

BIG BROTHER GETTING BIGGER

by Daphne Liddle

THE GOVERNMENT is considering setting up a huge comprehensive database to store recordings of every electronic communication – every phone call and email – in Britain, as part of the “war on terror”.

Such a move would require the compliance of telephone companies and internet service providers, who would be required to pass all their records to the Government-run database.

The Home Office plans so far are at an early stage but could be included in the draft Communications Bill to be included in the next Queen’s Speech in November; Government ministers have yet to see the draft plans.

The information would be held for at least 12 months and the police and security services would be able to access it if given permission from the courts. About 57 billion text messages were sent in Britain last year, while an estimated three billion emails are sent every day.

Civil liberties and data protection groups have already expressed alarm and expressed objections to the increasing “Big Brother” state.

But the Home Office is claiming that keeping these electronic information records is essential to protect national security but claims the information will be subject to rigorous safeguards.

A Home Office spokesperson said: “Communications data – the who, how, when and where of a communication but not the what (content) of the communication – is a crucial tool for protecting national security, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the public.”

This will raise many hollow laughs considering the number of occasions in the last few months when confidential Government records containing important personal information about hundreds of thousands of have been lost.

These losses have largely been attributable to huge swathes of job cuts in the civil service leaving those surviving overstretched and the privatising of many civil service functions, including confidential data transport.

This begs the question as to how, with insufficient civil servants to carry out existing commitments, the Government expects to assemble and protect such a large database. And sadly the obvious answer is that they will get the private sector to do it.

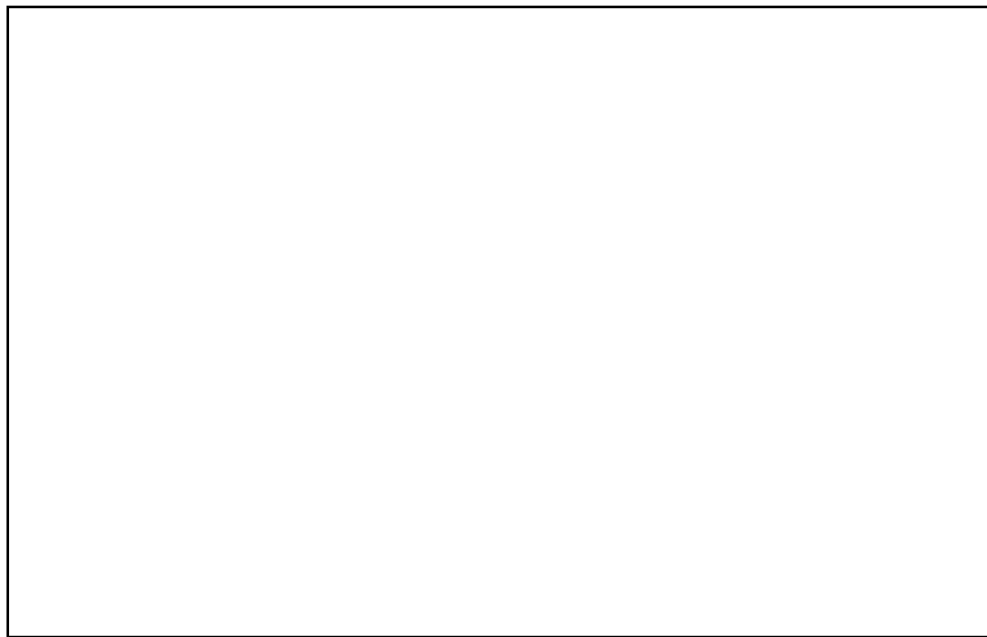
The Government already has an appalling record of disastrous contracts with various private sector giant information technology companies. The high-level civil servants who negotiate the contracts have little understanding of how their own departments operate at grass roots level and are not competent to instruct the companies’ software creators in what is needed.

The resulting errors have been catastrophically expensive to taxpayers – not to mention those citizens whose personal details are lost or recorded erroneously. But the IT companies have made a fortune from creating the faulty systems and then putting them right.

Already civil liberties groups and campaigners are concerned at the database the Government intends to create to back up the proposed biometric identity card scheme that will records many personal details about each one of us, including our credit card spending records.

Another giant database is even now being created with all our personal health details. Electronic travel cards like Oyster and the pensioner Freedom Pass already record our every journey by public transport and hundreds of thousands of surveillance cameras watch our every move.

How can so much information on so many people possible be used? Could there ever be enough human snoopers in either the public or private sector to have the time to sit through it all and make



• Saying no to ID cards and the database state in Cambridge.

sense of any of it? Unfortunately if they want to focus on any individual or small group it will be easy for them to do so. But the comings and goings, lives and deaths of the vast majority who do not come to the attention of those in authority will pass as anonymously as they do now.

For this reason alone, the huge databases will have little effect on preventing any kind of terrorism so long as the perpetrators have never drawn attention to themselves. The system will only notice them after the event. Real terrorists and big time criminals will already be well aware that there is no such thing as a truly private phone call, letter or email.

They will be careful not to use the trigger words that can be found by electronic searches and draw attention to potential suspects – such words as “bomb”, “detonation device” and so on. But thousands of rebellious teenagers will deliberately use these words all the time just to create chaos in the system.

We have to ask ourselves who will actually benefit from these expensive and sinister databases?

Access to these will of course be the dream of every marketing manager who wants to target their advertising at their most likely customers. And if these databases are being run by the private sector it

is a fair bet that the profit motive will overcome any scruples about data protection.

The IT companies will probably justify selling information to marketing agencies on the grounds that it will save the taxpayers a few pounds – local authorities already do this with electoral registers and have done for years.

If passed, this will mean that the monitoring of people in Britain is far in excess of what is happening anywhere else in the world, including the United States and Europe. But there is no doubt that western imperialist governments will be watching closely with an eye to introducing these measures to control their own working classes.

The Home Office is claiming the measure is part of plans to implement an EU directive developed after the 7th July bombings to bring uniformity of record-keeping – though it seems Westminster is volunteering to pioneer the scheme.

We can only say that if the bourgeois state feels the need for this level of control and monitoring, it is expecting the class struggle to become a lot more energetic in the near future.

And this expectation is probably based on the growing economic storm that could, if the organised workers of the world get their strategy right, bring an end to the dangerous and destructive system of global capitalism.

ror cases, and allowing post-charge questioning of suspects.

MPs are expected to vote on reforms to the Counter Terrorism Bill next month and opposition to Brown’s proposals is growing steadily, leaving Brown facing the prospect of defeat on the same issue that saw Tony Blair suffer his first Commons defeat.

The JCHR said “no clear evidence” has emerged of any likely need to extend the pre-charge detention period. And it describes the proposed safeguard against wrongful detention – a parliamentary vote after the 42-day power has been triggered – as “virtually meaningless”.

The committee’s chair, Labour MP Andrew Dismore, said: “We are astonished – and extremely disappointed – that the Government have failed even to consider our proposed alternative, in the meagre four paragraphs of official response we have received so far.”

He said the alternative package would better protect the public and comply with human rights principles, “whilst also reducing the risk of alienating minority communities”.

FUND

Our regular *New Worker* fund has done well this week, receiving £725 this week. This brings the May total so far to £1,277.75 and leaves £1,722.25 to raise to meet our £3,000 monthly target – and only just over a week to get there.

We thank a veteran comrade now living in Europe for £100, a south-west London comrade who has readily come to our rescue many times for £300 and a Vauxhall supporter for £50. A reader from Southall sent £7.50 and all the rest came from bankers’ orders. As usual, we give special thanks for money given in this way that we can depend on and use to plan our expenses in advance.

Political activity is picking up all around the country and we remind comrades to pass the collecting tin around at every available opportunity to support this paper. Please continue sending whatever you can to the *New Worker* Fund at PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

Our special appeal to raise £6,000 quickly is off to a good start with £520 received just this week, making a total of £580 collected so far and leaving £5,420 to go to reach our target.

We thank a long-term reader and supporter from Manchester for £100; another Manchester supporter sent £10; a Sussex comrade sent £200; a South Wales rock’n’roller sent £100; two Southall comrades sent £100 and the friendly Cumbrian bees sent £10.

This is a good start but please, please keep sending the money; we’ve still got a long way to go to reach the target. Send your contributions to the *New Worker* Special Appeal at PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ and make cheques payable to the *New Worker*.

email: party@ncp.clara.net

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THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

Murder on the streets

THE INCREASE in the numbers of young people being shot or stabbed to death by other young people is dominating newspaper headlines and was a major issue in the recent London Mayoral elections. The immediate proposals from the new Mayor, Boris Johnson, are for more powers for police to stop and search young people and for metal detector scanners at strategic points such as rail and Tube stations. Various right-wing tabloids are screaming for longer sentences for those found carrying lethal weapons. These methods only scratch the surface of the problem because they do not deal with the root cause of why young people carry weapons and band together into gangs.

