back.

Tom Keough



EDITORIALS

ABOUT POWER ...

by Susan Dorazio



About Mother Jones

For decades in the late 19th and early 20th century, Mary Harris (Mother) Jones (1837-1930) was a fearless union organizer, an indomitable voice for the rights of workers, and always in the forefront of the class struggle. Her militant actions, primarily in support of miners, led to numerous arrests and incarcerations, but nothing could break her spirit.

From 1903 until 1911, Mother Jones, an avowed socialist, toured the Western states, organizing for the Socialist Party. In a speech to the United Mine Workers convention in January, 1909, she declared, "If we thoroughly organize and educate our people, we can stop every wheel in the country and we can make those fellows stop eating. When we do that, we will spend what belongs to us, and they will work as we will rest. ... I want to fight and take what belongs to us."

International Women's Day is about power: theirs and ours. Their power puts courts and legislatures in charge of whether or not a woman can have an abortion. Our power leaves this decision where it belongs: with the woman herself. Their power dictates a profit-driven "managed care" health care system, at the service of transnational pharmaceutical companies. Our power lies in grassroots organizing efforts for a national system of universal health care, under community control.

Their power rests in rapacious corporations owned by an ultra-wealthy few that deplete the world's resources and exploit its people. Our power depends on building a grass-roots movement for a new society rooted in cooperation, equality, and workers' control.

Their power chooses to put toxic waste sites in our poorest communities-of-color, and to build dams that destroy the lives of countless farmers in our poorest countries. Our power demands environmental justice. Their power busts unions. Our power is on the shop floor talking with our co-workers about the connections between workers' rights, human rights, and women's rights. Their power pushes untrained, unemployed mothers into dead-end jobs without providing their children with quality child care or education. Our power is in the fight for full-funding for education and social services.

Their power dupes young men and women into signing away their rights and often their lives for the sake of U.S. imperialism. Our power gets the word out on alternatives to "jobs" in the military and calls for huge cuts in the military budget. Their power blames hunger and poverty on over-population. Our power blames hunger and poverty

on policies and practices consciously designed to protect and enrich the corporate agriculture of the most developed countries. Their power gets channeled through politicians whose primary allegiance is to the economic requirements of global capitalism. Our power gets exerted through political action completely independent of the mainstream, capitalist parties.

Their power resides in exploitation, inequality, domination, violence, and deception. Our power resides in cooperation, compassion, respectful communication, justice, and collective action.

March 8—International Women's Day—is our day. It's our opportunity to come together to speak out for a world where democratic socialist feminist values and programs enable people to live lives in ways they never will be able to under capitalism and patriarchy. That's the truth. That's our power.

GENDER BALANCE AT TOWN MEETING, WASHING DISHES

by Mary L. Wentworth

Howard Ziff thought that my suggestion that Town Meeting might try alternating male and female speakers in order to achieve gender balance was "just plain goofy" (*Amherst Bulletin*, Dec. 30, 2005). "Participation in Town Meeting is not to be compared with washing the supper dishes."

Alas, Mr. Ziff is in error. There is a long-standing connection between the two activities. For more centuries than we can document, patriarchal rules prescribed which sex would have the chore of washing the supper dishes and which would have the privilege of speaking in public. The solution in both situations, Mr. Ziff, is to take turns.

Mary L. Wentworth is a writer and a community activist who lives in Amherst, Massachusetts.

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The Socialist is always looking for interesting, insightful, well-written stories. In particular, we are looking for work that highlights the struggles and triumphs of the working class. We will accept news articles, stories about organizing and protests, but we are also looking for short fiction, poetry, and music/arts/theater/film review. Please mark all letters to the editor as such and limit letters to 250 words; articles should not exceed 2,500 words. Submit as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word .doc or .rtf format to SocialistParty@sp-usa.org, or by mail to: The Socialist, 339 Lafayette St. Room 303, New York, NY 10012. The deadline is the first of the month preceding each issue date.

It's Time to Raise Questions about Embryonic Stem Cell Research

by Lauren Brannon

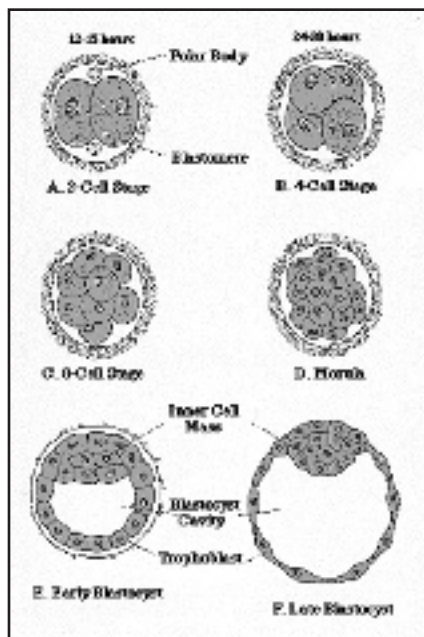
The exclusive culture of scientific research, coupled with the privatized healthcare system in the United States, prevents the majority of Americans from participating in product development and public policy processes. Currently, we are witnessing an explosion in the development of embryonic stem cell (hESC) research. Our involvement at this point in the process is critical. Decisions must not be left to corporate executives, investors, marketers, or capitalist politicians. Ultimately, the project of defining a radical position on the direction of hESC research requires addressing larger related issues that include a more comprehensive understanding of women's reproductive self-determination.

Embryonic stem cell research has been a contentious moral issue in the United States since stem cells were first isolated in a privately funded lab in 1999. Most opponents of embryonic stem cell research are concerned with the fact that the cells are derived from blastocysts: cells in early stages of embryonic development. Many of these opponents rely on "pro-life" rhetoric and ideology as the basis of their opposition. Conversely, many on the Left feel pressured to support the research without question in order to maintain politics that are consistent with their support for abortion access for women.

However, the latest trend among conservatives is to reverse their opinion and support funding hESC research while still managing to vigorously maintain their anti-choice agenda. For example, Senate majority leader Bill Frist, Bush's usual point-man on healthcare issues, repeatedly confirms his commitment to his "pro-life" constituency and ideals when he speaks about hESC research. Meanwhile, he recently announced that he supports a measure to expand federal funding of hESC research, even though in 2001 he had supported the President's decision to limit such funding.

