

THE WORLD IN DANGER

by Daphne Liddle

HUMAN activity, especially intensive farming, is damaging the natural environment all around the planet and threatening the welfare of future generations, according to a report delivered last Wednesday by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

The research was commissioned by the United Nations and was carried out by 1,360 scientists from 95 countries over four years at a cost of \$21 million (£11.3 million). It involved UN agencies, international scientific organisations and development agencies.

The details were released at meetings in Beijing, London, Washington, Tokyo, Brasilia, Nairobi, Cairo and New Delhi.

far too fast

And the basic conclusion was that human society is using up the earth's resources far too fast, risking dramatic global decline.

But there is a tremendous amount that can be done to lessen and even reverse the damage being done if there is enough investment in new technologies and changes in behaviour.

The authors of the report describe it as a "stark warning" for the entire world. "Human activity is putting such a strain on the natural functions of the earth that the ability of the planet's ecosystems to sustain future generations can no longer be taken for granted," it said.

Human demand for food, fresh water, timber, fibre and fuel means that more and more land is claimed for agriculture and nearly a quarter of the total land surface of the earth is now cultivated.

The demand for water has doubled in the last 40 years so that humans now use between 40 and 50 per cent of all available fresh water running off land. In many places the demand for water for irrigation is putting a strain on supplies of drinking water.

So much water is taken from our great rivers that for parts of the year the Yellow River in China, the Nile in Africa and the Colorado in America dry up before reaching the sea.

At least a quarter of all fish stocks are over harvested and in some areas the catch is now less than one per cent of what it was before industrial fishing.

An estimated 90 per cent of the total weight of the ocean's large predator fish – tuna, swordfish and sharks – has disappeared in recent years.

Around 12 per cent of bird species, 25 per cent of mammals and 30 per cent of amphibians are threatened with extinction.

The world's forests, mangrove swamps and coral reefs are all damaged and threatened with further serious damage.

These problems were all more or less expected, though not to the degree the report has revealed.

But other major problems have gone unsuspected. These include the results of the sudden, unprecedented release of free nitrogen and phosphorous into the environment – mainly from agricultural fertilisers. This has led to massive blooms of algae in the oceans and rivers, using up all the oxygen and killing other aquatic life.

The report identified this as a potential "tipping point" that could destroy entire ecosystems.

surprise

Dr Walt Reid, one of the authors, said: "Surprisingly, though despite a major body of monitoring information and scientific research supporting this finding, the issue of nutrient loading barely appears in policy discussions at global levels and only a few countries place major emphasis on the problem.

"This issue is perhaps the area where we find the biggest 'disconnect' between a major problem related to ecosystem services and the lack of policy action in response."

Another neglected threat is the way species are being spread around the world, leading to a loss of

local diversity. For example, the Baltic Sea now around 100 species of creature living in its waters that originated in different parts of the world, a third of them natives of North America's Great Lakes. At the same time, the Great Lakes now contain 170 alien species, a third of them native to the Baltic.

devastating

New species in an area can have a devastating effect on native creatures. The American comb jellyfish wiped out 26 commercially important varieties of fish in the Black Sea.

The scientists are warning that nature is not merely something nice to be enjoyed at weekends

and conservation is not a luxury.

A team of biologists in 1997 attempted an audit of the "business services" provided by nature to human economic activities – for example the free pollination of crops and air conditioning provided by green leaves.

They estimated nature's contribution at \$33 trillion (£17.75 trillion) a year, nearly twice the global gross national product for that year.

The Millennium Assessment Team concluded that "it lies within the power of human societies to ease the strains we are putting on the nature services of the planet, while continuing to use them to bring better living standards to all.

Iraq's 'great escape'

by our Arab Affairs
Correspondent

AMERICAN troops are keeping a low-profile in Iraq these days, anxious to avoid any incidents that might further enrage the Sunni Muslim community whose traditional and clerical leaders are still refusing to take part in a new puppet government two months after the bogus elections they boycotted.

Three Romanian journalists and their Iraqi-American go-between were kidnapped on Monday – seized near their Baghdad hotel shortly after interviewing puppet premier Iyyad Alawi – provoking demands in Bucharest for the withdrawal of their 800-strong contingent. Two pipelines were sabotaged in the northern Iraqi oil-fields and the quisling director of the South Oil Company narrowly escaped death when a roadside bomb was detonated as his car passed by in Basra.

Street battles continue between guerrillas in a number of towns and cities in central Iraq. Attacks on the Americans in Fallujah are now at the same rate as they were before the city was stormed by US Marines and a number of partisans have es-

caped from an American concentration camp in southern Iraq.

The most spectacular action of the week was the "great escape" from Camp Bucca, the second largest American prison camp in Iraq. Last Saturday American guards discovered a tunnel leading to the outside. Several hundred metres long, it had taken many weeks for the prisoners to dig in secret, right under the noses of their captors, using tools made from tent poles, buckets and empty containers. Dirt from the tunnels was scattered around the camp square or thrown under the latrines. The US military authorities confirmed that a number of prisoners had escaped following a head-count but no figures have been released.

prisoners

The Americans are holding over 10,500 prisoners in Iraqi concentration camps, more than double the number held last October. Most are held at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad. Camp Bucca comes second and prominent political prisoners, including former members of the Baathist government, are confined at Camp Cropper at Baghdad International Airport. A number are also held in US military bases throughout occupied Iraq.

Prisoners, often arrested

• The US refuses to act.

"Achieving this, however, will require radical changes in the way nature is treated at every level of decision-making and new ways of co-operation between government, business and civil society. The

warning signs are there for us all to see. The future now lies in our hands."

Dr Reid added: "We simply must establish policies that require natural costs to be taken into account for all economic decisions."

This is a compelling argument to abandon the unplanned, competitive, profit-motivated production methods of capitalism for the planned, considered and collaborative methods of socialism.

FUND

Our fund this week is only £62! It brings our total for March so far to £2,539.14, which is £460.86 short of our £3,000 monthly target.

We thank our regular London pensioner donor for £27.40, another north London pensioner for £10 and our Metropolitan branch for £10. We also thank a senior citizen comrade from Surbiton for £20.

Comrades, we cannot leave it all to our dedicated pensioners to support this paper. Maybe you've all been busy over Easter going on demonstrations or attending conferences.

But our younger supporters, friends and comrades must put their hands in their pockets now as a matter of urgency and send us whatever they can as soon as they can and send it to the New Worker Fund, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

email: party@ncp.clara.net

News Desk 020 7223 4050

THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

Howard's flight

IT'S BEEN FUN and games for the Tories this week. One of their leading MPs admits that their election manifesto contained only an edited version of their plans to cut public services and then gets kicked out of the party for spilling the beans.

Speaking at a private function millionaire Tory MP Howard Flight admitted that Conservative plans for cuts had been "sieved" to make them more acceptable to the electorate but that much more could be done after they won the election.

Howard Flight's remarks were for the Tory faithful – the Thatcherite core who've made plenty since 1979 and who want to ensure that the entire burden of the capitalist crisis remains on the backs of the working class.

No one can seriously believe that Tory leader Michael Howard was unaware of the considered views of his deputy chairman who also acted as the Tories' chief liaison officer with the financiers of the City of London. But once leaked Howard moved swiftly to boot Flight out of the Conservative party and he's now running around denying that there is any hidden agenda behind their election promises.

Howard says, "We won't promise one thing before an election and do something else after an election. We won't say one thing in private and another in public," though that's what the Tories are all about and Flight thinks he's done nothing wrong.

Whether Flight remains the Tory candidate for Arundel and South Downs is a matter of complete indifference to working people. But if anyone had any doubts that a Tory government would be infinitely worse than Labour's they would have been easily dispelled by Howard Flight's remarks.

Blair into reverse

What a difference a day makes – especially to Blair & Co who now realise they've got a fight on their hands to stave off the Liberal Democrats and get Labour's core working class vote out on election day.

In the past Blair revelled in his ability to ignore the unions and the democratic will of the Labour Party. This was the man who told Labour Conference in 2003 that he could "only go one way; I've not got a reverse gear".

Now he's backed down over extending the retirement age for the time being. Now he's promising to extend the right to four weeks paid leave to cover the traditional bank holidays.

Most employers already give their workers 20 days annual leave over and above our national public holidays. Others, the millions in poorly paid and badly organised or non-unionised labour, have their eight bank holidays deducted from their allowance or they are forced to work bank holidays without being given other days off in compensation.

This modest and long-overdue reform hasn't fallen from the skies. It's come from pressure from the unions and working people whose votes Blair has to get if Labour is to win a third term in office.

More pressure from the unions and the left of the labour movement must now be exerted to defeat Blair, Brown and all the other craven class-collaborators at the helm of the Labour Party and change the direction of the party and the government towards the demands of the people.

Treasure islands

The world's richest people have stashed away around \$11.5 trillion (£6.18 trillion) in offshore tax havens, according to Tax Justice Network, a group of accountants and economists.