Confiscating knives or holding amnesties are useless because knives are so very easily replaceable and always will be as long as people need something to cut up their food.

The *Independent* recently published the results of a survey that asked youngsters why they carry knives. The response was almost unanimous – for protection. Almost all those questioned cited some event that they or a close family member or friend had experienced where they had been attacked and afterwards decided to carry a knife for protection.

As for joining gangs, human beings are social animals, they will always form groups of friends who go about together and adolescence is the major stage in life for developing independent social skills and forming long-lasting friendships. And it only takes one or two seriously anti-social groups for all the rest to be convinced they need knives for protection and suddenly the town is full of dangerous rival gangs. Many gangs entrust their youngest members to carry weapons because they know, if caught, the underage youths will incur much lighter sentences from the law.

Once the weapons are in the hands of children, who may have been “taught right from wrong” but are still not old enough to understand just how wrong it is to kill another human being, casualties become inevitable.

What is lacking in these young people’s lives is adult attention, interest and intervention. It is no good blaming parents or teachers. The parents love their children deeply but are busy and exhausted earning a living, working long hours, juggling rising debts, housing costs and all the stresses that modern low-paid workers are subject to.

The teachers are also stressed and under enormous pressure to improve their school standing in league tables. They and their pupils face endless testing and judgement – enough to alienate many, leaving them jaded and cynical. They have no time for teaching the humanities, music or the arts – which are not tested. Nor do they have time or attention enough for pupils who are struggling – they must prioritise those who will do well in exams are raise the standing of the school.

Local government cuts over nearly three decades have wiped out most youths clubs, hobby activities and other constructive activities for young people. So thousands of youngsters are left entirely to their own devices, to support each other socially, emotionally and morally. And a few discover that associating with adult criminals and drug dealers can bring them instant wealth and material goods that their low-paid wage slave parents could never provide.

The children who get involved in illegal, anti-social gang activity are the victims of social neglect. But a capitalist society that promotes individualism, greed and selfishness can have no answers. Wherever these children look to the higher levels of society they see greed, corruption and crime and capitalism teaches them this is the only way forward.

Most capitalists bend or break the rules a bit – it improves profits and increases the chances of survival in business. Criminal gang bosses simply take this a bit further and ignore the rules.

We have only to look at the vast contrast with the status of children in socialist societies, where they are cherished, encouraged and respected, to see there is a far better, happier way to raise children.

Dead parrot

Archaeologist Dr David Waterhouse, who is a *Monty Python* fan, has discovered that 55 million years ago the “Norwegian Blue” parrot of the programme’s most famous dead parrot sketch really did exist.

But, as depicted in the sketch, the variety has long been “demised, passed on, ceased to be, stiff, bereft of life”.

Dr Waterhouse found that a fossilised wing recovered from a mine in Denmark came from a bird which belonged to the parrot family.

He said: “I specialise in bird fossils and am also a Python fan, so I have lived with jokes about dead parrots for years. Obviously we were dealing with a bird bereft of life, but the tricky bit was establishing it was a parrot.”

He believes the species would have flown in

Say no more

Norway as it would have had the same climate as Denmark at the time. He dubbed it the Danish Blue, although the species, a new discovery, has been given the scientific name *Mopsitta Tanta*.

Desperate measures

Nepal’s King Gyanendra, facing the imminent abolition of the monarchy, has been making animal sacrifices to Kali, the Hindu goddess of power.

In what will probably be his final royal public appearance, the former feudal dictator was accompanied by Queen Komal to the temple of Dakshinkali perched by the side of a stream in a jungle-clad ravine 25 km (15 miles) south of Kathmandu.

Following military defeat, and then defeat in the new constituent assembly the unpopular former ruler offered

prayers to the “family deity”.

Earlier at the shrine, the king sat crossed-legged in front of the deity and offered prayers as five animals – a buffalo, a goat, a lamb, a duck and a rooster – were sacrificed to goddess Kali, a common practice among Hindus, to please the deity. But it seems Kali wasn’t paying attention – the country is still going to be declared a republic.

Long journey

Commuters can spend 18 years of their working life travelling to and from work, according to a recent survey from the Automobile Association and Work wise UK.

Most people spend about five years commuting but in the London area where traffic congestion is worst the average person travelling to work now endures a three-hour round trip every working day.

The report aims to persuade bosses to allow more staff to work from home as congestion and delays cost Britain’s economy £22 billion a year.

Orange legacy

The small town of Innisfail in Queensland, Australia has a cancer death rate 10 times the state average and a leading researcher, Jean Williams, claims the cause is the secret testing, 40 years ago, of Agent Orange in nearby forests.

She claims that Australian military scientists sprayed the toxic herbicide on rainforest near Innisfail for defoliant testing in the early years of the American war against Vietnam. Local people say the jungle has been dying and has never recovered.

The site is near a river which supplies water for the town in the far north of the country.

Debt problems climb the ladder

TRANSACT, a national debt counselling organisation, reported last week that its offices in more affluent parts of the country are being overwhelmed by people on relatively high incomes who have fallen foul of rising interest rates and the unfolding credit crunch.

Transact, which runs more than 1,200 debt advice centres, says that debt problems are rising throughout the country but the rate of increase is more dramatic in places where once there would have been little demand for help and that many professional and homeowners are now in serious trouble.

In Haywards Heath in Sussex and Congleton in Cheshire, for example, there had been a 100 per cent rise in inquiries over the past year. It said some advice centres were so busy they had been turning people away.

Transact says Government funding has been generous, with an extra £55 million over the past three years to fund an extra 500 debt advisers.

But it says this has been concentrated on inner-city areas where the rise in problem debt has been less severe.

These services now with the credit crunch are being overwhelmed by a whole new breed of debtor: middle-class people

Transact co-ordinator

- Repossessions are on the increase.

Jamie Elliott said: “In the past it was almost uniquely people on benefits, people in social housing who went to debt advice agencies.

“Since the credit crunch started, they are seeing a big increase in professional people and homeowners coming to seek help, who have just been pushed over the edge and now can’t cope with their outgoings.

“But what that means is there is much less debt advice to go round.”

Many of the people Transact sees have taken ad-

vantage of easy access to credit or extended mortgages to pay for home improvements or just general spending.

But in recent months lenders have become much tougher and less willing to be flexible over repayments.

“I’ve had at least two clients sit in front of me and tell me they would have killed themselves if they hadn’t found out we were here,” said senior debt adviser Emma Russell.

Transact says that with fixed-rate mortgages coming to an end, higher fuel costs,

food bills and council tax, many people with decent salaries are struggling. It expects the problems to increase.

At the Mid-Sussex Debt Advice Centre which serves the Haywards Heath area, the average debt of clients – excluding mortgages – is £20,000, rising to £110,000 in the most extreme case.

Debt advisers say financial institutions must take some responsibility for encouraging debt and the Government should do more to educate people about financial responsibility.

Cornish tin mines to re-open?

THE SOARING price of some metals in world markets could make it profitable to re-open the tin mines of Cornwall and Devon.

Increasing demand from India and China has raised the price of tin last week to an all-time high of over \$25,000 (£12,792) a tonne. That is four times the value of tin when South Crofty mine near Camborne closed 10 years ago.

The mine’s owners want to re-open it next year and

there are plans to restart tungsten mining in Devon.

Until very recently the remnants of the old tin mines, known as the Stanneries, were regarded as part of the local historic industrial heritage, attracting tourists more than prospectors.

But rising prices are likely to change that, according to Cornwall county councillor Mark Kaczmarek.

The former South Crofty miner said: “If the price stays high there is no question in

my mind that other areas will be looked at.

“Whether it is tin, copper, zinc or lead, all metal prices have increased dramatically, but none more dramatically than tin.”

The South Crofty workforce has recently gone up from 17 to 42 in preparation for the restart of mining at what was once Europe’s largest tin mine.

Australian firm Wolf Minerals plans to restart production at Hemerdon tungsten and tin mine on the edge of

Dartmoor and is increasing investment levels following encouraging test drilling results.

The firm hopes to create 500 jobs by restarting the open-cast mine near Plymouth and plans to keep mining tin and tungsten for 20 years. Hemerdon is believed to be one of the world’s biggest reserves of tin and tungsten and Wolf expects to produce about 3,000 tonnes of tungsten and tin per year.

Weekend of CND protests

HUNDREDS of peace protesters last weekend staged a weekend of protests at US missile defence bases – Menwith Hill and Lakenheath last weekend as part of the month of action called by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament opposing their inclusion in the destabilising US “Missile Defence” system.

The protesters joined the “Breaking the Links” march and rally outside the main gates of RAF Menwith Hill on Saturday afternoon to highlight how a vital link in the US war-fighting machine operates just eight miles from Harrogate, totally immune from public and parliamentary scrutiny.

Menwith Hill, the world’s largest spy base, is planned as a satellite communications hub for the Missile Defence system, as announced to Parliament last summer on the day before it went into recess, preventing any debate.