For conservative politicians like Bill Frist, there's no problem using public funds for the benefit of venture capitalists and pharmaceutical companies, but their commitment to "nascent human

life" will not allow them to allocate federal funds for abortions for low-income women (the Hyde Amendment). This suggests that as far as hESC research goes, a moral debate solely focused on the embryo is not where the real battle lies. Instead, radicals need to begin looking closer at the hasty push for public investment, and what unconditional support for stem cell research in the United States will mean for women everywhere.



So what are stem cells, anyway? After an egg is fertilized, the zygote containing the fused maternal and paternal DNA goes through a stage of rapid cell division known as "cleavage" as it travels down the uterine tube. The resulting morula is a solid embryonic mass of blastomeres that begin to organize into two types of tissue as it enters the uterus and implants into the uterine lining. As cell division continues, the morula becomes a hollow blastocyst that has an outer cell layer, the trophoblast, a cavity, and an inner cell mass that is made of embryonic stem cells. Embryonic stem cells used for research are usually collected about five to nine days after fertilization when the embryo is comprised of about 200 cells. There is contention among opponents concerning both the destruction of an embryo

to obtain these cells as well as the possibility of creating an embryo for research purposes alone that would also destroy the embryo.

Embryonic stem cells are known to be "pluripotent" because they can differentiate into any type of adult human cell type. As the embryo grows in the uterus, this process of differentiation is mediated by narrowly understood molecular events that drive a small number of pluripotent cells into a developed fetus of specialized and labile cells. Not only can embryonic stem cells potentially become almost any type of cell in the body, they can also self-replicate endlessly in the absence of the molecular signals that direct differentiation. Most supporters of embryonic stem cell research extol both the possibilities of scientific achievement in our understandings of developmental biology and the endless amount of speculative genetic therapies that could be engineered with research from these cells.

One of the most obvious problems with going ahead with publicly funding hESC research is the lack of protections for women who are egg donors. In order to donate eggs, women go through a procedure that first shuts down their ovaries and then hyperstimulates them to produce multiple eggs for extraction. The most popular drug now used for egg extraction is Lupron™ (leuprolide acetate), which is used off-label to shut down a woman's ovaries before other drugs are given to stimulate them to produce multiple follicles. The procedure is preferred by researchers because it allows them to gather more eggs at once. There have not been adequate studies investigating the use of Lupron for egg extraction submitted to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Numerous problems are associated with using Lupron for this procedure, including hair loss, nausea, depression, muscle pain, asthma, insomnia, and hypertension.

The drugs that are used to hyperstimulate the ovaries after they are shut down can also be harmful. These drugs have been shown to sometimes cause Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syn-

drome (OHSS), a condition that leads to the development of cysts, enlargement of the ovaries, and massive fluid build-up in the body. The condition can lead to pain, hospitalization, renal failure, potential future infertility, and death. A review in the journal *Science* by David Magnus and Mildred K. Cho found that between 5% or up to 10% of women who receive these hyperstimulation treatments for egg extraction experience severe OHSS.

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has already vetoed a bill related to the California stem cell program that would have required audits and egg-donor protections. This indicates that egg donor protection issues may continue to be consciously neglected as state and federal funding for research increases. As recent historical instances such as the treatment of Puerto Rican women in birth control pill trials has shown, third-world women are at increased risk for abusive research practices. These issues are pronounced for third-world or poor women who might experience more pressure to donate if there is a financial incentive. On the other hand, should women altruistically go through the process of donating eggs so that private biotech companies can profit without receiving any personal benefit? These are practical and moral questions that radicals should be giving careful attention to.

Furthermore, should the public investment in hESC research be a priority when there are so many in the United States and worldwide without access to basic healthcare? The royalties and other benefits could easily be used to increase the quality of basic healthcare. During the campaign in California for Proposition 71, the public was encouraged to vote in favor of the funding in part because of the promised \$1.1 billion return on the public investment. Californians were promised a share of the royalties from hESC research, discounted treatments, as well as an overall decrease in general medical costs as the result of having treatments and cures. The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) now argues that

this return may be impossible and committees formed to review these issues are affirming the likelihood that Californians will not receive promised royalties. One of the arguments being used to withhold returns is that it may hamper innovation by removing the incentive of profit for private investors. The other is that federal tax laws may make the sharing of royalties impossible if the program is financed by tax-exempt bonds as planned. Reports are surfacing that Robert Klein, the main author of the initiative and chair of the CIRM, knew of this roadblock during the campaign for Proposition 71. Spending billions on hESC research for the benefit of private profit is an obscene misuse of public money, particularly in the absence of basic healthcare.

How can we reproductive rights activists qualify our support for funding hESC research so that it represents our socialist feminist values? We must demand that the process of funding, development, design, and all other aspects of hESC technology be socially owned and under the democratic control of independent researchers, health care workers, and community members. As long as the healthcare industry is profit-driven, abuses will proliferate.

All of us committed to the full range of rights for women's bodily self-determination need to make it our business to be involved and knowledgeable about stem cell research and technology so that we are neither actively nor passively supporting detrimental developments in this field.

It is only through a process of education and activism around the moral priorities and possible abuses of a stem cell research and technology industry—coupled with the articulation of our own alternatives to corporate healthcare policy and practice—that critical support of hESC research can be a tenable position for those of us in the reproductive rights movement. ●

Lauren Brannon has a bachelor's degree in biology and women's studies. She is interested in reproductive justice, reproductive technology, and the ways that scientific understandings relate to social realities. She lives in New York City.

Women, Hunger, and Food Insecurity

by Jessica R. Dreistadt

In 2000, members of the United Nations committed to eight Millennium Development Goals. The first goal was to halve extreme poverty and hunger by 2015, a minimal objective to begin with. However, according to the 2005 progress report, the target of halving hunger by 2015 is expected to be met in only half of the identified areas, is not expected to be met in 30% of the areas, and the situation has actually deteriorated in 20% of the areas.

Today, hundreds of millions of people around the world are chronically hungry and food insecure; that is, unable to secure enough nutritious food on a regular basis. The complex and often interrelated causes of this acute social malady include poverty, political and economic exclusion, conflict, gender and ethnic discrimination, geographic isolation, displacement of people from their native lands, adverse or unreliable weather conditions, and disease.