This sum is 10 times Britain's Gross Domestic Product and earns its owners \$860 billion (£462 billion) in interest every year. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has confirmed that tax avoidance is a growing international problem for rich and middle-income countries.

Dog tracks

The local authorities in Dresden are introducing compulsory DNA testing and registration for the city's 12,000 dogs so that if they foul the public streets, they can be traced and their owners fined for failing to clean up after them.

Say no more

Alarming

A scientist employed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has invented a new kind of alarm clock that hides itself, forcing the sleeper to search the room in order to turn it off and ensuring that they are properly awake.

Gauri Nanda said she made the device, which she calls "Clocky", after struggling to get up in the mornings. "I've been known to hit the snooze button for up to two hours," she said, "or even accidentally turn it off."

A Clocky looks like a furry swiss roll on wheels. When you hit the snooze button, it rolls itself off the bedside table and wheels around the bedroom floor, bumping into things before settling on a place to hide. When the alarm sounds, the sleeper must get out of bed to find it and turn it off. The fur covering is to make

it look endearing so you won't throw it out of the window in anger.

Crime of capitalism

Around 10.6 million children under the age of five die every year from preventable causes linked to poverty, according to the World Health Organisation.

Forty per cent of these die within a month of birth and 40 per cent of these deaths are in southern and western Africa.

The immediate causes of death are: pneumonia (19 per cent), diarrhoea (17 per cent), malaria (eight per cent), measles (four per cent) and HIV/Aids (three per cent). Neonatal deaths account for 37 per cent and of these premature birth account for (28 per cent), sepsis or pneumonia (26 per cent) and asphyxia (23 per cent).

Poor nutrition is a factor in the majority of cases.

Unequal in death

Oxfam International last week reported that up to four times as many women as men died in the Boxing Day Tsunami. In the worst hit area of North Aceh in Indonesia 77 per cent of the fatalities were women and in the worst affected village it was 80 per cent. Similar figures were revealed in Sri Lanka and India.

The difference is accounted for by many of the men in the region being out in fishing boats or at work when the tsunami struck and were better able to get away, while the women were at home with the children. They were unable to run or swim so strongly as the men and many lost their lives trying to save the children.

Researchers found that in Sri Lanka few women could swim or climb trees. Authorities fear the shortage of women in the surviving communities will cause many problems.

by Caroline Colebrook

TWENTY-five rail workers, who are planning a protest march from Glasgow to London, gathered on Westminster Bridge last Thursday, along with friends and supporters, for the launch of a campaign by the RMT transport union for Britain's railways to be brought back into public ownership.

The "Rail Against Privatisation" protest march is due to take place between 16th April and 30th April and will pass through 14 cities on its way, urging people to make renationalisation an election issue.

Last Thursday's event coincided with the publication of a new report from the think tank Catalyst on the costs of privatisation and the benefits of renationalisation.

The marchers will deliver the following messages to the electorate as they march:

The failure of privatisation:

1) In 1993/94 before privatisation over 90 per cent of trains on the publicly owned national network ran on time. By comparison in the year to 31 December 2004, the privately owned railways could only deliver 82.8 of services on time.

2) The public subsidy now paid to the railways is £4.5 billion, more than three times the public subsidy paid to British Rail.

3) A recent report by the independent think tank Catalyst calculated that £800 million a year is taken out of the industry as returns to private lenders and investors – a total leakage of £6 billion since 1996.

The benefits of public ownership:

4) According to catalyst, small transitional costs of taking the railways back into public ownership would subsequently reap huge savings for the taxpayer.

5) Savings would be accrued from reduced bureaucracy and an end to leakages to private providers of fi-

• Marchers and supporters on Westminster Bridge.

nance.

6) On a conservative estimate overall immediate cash savings of taking Network Rail, the train operating companies and rail operating companies into public ownership would be £500 million a year. In addition to a conservative estimate, taking renewals of contracts and franchises back in house would save £400 million a year.

7) So public ownership would deliver total savings of £900 million a year, or £4.5 billion over the lifetime of a Labour government.

8) Catalyst also argues that private sector investment would not be threatened as all private sector investment is ultimately paid from taxpayers and fare payers.

Consequences of continuing with privatisation:

9) Catalyst warns that "without direct public control over costs, money spent in support of the rail industry will prove unsustainable, creating pressure to shift the burden to passengers through fare rises and cuts to services."

10) Indeed the Railways

Bill currently progressing through Parliament will make it easier to reduce the size of the network, raising concerns over line closures, service reductions and job losses. The Strategic Rail Authority's Community rail Development Strategy could result in further cuts to our rural and branch lines.

11) Closing lines and services will further prevent the Government from reaching its domestic emissions targets. In addition the Royal Academy of Engineering has recently estimated that road congestion costs Britain around £15 billion a year.

The march will start in St Enoch's Square in Glasgow on Saturday 16th April with a rally and speakers. It will be in Edinburgh on Sunday 17th and in Newcastle upon Tyne on the 18th. Then it will be in Durham on the 19th, York on the 20th, Hull on the 21st, Leeds on the 22nd, Manchester on the 23rd, Liverpool on the 24th, Derby on the 25th, Nottingham on the 26th, Birmingham on the 27th, Milton Keynes on the

RMT launches campaign for rail renationalisation

HSBC workers fight bonus cuts

BANK workers employed by HSBC are planning a series of one-day strikes in conjunction with the general union Amicus after negotiations over a pay dispute broke down.

The union is set to start balloting workers in call centres and branches of the giant bank on 20th April, with a possibility of the first strike coinciding with HSBC's annual shareholder meeting on 27th May.

Staff are angry over plans to cut bonuses. Amicus says that of 25,000 staff covered by its negotiated pay arrangements, around 10 per cent will get no pay rise at all this year and another 40 per cent will get below inflation pay rises and a cut in their bonuses.

The union pointed out that the average annual pay of a cashier is just £12,500.

The BNP and the Saudi printers

THE NEO-NAZI British National Party has its journal *The Voice of Freedom* printed by Satellite Graphics Limited, based in Barking Essex – a company owned by Saudi Arabs.

BNP leader Nick Griffin was recently arrested on suspicion of inciting racial hatred after he described Islam as a “wicked, vicious faith”

The Voice of Freedom regularly described Islam as a “dangerous” religion and the BNP website regularly attacks Muslims.

Satellite Graphics is a subsidiary of Asharq Al-Awsat Limited, listed in Companies House as a “newspaper printers and publishers”

It specialises in printing Arab, Muslim and Asian newspapers in Britain and throughout the Middle East.

The link between the BNP and Satellite Graphics was uncovered by *Sunday Telegraph* research journalists Daniel Foggo and Peter Zimonjic acting on information from the *Searchlight* anti-fascist team.

Meanwhile the *Searchlight* team organised a very successful Day of Action against the BNP in Dagenham, Essex earlier this month, with 130 people taking part in distributing 36,000 copies of a special local newspaper to homes in the area.

TGWU wins race ruling

THE TREASURER of the British National Party last week lost his claim for compensation after being expelled from the Transport and General Workers' Union.

John Walker from Deeside, North Wales claimed the union had discriminated against him. But an employment tribunal rejected his claim and ruled that comments he made could encourage racism.

The TGWU expelled him in August last year on the grounds that he was inciting racial harassment, contrary to union rules.

A union spokesperson described the tribunal ruling as “very good news”, and added: “The tribunal has now confirmed the union’s decision to expel Mr Walker for advocating views which were against the union’s rules, was justified.”

“Mr Walker’s case was considered by the internal disciplinary process and confirmed by the union’s national executive.”

Teaching unions say no to city academies

THE NATIONAL Union of Teachers and the National Association of Schoolmasters and Women Teachers last week both condemned the Government’s city academy scheme at their annual conferences.

The £5 billion scheme gives private sponsors the power to run a state-funded school as they see fit, in exchange for an investment of £2 million.

costing

The scheme has been tested in 17 academies, costing an average of £25 million each, in London, Manchester, Nottingham, Bristol, Walsall, Middlesbrough and Northampton.

Two others, in Doncaster and Waltham Forest, were planned but dropped after

opposition from teachers and the local communities.

The educational standards in these academies have not been good but the Government is planning another 200. The schools which have been deemed to be failing by the Government inspectors, Ofsted, are most likely to be turned into academies.

NUT general secretary Steve Sinnott told his union conference in Gateshead: “Academies are not in the interests of any child, least of all those from the most challenging backgrounds.”

“They are not accountable to anyone, the whole teaching profession is opposed to them and we’ll be actively campaigning to stop them.”

The motion opposing academies was proposed by Alan Bradley, a teacher at a



• At the NUT conference.

Westminster comprehensive that is due to be turned into an academy. He said: “Academies are the Trojan Horse aimed at the citadel and the heart of comprehensive education.”