On Sunday the focus of protest shifted to Gate One at RAF Lakenheath for the “Three Strikes and You’re Out” demonstration.

Campaigners highlighted three issues: “Strike One” – that 110 US-controlled nuclear bombs are stored at Lakenheath, each many times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb.

“Strike Two” – that planes from Lakenheath regularly bomb Iraq and Afghanistan. Evidence photographed by campaigners has shown munitions used to have included cluster bombs, widely condemned for their civilian death-toll.

“Strike Three” underlines the continuing speculation that Lakenheath is the US’s preferred back-up location for the interceptor missiles themselves, were the long-running and so far unsuccessful negotiations for a site in Poland to fail.

CND chair Kate Hudson said: “US plans for Missile Defence are already destabilising Europe, sparking a Russian response that risks moving us toward a new Cold War. ...we’re all being turned into targets by hosting this system – foisted on us despite the fact that the majority of the public are against it and that there has been no vote in Parliament to support it.”

New dispute at Fujitsu

MANUFACTURING workers at Fujitsu’s Birmingham plant voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action last Wednesday in response to the company’s threat to move production overseas.

In a 77 per cent turnout the workforce voted for two forms of industrial action: action short of strike (comprising non-cooperation) was voted for unanimously; strike action was voted for by 68 votes to one.

Jeannie Drake, deputy general secretary, said: “We have been in talks with the company to try and reach a solution... We feel some progress was made this morning, and although we’re cautious about that progress, we have agreed not to serve notice for action immediately.”

Unions welcome rights for agency workers

by Caroline Colebrook

UNIONS have welcomed a deal negotiated between the Government, the Confederation of British Industry and the TUC that will give new rights to agency workers after they have been with the same employer for 12 weeks.

The new rights would bring Britain into line with the European Union Temporary Workers Directive.

Some details of the proposed law concerning agency workers still need to be worked out but staff of agencies would get job protection rights after 12 weeks of work.

The CBI had sought up to a year’s working time before a doctrine of unfair dismissal could take effect.

Equal pay and similar work conditions for 1.4 million agency workers also is included in the package, although details on those issues are still in discussions.

The news was a clear victory for the TUC and trade unions, which mounted an effective campaign this year for work rights for agency workers.

TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: “I welcome the Prime Minister’s clear recognition that agency workers get a raw deal. Unions will now step up their campaign to secure proper protection and a fair deal for agency workers.”

That campaign produced

a record 136 MPs supporting a Private Member’s Bill on the issue of rights for temp agency workers.

The Bill was tabled by Labour MP Andrew Miller and won a full third of the House of Commons in February; it left little doubt that the Brown Government must act on a draft law.

One of the leading campaigners was Unison general secretary Dave Prentis. He said: “This is a great step forward to protect the majority of vulnerable agency workers, and, significantly, a leap towards the trade union position.”

“We have been campaigning for these rights for the past six years and the log jam has at last been broken. This was unfinished business from the Warwick Agreement.”

“The abuse of temporary agency workers is a shameful relic of another age that should be outlawed. It cannot be right that in the 21st century, we still allow unscrupulous bosses to exploit the most vulnerable workers by denying them basic employment rights.”

“Agency workers are becoming an increasing feature of the public sector and we want to make sure that they are treated fairly. We will continue campaigning to protect those workers not covered by the agreement, who may still be exploited and abused by bad bosses.”

The state – a weapon of class oppression

by Mervyn Drage
in Manchester

“THE BOURGEOIS state controls the armed forces, police, judiciary, prisons, security services and other institutions of subtle control such as the mass media, including television and the education system,” Peter Hendy told a public meeting in Manchester last Thursday 15th May.

This was the fourth in a series of public meetings organised by the Greater Manchester *New Worker* Supporters’ Group at the Friends Meeting House in Mount Street, central Manchester.

Previous meetings had covered “Troops out of Iraq,” addressed by New Communist Party general secretary Andy Brooks, then “Should working people vote Labour?” addressed by NCP industrial organiser Mike Fletcher and “What is Marxism?” a debate on dialectical materialism led by Peter Hendy, who is an NCP central committee member.

In last Thursday’s meeting Peter opened the debate on Lenin’s famous work *The State and Revolution*, written between August and September in 1917, just before the Great October Revolution.

Peter explained the rel-

evance of Lenin’s book for communists and working class people struggling today against the monopoly capitalist system and the bourgeois state machinery.

Lenin comprehensively developed Marx’s teachings on the state after they had been distorted by Kautsky and other opportunists.

Lenin examined the Russian revolutions of 1905 to 1907 and spring 1917; he refuted the Menshevik, left social democratic and opportunist argument that the state could be used for the reconciliation of classes.

The state, as Marxism teaches, is a machine for the suppression of one class by another. Lenin showed that the capitalist state of imperialism is an instrument of dictatorial class rule by the bourgeoisie.

In the discussion that followed Corrydon Archer said that the Marxist-Leninist ideas espoused and explained by Peter Hendy would help his day-to-day work as a community activist.

Those present agreed to look into the possibility of holding the next meeting on a more informal basis at a community centre in Moss Side and a collected was made to pay for the hire of the room.

• Making the demand.

“We want to make sure that proper penalties are imposed on employers who abuse their position.”

Paul Kenny, general sec-

retary of the GMB union said: “The agreement does not do everything we would have liked but it is a big step forward.”

Government support for school cadets

THE GOVERNMENT is planning to support plans for an expansion of the military cadet corps in schools and the introduction of an “Armed Forces Day” to improve support and recruitment for the armed forces in Britain.

Recruitment has plummeted since the Government committed British forces to support the illegal and discredited United States-led invasion of Iraq.

The Tories are complaining that the Government is stealing their ideas.

There are currently 60 cadet forces in comprehensive schools in England and Wales, compared with 200 in grammar and independent

(mainly ancient public) schools. The review also recommends an annual Armed Forces Day – an idea Prime Minister Gordon Brown indicated he supported in a letter seen by a Sunday newspaper last month.

The idea for such a day has already won support from senior military commanders and some families of service personnel killed in war.

Leading football clubs are expected to be called on to host parades by troops as part of the plans.

The Davies’ review also recommends that servicemen and women are encouraged to wear their uniforms while off-duty.

TUC demands better mental health support for workers

THE TUC last Friday published new guidance for employers and unions to help support workers with mental health problems, in advance of its disability conference taking place this week (21st and 22nd May).

Every organisation in Britain is affected by mental distress and ill health in the workplace, and at any given time one in six workers will experience depression, anxiety, or stress-related problems.

Simple steps – including the prevention and early identification of mental health

problems – can promote the mental well-being of staff and help employers save money by cutting down on days lost to sick leave.

TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: “Hundreds and thousands of people at work face ignorance, prejudice and stigma because of mental health problems. Even more – who are both able and willing to work – cannot get a job because of discrimination by employers, even though this is illegal under the Disability Discrimination Act.”

Fighting for Karen Reissmann

by Mike Fletcher
in Colchester

KAREN REISSMANN is a mental health nurse – a very good nurse who was about to be promoted last June when her employer, the Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust suspended last June her and later sacked her for “gross misconduct”.

Her crime was, as Unison branch chair, to campaign against cuts to the trust’s services. When she was suspended her work colleagues were so angry they staged a three-day protest strike.

Now her union and other trade union activists and progressives around the country are campaigning for her reinstatement.

And last Thursday in Colchester High Street members and supporters of the Labour Representation Committee met and campaigned for Karen Reissmann. Those involved included members of the Labour Party, the New Communist Party, the Amicus section of the giant union Unite and other members of the Colchester Trades Council.

Together they collected 220 petition signature and £57 in donations for the campaign.

And they plan to meet again next Thursday and every Thursday at 2pm in Colchester High Street to carry on the campaign. They welcome all progressives and trade union activists who can to join them – and bring a banner if you can.

Equal pay for train workers

THE RMT transport union called off planned strike action by than 400 train-maintenance, shunting and cleaning staff at eight First Great Western sites between Penzance, Swansea and London off last Sunday after the company conceded to union demands.

The 24-hour strike action planned for 18th May was called off after the company dropped plans to extend the use of contractors within engineering and agreed to pay all overtime within the engineering grades at a time and quarter with effect from Sunday 8th June 2008.

The company also agreed to implement 35-hour week rosters and a 25 per cent increase in earnings for some of the lowest paid cleaning grade members.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow congratulated members on sticking together and standing up to a management that had not previously been prepared to treat staff equally.

“Due to the steadfastness of members at FGW, these inequalities have been removed.”

“This once more shows what can be achieved if all grades organise and work together in one industrial union,” Bob Crow said.

What is the philosophy of Marxism?

An opening given by Peter Henty to the *New Worker* Supporters' Group meeting in Manchester on 6th March 2008.

Part one

MARXISM, or scientific socialism, is the name given to the body of ideas first worked out by Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). In their totality, these ideas provide a fully worked-out theoretical basis for the struggle of the working class to attain a higher form of human society – socialism.

