

## Editorial

**“Remembering” Auschwitz in Order  
to Rewrite History**

Last week the United Nations commemorated the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp by the Soviet Red Army with a special session, the first time that such a commemoration has taken place. Auschwitz was the largest of the death camps where the Nazis murdered millions of Jews, communists, gypsies and others. The proposal for such a commemoration originated with the United States and Israel, and both countries are using the occasion to rewrite history in order to cover up their own nefarious roles in the Nazi holocaust.

When the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933, the governments of the United States, Britain, France and Poland saw it as an opportunity to rid the

world of communism and encouraged Hitler to attack the Soviet Union. Despite the ban on munitions manufacturing, the western imperialists not only turned a blind eye to the economy being put on a war footing in Germany, but were instrumental in financing the revival of the German munitions industry. In fact, American companies such as General Motors and Ford were among the largest manufacturers of military equipment in Germany and British Prime Minister Chamberlain had extensive personal investments in German munitions companies. For several years prior to 1939 the Soviet Union warned the West that the Nazis were organizing a disaster for Europe, but Britain and the U.S. were confident that

*See page 2: “Remembering” Auschwitz*

## Commentary

**Escalating American Rhetoric Against Iran**

While U.S. President George W. Bush was talking in flowery terms in his inaugural address about the U.S. mission to spread “freedom” and “liberty” around the globe, Vice-President Dick Cheney was telling reporters how the Bush administration intends to achieve that goal. According to Cheney, Iran is at the top of the list of those countries in need of liberating by the Americans. He threatened to take the issue of Iran’s nuclear program to the UN Security Council if it does not capitulate to U.S. demands that it end all nuclear research programs. If Iraq is the precedent, then the next step will be outright invasion.

Cheney went on to say that Israel “might well

decide to act first” to destroy Iran’s nuclear research facilities. This statement by Cheney was seen by many as *de facto* authorization for Israel to go ahead with its threats to bomb Iranian nuclear facilities, just as it bombed Iraqi nuclear facilities during the 1980s..

For her part, during her confirmation hearings newly appointed Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice also attacked Iran. She labelled it an “outpost of tyranny” and condemned it for supporting terrorism and being hostile to Israel.

It is not clear whether this escalating rhetoric is a signal that an attack on Iran is imminent or merely an attempt to intensify the pressure on the Iranian government. It does not appear feasible for the U.S.

*See page 4: American Rhetoric*

***“Remembering” Auschwitz...from page 1***

Hitler’s fanatical anti-communism would lead him to attack the Soviet Union first. They believed that both Germany and the Soviet Union would be so weakened by such a war that they could march in and take over both countries in the aftermath.

Within most European countries, other reactionary forces were also counting on the Nazis to assist them in implementing their own agendas. The French imperialists allowed the Nazis to organize sympathetic organizations within France because they were attacking the French communists whom the French monopoly capitalists considered the most serious threat to their rule. The Polish government also saw communism and the Soviet Union as bigger threats than Nazism.

For their part, the main Zionist leaders, many of whom went on to become founding members of the State of Israel, hoped to take advantage of the virulent anti-Semitism of the Nazis to promote Jewish emigration to Palestine. Even after the rounding up of German Jews began, the Zionist leadership opposed any form of resistance within the Jewish community, advocating instead that Jews should submit and refrain from “provoking” the Nazis. When U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt was considering opening the U.S. to Jews fleeing Nazi persecution, the main American Zionist organizations sent a delegation to meet with the president and discourage him from doing so. Their rationale was that if European Jews had a choice they would emigrate to the United States rather than to Palestine.

This collusion continued even as the worst Nazi crimes became known. For example, For example, during his trial in Israel in 1961, Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi bureaucrat in charge of the death camps, testified that he struck a deal with Rudolf Kastner, a leading Hungarian Zionist, who agreed to advise Hungarian Jews not to resist transportation to the concentration camps. (See *The Kasztner Affair* on page 2) In return, the Zionist leaders were given safe passage out of Hungary along with their considerable

wealth. The vast majority of Hungarian Jews considered themselves to be Hungarians and were not interested in Zionism or Palestine, so the Zionists considered them a “dead branch on the tree of Zion” and not worth saving.

Those who contributed to building up the Nazis and those who collaborated with them or looked the other way as they carried out their plans to rid Europe of Jews, communists, gypsies and other “undesirables” would now have us believe that it was they who are the greatest defenders of the Jewish people. Most news reports did not even mention that it was the Soviet Red Army that liberated Auschwitz, while the Pope used the anniversary to launch a tirade against communism. Yet, the reality is that in all of the countries in Europe that were occupied by the Nazis, the main people fighting against Nazism and organizing to defend the Jewish community were the communists. The same was the case within the Jewish community; it was the Jewish communists who organized and led the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and countless other acts of Jewish resistance. Furthermore, it was the Soviet Red Army which broke the back of the Nazi Wehrmacht at Stalingrad and Kursk and which, along with the communist-led partisans, liberated most of occupied Europe. Meanwhile, sections of the Polish nationalist movement spent most of the war murdering communists and Jews. The killing of Jews by these Polish nationalists continued well after the war ended until they were rounded up and jailed by the Red Army and the new Polish state.

It is quite appropriate for the world to commemorate the liberation of Auschwitz and to remember the lessons of the Nazi Holocaust. However, it is the real history of that period that should be remembered, not some fairy tale told by the imperialists and Zionists to cover up the crimes that they committed at that time, as well as to justify the crimes they are committing today.