“It is a whole sorry carnival – public school headteachers, evangelical car dealers and behind them multinational corporations. It’s throwing out rational thought and bringing in creationism. What next? A GCSE in spell casting?”

Steve White, a teacher from Waltham Forest, said: “Communities are being blackmailed into accepting academies because they’re told it’s the only way to replace their crumbling schools.”

“Millionaire capitalists should keep their hands off our state education system,” said Ken Muller from Islington

Green School. He told the conference that he has used the Freedom of Information Act to study paperwork that revealed that the former Ofsted chief inspector Chris Woodhead had overruled his own inspectors to fail Islington Green School in 1997.

vandalism

He accused Woodhead of “educational vandalism” and called for him to be “named and shamed” along with former Education Secretary David Blunkett and Tony Blair – who had refused to send his own children to the school.

Meanwhile in Brighton, Peter McLoughlin, president of the NASUWT told his union conference that the Government’s decision to go ahead with city academies

was based on “slavish adherence to ideology”. He said they were the biggest threat to a “publicly accountable, high-quality and equitable” education.

“There is potential for biased admissions policies and private sponsor influence over the curriculum. Pursuance of this policy is more a recipe for chaos and confusion than cohesion.”

Both unions were also concerned about the rise in bad behaviour, and in particular violence, among pupils.

The NASUWT voted unanimously that violent pupils should be banned permanently from schools and that parents should take more responsibility for their children’s actions.

The NUT conference called for a charter on acceptable classroom behaviour to stop violent pupils threatening and even trying to kill teachers.

Delegate Robin Head from Somerset said: “We all know the current situation. We live and breathe it in every day. We all know the stress it causes us, our colleagues, our colleagues’ families, when order in the classroom breaks down.”

“Poor pupil behaviour is consistently cited as a reason why staff leave the profession.”

Jenny Cooper from Brent in north London described an incident at her special school where a member of staff was threatened by a pupil with a kitchen knife who wanted to kill her.

Steve Sinnott said: “We can’t tolerate teachers being attacked or other youngsters being attacked.”

NUT president Hilary Bills, a primary school teacher, said that older children tend to copy the behaviour of their football heroes. “They ape what happens on the football pitch,” she said. “I’m sorry, when Wayne Rooney walked across that football pitch and swore, the message went out there that it’s acceptable.”

Pat Astle from Essex blamed the poor quality of the privatised school meals service for bad behaviour. She told the conference: “The decline in pupil behaviour could be linked with the privatisation of school meals. Rubbish in, rubbish out.”

She also quoted figures from the Government’s Teacher Training Agency that showed that 37 per cent of newly qualified teachers felt they had been given inadequate preparation to establish good behaviour and order in the classroom.”

The NUT also voted unanimously for a motion calling for a new ballot for strike action if the Government reneges on its promise to drop plans to raise the normal pension age from 60 to 65.

The previous week the union had halted its ballot for strike action on the threat to pensions after the Government dropped its plans in face of a potential series of national strikes by 1.5 million public sector workers.

ASW pension fight continues

FORMER steelworkers once employed by Allied Steel and Wire in Cardiff, who lost their pensions when the company went bankrupt, last Saturday marched through the city centre to declare their intention to fight on until those pensions are restored in full.

They were joined by other workers from all over the country who had also been affected by the collapse of pension schemes. The march was also supported by Plaid Cymru MP Adam Price.

The Government, under pressure, has conceded that they will get 80 per cent of their pensions but the SAW workers are still fighting for the full restoration of the funds they paid into over many years.

Around 800 ASW employees lost their jobs and most of their occupational pensions when the firm collapsed in July 2002.

Since then they have campaigned tirelessly for new laws to protect workers’ occupational pension funds.

This resulted last year in a Government announcement of a £400 million trust being set up to help them and another 65,000 workers around Britain who have lost some or all of their pensions. This will restore 80 per cent of the pensions of those about to retire.

Former ASW worker John Benson said: “Our campaign carries on until people get 100 per cent of their pensions.”

“It is not clear whether we will even get the 80 per cent promised so we’re not stopping until we get what’s due.”

ITV staff vote for action

BROADCASTING workers employed by ITV across the country last week voted in favour of strike action in a dispute over pay.

Gerry Morrissey, assistant general secretary of the broadcasting union Bectu, said: “It is unacceptable that ITV executives award themselves huge share bonuses but will not give their workers

a pay rise in line with inflation.”

The dispute involves broadcasting, production and studio workers at ITV centres in London, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Norwich, Birmingham and Nottingham.

If the strike action goes ahead programmes such as *Coronation Street* and *Emmerdale* could be affected.

Success in school meals campaign

PRIME Minister Tony Blair last Wednesday pledged another £280 million to be spent over the next three years on improving school meals after the massive support for the campaign by TV celebrity chef Jamie Oliver.

As Oliver delivered a 270,000-signature petition, Blair promised that at least 50 pence will be spent on the ingredients of every primary school dinner and 60 pence on secondary school dinners.

In the run-up to the election, Blair could hardly do anything else. Education Secretary Ruth Kelly is claiming she always intended to improve school dinners in any case.

Jamie Oliver told the press: “It is certainly very positive – 20 years too late but we are talking about the right sort of money.”

“Unfortunately it has taken a documentary and, really, the hearts and emotions of the kids and families we filmed to touch the nation.”

The grants will be directed via local education authorities and involve “new” money from the reserves of the Department for Education and Skills.

The money will be tar-

geted at areas where spending on dinners is lowest though all schools should get something. It will not be ring-fenced after the three years of the plan.

Schools have to decide how much they will spend on food from their total budget – with many demands on it.

And the Department of Education accepts that schools already spending above 50 pence a meal might feel they are being penalised for doing the right thing.

Most schools use a commercial supply caterer and allow around £1 per head per meal. A third of this goes to pay the dinner staff, a third goes as profit for the company, leaving just a third for ingredients.

Those schools that do their own catering can immediately spend significantly more on both ingredients and on dinner staff wages but cutting out the commercial profiteers.

The extra money is needed not just for better ingredients but for extra dinner staff – or longer hours for the existing staff – who need to be better trained to deliver meals that are both nutritious and enjoyable for the children.

Features

Washington's quest for world domination the Wolfowitz, Bolton appointments

by Fred Goldstein
Workers World US

WITH THE appointment of John Bolton as United States ambassador to the United Nations and the nomination of Paul Wolfowitz to be president of the World Bank, President George W Bush is trying to accomplish in the political and financial spheres what he has been unable to do by military means—that is, to drastically and unilaterally expand Washington's world domination.

Bolton ("There is no such thing as the United Nations") and Wolfowitz ("They [the Iraqis] will greet us as liberators") are two of the most hard-driving unilateralist hawks in the Bush administration. Hawkish unilateralism has been a disastrous failure in Iraq; foreign policy by military threat has only stiffened world resistance to Washington and revealed its vulnerability.

So the Bush administration has repositioned Bolton and Wolfowitz into areas where they can continue to pursue their inflexibly belligerent unilateralist policies but where anti-imperialist resistance is not as formidable as it is on the streets of Baghdad or Mosul, Gaza, south Lebanon, Tehran, Pyongyang, Caracas or Havana.

Bolton was formerly undersecretary of state for arms control and international affairs. He was the representative of Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in the State Department. Bolton was a protégé of ultra-rightist, militarist and racist senator Jesse Helms from North Carolina, who said of him at his confirmation hearings in 2001: "John Bolton is the kind of man with whom I would want to stand at Armageddon, if it is to be my lot to be on hand for what is forecast to be the final battle between good and evil in this world."

Bolton: the hit-man diplomat

The United Nations is the arena in which Washington will try to step up its pressures on Iran. Bolton has made a cause out of getting Mohamed El Baradei fired from his job as head of the International Atomic Energy Agency because El Baradei failed to take a tougher line with Iran. Bolton was quoted by the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* in early 2003 as saying that the United States, after defeating Iraq, would "deal with" Iran, Syria and north Korea.

Bolton's appointment is a particularly aggressive move against China, since he is a paid lobbyist for the Taiwanese government and was helping the Taipei regime develop a strategy to get UN recognition.

Bolton had to be excluded as

a negotiator from the six-party talks on North Korea after he called its leader, Kim Jong Il, a "tyrannical dictator" of a country where "life is hell." In an unprecedented concession, the State Department removed him from the delegation after the north Korean government said that "such a human scum and bloodsucker is not entitled to take part in the talks."

According to the *Tribune* article: "In an interview with the *New York Times* in 2002, Bolton was asked about what seemed to be mixed signals from the administration on North Korea. He grabbed a book from a shelf and laid it on the table. Its title: *The End of North Korea*. 'That,' he told the interviewer, 'is our policy.'"

These candid public outbursts from Bolton are nothing more than a crude repetition of Bush's "axis of evil" pronouncements in his belligerent 2002 State of the Union message.