Some think that capitalism is the answer to poverty, and therefore hunger. It is envisioned, or at least argued for, as a means of expanding opportunities to people throughout the world. In fact, the exact opposite is the case. The imposition of a market economy under capitalism has led to numerous grave consequences in the fight for food security.

When land becomes a commodity, access is limited to those with means. Therefore, the ability to produce food is restricted. Displacement of natives to less arable land may occur, reducing the variety of foods that can be grown. This increases reliance on commercial food goods. The traders and capitalists

Hunger, continued on p. 6

Stem Cell Research

For more information about embryonic stem cell research, the following website is recommended: www.genetics-and-society.org.

who sell food products further exploit those affected by building a profit into the price of goods. The ability to generate income through agriculture is also eradicated among the oppressed. Technology such as pesticides, genetic modification, and growth hormones replace ancient traditions of farming, hunting, gathering, and fishing. Conflict over resources tied to land creates widows and orphans who might be prevented from fully accessing economic opportunities, if not altogether abandoned by a society plagued by scarcity and the struggle for survival.

When people are regarded as commodities, radical shifts in familial and societal structure necessarily take place as those affected adapt in order to survive. Time spent away from home increases as people are forced to sell their labor in order to participate in the capitalist economy. Families may be split up as a parent or child leaves in search of a job. This leaves many women in the position of providing for their families without support. Increased urbanization and suburbanization occur as people gravitate toward job opportunities. This changes the value of land, intensi-

fying the effects of its commodification. Many agricultural workers are poorly paid and unable to eat themselves. In the United States, many farm workers are illegal immigrants who are paid minimal wages under the table.

Women are especially vulnerable to experiencing hunger and food insecurity because of our 'inferior' social status and biological needs. Women often eat last, at times to ensure adequate nutrition for our children but in many cultures because men demand this subservience. We also have unique nutritional requirements. Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding must ingest extra calories in order to nourish our children.

Within capitalist societies around the world, women are often systematically excluded from full participation. We have less access to capital. In many countries, our land ownership rights are minimal or nonexistent. We are often strangers to the political process that governs these policies.

Women hold the key to designing and delivering sustainable and equitable food resources. We produce most of the

food in the world. We purchase and prepare the majority of meals. But in most societies we are precluded from being in control of significant decisions and participating in processes that would give us the opportunity to develop feminist solutions to hunger and food insecurity.

We must work together as sisters to develop local, national, and international women's organizations that will eradicate the political, economic, and social barriers to our ability to develop just and sustainable food systems. The collective voice and action of socialist feminists around the world is desperately needed so that all women, men, and children will have access to a sufficient supply of nutritious, safe, affordable food.

Let's work together toward viable long-term, food production systems and distribution networks that meet the nutritional and economic needs of all people, embrace gender (and other) differences, minimize damage to the environment, and promote community and individual health. ●

Jessica R. Dreistadt is an anti-hunger activist and a graduate student of Sociology who lives in Bethlehem, PA.

Mujeres de la Raza: Chicana Activism

by B. Guise

In order to understand Chicana activism, one must first seek to understand the Chicana for she is many things. She is a woman. She is a mother, a sister, a wife. She is a feminist. She is a Mexican American and she is La Raza.

La Raza, meaning literally the race, first showed up in the book *La Raza Cós mica* (1948) by José Vasconcelos. Vasconcelos claimed that the indigenous people of America were made "better" when mixed with European blood. This gave way to a new race, *La Raza Cós mica*. Vasconcelos argued that this new race would show the world "the way." Over time, the term *La Raza* evolved in meaning moving from the somewhat racist 'The Race' to a more friendly definition of "The People." Eventually the concept of *La Raza* was adopted and promoted by the Mexican government, where they replaced "Columbus Day"

with "Día de la Raza." The idea again showed up in the 1960's and became the foundation of the Chicano movement.

The Chicano movement is a blend of individuals and organizations who share a sense of pride in Mexicanidad, an allegiance to the enhancement of Chicano/a culture, mutual identification, an aspiration to advance the Chicano/a socio-economic position, and a dedication to making constructive changes in U.S. legislation. Chicanismo is a blending of cultural awareness and self-determination. It is not a nationality, but a philosophy. Some Chicanos/as also feel that Hispanics and Latinos fail to represent their indigenous heritage and the unique socio-economic aspects of Chicano/a culture. Chicanos/as work toward the goal of being an equally paid, educated and respected American without giving up their Mexican heritage.

A major focus of Chicanos/as has been political, educational and economic change. Some Chicanos/as have chosen to change the system through the traditional avenues of the two party system such as conducting voter registration drives, and working for the passage of supportive legislation. Some have chosen nonpartisan organizations like *El Partido de la Raza Unida* (PRU, United People's Party) or the *United Farmworkers' Union*. Others have tried the more radical route of walkouts, sit-ins, and direct confrontations with school administrators.

An important outcome of the early years of the Chicano movement was the awakening of Chicano art. Chicanos/as everywhere found an outlet to express their feelings and let their voices be heard via painting, music, literature, theater, and bilingual television, radio stations,

newspapers, magazines and movies. Muralism and graffiti art quickly became a favorite among Chicanos/as, as well as the teatro (theater).

As the sixties gave way to the seventies the political climate began to change. The Women's Liberation movement was gaining momentum. Chicanas within the Chicano movement began to see that the movement was more about the men's rights. They also noticed that the majority of La Raza's political leaders and candidates were male. This was particularly evident within the Raza Unida Party. In 1973, the women of the party decided that they should assume leadership roles just like the men. This led to the women's caucus, Mujeres Por La Raza that worked within the Raza Unida Party. The mujeres organized conferences for Mujeres Por La Raza and led workshops. These efforts helped other women to get involved with community level organizing, conferences and campaigns. Chicana feminism had arrived.

Women of Mexican descent call themselves Mexicans, Mexicana, Latinas, Mexican-Americans or even Hispanics. The term 'Chicana' usually connotes women oriented toward radical political action. They seek to convey the idea that issues of sexism, racism, homophobia, and poverty are inherently connected and to understand how they affect the Mexican-American woman. They also resolve to fight for the right to control their own bodies, equality on the job, resolutions for 24 hour child-care centers in Chicano communities and educational, political, social, and economic advancement. They challenge every social institution that contributes to the oppression of women. Chicanas themselves, face a triple dose of oppression, as Mexican-Americans, workers and as women. Chicanas are a minority within a minority and a culture within a culture.