Marxism falls under three main headings, corresponding broadly to philosophy, social history and economics: dialectical materialism, historical materialism and Marxist economics. Lenin described these as the “three component parts of Marxism”.

To promote the study of Marxism I intend to provide an outline of the basic principles and laws of dialectical materialism.

Dialectical materialism is the core of the philosophical system of Marxism-Leninism and its methodological basis.

What is dialectical materialism? Do we need a philosophy?

For those unacquainted with Marxist philosophy, dialectical materialism may seem an obscure and difficult concept. But for those prepared to take the time to study this new way of looking at things, they will discover a revolutionary outlook that will allow them an insight into and understanding of the mysteries of the world in which we live. A grasp of dialectical materialism is an essential prerequisite in understanding the doctrine of Marxism. Dialectical materialism is the philosophy of Marxism, which provides us with a scientific and comprehensive world outlook. It is the philosophical foundation – the method – on which the whole of Marxist doctrine is founded.

According to Engels, dialectics was “our best working tool and our sharpest weapon”. Dialectics provides a guide to action and our activities within the working class movement. It is similar to a compass or map, which allows us to get our bearings in the turmoil of events and permits us to understand the underlying processes that shape our world.

Whether we like it or not, consciously or unconsciously, everyone has a philosophy. A philosophy is simply a way of looking at the world. Under capitalism, without our scientific philosophy, we will inevitably adopt the dominant philosophy of the ruling class and the prejudices of the society in which we live. “Things will never change” and “history always repeats itself” are common refrains, reflecting the futility of trying to change things and of the need to accept our lot in life. These ideas, explained Marx, form a crushing weight on the consciousness of men and women.

Just as the emerging bourgeoisie in its revolution against

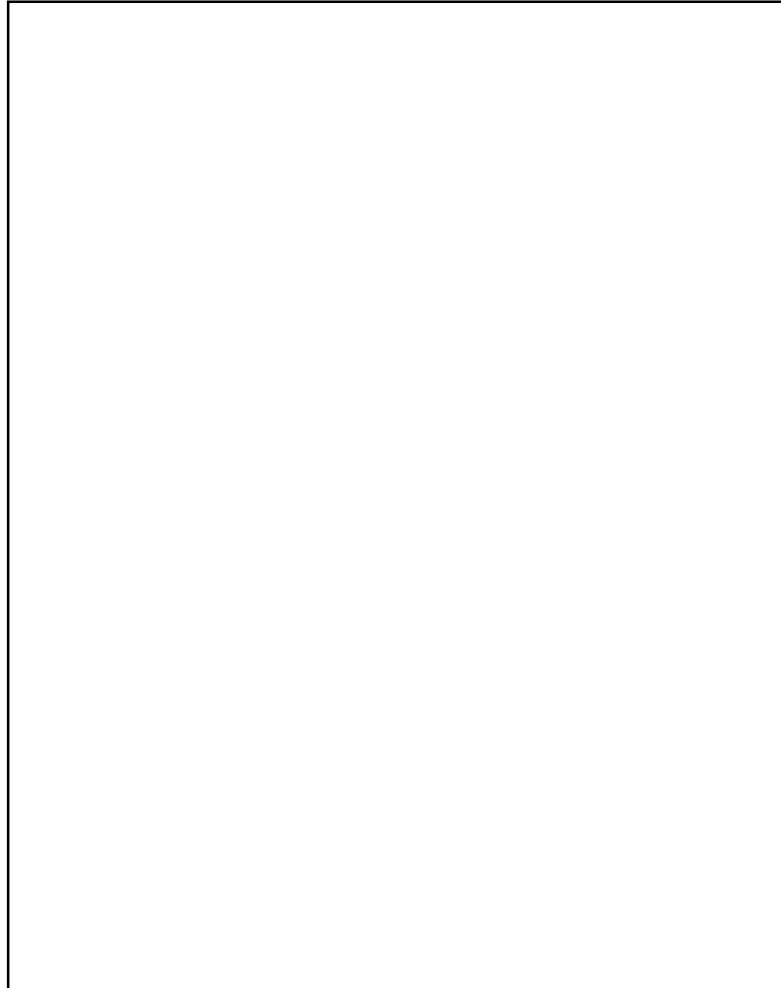
feudal society challenged the conservative ideas of the old feudal aristocracy, so the working class, in its fight for a new society, needs to challenge the dominant outlook of its own oppressor, the capitalist class. Of course the ruling class, through its monopoly control of the mass media, the press, school, university and pulpit, consciously justifies its system of exploitation as the “most natural form of society”. The repressive state machine, with its “armed body of men”, is not sufficient to maintain the capitalist system. The dominant ideas and morality of bourgeois society serve as a vital defence of the material interests of the ruling class. Without this powerful ideology, the capitalist system could not last for long.

“In one way or another,” states Lenin, “All official and liberal science defends wage slavery. To expect science to be impartial in a wage-slave society is as foolishly naïve as to expect impartiality from manufacturers on the question of whether workers’ wages ought not to be increased by decreasing the profits of capital.”

Official bourgeois ideology conducts a relentless war against Marxism, which it correctly sees as a mortal danger to capitalism. Blair denounced Marxism as “an outmoded sectarian dogma”. The bourgeois scribes and professors pour out a continual stream of propaganda in an attempt to discredit Marxism – particularly the dialectic. This has especially been the case since the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the ferocious ideological offensive against Marxism, communism, revolution and suchlike. “Marxism is dead,” they repeatedly proclaim like some religious incantation. But Marxism refuses to lie down in front of these witch doctors! Marxism reflects the unconscious will of the working class to change society. Its fate is linked to that of the proletariat.

The apologists of capitalism, together with their shadows in the labour movement, constantly assert that their system is a natural and permanent form of society. On the other hand the dialectic asserts that nothing is permanent and all things perish in time. Such a revolutionary philosophy constitutes a profound threat to the capitalist system and therefore must be discredited at all costs. This explains the daily churning out of anti-Marxist propaganda. But each real step forward in science and knowledge serves to confirm the correctness of the dialectic. For millions of people the growing crisis of capitalism increasingly demonstrates the validity of Marxism. The objective situation is forcing working people to seek a way out of the impasse. “Life teaches,” remarked Lenin. Today, to use the famous words of the *Communist Manifesto*, “A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of communism.”

In the fight for the emancipation of the working class, Marxism also wages a relentless war against capitalism and its ideology, which defends and justifies its system of exploitation, the “market economy”. But Marxism does more than this. Marx-



• Marx arrested in Brussels in 1848 – Marx and Engels never separated theory from practice and sometimes paid the price. Below: Marxism is far from dead, the very thought of it still haunts the capitalists.

ism provides the working class with “an integral world outlook irreconcilable with any form of superstition, reaction or defence of bourgeois oppression,” (Lenin). It seeks to reveal the real relationships that exist under capitalism and arms the working class with an understanding of how it can achieve its own emancipation. Dialectical materialism, to use the words of the Russian Marxist Plekhanov, is more than an outlook; it is a “philosophy of action”.

The limits of formal logic

Men and women attempt to think in a rational manner. Logic (from the Greek *logos* meaning word or reason) is the science of the laws of thinking. Whatever thoughts we think, and whatever language they are expressed in, they must satisfy the requirements of reasoning. These requirements give rise to laws of thought, to the principles of logic. It was the Greek philosopher

Aristotle (384-322 BC) more than 2,000 years ago who formulated the present system of formal logic – a system that is the basis of our educational establishments to this very day. He categorised the method of how we should reason correctly and how statements are combined to arrive at judgements, and from them, how conclusions are drawn.

He laid down three basic laws of logic: the principle of identity ($A = A$), of contradiction (A cannot be A and not A), and the excluded middle (A is either A or non- A ; there is no middle alternative).

Formal logic has held sway for more than two millennia and was the basis of experiment and the great advances of modern science. The development of mathematics was based on this logic. You cannot teach a child to add up without it. One plus one equals two, not three. Formal logic may seem like common sense and is responsible for the execution of a million-and-one everyday things. But – and this is a big but – it has its limits. When dealing with drawn out processes or complicated events, formal logic becomes a totally inadequate way of thinking. This is particularly the case when dealing with movement, change and contradiction. Formal logic regards things as fixed and motionless. Of course this is not to deny the everyday usefulness of logic; on the contrary but we need to recognise its limits.

The dialectic is neither fiction nor mysticism but a science of the forms of our thinking insofar as it is not limited to the daily problems of life but attempts to arrive at an understanding of more complicated and drawn-out processes. The dialectic and formal logic bear a relationship similar to that between higher and lower mathematics.

With the development of modern science, the system of classification (of Linnaeus) was based on formal logic, where all living things were divided into species and orders. This constituted a great leap forward for biology compared to the past. However it was a fixed and rigid system, with its rigid categories, which over time revealed its limits. Darwin in particular showed that through evolution it was possible for one species to be transformed into another species. Consequently the rigid system of classification had to be changed to allow for this new understanding of reality.