This, however, was all pre-Iraqi resistance, pre-quagmire. It represents the aggressive mood of the neo-cons and the other right-wing militarists who dominate the Bush administration. But while the mood and the ambitions may persist, the world-wide resistance has forced the Bush administration to rely more heavily on diplomatic methods, intimidation, financial strangulation and subversion while it tries to deal with its political setback in Iraq.

The nominations of Bolton and Wolfowitz are calculated to convey forward aggressive momentum by bringing two of the most important world institutions of imperialism, the UN and the World Bank, more closely under the domination of US imperialism—especially the right-wing grouping represented by the Bush administration.

Wolfowitz: integrating militarism and banking

There are several important aspects to Wolfowitz being nominated to head the World Bank. It is highly significant that the second most powerful figure in the Pentagon could make the transition to becoming the head of the largest public financial institution in the imperialist world.

Much is being made of Wolfowitz's lack of experience in economic development. But the World Bank is only secondarily about economic development. Its primary function—all the altruistic pronouncements of its liberal advocates notwithstanding—is to channel funds for investment and exploitation to the giant monopolies, particularly the oil giants. This facilitates their plunder of the oppressed countries around the world.

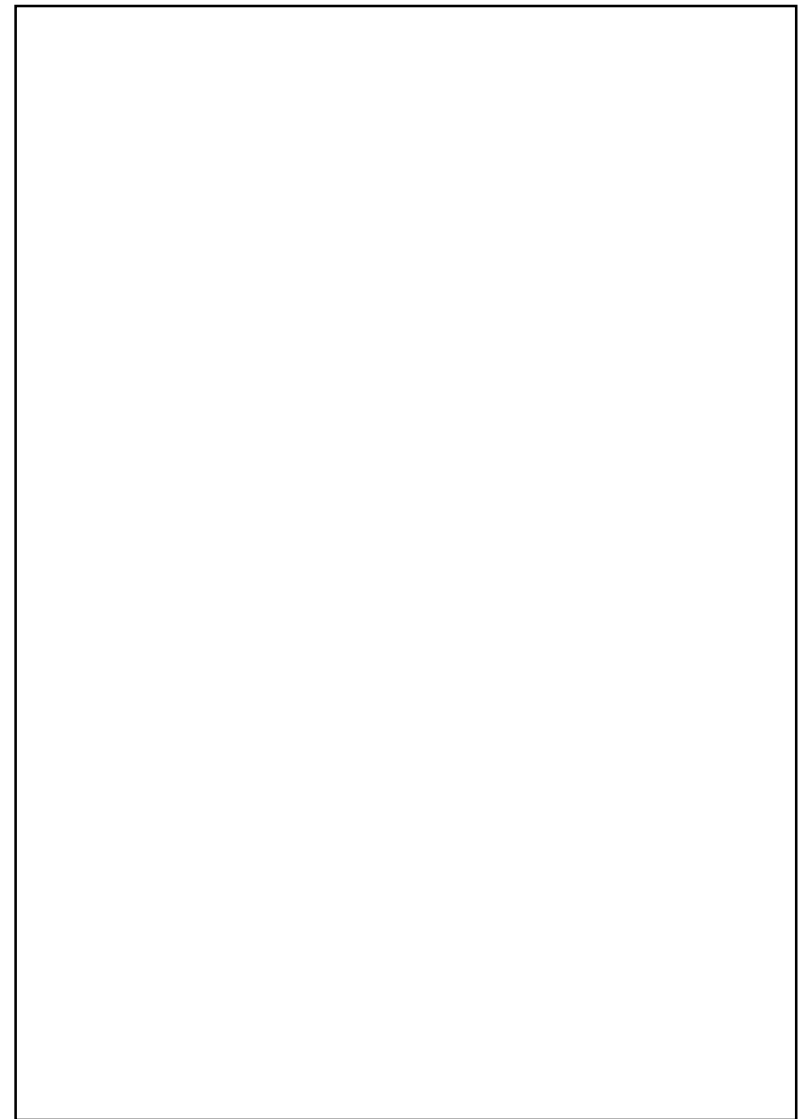
V.I. Lenin, the organizer of the Bolshevik Revolution, wrote a groundbreaking book in 1916 entitled *Imperialism, the Highest*

Stage of Capitalism. Lenin summed up what was then a new stage of capitalism, after the competitive stage. He described the development of giant monopolies and cartels and the merger of bank and industrial capital into finance capital. This integration of the banks with the transnationals laid the basis for the division of the entire world into different spheres of imperialist interest.

Lenin was writing in the first stage of the development of imperialist militarism, during World War I. Particularly since World War II, one of the most pronounced developments in the evolution of imperialism has been the deep integration of the military with finance capital. And the Pentagon has become that nexus in the US.

Wolfowitz is Cheney's protégé. Together they served in the first Bush administration in the Pentagon, Cheney as secretary of defense and Wolfowitz as undersecretary for defense planning and policy.

After the collapse of the



• At least one protester's view of Wolfowitz.

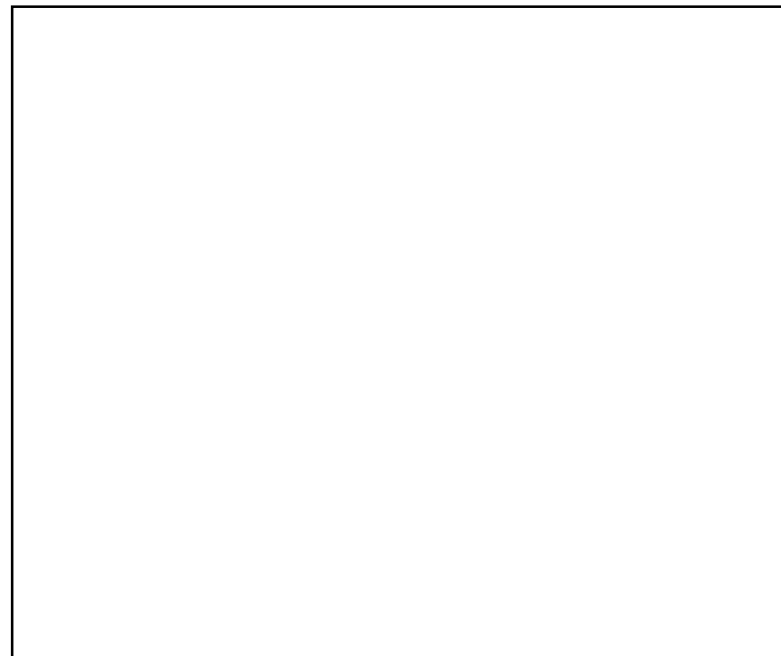
USSR, they co-wrote a document made public in March 1992 asserting that henceforth the US would be the absolute dominant power in the world and no power or group of powers should even

think about challenging this supremacy. That document was leaked to the *New York Times* and then disavowed by the elder George Bush, then the president.

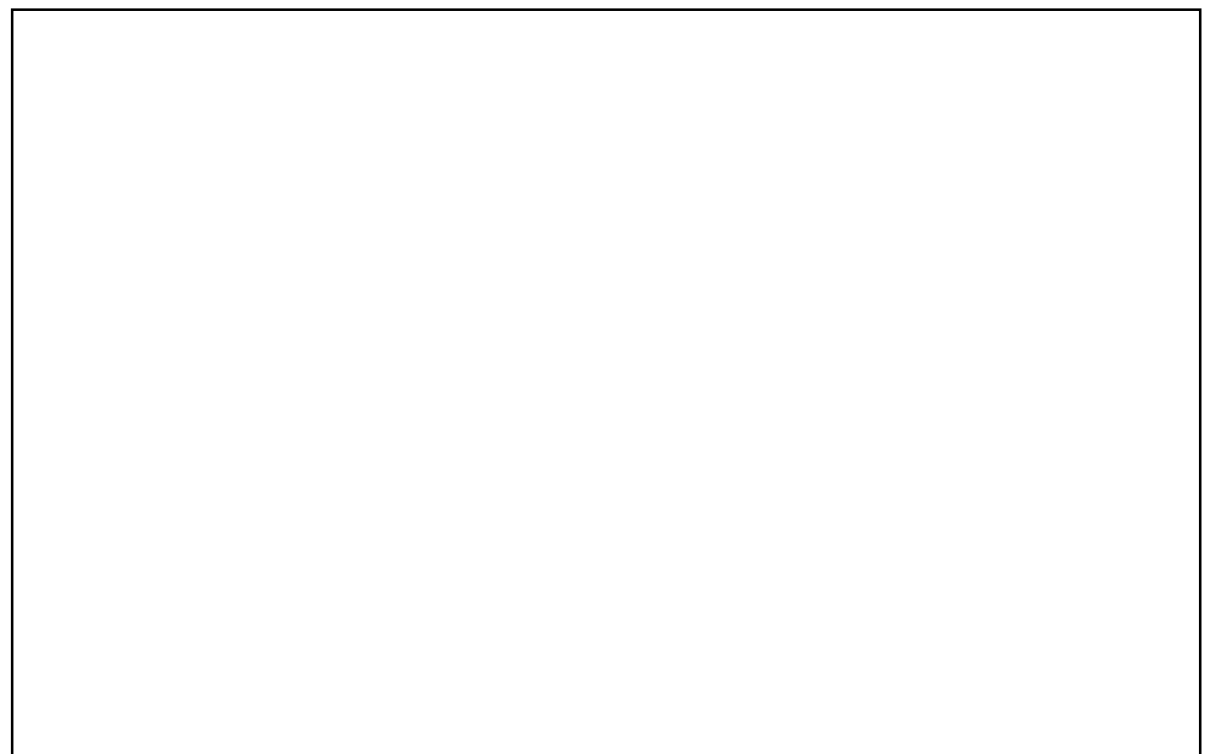
This thesis re-emerged in an even more aggressive form in Bush's National Security Strategy document, issued in 2002. It was the voices of Cheney, Wolfowitz and their backers in the Pentagon and Wall Street, just updated from 1992.