## The Kasztner Affair

Rezsö (Rudolph) Kasztner was a leader of the Hungarian Zionist movement who worked to encourage the emigration of Hungarian Jews to Palestine throughout the 1930s. During the Second World War, Kasztner collaborated with Nazi officials in Hungary to save the lives of 1,684 of the country's 180,000 Jewish residents – so-called community leaders, who fled to Palestine. As part of the deal with the Nazis, Kasztner and other Jewish leaders then assisted in organizing the transport of tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews to death camps. Zionist leaders assured those deported that they were being sent to work camps or for treatment for medical ailments; as a result, most of those deported co-operated with the process.

Kasztner himself emigrated to Palestine and after the creation of the State of Israel got a job as an official with the Ministry of Tourism. In 1953, an Israeli journalist, Malkiel Grunwald, published an article in which he accused Kasztner of collaboration and wrote that his actions helped ensure the destruction of Hungarian Jewry. Backed by the Attorney General of Israel, Kasztner sued for slander and won. However, Grunwald appealed and in 1955 the Supreme Court of Israel reversed the lower court's ruling. Judge Benjamin Halevi, in his decision exonerating Grunwald, wrote:

“The masses of Jews from Hungary's ghettos

obediently boarded the deportation trains without knowing their fate. They were full of confidence in the false information that they were being transferred ... The Nazis could not have misled the masses of Jews so conclusively had they not spread their false information through Jewish channels. The Jews of the ghettos would not have trusted the Nazi or Hungarian rulers. But they had trust in their Jewish leaders. ... The sacrifice of the vital interests of the majority of the Jews, in order to rescue the prominents, was the basic element in the agreement between Kasztner and the Nazis. This agreement fixed the division of the nation into two unequal camps: a small fragment of prominents, whom the Nazis promised Kasztner to save, on the one hand, and the great majority or Hungarian Jews whom the Nazis designated for death, on the other hand. An imperative condition for the rescue of the first camp by the Nazis was that Kasztner will not interfere in the action of the Nazis against the other camp and will not hamper them in its extermination. Kasztner fulfilled this condition. He concentrated his efforts in the rescue of the prominents and treated the camp of the doomed as if they had already been wiped out from the book of the living. One cannot estimate the damage caused by Kasztner's collaboration and put down the number of victims which it cost Hungarian Jews.”

Kasztner was assassinated in 1957.

## Israel Reinstating Psychological Warfare Unit

News reports from Israel last week indicate that the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) has decided to reform its psychological warfare unit which is used almost entirely against Palestinian suspects, detainees and prisoners. The unit was supposed to have been disbanded in 2000, although reports of IDF use of psychological torture and warfare against Palestinians have continued over the past five years. Many Israeli commentators have speculated that the unit's duties were assumed by the regular army.

According to IDF spokespeople, the aim of the unit is to influence opinion in the occupied territories.

IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon has given interviews in which he said there was a need to combat Palestinian violent resistance by “sear[ing] into the consciousness” of Palestinians its futility. Ya'alon is reported to have given the order for the creation of the new unit, which will contain about 70 soldiers. Recruitment is focusing on Arabic-speaking soldiers with experience in the occupied territories, with senior commanders already selected based on experience in espionage.

*See page 4: Psychological Warfare*

## Fifth World Social Forum Held

The fifth annual World Social Forum opened in Porto Alegre, Brazil on January 26 with a march of over 200,000 workers, youth, indigenous peoples, farmers and activists from around the world. The forum, first organized to counter the annual gathering of world leaders and the world's biggest capitalists in Davos, Switzerland, has turned into a gathering place where activists from around the world can gather to discuss the worldwide movement against capitalism, globalization and imperialist war.

Marchers walked behind a giant banner inscribed in four languages with the slogan of the World Social Forum - 'Another world is possible'. Thousands of other banners and placards opposed everything from the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq, to the neoliberal policies of privatization that have caused disaster for the peoples of the world, the proposed Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, and the U.S.-backed puppet government in Haiti. Other marchers held signs in support of struggles of the people of the world for true freedom, sovereignty, peace and social justice.

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### ***American Rhetoric...from page 1***

to launch a military strike against Iran while it is still bogged down in Iraq, although the Bush administration may actually believe its own propaganda that the Iranian people will not defend their theocratic government. The U.S. may also believe that getting the Israelis to do its dirty work would be a cheap and easy way of teaching the Iranian government a lesson without the necessity of having to commit any American troops in the immediate future. However, an Israeli strike on Iran would greatly inflame passions in the Middle East and increase the level of struggle against the U.S. throughout the region.

Whether or not an American invasion of Iran is imminent, the rhetoric coming out of the Bush administration makes it clear that it intends to continue with a foreign policy of creating crises in one country after another in order to justify U.S. aggression. It is a foreign policy based on the premise of "war without end" as a method of expanding the U.S. empire.

Following the march, the forum was officially opened by representatives of different struggles in Asia, Africa and Latin America, including Ivette Gonzalez, the daughter of Rene Gonzalez, one of the five Cubans imprisoned unjustly in the U.S. for his work to prevent terrorist attacks against Cuba.

Over 78,000 participants registered for the Forum, which runs for six days and includes over 2,000 separate discussions, conferences, debates or sessions on different topics of concern to the movement. Hundreds of cultural presentations are also scheduled.

*Modern Communism* will carry reports on some of the discussions at the Forum in our next issue.

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### ***Psychological Warfare...from page 3***

According to media reports, the group has not yet been established, although a commander and other senior officers responsible for leading the unit have been selected. It is these leaders who are reported to have authorized a drop of 250,000 leaflets in the Gaza strip in the weeks leading up to local council elections. The leaflets denounced Hamas, blaming the group for the use of violence against civilians by IDF forces. According to the rather circular logic presented in the leaflet, if there was no armed resistance against Israeli occupation forces in the Gaza strip, the occupation forces would not be needed. Hamas went on to win the local elections with a two-thirds majority.

## **Modern Communism**

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