In effect, the system of formal logic broke down. It could not cope with these contradictions. On the other hand, dialectics – the logic of change – explains that there are no absolute or fixed categories in nature or society.

Only dialectical materialism can explain the laws of evolution and change, which sees the world not as a complex of ready-made things but as a complex of processes, which go through an uninterrupted transformation of coming into being and passing away.

To be continued.



by Sonja Karkar

“ANZACS back again” was the front-page headline of Jerusalem’s *Palestine Post* on 13th February, 1940. The ANZAC reputation for courage and daring was legendary after their victory at Beersheba in 1917. That was the Palestine Campaign that saw the celebrated charge of the 4th Light Horse Brigade on the unsuspecting Turks.

It was a battle that turned the tide of that campaign and led to the subsequent end of Ottoman rule in Palestine.

During the Second World War Palestine was under a British Mandate and Australian and New Zealand soldiers were back helping the British army to stop the Germans from capturing Egypt and the Suez Canal. They fought alongside several Palestinian brigades enlisted into the British Army under The Palestine Regiment. That decisive offensive took place in 1942 at El Alamein, Egypt, the first allied land victory of the war.

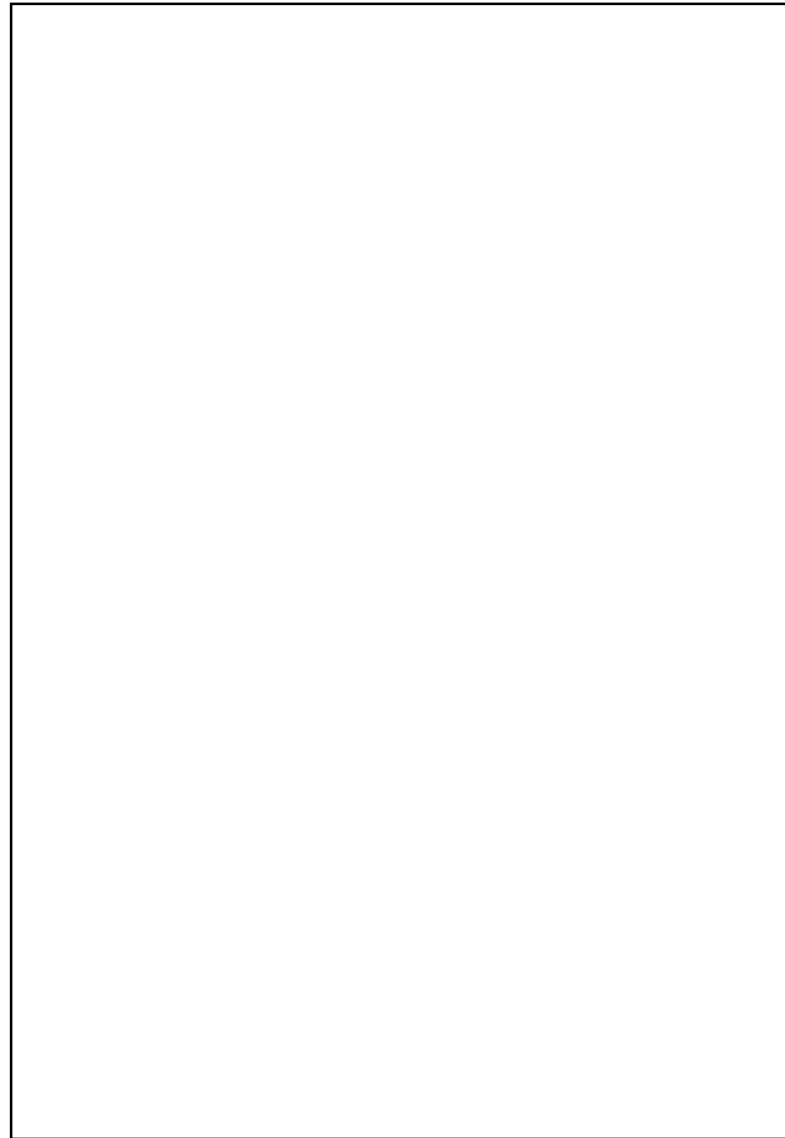
Tragically, more than 2,000 ANZACS from both campaigns would never see Australia or New Zealand again. Over 600 lie in unknown graves with Muslim and Christian Arabs and Jews who also died trying to defeat the German army. Other ANZACS are buried in war cemeteries throughout Palestine, two of which can be found in Gaza — one beautifully cared for in the Palestinian town of Deir al-Balah, and the other in Gaza City.

The Beersheba Commonwealth War Cemetery has graves of some 175 Australian soldiers and lies on the edge of today’s sprawling commercial city that Israel has renamed Be’er Sheva. Our soldiers knew it as Beersheba with a largely Palestinian population.

The *New York Times* of 1st November 1917 described Beersheba as an “ancient Palestine city, having much strategic value”, and during the British Mandate, it remained an administrative centre providing work and services for some 4,000 Palestinians who lived in the area.

The next time Beersheba became a battleground was in 1948, when the army of the newly-cre-

The ANZAC-Palestine connection



• Above: a memorial to the ANZAC-Palestine connection. Below: the charge itself.

ated Israel captured the city and terrorised its Palestinian inhabitants into fleeing. It was never intended to become part of Israel under the 1947 UN Partition Plan, but like in other parts of Palestine, the Palestinians were never allowed to return to their homes.

In an effort to conflate Australia’s Palestine Campaign with Israel, the Pratt Foundation in Australia, which contributes heavily towards Israeli causes, commissioned a statue for the new theme park that it has set up in memory of the Australian soldiers in Beersheba. That was almost a year ago. A statement made last month by Australian Veteran Affairs Minister Alan Griffin, said that the Park of the Australian Soldier was a gift to the people of Be’er Sheva, but for years the Israelis living there were ignorant of the site’s significance and wilfully neglectful of its heritage.

Earlier this year, the Australian government was forced to order an investigation after the precious water wells, which the Australian soldiers had so bravely fought to secure, were found to be in a shocking state of disrepair and a virtual rubbish tip.

Since then, the embarrassment for Israeli officials over the neglect of this historic site has passed. The statue was unveiled in Beersheba on 28th April to commemorate what many regard as the most significant victory of Australian military history and Australia’s Governor-General was in Israel — a first for our head of state — along with other international dignitaries for the ceremony.

In contrast, Australia’s first Jewish Governor-General Sir Isaac Isaacs vigorously questioned the legitimacy of Zionism (the founding ideology of Israel), describing it as “a monstrous historical crime and curse”. He did not live to see the state of Israel, but it is unlikely that he would have associated himself with it, particularly in light of its nefarious deeds over the last 60 years.

Gaza has particularly suffered because of Israel. Subjected for two years to an increasingly punitive siege, 1.5 million starving Palestinians are barely 50 km away from the commemorations in Beersheba. Their extreme hu-

manitarian need cries out for attention. They should not be ignored and neither should their history. Some of the heaviest fighting took place in Gaza during the Palestine Campaign when ANZACS and Palestinian soldiers fought the Turks to free Palestine from Ottoman rule. Now, the Palestinians are prisoners of Israel — not only in Gaza, but in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The Governor-General ought to have paid his respects to the ANZACS resting in Gazan graves, but it is unlikely that Israel would have given him a permit for free passage in any case. The much-publicised ANZAC-Israel connection would appear then to be more about fudging history than honouring it.

While most Australians would see the statue and park for the fallen ANZACS as a tribute to their soldiers fighting and dying for King and Country, editor Dan Goldberg of *Rhapsody*, a bi-monthly insert in the Australian Jewish News, sees it as “a permanent memorial to those who died in battle for the Jewish state.”

This is a disturbing and historically incorrect remark, since the battle for Beersheba occurred 31 years before the state of Israel even came into being or was created in Palestine for that matter.

In fact, the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which sought British support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, was still being debated by the British War Cabinet when Beersheba was captured. In the following decades, the British denied that a Jewish state had been intended — only a “national home” — and insisted that a clause be inserted stating that “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine”, which in itself was insulting to the Palestinians who made up 92 per cent of the population.

It was not until 1947 that the United Nations member countries, amongst them Australia, unequally divided Palestine with the stroke of a pen and created Israel without consulting the Palestinians, who had lived rich and productive lives in the cities, towns and villages under the Ottomans and later the British.

Last month Palestinians could only watch in despair as the remembrances took place and the historical connection between Australia and Palestine was usurped by a state that did not exist when Australian soldiers fought there for the British Empire.

War memorials everywhere show Palestine etched in stone. Graves in Gaza honour our soldiers. But even more telling, are the four million Palestinians who live in that land under Israel’s brutal occupation and siege and the 7.2 million refugees who are waiting to return home. They will not forget. It will take more than Governor-Generals and statues to expunge the history and memories of the ANZAC-Palestine connection, try as Israel might.