The connection between Cheney and Wolfowitz is important because Cheney, as the former CEO of Halliburton, an oil service company, is at the hub of the oil industry and deals with all the giant companies. These companies, in turn, have a global outlook that is all but identical with that of the Pentagon. The oil monopolies are at the center of US capitalism, integrated with industry, finance and the military. The appointment of Wolfowitz is a step in the further deepening of this integration.

As US and German imperial-



• Above: Wolfowitz. Below: US troops among the ruin they have created in Iraq.



Citizen Kane in Moldova

by Rob Gowland
The Guardian

Australian communist weekly

THERE WERE elections in Moldova in March. The ruling Communist Party of Moldova was re-elected.

The capitalist media's approach to the elections reminded me forcibly of Orson Welles' great film *Citizen Kane*. In that film, Welles, as press magnate Charles Foster Kane, is resoundingly defeated in his bid to become Governor.

The editor of his flagship newspaper looks at two alternative front pages that had been prepared in advance of the election: one says "KANE WINS", but he cannot use that one. Sadly he chooses the other, "FRAUD AT POLLS".

Had the Communist Party been defeated in Moldova, the bourgeois media would have loudly regaled us with more tales of a "velvet" — or rainbow-coloured or blue and white or any colour but Red — "revolution".

But the Communists won, so, in the best traditions of *Citizen Kane*, the cry immediately went up of "Fraud At Polls". As it does wherever imperialism's stooges fail to carry the day, whether in Moldova or Venezuela or Zimbabwe.

Even before the polling day, as soon as it became clear that imperialism's "pro-democracy" forces were unlikely to win, the disinformation campaign swung into action. To nobody's surprise, specialist websites like the anti-Communist <http://www.moldova2005.net> came out with such news headlines as "Moldavian elections have already been falsified!!" (with double exclamation marks to give it veracity, presumably).

Now how predictable was that claim, eh?

Moldova is the former Soviet Republic of Moldavia. When Gorbachev's counter-revolutionary putsch overwhelmed the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, socialism was also overthrown in Moldavia.

Soviet rule was replaced by a neo-capitalist regime comprising budding entrepreneurs, professionals and intellectuals who claimed (perhaps genuinely) to believe the lofty promise of bourgeois democracy, anti-Russian Moldavian nationalists and supporters of the concept of incorporating Moldavia into neighbouring Romania.

The country's name was changed to match that of the Romanian province of Moldova, but the anti-popular measures of the bourgeois regime combined with

the push to incorporate the country into a "Greater Romania" led to full-scale civil war, in which to the evident surprise of imperialism, the Communist-led forces were victorious.

I met a representative of the Communist Party of Moldova just after their historic regaining of power. So far they are the only communist party in the former Soviet Union to have done so.

She told me of some of the problems that confronted the Moldovan party. Besides the inevitable confusion and disarray in the aftermath of counter-revolution and civil war, they were faced with trying to bring together a deeply divided nation, rent by ethnic rivalries which imperialism had deliberately fanned in order to fuel the civil war.

Their call to other former Soviet republics to join in re-establishing the Soviet Union had not received much official support, so they were going to have to try to make it on their own, a daunting prospect for a small, war-ravaged country.

Sandwiched between Romania and the Ukraine, they were not exactly in a prime trading position. On top of this, they knew only too well that imperialism would be working very hard to bring about their downfall.

They were also acutely aware that, thanks to foreign interference in their civil war, Moldova was knee deep in weapons of all sorts, including heavy weapons. Anyone wanting to stage a coup would not lack for the means with which to do it.

It is a tribute to their skill and their successful policies that they have survived this long and have even been re-elected (without recourse to fraudulent polls). But, of course, to retain power they must bring about an improvement in the lot of the people.

Without a Soviet economic bloc to belong to and draw strength from, they are following the same risky road as the other countries of Eastern Europe and joining the European Union. Whatever their misgivings, they probably have no other viable alternative at present.

Within the European Union, however, strident voices have been raised in an effort to keep them out. They are, after all, Reds!

I received an email only last week headed "Communist Terror returns to Europe". Where, I wondered, was this curious phenomenon taking place.

Predictably, the email took me back to our old friend <http://www.moldova>

2005.net where a headline shrilled "The state with a red dic-

tatorship will accede to EC!"

While communists worry that Moldova joining the EU places its communist-led government at risk, anti-communists are trying to quarantine it to save Europe from the contagion of Red Revolution. Paradoxically, I find the sense of déjà vu associated with this rather reassuring.

Churchill tried to quarantine the USSR with his Cordon Sanitaire, and failed. Hitler similarly tried to keep "Bolshevism" out of Europe, and failed.

The United States, of course, tried to keep it out of everywhere. And also failed.

Now, having successfully overthrown socialism in the USSR and Eastern Europe, it seems they are nonetheless terrified at the prospect of having even one small Communist-led country reappear amongst the nations of Europe.

My, these socialist ideas must really be potent, mustn't they?

• Wolfowitz visiting Abu Ghraib prison – the scene of terrible crimes.

ism competed to dismember Yugoslavia, culminating in the Clinton administration's war in 1999 and the sending of US troops to occupy Kosovo, the World Bank was on the scene ready to give loans and grants to the corporations for "reconstruction".

In March 2002, after the Pentagon pulverized Afghanistan with bombs and missiles, the World Bank came on the scene to finance an oil pipeline from Turkistan through Afghanistan to the Indian Ocean on behalf of the oil monopolies. The bank was also on the scene after the Iraq invasion to help with "reconstruction" designed to bolster the US occupation of that oil-rich country.

World Bank and Halliburton

The World Bank is as close as you can get to the Halliburton corporation. Cheney's former firm has a lock on energy contracts in Iraq and is positioned to help US oil giants take control of Iraqi oil.

Wolfowitz was an architect of the war, which was all about that oil. When Wolfowitz takes over the World Bank he will still be in the war for oil; he will still be working with Cheney, Rumsfeld and the Pentagon in the service of finance capital and its empire, just in a different capacity.

During the period of 1992 to 2004, the World Bank financed fossil fuel projects – oil, coal, gas, electric power plants, privatisation of plants and natural resources – to the tune of \$28 billion [£15 billion]. ("Wrong Turn from Rio," www.seen.org) Of that \$28 billion, Halliburton got \$2.575 billion [£1.384 billion] for projects in Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Chad, Cameroon, Georgia, India, Kazakhstan, Mozambique, Russia and Thailand. Halliburton was the largest oil contractor with the World Bank. ("The Energy Tug of War," www.seen.org)

Not to be left out, ExxonMobil got \$1.367 billion [£735 million] for projects in Argentina, Chad, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia; Chevron Texaco got \$1.589 billion [£854 million] to go into Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Congo-Brazzaville, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Russia and Thailand; Unocal got \$938 million [£504 million]; and Enron received \$744 million [£400 million]. All the oil giants of the imperialist world got in on the take.

One glance at the list of oil-producing countries reveals they are also countries of interest to

the Pentagon, the banks and other transnational profiteers.

So the shift of Wolfowitz to the World Bank amounts to shifting a militaristic hawk from one part of the imperial apparatus to another part. The centralizing nexus is the military-industrial complex, the Pentagon and big oil. They are all inseparable from imperialism itself.

It is no accident that the architect of the Vietnam War under President Lyndon Johnson, Secretary of Defence Robert McNamara, was also sent to become the president of the World Bank. He had been the Chief Executive Officer of Ford Motors and was familiar with running a corporate empire. His shift to the Pentagon and then to the World Bank was a natural transition within the empire.

There has been speculation that Wolfowitz is being kicked upstairs because he is so identified with a failed war of aggression – in the same way that McNamara was moved out because of the failure to conquer Vietnam. To be sure, Wolfowitz has been removed from the military policy-making position in which he has spent his life. But only time will tell the meaning of this shift, should it succeed.