The paradoxes of being a Chicana are clear. While Chicanas are proud of and defend La Raza, at the same time they reject the ideas of the subordination of women that lie within La Raza. Many La Raza men believe that a woman's greatest virtue is the ability to serve

men. According to the resolutions of the First National Chicano Conference, traditional roles for Chicanas are not acceptable or applicable. Chicanas cannot accept anything but equality among all people. In addition, women of La Raza are expected to have large families regardless of economic security and are often denied access to birth control. This, of course, is also endorsed

“In spite of the considerable difficulties that confront them, Chicana activists continue to work diligently for their rights as Mexican-American women and for Chicano liberation.”

by the Catholic Church. Chicanas, who don't believe that the woman's place is in the home, are often accused of being disloyal to their heritage and their religion. For many women being a Chicana means not fulfilling their parents' expectations of what a mujer of La Raza should be.

As far as the term 'feminism' is concerned, for many Mexican-American women it is inherently linked to white middle to upper-class women. Chicana activists are frequently accused of being 'sell-outs' or 'acting white'. However, many Chicanas apply the goals and rhetoric of feminist politics without actually using the term 'feminist'. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that white feminists do not usually identify with brown feminists. Therefore, Chicanas not only have to fight institutionalized sexism, but racism and classism as well.

In spite of the considerable difficulties that confront them, Chicana activists continue to work diligently for their rights as Mexican-American women and for Chicano liberation. Their issues have become more imbedded into the Chicano liberation movement, but not always successfully. Notable Chicana activists include Martiza J. Broce who is the community coordinator for the Coalicion De Derechos Humanos/Arizona Border Rights Project and Isabel Garza cofounder of the Arizona Border Rights Project. They, along with other activists, fight for those suffering human and civil rights violations along the Arizona/Mexican border.

Broce also follows the Border Patrol, armed with a video camera documenting the treatment of people being detained or deported. Ana Castillo is a writer, scholar and activist committed to the education of Americans on Chicana feminist issues through speeches, journalism, poetry, fiction and personal narrative. You can find her at www.ana-castillo.com.

Sisters Nadine and Patsy Cordova were threatened and then fired for teaching students about Chicano/a history. The teachers also implemented a Racial Tolerance education program for their classes and sponsored students to start the school's first chapter of MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan). The teachers were rewarded for this rash of Chicana Activism by being labeled as racist and then fired.

Nancy de los Santos is the associate producer of the motion pictures *Mi Familia* and *Selena*. She is a fifteen-year veteran of the Hollywood film industry. De los Santos directed a short film from her own script for the Universal Television Film Project, *Breaking Pan With Sol*, which received the "Best Short Film" award from the Chicago International Latino Film Festival. Her teleplay, *Mothers Against Gangs* is in development with Olmos Productions. She is also co-producer of *The Bronze Screen: The History of Latinos in Hollywood*, currently in development.

Graciela Sanchez is the director of San Antonio's Esperanza Peace and Justice Center a nationally renowned pro-

Chicana, continued on p. 14

Braving the Waters

by Tejal Kanitkar

“The women who participate in and lead ecology movements in countries like India are not speaking merely as victims. Their voices are the voices of liberation and transformation. The women’s and ecology movements are therefore one, and are primarily counter-trends to a patriarchal mal-development.” —Vandana Shiva

In every country there are people who live at two extremes of the spectrum. There are the few rich who eat better food each day and then there are the many poor who reduce their food rations each day. India is no different.

In the midst of market reforms and privatization, the Indian upper classes and upper middle classes have suddenly been elevated to what resembles the western standard of living. However, a large section of Indian society remains removed from this “development” -- excluded from the celebration of India’s 8% per annum economic growth.

Throughout the world, “growth” and “development” have taken a serious toll on people and on the environment. These have affected India even more drastically. Over the last 50 years, large dams on many of the rivers of India have displaced over 30 million people, most of whom have not been compensated for their land or given alternative housing. Large-scale deforestation, which has left India with only 20% forest cover, has rendered many Adivasis (the indigenous people of India) homeless. Unchecked and unregulated industrialization has polluted groundwater and in many parts of the country has depleted this resource to drastically low levels.

Over 70 percent of India’s population currently derives its livelihood from land resources. Since women comprise almost 60-65% of this segment, it is no surprise that the people’s movements that have risen to fight against the appropriation of these natural resources have largely been women’s movements.

The Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA)—“Save the Narmada” movement—is one of the many people’s movements in



NBA photographer

Protest by the movement to save the Narmada Valley.

India, fighting for the rights of the oppressed classes. The anti-dam movement in India got recognition only in the last couple of decades when the inhabitants of the Narmada Valley led an amazing struggle against the Government and the World Bank. The protests resulted in an inquiry and subsequently an unprecedented withdrawal of funding by the World Bank. This movement, organized largely by women and including some of the most marginalized communities of the country, raised many questions about the functioning of “the world’s largest democracy.”

The Narmada movement elicited mixed reactions from the Indian populace. The urban middle class dismissed Midha Parkar (one of the key organizers) and her followers as “tree huggers” and “women without anything better to do.” They labeled her, and “others like her,” “anti-development,” an insult used ever more frequently in India these days. Sometimes, when the movement wasn’t far away in the valley, out of sight of the urban middle class, but was in their face, outside their workplace, in

the form of picket lines and dharnas (sit-ins), there were instances of the patronizing dismissal turning into violence, too. However, a large section of the Indian population, urban and rural, remained, and still remains, apathetic and even unaware of the struggle in the valley.

The administration, however, is very much aware of the struggle and has tried to crush the movement at every turn. This has been done blatantly at times and not so blatantly at others. Harassment by police, forcible displacement without resettlement, forcible arrests without charges, and illegal submergence of inhabited villages were some of the many atrocities that the tribals and activists in the Narmada Valley were subjected to. The ruling to raise the dam heights even when thousands remained without relief and resettlement was one of the many unjust decisions meted out by the Supreme Court against people who depend the most on administrative and judicial systems. Many were arrested for merely protesting against the court rulings.