Sonja Karkar is the founder and President of Women for Palestine and one of the founders and co-conveners of Australians for Palestine in Melbourne, Australia. *Electronic Intifada*

Home News

LETTERS

Dear Comrades

New Labour should not be surprised at their poor results in the local elections held on 1st May. New labour is very unpopular and is in meltdown phase; it is debatable whether it can recover in time for the general elections due to be held in 2010.

New Labour's vote did, however, hold up quite well in Greater Manchester.

The Conservatives received good results in town halls nationwide. The pompous, Eton and US educated "toff" Boris Johnson captured the Greater London Mayor's job for the Tories in London. Johnson received extensive support from the right-wing rage the London Evening Standard but he only just scraped in, defeating "Red" Ken by a narrow margin.

Ken Livingstone may have remained as London Mayor if he had distanced himself from lame-duck Prime Minister Gordon

Brown and New Labour. The Liberal Democratic vote held up well in Manchester and across the country.

Yet the percentage of people voting - or turnout - was poor. In Manchester central it was only 15 per cent; that is about one in seven of the electorate. Turnout in the 11 Greater Manchester districts was between 30 and 35 per cent.

The real victor was not the Tories but apathy. In the last general election the turnout was only 60 per cent. The fact is that people are disillusioned with the whole electoral process, whether it be in local elections or in Parliament.

The three big parties are seen as being little different from each other. Parliamentary scandals and corrupt deals have dented the reputations of politicians. In the local elections councillors appear to be in it for financial gain, career enhancement and opportunist reasons, rather than for the good of the community.

Councillors used to receive modest expenses for

travel and meals; now they receive a salary. The Leader of Manchester City Council, Sir Richard Leese for example, is on a whopping salary, several times that of the average worker.

We might be able to learn from the experiences abroad. In socialist Cuba in municipal elections in 2005 the turnout was over 90 per cent. Many councillors in Cuba are independent, contrary to the myth that Cuba is a communist dictatorship.

Even in the unstable capitalist economy of Italy the turnout in the recent general elections was over 80 per cent.

One idea for a progres-

sive way forward in local elections would be for prospective councillors to be invited to community venues to listen to the concerns of the local community and to articulate their party policies.

This form of participatory democracy (hustings) could be a winner. Pre-election meetings of prospective councillors used to take place 20 years ago in Manchester and elsewhere. Perhaps we could ask the labour and Liberal Democrat parties and Manchester City Council to reintroduce them.

Yours,
W Allen.
Manchester.

Secret subsidy for construction companies

A NEW REPORT commissioned by construction union Ucat has revealed that the construction industry enjoys a secret Government subsidy of £1.7 billion per annum through the false self-employment of workers.

The publication of the report comes hot on the heels of the recent Office of Fair Trading Report into widespread price fixing by construction companies.

The report, The Evasion Economy, was launched last week at Ucat's National Delegate Conference in Perth.

False self-employment occurs through the Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) a stand-alone self-employment tax scheme for the construction industry.

Unlike all other forms of self-employment, workers are paid up front and are deducted tax at source. Although officially self-employed workers cannot refuse work, have set hours of work, have to obey orders and have their materials and large equipment provided for them.

Companies employing workers on CIS do not pay employers' National Insurance contributions (12.8 per cent of earnings), while workers pay lower NI contributions and can also make a tax return, where they can claim a

rebate often amounting to several thousands pounds.

A company employing a worker on CIS and paying him or her £20,000 would save £2,560 in national insurance contributions per annum.

The Evasion Economy written by Professor Mark Harvey of Essex University makes a conservative estimate that there are between 375,000 and 425,000 workers falsely self-employed in Britain.

The figure of £1.7 billion is based on 400,000 workers being falsely self-employed. The report warns that the figures are conservative because the industry has become so casualised that official data probably does not correctly record everyone working in the industry.

It is highly likely that the loss to the revenue and the number of workers falsely self-employed is far greater.

Due to being considered to be self-employed, workers on CIS do not have employment rights and can be hired or fired at a moment's notice.

There is also increasing evidence that CIS workers are at greater risk of death or injury due to lax health and safety regimes on the sites that they work on. Workers are denied standard benefits including holiday and sick pay.

Special Appeal

THE NEW COMMUNIST Party Central Committee has decided to launch a special appeal for extra funds for the New Worker.

The committee set the target figure at a modest £6,000 because that is the shortfall from last year's NCP 30th anniversary appeal and because we hope to raise the money quickly to resolve cash-flow problems that have dogged us since the beginning of this year.

Most of these problems are arising from increases in the costs of producing the paper, increased postage costs, very high rates for the Party Centre building and banking charges.

A quick, substantial injection of cash will resolve several problems that are now a drain on our day-to-day running costs and allow us to look to the future, plan for the replacement of ageing machinery and technology - and ageing staff and volunteers, without whom the paper could not appear.

We call on all readers and supporters to contribute whatever they can. NCP cells and New Worker Supporters' Groups are asked to be sure to take a collection for the paper at every event and meeting they can and to plan fund-raising schemes and events. Please share any good ideas with us.

The Central Committee, having passed this decision, immediately passed the collecting tin around the table and collected £60 to start the Special Appeal on its way.

Please send whatever you can raise to the New Worker Special Appeal at PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

Diary

EVERY Thursday

Petition in support of victimised Unison worker Karen Reissman. 12 noon, outside Colchester Town Hall. Org by Colchester Labour Representation Cttee.

SUNDAY 25 May

Nottingham Green Festival. 12 - 6pm, The Arboretum, Waverly Street. 0115 9621 453.

WEDNESDAY 28 May

Israel & Palestine. Prof Jeff Halper. 7.30pm, Temple of Peace, Cardiff, south Wales. 02920 889514.

THURSDAY 29 May

Hands off Cuba - learn the truth about the Cuban revolution from Teresita Trujillo, Central Cttee, Communist Party of Cuba. 7.30pm, room 3D, University of London Union, Malet St, WC1E 7HY.

SATURDAY 31 May

No third Runway. Demo at Heathrow, assemble 12 noon. www.campaigncc.org

TUESDAY 3 June

All Saints Gig - live bands. Love Music Hate Racism,

Lewes TUC Festival. Lewes, Sussex. Free

MONDAY 9 June Berthold Brecht and The Heavenly Four. Stefan Eggerding and his film. 7pm, MML, Marx House, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R.

MONDAY 9 June Woody Guthrie. Music & commentary. 8pm, Lewes Arms, Lewes, Sussex.

THURSDAY 19 June Robert Tressell. A discussion with John McDonnell MP, Billy Hayes (postal workers), etc. 7pm, The Grange, Lewes, Sussex. Lewes TUC Festival.

SATURDAY 21 June Sussex and the Spanish Civil War. Prose, poetry & song. Bill Thorneycroft, John Cruddas MP etc.

WEDNESDAY 25 June Towards a united Ireland. Gerry Adams, Sinn Féin. 7.30pm, London Irish Centre, Murry St, London NW1.

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.

On the Web...

New Worker National -

www.newworker.org

NCP Central -

www.geocities.com/ncpcentral

London District NCP -

http://londoncommunists.blogspot.com/

Brighton NCP -

http://brightoncommunists.blogspot.com/

NCP-PCS -

www.geocities.ncppcs/pcs1.html

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New technology and the need for socialism £2 plus 50p P&P.

On Stalin £2 plus 50p P&P. (New Worker reprint).

All in the family by Daphne Liddle,

£1 plus 50p P&P (New Worker reprint).

Arab nationalism and the communist movement

by Andy Brooks, £1 plus 50p P&P (New Worker reprint).

Killing ourselves to live by Daphne Liddle,

£1 plus 50p P&P (New Worker reprint).

NHS caught in debt trap by Daphne Liddle, £1 plus 50p P&P

(New Worker reprint).

On strikes by VI Lenin, £1 plus 50p P&P.

NCP Lit. PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

(cheques to New Worker)

New Worker Supporters' Groups...

New Worker supporters groups exist to support the weekly newspaper of the New Communist Party. Individual membership is £5.00 (8 Euros or \$10) for all or part of the calendar year and every member will receive a New Worker Supporters Group (NWSG) card and a copies of the Internal Bulletin for the year.

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The tipping point

SCIENTISTS these days are deeply concerned that the climate changes caused by global warming could reach a "tipping point" beyond which disastrous consequences would be irreversible. It is a scary prospect but one that cannot be predicted with any kind of pinpoint accuracy, just as an earthquake cannot be pinned down to happen on a particular date.