Wolfowitz's nomination has many dire economic and political implications for the fate of the Third World. He will undoubtedly deepen the reactionary, neoliberal policies already being pursued by the World Bank.

The World Bank is really a collaborative institution with the International Monetary Fund. The World Bank withholds loans until a dependent government submits to all the austerity measures ordered by the IMF: putting national industries and utilities up for sale to the transnationals; putting fees on basics such as healthcare, education, and water; slashing government subsidies for the workers; exporting nationally needed natural resources to the imperialist countries, and many other onerous measures. The World Bank is under attack in many countries right now.

Wolfowitz is so openly identified with the war in Iraq, the occupation, the torture, the killing of civilians, the destruction of Fallujah, and all the openly war-like and aggressive positions of US imperialism that his nomination to the World Bank, should it go through, could easily touch off a new wave of struggle to throw this imperialist institution out of the oppressed countries.

• Top: communist president Vladimir Voronin casts his vote. Above: election posters.

Home News

LETTERS

Dear editor

Our Australian contributor Rob Gowland claims that media persuasion is responsible for the adulation of royalty. I would say that low IQ allows it.

Best wishes,

JH Edwards, Manchester.

Dear editor

I see that Health Secretary John Reid says he wants to allow the most "entrepreneurial" general practitioners the opportunity to use their initiative to broaden the scope of patient services.

Surely there is enough commercialism in the NHS already. When we visit a hospital now, it is more like setting foot in a shopping mall. A lot of the food on sale is junk food - indicating that profit margins are more important than patients' health.

When we visit our GP we are never sure whether the prescription is more for our benefit or for the profit margins of the big drug companies who keep the GP well supplied with perks and freebies.

GPs are already enormously powerful, standing as the gateway to all NHS services. If someone lacks confidence in the GP or has a bad relationship with them there is absolutely no way for them to gain access to any NHS services except as an emergency admission to hospital.

Doctors are human, not saints. They have the same

range of personalities as any other profession - and that includes some who are arrogant, lazy and greedy. Reid's proposals will encourage the worst traits in them.

But they are in such a powerful position it is hard for an unhappy patient to challenge them. Once a patient is labelled as "awkward", other doctors are not willing to take them on so there is pressure to keep quiet and put up with it.

The Community Health Councils used to provide an avenue to investigate complaints but they have been scrapped.

Medical students have always tended to come from the upper middle classes. That will be even more so now that tuition fees for the long courses are so high. Too many of them already see medicine primarily as a career in which they can make themselves rich.

The working class as ever will be at their mercy. No wonder alternative medicine is flourishing.

Yours,

HE Cartey London.

The editor welcomes letters from our readers. If you have a contribution to make, please make sure it reaches us before Wednesday. You can send your letters to: PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ, or email party@ncp.clara.net

Unions disappointed at draft corporate killing law

UNIONS in England and Wales last week gave a half-hearted welcome to the publication of the long-awaited draft corporate manslaughter Bill, which should improve safety at work but still lets negligent bosses off the hook.

The Transport and General Workers' Union had been working with the construction union Ucat to campaign for new laws on corporate manslaughter and directors' responsibilities.

TGWU general secretary Tony Woodley said: "These proposals are a significant step towards safer workplaces. Last year 235 workers were killed at work in this country and workplace deaths actually rose by four per cent. Reform of the law is therefore long overdue.

vital

"We are particularly pleased to see that the proposals will also apply to the Crown. As the largest employer in the land, it is vital that the Government sets the lead on workplace health and safety.

"But we need to take care that the proposed exclusions for the Crown do not mean that the existing anomaly is removed only to be replaced by others."

The TGWU has also expressed concern that the draft Bill does not require directors to take positive steps on health and safety.

This could mean that the courts will not be able to apply the new offence or corporate manslaughter in instances where individual company directors have neglected to maintain safe workplaces.

"The draft Bill is a chance to ensure that health and safety is taken more seriously in the boardroom, that workers' health is protected through a culture of prevention and that justice is done when tragedies do occur," said Tony Woodley.

"We will therefore be pressing for the Bill to be amended to deliver this as

it passes through Parliament."

The Health and Safety Executive estimates that up to 70 per cent of workplace deaths are the result of serious management failures, yet only five directors have been imprisoned for corporate manslaughter in the history of British law.

Yet it seems the new law will do little to change this. The new legislation will mean any offence is committed by an organisation, not an individual.

Grass roots union activists in the building industry have told the New Worker that they are very unhappy with the proposals, which they describe as "garbage". They feel that only the prospect of being jailed for criminal negligence will motivate some bosses to put their workers' lives before their profits.

Meanwhile in Scotland, the oil workers' union OILC is angry that Justice Minister Cathy Jamieson has delayed introducing a similar measure in Scotland.

The Scottish Executive has, instead, set up an expert group to offer advice, which has angered those campaigning for "corporate homicide" to be made a specific offence.

waiting

OILC general secretary Jake Molloy said: "We have been waiting since Labour came to power in 1997. I just can't understand the move at all. There is more than enough expert opinion out there.

"I just get the impression this is more about delaying it until Westminster brings in some kind of diluted version and in Scotland we will just pick it up and run with it.

"If we go down that route then I am afraid that nothing will really change in Scotland"

He was critical of the proposed Westminster Bill because it did not contain the threat of a prison sentence for directors.

The Confederation of British Industry has welcomed the draft Bill wholeheartedly.

Diary

FRIDAY 1 April Rock the Wall! Live music, stalls etc. 6.30pm-1am.

At Nambucca, 596 Holloway Road, London N7. PSC. £2 from 8.00pm. 020 7700 6129

SATURDAY 2 April Exhibition: Iron Ladies in Thatcher's Britain. The Women's Library, London Metropolitan University, Old Castle St. E1.

SATURDAY 2 April For freedom of movement and the right to stay. March ass. 12 noon, Clerkenwell Green London EC1 to rally in London Fields, Hackney 2pm.

SATURDAY 9 April Deir Yassin Day. 8pm, St John's Wood Church, Lords Roundabout, London NW8. PSC. Free - drinks & sweets served.

SATURDAY 9 April - 10 April. National NCP weekend school.

Includes: Arab Liberation, Gender and Class, What is Globalisation? The Irish Struggle. Open to members and friends. Details: General Secretary NCP, 020 7223 4052.

WEDNESDAY 20 April Israeli terrorism & Palestinian resistance.

7.30pm, St Stephens Church, Bath St, Glasgow.

WEDNESDAY 20 April Two films on Palestine: Bury My Heart in Palestine and Arna's Children. Tickets in advance from the box office, Duke of Yorks theatre, Brighton, 01273 602503.

THURSDAY 21 April Israeli terrorism & Palestinian resistance.

7.30pm, Augustine Church Theatre, George IV Brige, Edinburgh. Scottish PSC.

THURSDAY 21 April - 25 April, Spring Peace Camp, RAF Brize Norton, Oxfordshire. 0117 946

6885. THURSDAY 21 April - 23 April. Talking to Terrorists. Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds.

FRIDAY 22 April - 6 May Palestinian Film Festival in London. Screenings in Barbican Centre and SOAS Thornhaugh St Russell Sq. Details: www.palestinefilm.org

SATURDAY 23 April Blair's Wars. speakers, stalls etc. 11am-3.30pm, Brightelm Centre, North Road, Brighton

SATURDAY 23 April Peace and Military Vets demo. 12 noon, Carterton, Oxfordshire. 0117 946 6885

MONDAY 25 April Peace Day. Nottingham CND. Stall in the market & other activities. Details: 01773 760205.

THURSDAY 28 April Construction Safety Campaign. Memorial march & meeting. Ass. 11.15pm Tate Modern, South Bank, march to H&SE HQ followed by a meeting at GLA building, Tower Bridge.

SATURDAY 30 April Which way for Africa? On the 33rd anniversary of the death of OK Nkrumah. Speaker: Moukoko Priso, Gen Sec Union Of the Peoples of Cameroon (UPC). 1pm-5pm, SOAS Thornhaugh St, London WC1. ALISC Network. 07984 405 307.

SATURDAY 30 April March for rail nationalisation, 12 noon Whitehall Place. Rally at Camden Centre 3pm. RMT.

SUNDAY 1 May London May Day 2005. Ass. 12 noon Clerkenwell Green EC1, march to Trafalgar Sq.

SATURDAY 21 May Free Palestine. National demo. 1pm, central London. org. by PSC. www.palestinecampaign.org

Please contact us if you have an item to place in the diary. We advertise meetings for free. Ensure that you let us know before Tuesday, so we can place it in the next issue of the paper.

DVD

Salt of the Earth

Directed by Herbert J Biberman (one of the 'Hollywood ten')

Made in 1954 this film was banned, blacklisted and hounded in the US. It was smuggled to France and there was met with huge international acclaim.

Now on US DVD - a few copies only. £12 inc. P&P.

from Paul Barrett, 21, Grove Terrace, Penarth, South Wales, CF64 2NG.

THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

6 weeks: £4; 3 months: £8; 6 months: £15; annual: £30

Name..... Address..... Post code..... Phone..... Send cheque/P.O.'s to: NW Subs, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ

On the Web

New Worker National - www.newworker.org NCP Central - www.geocities.com/ncpcentral NCP-PCS - www.geocities.ncppcs/pcs1.html

BOOST OUR FUND

make your commitment to sustaining the New Worker in the struggle for peace and socialism

COMPLETE THE BANKER'S FORM BELOW

The Manager.....

.....Bank

Banks address.....

Please pay to the New Worker account No. 50492464, 08-90-34, Co-operative Bank plc, 17 High St, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT1 1LP,

the sum of £.....(in words)

each month starting on.....

Account No.....

Signature..... RETURN THIS FORM TO: NWFund, PO Box 73 London SW11 2PQ.

JOIN US For peace! For justice! For socialism! NCP

I would like to join the New Communist Party I would like more information about the NCP Name..... Address..... postcode..... SEND TO: NCP, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

Karl Marx grave-side oration

by Len Aldis

BORN IN 1818, Karl Marx, the son of a lawyer, also studied law, and philosophy. Later in his life he was to make good use of these studies in his many writings and speeches. These have come down to us today. Many of them can be seen and read today in the Marx Memorial Library at Clerkenwell Green.

There, readers have access not only the many works of Marx but also other philosophers who followed him. Books are also there by writers who were involved in or witnessed many struggles in this and other countries over the years.

Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary, last year mentioned that his office also had an extensive library, that included the works of Marx and Lenin.

He even wrote in a national newspaper that he was taught how to recognise a Trot from 50 feet. What a pity that he was not able to recognise from 18 inches a sexed up dossier that took this country to an illegal war that led to so many innocents being killed.

But that example shows that the works of Marx are still being read and studied – with the exception of Jack Straw.

Although we are here to pay tribute to Karl Marx on the anniversary of his death 122 years ago today 14th March 1883, I much prefer to commemorate and celebrate a person's birth.

In the case of Marx, his life has enriched the lives of millions throughout the world. One of the most powerful publications he and his colleague Frederick Engels left us, was the *Communist Manifesto*.

This small publication has been translated into many languages, and in my opinion, when read it opens up the mind of the reader to what could be...

The *Manifesto*, along with Marx's other books, explained the world he lived in. They also have lessons for us today 122 years after he died.

Today we are living in a world of instant communication: television, radio, and dare

I say the mobile phone? We also live in the age of world travel by aircraft.

Tragically these advances, although they have brought us together, have also brought us the horrors of wars, world and civil and the deaths of millions by starvation.

We can send machines to Mars to find water, but cannot, or will not, get water to the millions dying of thirst on this earth.

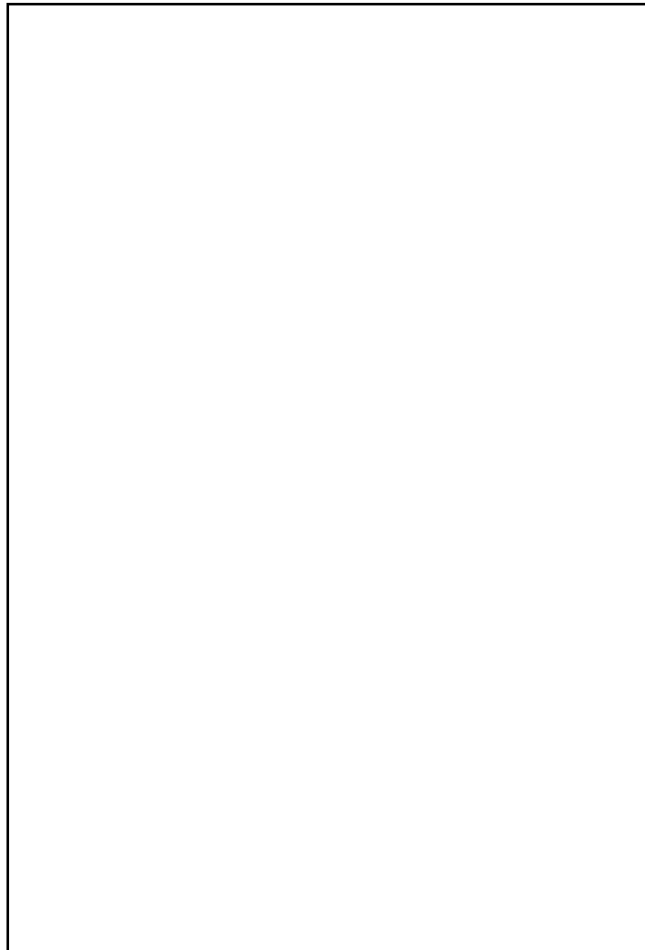
Something is wrong, and Marx saw this in his research and writings, and in the *Communist Manifesto* that he has left us.

Despite the set-backs faced by some communist parties, the struggle against the evil of capitalism continues.

In this area of Highgate Cemetery are buried people from many lands. Some asked to be buried here near to Marx. Some of them laid the ground work for the progressive steps their countries took. It is an honour to be here today to be with them and Karl Marx.

In the past few weeks we have seen the election of progressive people and governments in countries of South America and others. People are on the move.

We must hope that they



will achieve their aims of having a better life than they have had. For them perhaps I can end with a quote from the

Manifesto to wish them well.

“They have a world to win.”

• Top: Len Aldis gives the address. Above: NCP General Secretary Andy Brooks pays respects in name of the party.

IRA Easter message 2005

ON THIS, the 89th anniversary of the Easter Rising of 1916, we remember the men and women of every generation who have given their lives in the struggle for Irish freedom.

The leadership of *Óglaigh na hÉireann* extends solidarity to the families of our comrades who have fallen during this phase of the struggle. We remember those comrades with honour and pride.

We send solidarity to our Volunteers and to our friends and supporters at home and abroad.

We think of our imprisoned comrades and their families at this time also.

Over ten years ago, the leadership of the IRA declared a complete cessation of military operations. We did so to enhance the development of the Irish Peace process.

From then until now we have, on a number of occasions, demonstrated our continuing support for this process.

At times of significant crisis or political impasse, we have taken initiatives to move the situation forward.

Our approach has been premised on the belief that the achievement of a just and lasting peace requires constant forward momentum in the Peace Process.

For the past two years, the Peace Process has been locked in stalemate and has slipped backwards into deepening crisis.

During that period, specifically in October 2003 and in December 2004, we agreed to significant initiatives as part of an agreement to break the logjam. On each occasion, other parties reneged on their commitments.

An unprecedented opportunity to transform the situation on the island of Ireland was thrown away by rejectionist unionism, aided and abetted by the two governments.

The DUP attempted to turn the initiative of December 2004 into a humiliation of the IRA. The concerted efforts of both governments since then to undermine the integrity of our cause, by seeking to criminalise the republican struggle, is clear evidence that our opponents remain fixated with the objective of defeating republicans rather than developing the Peace Process.

The sustained campaign directed against the republican people over recent months is nothing new. We have seen and heard it all before.

Those who opted to follow the Thatcher path will not succeed.

Our patriot dead are not criminals. We are not criminals. Republican men and

women suffered deprivation and torture to defeat attempts to criminalise our struggle. Ten of our comrades endured the agony of hunger strike and died defeating the criminalisation strategy.

We will not betray their courage by tolerating criminality within our own ranks. We will not allow our opponents to further their own petty self-interests by levelling false allegations against *Óglaigh na hÉireann*.

The IRA has spelt out its position in relation to the killing of Robert McCartney. It was wrong, it was murder, it was a crime. But it was not carried out by the IRA, nor was it carried out on behalf of the IRA.

The IRA moved quickly to deal with those involved. We have tried to assist in whatever way we can. Unfortunately, it would appear that no matter what we do it will never be enough for some.

Those in the political and media establishments who have been so quick to jump on the bandwagon have again laid bare their own hypocrisy.

This causes justifiable resentment among republicans. But it must not cloud the issue. *Óglaigh na hÉireann* expects the highest standards of conduct from our Volunteers.

Struggle requires sacrifice and discipline. It promises hardship and suffering. Our fallen comrades rose to those challenges and met them head on.

The discipline and commitment of our Volunteers and the wider republican base have been the backbone of our struggle. In these testing times, that steadfastness and determination are needed more and more.

We salute you and urge you to remain strong and united.

The crisis in the Peace Process and the reinvigorated attempts to criminalise us have not diminished in any way our determination to pursue and achieve our republican objectives.

Irish unity and independence provides the best context for the people of this island to live together in harmony.

The primary responsibility now rests with the two governments.

They must demonstrate their commitment to a lasting peace.

Pandering to the demands of those who are opposed to change is not the way forward.