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War, Women, and Gender Backlash

by Teresa Murphy

News about civilian casualties and the horrors of war are commonplace in the left and independent media. However, we rarely have the chance to read testimonies by womyn on the effect war is having on them. In Lesley Abdela's "Iraq's War on Women," she asserts that the conditions for womyn in Iraq have worsened since the United States occupation and that violence is escalating across all of Iraq and from all parties involved.

Increases in fundamentalist backlash against womyn, particularly womyn who are not veiled or who wear make-up, includes such human right abuses as acid thrown onto the face, rape, and even assassinations. Abdela states, "Now, dead bodies of girls and women are found in rivers and on waste ground with a veil tied around the head, as a message."

In the justifications used by the United States for the war on Iraq, one of the frequent ones is that we are promoting liberal democracy, yet for the thousands of Iraqi womyn democracy is far from reality. The same is true for Afghanistan, where womyn lived under the brutal gendecidal policies of the Taliban and were promised certain freedoms once the Taliban were removed. Yet this has not been the case, and in fact, womyn still are being killed today for not abiding by the codes of tribal and rural clergy, and self-immolation is still a wide spread horror.

In many countries, womyn may not even speak about such atrocities without the threat of death, such as was in the case of Nastaran, a writer and activist living in Iran. Nastaran submitted an essay to the Women's World Organization for Literature and Development in 2003 based on her true-life experience in the war in Iraq. Her last name was omitted due to death threats. The essay is entitled "Life in a State of Terror." In the essay she writes:

"There are times you do not feel terrified. How long does that last? It depends on where you live. The longest I have

had during the last twenty-five years was two hours; two sweet hours of feeling strong, like I was walking on a solid, permanent foundation. Then my confidence, my sense that I could be victorious over any evil inhumane thing began to evaporate. I was left alone with a hollow in my heart, my fear, and my desire to grasp power myself. When I was a teenager, I had a fantasy that one day all the 'good' people would collect the weapons of the world and throw them out. When I became older, I got cynical. I would tell myself the same story, but continue by trying to sort out where all these weapons of the world could be thrown away. If they were to be hidden or locked up, who could be relied to keep them intact? As long as outer space had not been explored to the present extent, I thought it would be a safe place for getting rid of all arms. Since September 11, I have told this story several times, asking others what they thought we should do to bring about hope instead of devastation, joy instead of hopelessness, and peace instead of terrorism, be it state terrorism, political terrorism, or patriarchal terrorism. Since September 11, my only relief, my only hopeful moments of feeling strong, have been the times I felt connected to a universal effort to stop war and terrorism.

"Long live peace; long live the solidarity among 'good' people."

The Iraq war, however, is not the only war where womyn have suffered not only the horrors of war but backlash and betrayal, even by those who are committed to protecting them, as is testified in this woman's words. Monica Arac de Nyeko, member of Transcend Art and Peace Network (TAP) from Uganda, wrote this essay also for the WWLD in June of 2003, and in it she states:

"The 1986 war against The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Northern Uganda started as only as a joke, but it has eaten away Acoli. It's like an imaginary tale. Children are trained to be lethal massacre weapons. Sometimes

they flee back home to seek what was taken from them, but they discover they cannot stay because their minds think of blood and killing only. They tell of the urine they drank from the unbearable thirst. The young girls, our former schoolmates, have been sex-slaves and loathe male company. Many we will never know what happened to them.

"We are a generation of thorns. Memories of nights in rain and gripping fear creep to our dreams. Sleep should be the only place where there is no worry. It should be dreamland, hopeland. But our sleep knows not the vague images of paradise created from longing; there are images of ghosts of dead friends and relatives. The ones we watched pangas hack. Those we heard from our hiding places flogged to death. Those we see headless, limbless, noseless, lipless when we blink.

"It's sad that the situation is hopeless and there is nothing much the we without power can do. Our government has been fighting futilely for sixteen years but they will not talk serious peace. Our president Y K. Museveni calls Joseph Kony, the rebel leader, a jigger that can be dealt with in an instant. But numbers of Acoli civilians dwindle in cheap talk. They say in every news bulletin, 'the war will end real soon,' soon has become sixteen years.

"We have learnt to survive and say our prayers before trying to sleep. In case we wake up in another world. It has got to be Heaven, vague as it might seem to atheists.

"We have learnt to seal our lips and pretend we know nothing of what goes on. We cannot trust anyone. The rebels do not care whether we live or die. We do not know why they fight. We know nothing of treaties signed by important men. We know not what words like terrorists, victims and universal declarations of human rights mean. But we know that we are going to die, from bullets, hunger or hopelessness.

War, continued on p. 10

“The low ranked government soldiers, who are sent to protect us, run and hide in their brick walled barracks to protect themselves when the rebels come. They return when it’s calm to rape our grandmothers, light our huts for pure pleasure and in the evening we hear the radios say, ‘Look what the bloody rebels did again, take heart brothers and sisters in the north, and try to understand that the government is liberating you.’ But we cannot try to understand, there is nothing to be understood.”

These are just two excerpts from testimonies, two voices yet there are millions more testimonies just like them. The problem they scream out against is war itself, war that is fought for imperial gains, land, wealth and economy or for ethnic control/genocide. War is violence. There is nothing beautiful about war, it brings out the worst in human behavior, it is the chaos of all chaos. The solution to ending violence against womyn especially during war isn’t changing gender roles in regard to war or attempting to feminize the military as some liberal feminists suggest. We have seen by the human rights abuses in Abu Ghraib—including not only the horrific abuse of men but the rapes of many Iraqi womyn and girls, as well—that changing gender roles within war or combat does not soften war, it only creates the environment where womyn assimilate into patriarchal roles and behaviors.

Womyn have been fighting in the guerrilla wars in Columbia and in Peru, yet violence, including sexual violence against womyn, is at an all time high in both of those nations. The solution to ending violence is not acquired by worker killing worker or by womyn slaughtering or assisting in slaughtering innocent civilians in the name of God or Imperialism or the myth of Democracy. In fact, one of the biggest lies sold to womyn around the world is that war will liberate them from patriarchy, when in fact, it is the deception used as a means to take control of a culture by taking control of the minds of womyn. It is this method of Western warfare that the Eastern/Islamic world

has retaliated against (Fanon, “Algeria’s Unveiled”).