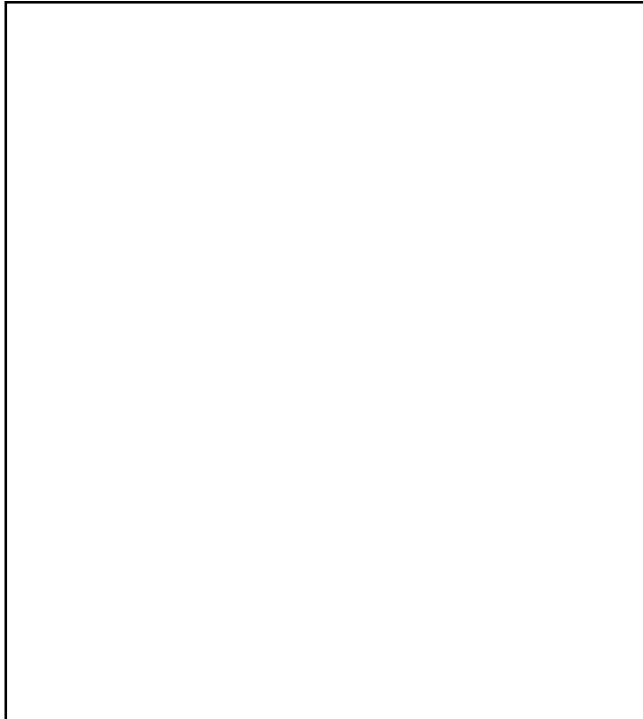
However, the movements of the earth's crust that cause a quake can be measured and that a quake will happen within a certain broader time period can be predicted with great accuracy.

Knowing an earthquake is coming is not limited to the physical sciences. Social systems have their tipping points, too.

From the point of view of humanity, a social earthquake that sweeps away outmoded relations of pro-

duction and property is a much cheerier prospect than environmental tipping points that could alter our ecosystem in ways that would put enormous stress on any human society. Let us hope that the social transformation comes while there is still time to undo the damage to the environment of the last 200 years.

What has caused this damage? Unbridled and unplanned growth of the means of production driven by the profit motive. Oh yes, we are always being promised that the next growth spurt of capitalism will end hunger, poverty, war, and so on. But it never happens. The rich get richer, the poor get poorer. That's the nature of this system. Take the new, highly profitable industry of ethanol production. It was supposed to be the answer to global warming, but it is having the same damaging effect. It is deepening world hunger by causing food prices to rise.



• Revolutions are inevitable – be prepared!

Not that long ago, before capitalism became a global system, there were many societies that met their needs in a sustainable man-

ner. The big difference is that people were not farming, hunting or raising livestock primarily to sell and make a profit, as happens

with production today.

What are the chances that the working class, the vast majority in modern society, can eradicate the system of capitalism and set up one that is based on meeting human needs, but at a much higher level of science and technology than in pre-capitalist days?

Obviously, it takes a huge struggle to get rid of a parasitic ruling class that has, over centuries, used its wealth and influence to shape all contemporary social institutions to serve its needs. But revolutions do happen. In fact, they are as inevitable as earthquakes.

Of course, everyone wants to know, when will the tipping points occur? When will all the day-to-day injustices — the hail of police bullets that killed Sean Bell, the unbelievably racist callousness that condemned so many to die in New Orleans after Katrina, the mounting evictions for unpayable mortgages, the

rising toll in money and blood of imperialist wars, the layoffs and cutbacks and poverty wages — when will it all bring about a new mood of struggle on a massive scale, in the same way that racist violence and segregation led to the upsurge of the Civil Rights movement?

Scientists shouldn't wait until tipping points occur to plan their response. The same is true for the progressive movement. Revolutionary politics are every bit as valid at a time like this as when the battle of the classes and the struggle of oppressed peoples for national liberation has become red hot.

In fact now is the time to consider carefully how to build a revolutionary movement while at the same time fighting like hell to roll back all the attacks coming down against the working class and the oppressed.

Workers World (US)

Bolivian progressive forces are on alert

THE BOLIVIAN opposition has suddenly come out in support of the presidential plan to call referendums to revoke the mandates of the heads of state and the nine departmental governors, with the unwholesome aim of ousting the president, Evo Morales, the first indigenous leader to take the helm in the Andean country.

The right-leaning opposition made up of leading businesspeople and the oligarchy among others, revived the recall referendum project in the Senate, which had already been passed by the Chamber of Deputies, supported by the pro-government Movement Towards Socialism party.

The vote, scheduled for next August, will probably be preceded by the remaining autonomy referendums, like the one already held in Santa Cruz, called by governors of the provinces of Beni, Pando and Tarija who are trying to break up the Bolivian nation.

The most conservative forces in Bolivia have agreed to the national referendum because they believe that if they manage to eject Evo Morales, the presidency would be assumed, under the existing Constitution, by the Senate leader and influential businessman born in Santa Cruz, Oscar Ortiz.

Supposing this conspiracy is a success, Bolivia would pass from a democratic-popular government aiming for social justice and answering to the wishes of the majority of indigenous people — to another conservative front, favouring neo-liberalism, which is likely to drive the people into misery.

But from destabilising



• Evo Morales.

plans to the practice, there is a long road because it is expected the unification of progressive forces will impede the triumph of the vile opposition.

President Evo Morales who was legitimately elected by a 53 per cent turnout, has been in office for two years and three months, a period in which his policies have had genuine popular impact.

The majority of poor people's demands have been met by Morales, despite the constant aggressive campaign of the conservative forces, often bordering on racism.

The first indigenous president in Bolivian history has strengthened state control, not on a whim, but in order to help poor people.

The nationalisation of oil and gas have had visible results. This had long been demanded by the most oppressed. Agreements with the investment companies that used to take the best part of

the pie have now been readjusted to benefit the nation.

Education and health have improved, with increasing selfless aid from Cuba and Venezuela. The government led by the Movement Towards Socialism has created the conditions for Cuban teachers and doctors to work directly in traditionally marginalised communities.

Taking stock of Evo Morales term of office, it is also clear that he has met expectations in pushing through the new constitution project, eventually passed by the Constituent Assembly and now awaiting a referendum.

The conservatives took the new constitution as a pretext to call autonomy referendums in four departments. They are now coming out in favour of the recall referendum, but not because they support democracy, but rather because they want to get rid of those who support the oppressed in Bolivia.

Radio Havana Cuba

Philadelphia cops declare 'open season' on the Black community

by Betsey Piette

THE CAUGHT-on-videotape kicking and beating of three young Black men — Brian Hall, Dwayne Dyches and Pete Hopkins — by more than a dozen Philadelphia police officers on 5th May has once again put "the City of Brotherly Love" in the national spotlight for police brutality.

An 11-minute video, filmed by a FOX29 helicopter, shows cops with guns drawn pulling the three men out of their car and then repeatedly kicking, stomping and hitting them with fists and clubs while the three are facedown on the roadway.

In another incident just one night earlier, Philadelphia police grabbed Anthony Pleasant off his bike and beat him so badly he ended up hospitalised with a fractured nose, swellings to his head and multiple body bruises. "It's like open season on any Black person — period," declared Pleasant's aunt, Daveena Pratt.

Mayor Michael Nutter tried to excuse the cops' brutality, saying they were "devastated" and "outraged" over the shooting death of police sergeant Stephen Liczbinski the weekend before. Nutter recently instituted a police "stop-and-frisk" policy that many fear will lead to more such incidents, especially given the department's history of brutality and racism toward communities of colour.

At a news conference, Eldridge Suggs, attorney for Dyches, suggested his client was targeted because of his



• Caught on video.

strong resemblance to Eric Floyd, the man eventually captured and charged with Liczbinski's shooting. The victims' attorneys claim police concocted a story that the men were suspects in a shooting to cover up a case of mistaken identity.

According to city officials, this incident is an aberration, but the scenes caught on video are all too reminiscent of an incident prior to the 2000 Republican National Convention in Philadelphia, when Thomas Jones was nearly lynched by at least 20 Philadelphia cops who beat him and shot him five times.

Since 2006, police have fatally shot 35 people in Philadelphia, more than in any similar period since 1980. Already in 2008 there have been three reported deadly shootings by police, including one of an unarmed bystander killed by

a cop who fired 11 shots into a house where a number of people, including children, were celebrating New Year's Eve.

Showing little concern for victims of police brutality, John McGrody, vice president of the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police, told the Philadelphia *Daily News* on 8th May that "innocent until proven guilty in a court of law" means nothing to him.

In the same issue of the *Daily News*, columnist Michael Smerconish, a former attorney for the Fraternal Order of Police, openly advocated that police should shoot suspects to save the time and expense of jury trials! Smerconish has spent decades trying to get Black revolutionary journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal executed on frame-up charges.

Workers World (US)

THE NEW WORKER

International News

Web: www.newworker.org

Fax 020 7223 4057

Protests against import of US beef in south Korea

MORE THAN 20,000 people attended a candlelight rally in protest against the opening of south Korean market to American beef took place at the plaza in front of the Seoul City Office on 14th May.

Speakers at the rally declared it is the demand of the people that "traitor" Lee Myung Bak should recognise the fact that the negotiations on the opening of the market to American beef were wrong and immediately nullify them.