P O'Neill,

**Irish Republican
Publicity Bureau,
Dublin.**

Poland after the counter-revolution

by Prof Zbigniew Wiktor

THE WHOLE PURPOSE and practice by the counter-revolutionary forces in Poland in 1989 was to weaken, confuse and derail the working class as an opposition force against the bourgeoisie. There was immediate privatisation and the selling off of the industrial might of Poland, thus making over three million Polish people unemployed.

But in fact, it was over five million unemployed. The question of *Solidarnost* and the full-scale Western powers intervention and financial support for this movement,

produced the desired result for imperialism.

Now there are 20-26 per cent of the workforce unemployed, which is now the highest in Europe. Two thirds of the workers are young people without any jobs. Over 60 per cent of all industrial enterprises are foreign-owned. More than 80 per cent of Polish banks are in the hands of foreign owners. With Poland joining Nato and the European Union, this is giving impetus to the drive for hegemony of Germans in Europe. The future perspective for Polish people is grim.

From 1989-2004 industrial production fell below what it was in 1960. The economic trade that was going on with Soviet Union and other former socialist

countries practically ceased altogether. The foreign debt of Poland to the World Bank and to other capitalist institutions rose to \$120 billion.

The terrible situation in the health sector, schooling and other social services is beyond description.

The present bourgeois government of Poland tries to convince the people that the last 15 years were years of one success upon another. Poland now has lack of useable roads and transportation. Railway modernisation and communication systems need a complete overhaul. There is a great chasm between the extremely rich and the poor, and this chasm is growing alarmingly with every year. 50 per cent of the people are

living below the standard of the minimum wage. Poland in these 15 years has sunk into a very deep economic and social crisis and political chaos.

The involvement of the Polish army in Iraq is so unpopular, that over 75 per cent of Polish people are protesting and demanding that the Polish government take the troops out of Iraq.

The illusions of capitalism are being decimated by reality of life. The mass media daily propagates anti-worker sentiments, anti-socialism and anti-communist diatribes and, unfortunately this helps to disunite worker solidarity and a united front against the present bourgeois regime of Poland. *Brzask* (Poland)

South Asia: more devastation

JUST THREE MONTHS after South Asia's worst ever tragedy – a tsunami unleashed by an earthquake on the island of Sumatra that killed some 300,000 people in the region – the land moved again along the coasts of Indonesia.

An massive earthquake measuring 8.7 on the Richter scale devastated the island of Nias, located close to the tremor's epicentre, damaging 80 per cent of its buildings, totally destroying many of them and burying, authorities fear, more than 2,000 people.

Alarms went off warning of a possible tsunami in the

entire area including Sri Lanka, India and the Maldives, the countries that along with Indonesia experienced the worst damage on Boxing Day. However, the open wounds of the previous catastrophe have still not healed, demonstrating the extreme fragility of the poor towns in the area, which are nevertheless, considered a tourist "paradise".

The fact that a third of the victims were children and four times as many women as men died, has begun to cause serious problems. It is estimated that the medium-term demographic consequences will be

severe. Authorities are now concerned with protecting the many children orphaned by the tsunami, creating institutions to care for them and working to convince family members to take them in to stop unscrupulous traffickers of children.

indispensable

In the case of women, the situation is difficult. Because so many of them died – about 77 to 80 per cent of all the victims in northern Aceh – it obliges men to assume roles that traditionally have fallen only to women: duties which

are indispensable to the survival of the family. The female population that escaped death is now more exposed to violence and rape, especially in refugee camps. What's more, a number of agencies co-operating in the area have warned of the risk that because there is a lack of women, female children and teenagers will be married prematurely, which will shortly generate another type of problem.

The truth is that this new earthquake has brought to international attention all that is lacking for the recuperation of the region damaged by December's disaster, cost of

which is estimated at \$7.8 billion [£4.19 billion], an amount far beyond the capacity of the countries hit and requiring international efforts if the region is to get back on its feet.

praise

And, though praise must go to the role taken on by international institutions like the Red Cross, the Red Crescent, UNICEF and the office of the UN High Commissioner, NCNUR, as well as some non-governmental organisations, the absence of decisive action is noted on the part of some developed coun-

tries such as the United States, which is not involved in the reconstruction.

Cuba, on the other hand, despite being small and poor, quickly sent medical assistance to the most affected areas. The problem is that when it is time to help the peoples who most suffer, usually the poorest and most defenceless, the richest societies and governments exhibit an incredible insensitivity and selfishness. And, after all is said and done, it is clear that solidarity is not a matter of resources, but rather of will and attitude and the capacity to act in a disinterested manner.

Radio Havana Cuba

Indian communists visit Pakistan

Statement by Comrade Harkishan Singh Surjeet, General Secretary, Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Comrade AB Bardhan, General Secretary, Communist Party of India, on this groundbreaking visit in March.

WE WERE INVITED to visit Pakistan and meet Pakistani leaders of other political parties, our Left counterparts, different sections of the community and prominent public figures in that country.

A joint front of Left parties extended the formal invitation and arranged the crowded itinerary of the eight-day tour which took us to Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi and a few other places around.

fruitful

They took great pains to arrange well-attended meetings, receptions and personal visits for our delegation. The administration on its part extended full co-operation. We thank them all for making our visit fruitful and enlightening.

This was our first visit to Pakistan in 57 years. Comrade Surjeet had been the Provincial Secretary of the Communist Party in Punjab before 1947 and had worked from Lahore for nearly 10 years. He had been in prison in the Lahore Fort and the Montgomery jail (Sahiwal). For him it was also a nostalgic visit to these places.

Wherever we went, we were received with fraternal enthusiasm coupled with a lot of expectation about the peace process between the two countries. Everyone spoke about the need to

resolve all issues pending between the two countries through dialogue and in a spirit of mutual accommodation and goodwill. There was a general feeling that once we solve our issues, both the countries and the South Asia Region will witness rapid development and emerge as a powerful region.

They were keen to hear from us what the Indian people and the Indian government thought and felt on these questions and, as two Left parties who were supporting the government today, what our experience was about its policies, especially on economic issues and in relation to Pakistan. There is general satisfaction that several confidence-building measures had been taken, such as the latest agreement on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service and the expected rail link.

The highlight of our visit was our hour-long meeting with President Musharraf, followed by our talks with the Prime Minister, Mr Shaukat Aziz and the lunch hosted by the Foreign Minister, Mr Kasuri.

conflict issues

The meeting with the President was very frank. He was happy with the progress of the confidence building measures and was also forthright about removing all obstacles to commerce and trade and opening up. But he asserted that "conflict issues have also got to be taken up. We cannot avoid any discussion on Kashmir". He urged that both sides should display "sincerity, flexibility and courage" in trying to evolve a settlement that is ac-

ceptable to both sides and to the people of Kashmir.

The question of the Baglihar dam was also discussed, which he said was vitally linked with the supply of water downstream to Pakistan.

The issue of nearly 200 poor Indians who had completed their term of punishment but were still held in Pakistan was also raised. (Next day a foreign department official had been asked to confirm their Indian nationality so that they can be handed over).

send them back

We also raised the issue of fishermen who are detained for crossing the territorial waters. On this too Musharraf was of the view that the two sides should agree on the simple procedure of rebuking these "poor people" when caught and sending them back, rather than detaining them.

We found many Left-oriented people and sympathisers in Pakistan. Unfortunately, they are scattered and divided. No doubt they will come together in the coming days and play their role.

We had the opportunity to have detailed talks with Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party in the historic Sindh Assembly building and to meet leaders of the National Awami Party (this included Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan's grandson, who is the president of the Party) and leaders of the MQM.

We have returned with the feeling that both the countries and their people have today a great opportunity before them, one that cannot and should not be missed.

Washington profits from Indo-Pakistan conflict

THE UNITED STATES is seeking to profit from the deadly rivalry between Pakistan and India by selling combat aircraft and other weapons to both of them. PR Chari, a professor at the New Delhi Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies said that Washington was "laughing all the way to the bank" in selling nuclear-capable F-16 Falcons and F-18 Hornet fighters to both countries.

The sale of Falcons to India was probably directly associated with Bush, says Chari, in that the fighters' factory was located in his home state of Texas and that reportedly 5,000 jobs had been saved by the deal.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was also recently in India and discussed the sale as well as providing further nuclear technology for New Delhi's energy programme. India traditionally buys its arms from Russia, but closer ties with the United States have led to improved business deals for Washington.

Chari said that he didn't see the logic in purchasing such advanced fighter aircraft capable of delivering nuclear

missiles when both countries already possessed missiles with more than adequate range.

The research professor added that it was interesting to note the cynical circle completed by Washington from its 1998 sanctions against both Pakistan and India for conducting nuclear tests to

actually promoting the use of nuclear weapons today.

"It just shows that Washington has a flexible enough foreign policy to accommodate what it judges to be in its own best interest and this includes such issues as nuclear proliferation."

Radio Havana Cuba

• F-16s on the production line.