We will continue to see wars and human right abuses, especially violence against womyn, as long as we continue to have systems that are based on class, racism, ultra-nationalism, totalitarianism, and imperialism—those systems that perpetuate and are at the root cause of all wars. Violence against womyn will never end until those systems based on abuse and power are replaced with systems that are humane, socially just, economically just, and gender-just, meaning that both genders are treated with dignity and respect, not as assimilated beings but as human beings, regardless of roles they may fill, whether feminine, masculine, or androgynous. Only then will we see the end to such atrocities as in those testimonies given by Nastaran and Monica Arac de Nyeko. ●

Resources:

Gender and war see: Peace and Conflict Monitor’s website: www.monitor.ucepage.org/innerpg.cfm?id_article=293

Global Gender Issues by V. Spike Peterson and Anne Sisson Runyan

Essays by Women’s World Organization for Rights, Literature and Development: www.wworld.org.

Note: Excerpts from essays used, but authors of essays are not listed or said to be of any political affiliation, including socialist or socialist party, only their testimonies are used here.

“Iraq’s War on Women” Author Lesley Abdela can be seen at: www.opendemocracy.net/%20conflict-iraqconflict/women_2681.jsp

Note: Excerpt from article used, but author of article is not listed or said to be of any political affiliation, including socialist or socialist party, only excerpt of article is used here in regards to the status of Iraqi womyn. Website is Open Democracy, a global website with various authors and views.

Teresa Murphy is a member of the Socialist Party of Colorado and has studied political science/international policy and relations at Metropolitan State College (Denver).

With no less than six national political parties and thirty state parties, the fact that the anti-dam movement received political support from the Indian Left only two years ago is indicative of the divergence of social interests and political aspirations. The “development” rhetoric adopted by every single political party in India has sidelined, overlooked, and even dismissed ecological issues, which means that issues concerning most working women in India have thus far been ignored.

While the Indian Left has limited itself to the organized sector, which is a subset of only the urban middle and lower middle classes, the Dalit movement (the movement of the lower castes) has been largely focused on creating political spaces. In many tribal movements, also, women are considered only as an inclusive category and not as a separate group that has its own issues.

In a post-globalized world, all these movements that are fighting caste, class, and gender discrimination need to come together to rally against the forces that combine to reduce their control over resources. A woman shouldn’t have to fight a double battle: one as a tribal and the other as a tribal woman; one as a farmer and another as a woman farmer.

Movements like the NBA have been able to connect class issues with women’s issues, and environmental issues with economic issues. Despite setbacks, slander, and injustice, the Narmada Bachao Andolan has been a great step forward for people’s movements throughout India. It has raised fundamental questions regarding the “development” dream wrapped in nationalist bombast, sold to Indians by the government.

Although the administration has given us little to be happy about, movements like the NBA have given us a lot to be proud of. The Indian women from the most marginalized communities have shown tremendous courage in standing up to imperialist organizations like the World Bank, courage that even the most powerful men in the country lack. ●

Tejal Kanitkar is a mechanical engineer from India, currently working in the area of renewable energy.



This art is from a comic book that will soon be available as a tool for counter-recruitment activists. Inquiries contact sabjonze@yahoo.com. Sabrina Jones' comics appear in "World War 3 Illustrated," and "Wobblies! A Graphic History of the Industrial Workers of the World." Her comic "Prisoners of the War on Drugs" is available to activists and educators from www.realcostofprisons.org. See more at www.sabrinaland.com.

The Lessons of History, Unrevised

by Mary Alice Herbert and Susan Dorazio

The life story of Rosa Parks, who died last November at the age of 92, is an inspiring one. She was born in 1913 in Tuskegee, Alabama. Family illness interrupted her high school education, but after she married Raymond Parks she continued her education, with his encouragement. His support also inspired her to join the NAACP.

While Rosa Parks is rightly remembered as the “Mother of the Civil Rights Movement,” her story is larger than the one we read or hear in the capitalistic media. She was much more than a 42 year-old seamstress who one day decided she was too tired to give up her seat on the bus to a white man. Her defiance of the bus company’s rules (that blacks could only sit in the back of the bus and could be made to give up their places there if the white section was full) was not a spur of the moment act. Rosa Parks was part of an organized group and had been to training sessions at the Highlander Folk School in civil rights organizing and non-violent civil disobedience.

She had been chosen to start the confrontation in Montgomery when plans were made for the bus boycott which would follow her arrest. Her gentle manner and ladylike exterior, as well as her bravery and determination, made her a perfect choice. She had earlier been evicted from the bus she rode each day in a similar incident which made it likely that she would be arrested in a second incident. She was an active member of the local NAACP and when her arrest came that group and others were ready to mount the boycott which lasted 381 days.

The careful planning by a large and united group of protesters ready to act immediately after Parks’ arrest is rarely mentioned when her story is told. Neither is her preparation. It fits the pattern of individualism we’ve all been schooled in as Americans to perpetuate the myth that one individual taking a courageous stand is all that is needed to

fight injustice. It doesn’t tell the whole truth that collective work and cooperation are necessary for social change, and that individuals can easily be silenced by the system if they don’t have a movement behind them.

This is true for International Women’s Day, as well. These days, if people in the U.S. hear about IWD at all, it is generally from a newspaper supplement on the rise to success of female administrators of one kind or another, or a spread on women business owners. While it is important for women to have opportunities for achievement in all kinds of work, features such as these have nothing to do with the history of International Women’s Day, or with the way it is currently celebrated in much of the world.

International Women’s Day traces its history back to February, 1909, when the Woman’s National Committee of the Socialist Party USA initiated a national day of action to support women’s suffrage, while connecting this issue to the broader movement for social justice. A year later, the Socialist International declared a global day of action along the same lines.

In August, 1914, World War I erupted, leading to the slaughter of millions. International Women’s Day became a focal point for those calling for an immediate end to the war. On February 23, 1917, (March 8 on the new calendar), tens of thousands of Russian women celebrated International Women’s Day by surging onto the streets of Petrograd demanding peace. These militant protests led to the downfall of the czar and paved the way for Russia’s decision to leave the war.

In March, 2006, senseless war continues. Once again we are told that military action and occupation promotes freedom and peace, and once again we know that the real reasons relate to power and greed: forces at the core of capitalism and patriarchy.