Lee is chiefly to blame for the unending suicides committed by stockbreeding farmers, they said, calling upon all the people to turn out to get their grudge settled.

That day candlelight rallies simultaneously took place in over 40 provinces, cities and counties across south Korea.

Meanwhile, the People's Council of Measures Against the Total Opening of the south Korean Market to American Beef held a meeting of representatives in Seoul on 15th May at which it decided to escalate the actions against the imports.

Speakers at the meeting recalled that candlelight actions in protest against the import of American beef have so far been attended by a total of at least 200,000 people in more than 70 areas of south Korea and organisations in different domains were inaugurated to conduct diverse activities.

They stated the council would not stop their candlelight actions but escalate them till the renegotiations for meeting the required conditions for the import of American beef take place.

A letter of protest to "traitor" Lee Myung Bak was read out at the meeting. It urged Lee to come to his senses, though belatedly, and declare the outcome of the negotiations for the import of American beef null and void and renegotiate it.

At the end of the meeting, the participants staged a demonstration.

KCNA, Pyongyang

DPRK mourns China earthquake victims

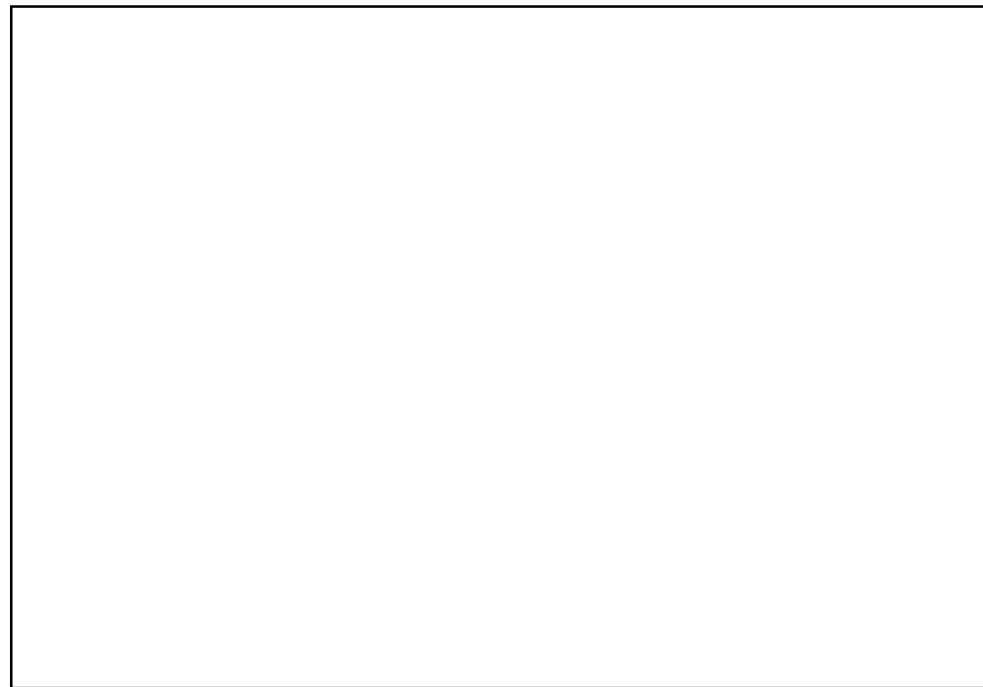
IN PYONGYANG, capital of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), on Monday 19th May, air sirens sounded at 15:28 local time (06:28 GMT) over the city, mourning the China earthquake victims.

As a friendly neighbour, the DPRK people and government have paid great attention and sympathy to the victims of the massive earthquake that hit Sichuan, south-western China at 14:28 Beijing time (06:28 GMT) last Monday.

Kim Jong Il, top leader of the DPRK, sent deep sympathy and consolation to Chinese President Hu Jintao on 13th May, the second day of the earthquake, hoping Chinese people would overcome the aftermath of the disaster at an early date.

Other DPRK leaders, including Premier Kim Yong Il and Foreign Minister Pak Ui Chun, also expressed their deep condolences for the loss of lives and properties in the Sichuan earthquake.

Meanwhile, some institutions and social organisations of the DPRK, including the Korean Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, the Central Committee of the DPRK-China Friendship Association, the Central Committee of the Kim Il Sung Socialist



• Chinese President Hu comforts a young earthquake victim.

Youth League, sent messages of sympathy to their Chinese counterparts.

The aid given by the DPRK to the quake-stricken areas was more than words. The DPRK government offered US\$100,000 dollars to the Chinese government on 17th May to help people in the quake-stricken areas relieve the aftermath of the disaster and bring their life to normal as early as possible.

"The DPRK people took the distress the Chinese people had suffered as their own," said Pak Ui Chun, "the money is not a large amount, but it embodies the DPRK people's feeling of sharing the pain of the Chinese people."

Chinese Ambassador to the DPRK Liu Xiaoming said what particularly impressed him was that the DPRK gave aid to Chinese people even when they themselves were in

need of help. The DPRK media reported the deadly earthquake and the efforts made by the Chinese government and people to fight the calamities. Their coverage gave prominence to the work that the Chinese People's Liberation Army had done.

While the sirens wailed over Pyongyang on Monday, a mourning ceremony was being held in the Chinese Embassy.

Xinhua

Palestinians mark the Nakba

PALESTINIANS throughout the occupied territories have marked the 60th anniversary of the Nakba or "catastrophe" when they were forced from their homes to make way for the creation of the state of Israel.

Sirens sounded in the West Bank on Thursday 15th May as rallied commemorated the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in 1948.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas addressed a rally in Ramallah, calling for an end to occupation and settlement building.

He said: "It's time for the occupation to leave our land ... and for the 'catastrophe' to come to an end."

"Our Palestinian people have carried in pain the memory, and hope to return to their homeland."

Palestinians in the West Bank and refugees throughout the world released black balloons to mark the day. In the West Bank 21,195 balloons were released - one for every day of the Nakba.

The day was also marked by clashes between Palestinian youths

and Israeli soldiers manning the Qalandiya checkpoint on Thursday. The soldiers reacted to stones being thrown by firing rubber-coated steel bullets and tear gas.

The youths had marched from Ramallah to the checkpoint to commemorate the 60 years of dispossession.

An *Al Jazeera* journalist reported: "It was tense, but now the clashes have ended. [The checkpoint] is a permanent friction point between Palestinians and the Israeli occupation."

"It represents the ongoing occupation or expropriation of Palestinian land through the separation wall, which blocks their hope of having a contiguous and viable state any time in the future."

Meanwhile US President George Bush was in Israel to mark the 60th anniversary of the creation of the state of Israel.

He spoke to the Knesset (Israeli parliament), promising that the US would "stand with" Israel in its fight against "terror".

"America stands with you in breaking up terrorist networks and denying the extremists sanctuary," he said.

"Israel's population may be just over seven million. But when you confront terror and evil, you are 307 million strong, because America stands with you."

He made no mention of the Palestinians but did attack Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas, the Palestinian party in control of the Gaza Strip.

Marwan Bishara, *Al Jazeera's* senior analyst, Bush's speech had done little to further peace negotiations.

"What we had from the US president today was a speech that is more retributive than restorative ... we heard very little about Palestinian rights or how to restore peace."

Cuban literacy programme in Spain

THE CUBAN literacy method *Yo Si Puedo* (Yes, I Can) crossed the Atlantic Ocean for the first time to Europe to teach thousands of people from the Spanish region of Andalusia to read and write.

Political organisations like the Communist Party and the Communist Youth of Andalusia, as well as other progressive friends, started a unique experiment in several parts of the Andalusian capital of Sevilla, *Granma* newspaper reported on Monday.

facilitators

The project taught over 20 people as project facilitators, in a course attended by officials from the Andalusian capital's City Hall.

The City Hall Youth and Sports delegate Francisco Manuel Silva, also provincial political secretary of the Andalusian Communist Youth, stated that the application of this Cuban method has "pioneered progressive policies we are trying to use in the city".

Silva said that of 700,000 inhabitants of that region, nearly 400,000 people have no academic title, 20,000 are totally illiterate and another 40,000 are poorly educated.

Prensa Latina

Police recruits shot dead in Iraq

ARMED men last Monday shot and killed 11 Iraqi police recruits in northern Iraq near the Syrian border. Police found a bullet-ridden minibus that the recruits had been travelling in and the bodies of the recruits in a deserted area near the rural town of Baaj, 130km from the northern city of Mosul in Nineveh province.

US and Iraqi collaborationist troops had been conducting a crack down in the area to root out Al-Qaeda fighters.

volunteered

Abdul Rahim al-Shameri, the mayor of Baaj, said the men had just volunteered to join the police force and were on their way out of town.

The Al-Qaeda fighters have carried out frequent attacks against police recruits, killing hundreds.

The commander of US forces in northern Iraq said joint security forces had arrested about 100 suspects thought to be crucial to the operations of armed groups in their offensive in the region.