This International Women’s Day, as women throughout the world take to the streets to demonstrate our opposition to militarism, imperialism, and social injustice, we commemorate the heroic actions of the socialist women of 1909 and 1917, and the radical women of the Civil Rights era. In doing so, we maintain an unbroken link in the collective struggle to replace global capitalism with a global society based on the revolutionary principles of democratic socialism. ●

Mary Alice Herbert is a retired kindergarten teacher and a member of the executive committee of the Peace and Justice caucus of the National Education Association. Mal was the Socialist Party’s vice-presidential candidate in 2004, and lives in Putney, Vermont.

Susan Dorazio is a child care worker and the convener of the Women’s Commission of the Socialist Party USA. She lives in Montague, Massachusetts.



An illustration of Harriet Tubman, by Tom Keogh. His paintings and illustrations have been shown in the Museum of Modern Art, United Nations offices, and in union newsletters. Most recently, Tom helped produce Wobblies! A Graphic History of the Industrial Workers of the World, published by Verso Press.

Clara Zetkin: Socialist Feminist & Revolutionary

by Eric Chester

Clara Zetkin was one of the foremost proponents of a feminist perspective within the Socialist International in its heyday prior to World War I. As editor of the German Social Democratic Party's magazine for women, she sought to highlight a series of issues related to the oppression of women in a capitalist society. In 1910, an international congress of socialist women approved a resolution presented by Zetkin establishing an International Women's Day. (The Socialist Party of the United States had initiated the commemoration of such an event in 1909, but on a national basis.)

Thus, as we celebrate International Women's Day in 2006, it seems appropriate to reprint one of Zetkin's most important writings. Zetkin, along with Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht and Franz Mehring, provided the leadership for a loose network of radicals that began questioning the authority of the Party's leadership during the first years of the last century. This nascent left-wing opposition condemned the Party's leaders for their willingness to compromise and their timidity in confronting the Prussian state. Hiding behind a blanket of Marxist rhetoric, the German Social Democratic Party was becoming increasingly trapped within the boundaries of the safe and respectable.

The cozy arrangements constructed in the early twentieth century collapsed in August 1914, when World War I tumbled the entire world into an unprecedented bloodbath. (Ultimately, twenty million people would die as the result of a pointless contest of imperialist powers.) The leadership of the Social Democratic Party quickly rallied behind the war effort, zealously defending the imperial pretensions of the Kaiser's government. Only the left-wing, soon expelled from the Party, stood up against the onslaught of patriotic fervor.

The following piece was written by Zetkin as the manifesto of an international congress of anti-war socialist women convened in Switzerland in March 1915. Upon her return, Zetkin was placed under arrest for four months

for challenging the war and Prussian militarism. She and her comrades in the Spartacus Bund held firm to their principles despite the repressive force of an autocratic state and despite the venomous hostility of the pro-war socialists. Her courage and commitment remain a model for those of us who hope to organize a militant anti-war opposition in the center of the only remaining global empire. ●

Eric Chester is the convener of the International Commission of the Socialist Party and the author of the new book True Mission: The Labor Party Question in the United States (Pluto Press, 2004). He lives in Western Massachusetts.

Women of the Working People

by Clara Zetkin

Where are your husbands? Where are your sons?

For eight months now, they have been at the front. They have been torn from their work and their homes. Adolescents, the support and hope of their parents, men at the prime of their lives, men with graying hair, the supporters of their families: All of them are wearing military uniforms, are vegetating in trenches and are ordered to destroy what diligent labor created.

Millions are already resting in mass graves, hundreds upon hundreds of thousands lie in military hospitals with torn-up bodies, smashed limbs, blinded eyes, destroyed brains and ravished by epidemics or case down by exhaustion. Burnt villages and towns, wrecked bridges, devastated forests and ruined fields are the traces of their deeds.

Proletarian Women! One has told you that your husbands and sons left for the war in order to protect their weak women and children and to guard home and hearth.

But what is the reality? The shoulders of the weak women now have to bear a double burden. Bereft of protection, you are exposed to grief and hardships. Your children are hungry and cold. One threatens to take away the roof over your head. Your hearth is cold and empty.

One has talked to you about a grand brother and sisterhood between the high and the low, of a cessation of strife between poor and rich. Well, the cessation of strife

meant that the entrepreneur lowered your wages, the tradesman and unscrupulous speculator raised prices and the landlord threatens to evict you. The state claims impoverishment and the bourgeois welfare authorities cook a meager soup for you and urge you to be thrifty.

What is the purpose of this war which has caused you such terrible suffering? One tells you, the well-being and the defense of the fatherland. Of what does the well-being of the fatherland consist?

Should it not mean the well-being of its millions, those millions who are being changed to corpses, cripples, unemployed beggars and orphans by this war?

Who endangers the well-being of the fatherland? Is it the men who, clad in other uniforms, stand beyond the frontier, men who did not want this war any more than your men did and who do not know why they should have to murder their brothers? No! The fatherland is endangered by those that reap profit from the hardships of the broad masses and who want to build their domination upon suppression.

Who profits from this war? Only a tiny majority in each nation.

The manufacturers of rifles and cannons, of armor plate and torpedo boats, the shipyard owners and the suppliers of the armed forces' needs. In the interest of their profits they have fanned the hatred among the people, thus contributing to the outbreak of the war. This war is beneficial for the capitalists in general. Did not the labor of the dispossessed and the exploited masses accumulate goods that those who created them are not allowed to use? They are too poor to pay for them! Labor's sweat has created these goods and labor's blood is supposed to create new foreign markets to dispose of them. Colonies are supposed to be conquered where the capitalists want to rob the natural resources and exploit the cheapest labor force.

Not the defense of the fatherland but its augmentation is the purpose of this war. The capitalist system wants it that way, and without the exploitation and suppression of man by man, that system cannot exist.

The workers have nothing to gain from this war but they stand to lose everything that is dear to them.

Wives of workers, Women workers! The men of the belligerent countries

have been silenced. The war has dimmed their conscience, paralyzed their will and disfigured their entire being.

But you women who besides your gnawing concern for your dear ones at the front have to bear deprivations and misery, what are you waiting for in expressing your desire for peace and your protest against this war? What is holding you back?

Until now you have been patient for our loved ones. Now you must act for your husbands and sons.

Enough of murdering! This call resounds in many tongues, millions of women raise it. It finds its echo in the trenches where the consciences of the people's sons are stirred up again this murder.

Working Women of the People! In these difficult days, Socialist women from Germany, England, France, and Russia have gathered. Your hardships and sufferings have moved their hearts. For your sake and the sake of your loved ones, they are asking you to work for peace. Just like their minds met across the battlefields, so you must get together from all countries in order to raise the cry: Peace! Peace!

The world war has demanded the greatest sacrifices from you. The sons that you bore in suffering and pain, the men who were your companions during your difficult struggles, have been torn away from you. In comparison with these sacrifices, all other sacrifices must seem small and insignificant.

All humankind is looking upon you women proletarians of the belligerent countries. You are destined to be the heroines and redeemers!

Unify as one will and one deed! What your husbands and sons cannot yet aver, announce with a million voices: The laboring people of all countries are a people of brothers. Only the united will of this people can stop the killing. Socialism alone will assure the future peace of humankind. Down with capitalism which sacrifices hecatombs of people to the wealth and the power of the possessing class! Down with War! Break through to Socialism! ●

Bern, Switzerland, March 1915, the International Socialist Women's Conference; published in Berner Tagwacht 3 April 1915; from Clara Zetkin, Selected Writings, edited by Philip S. Foner, International Publishers, 1984.

Book review

by Maggie Phair

Bananeras by Dana Frank, South End Press, Cambridge, Mass, 2005, 109 p. ppd. \$12

The banana is everywhere, but many of us will be surprised to learn that most banana workers in Central America are unionized. However, in Ecuador, banana workers are entirely without unions and earn as little as one fifth of what their compadres earn in unionized companies, and without healthcare or other benefits. Chiquita, Dole, and Del Monte are the largest growers. Bonita is the fifth largest brand, and is entirely non-union.

Women banana workers are employed only in the packing houses, where they are expected to handle 42 pound boxes. (In California, the limit is 25 pounds.) Bananeras mujeres have argued that their participation as union activists and officers is required to make the unions strong.

Beginning in Honduras, where they had the help of some leftists and male unionists, women have moved from studying their own daily lives to understanding the broadest of global political-economic processes.

Women attending workshops and conferences have learned everything from

women's rights and ending machismo to transnational issues like CAFTA (Central American Free Trade Agreement) and they have learned leadership skills as well. Every woman attending a workshop conducts another workshop for ten more women at her own plantation, who each give another workshop for ten more women.

Dana Frank gives the past role of the U.S. labor movement and the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) as essentially harmful to Central and South American unions because of the extreme anti-communism that united the AFL-CIO with the U.S. state department. In that period, European unions, and especially Danish unions, helped the banana unions and bananeras mujeres. Now the AFL-CIO has terminated AIFLD, and actually helps the banana workers and other unions in Central and South America. Frank lists U.S. Labor Education in the Americas (*US/LEAP*, www.usleap.org) as being especially helpful.

Contact Maggie Phair at maggiephair@peoplepc.com for a shorter version of this book written especially for children—who know bananas but not bananeros. ●

Maggie Phair is a retired woman, former union activist, and former Socialist Party USA co-chair. She lives in California.

Chicanas, continued from p. 7

gressive organization that challenges our cultural view of women, people of color, queers and the poor through art, alliances, literature and action. Because of their work, they have been attacked by the Religious Right and even conservative white gay men. Their attacks in the media culminated in Esperanza's defunding of over \$70,000 from the city's art budget. A lot of that money was earmarked to the Lesbian/Gay Film Festival, the MujerCanto festival (an arts festival that featured women) and MujerArtes (another mujer based arts program). However, Graciela, her partner Gloria and the rest of the

Board and staff of Esperanza weathered the storm.

Considering the many women who are making significant contributions to Chicana activism, there are still very few websites promoting their causes. In fact, there is a pronounced absence of Chicana activism in the media in general. Education is foremost. For more information about these women and others, you can go to www.chicanas.com or start your own website in honor of the Chicana in you. ●

B. Guise has written several articles for various socialist publications. She lives in Texas and works in radio.

Obituary, and Other Observations

by Myrtle Kastner

Ariel Sharon, aka The Bull Dozer, suffered a massive stroke at 77, putting an end to a life-long dedication to Zionist expansionism: from his youth as a terrorist during the British Mandate, through the invasion and occupation of Lebanon (during which he over-saw the massacre of Palestinians in the refugee camps of Sabra and Chatila), to the building of “Facts on the Ground” (i.e., expansion of Jewish settlements, confiscation of Palestinian homes and farms, destruction of olive groves, diversion of water resources, and the building of the wall).

Preceded in death by his long-time enemy, Arafat, by the “Road Map for Peace,” by victims of Israeli attacks on almost every nearby country, by the refugees in Lebanon, and by two dozen U.S. navy men aboard the U.S.S. Liberty (1967).

Survived by Palestinians and Israelis who still hope—and organize

for—a land where they can live and work together as they did before foreign policies created a false division between them.

Democracy to the Middle East

Speaking of Lebanon, Condoleeza said, “You cannot have free elections under military occupation.”

Of course, this does not apply to Iraq—or to Palestine.

Speaking of Egypt, Condi said, “You must have multiple-party elections, with free access to the media.” Great idea! Let’s try it in the U.S.

CEO of Halliburton to VP of USA

It’s great to make your profits certain.

The military contract way—And if folks in New Orleans are hurtin’ / Let them buy some stock in Halliburton!

Myrtle Kastner is on the executive committee of the Socialist Party of Wisconsin and a member of the Mid-East Committee of Peace Action of Wisconsin.

Socialist Party USA

Statement of Principles

The Socialist Party strives to establish a radical democracy that place’s people’s lives under their own control: where working people own and control the means of production through democratically elected bodies; where workers have the right to form unions freely, and to strike and engage in other forms of job actions; and where the production of society is used for the benefit of all humanity, not for the private profit of a few. We believe socialism and democracy are one and indivisible.

The Socialist Party fights for socially progressive changes compatible with a socialist future. We support union and electoral action independent of the capitalist-controlled two-party system to present socialist alternatives. We strive for democratic revolutions—radical and fundamental changes in the structure and basis of the economic, political, cultural, social and personal relations—to dissolve the power now exercised by the few who control great wealth and the state.

The Socialist Party is a democratic, multitendency organization, with its structure and practices visible and accessible to all members.

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