

MARYLAND UNITED FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE, INC.

WINTER 2005 NEWSLETTER Volume 16, Number 1

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Note: All opinions expressed in this publication are those solely of their authors and do not necessarily reflect those of MUPJ and/or its members...as usual! Many thanks to Carol Solomon, Ron Solomon, and Paulette Hammond for helping with this issue.

Highlights of 12-11-04 Coordinating Body meeting

Present were: Ron Solomon, Dan Frasier, Elaine Heiberg, Gus Fahey, Bert Donn, Bob Hanson, Paulette Hammond, Mary Chenoweth, Phil Chenoweth, Bernie Brown, Carol Solomon, Tony Langbehn

Tony said Nil Deo sends his regrets; his mother is dying in South Africa and he has to go there.

Introductions were made, as several new people from the Frederick Peace Resource Center are helping us with the Peace Conference (see below).

The **minutes of the previous meeting**, 9-26-04 were approved as presented.

Financial Reports;

MUPJ, Inc.: Chuck reports that we have \$2025 in our account

Institute for Positive Action: Carol reports that we have \$1095.19 in the account.

Committee Reports

Membership: The renewal notice has gone out, with red dots on the address label for those who have already renewed.

Peace Conference April 30, 2005:

War is Not the Answer, What is?
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Frederick Historic District

Pastor Albert Lane will welcome us to the church. Dan will ask Mayor Jennifer Dougherty to welcome us to Frederick.

Keynoter: Medea Benjamin (Code Pink and Global Exchange) She is requesting a donation of \$500 for her group. We already have \$100 from the Prince George's County Peace and Justice Coalition, a \$100 pledge from the Frederick Peace Center, and hopefully \$50-100 from the Global Coalition.

Lunch: Veggie Annie will do lunch

Bagels: Gus will arrange to have 10 dozen bagels and cream cheese.

Networking Sessions: Discussion of making a specific topic for each session, such as continuation of the keynote address. Breaking up into demographic groups, youth, etc.

Tony suggested passing around a sheet at lunchtime to see if there is enough interest in following up. Mack Legerton is willing to organize this again for us.

Benjamin Peace Awards: Nil has been working on this.

Workshops:

- Damu Smith and Carolyn Boyd, Black Voices for Peace, "M.L.K., Jr.'s Philosophy of Non-violence"
- Julie Enszer, Nuclear Policy Research Institute, "Nuclear Weapons"
- Lisa Archer, Friends of the Earth, "Chemicals In The Environment And New Campaign For Toxin- Free Cosmetics"
- Eileen Kittridge, Center for Food and Safety, "Genetic Modifications And Irradiated Foods"
- Dick Ochs and Barry Kissin, "Biological Weapons at Fort Detrick"
- Nicole Sinclair, Natural Resources Defense Council, "Global Warming"
- Chuck Michaels, "Update on the Patriot Act"

Facilitators are available in the area: contact Gus about that.

Miche (from Haiti) showed us around the church: The large church school building will work for our tables, workshop, and networking sessions. We will need the sanctuary for the keynote address, Benjamin awards, lunch, and plenary sessions.

Caucus Reports

Prince George's County: Tony spoke at St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Laurel: Reclaiming Morals from the Religious Right. We might want to follow up next year for the Peace Conference. They want to cosponsor this year's Conference. Bert said the Prince George's County Coalition is starting a video series in January that will be on local cable, with a discussion following. Gus mentioned that they have several in their office right now.

Baltimore Area: Bernie told about a meeting, Faith and Resistance by Jonah House, & other Plowshares groups in DC www.jonahhouse.org

Western Maryland: They're helping organize the conference. It's great to be in touch with them again! Gus said that the PRC is working on website: www.frederickpeace.com. Dan thanked us for sending out our calendar, the website

will be loosely based on it, on what is happening and how to get in touch. Newspaper feature about conflict resolution (not affiliated with PRC). Film series again. M.L.K. Jr. potluck on the 17th at the Evangelical Lutheran Church basement. Focusing on conflict resolution rather than all the issues.

New Business

We agreed to join United for Peace and Justice.

We agreed to give Earth Action \$50 for their new organization, World Future Council.

Next meeting: Sun. March 13, Peace Resource Center, Frederick, 3-5 pm



War is Not the Answer, What is?

Justice community, we realize that violence is never the answer to conflicts, whether in our homes, communities, states, nation, or world. We understand that the issues that brought to the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Israel/Palestine (to name but a few) will not be permanently resolved by fighting and armaments. We have a vision of a better way. The 20th Annual Maryland Peace and Justice Conference will articulate some of those issues and alternative ways of resolving the conflicts.

We are looking forward to hearing from keynoter Medea Benjamin, about Global Exchange's efforts in that arena.

The conference will be Saturday, April 30 at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Frederick Historic District. It has been quite a while since we have had a conference in western Maryland, and we are delighted to re-connect with the peace activists there. We are also delighted to find a sympathetic activist church in the center of Frederick to host us. For those of you who have not been to Frederick recently, you will find a renovated historic district, wonderful restaurants and shops, and lots of friendly people.

We are finalizing our workshop presenters and will be mailing out the cosponsor letters shortly. If your group did not receive one, contact Carol at 410-363-3140 or peacepepper@comcast.net.

Included will be a wonderful vegetarian lunch and some great entertainment.

A Pot Luck dinner will be held at the church on April 29. People who will like home hospitality will be accommodated as well. You might want to make a weekend of it in Frederick!

We look forward to seeing you there!



Martin Luther King's World House Vision and Agenda - True Security for Everyone Everywhere

by Carol Bragg

Most of us are familiar with Dr. Martin Luther King's famous "I Have A Dream" speech, delivered before a crowd of 200,000 people at the March on Washington in August, 1963. But few have read Dr. King's World House essay, probably the best summation of his teachings.

This essay is adapted from King's Nobel Peace Prize lecture, given at the University of Oslo December 10, 1964. He worked on this speech for nearly a month and later gave it prominence as the final chapter in his book, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*, published in 1967.

The World House essay describes the enormous challenges facing humanity and prophetically ends by warning of the tremendous urgency of addressing them: "Over the bleached bones and jumbled residues of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words: 'Too late.'" When Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel introduced Dr. King to a Rabbinical Assembly ten days before King's assassination, Heschel proclaimed: "Where in America today do we hear a voice like the voice of the prophets of Israel? Martin Luther King is a sign that God has not forsaken the United States of America. God has sent him to us. Martin Luther King, Jr., is a voice, a vision, and a way. The whole future of America will depend on the impact and influence of Dr. King."

Black theologian and activist Vincent Harding has written: "If there is even a chance that Rabbi Heschel was correct, that the untranquil King and his peace-disturbing vision, words, and deeds hold the key to the future of America, for scholars, citizens, or celebrants to forget the real man and his deepest implications would be not only faithless, but also suicidal."

This year is the fortieth anniversary of Dr. King's World House vision. It is time to heed the prophet and let him lead us "out of the wilderness."

Summary of the World House Vision

King begins his essay by suggesting that we have inherited a large house, a "world house" in which we must somehow learn to live together in peace—black and white, Easterner and Westerner, Gentile and Jew, Muslim and Hindu—a family widely separated in ideas, culture, and interest. We must learn to live together as brothers and sisters, or together we will perish as fools.

He goes on to say that we suffer from a poverty of the spirit that stands in sharp contrast to our scientific and technological

advances. The richer we have become materially, the poorer we have become morally and spiritually.

He then describes three great problems facing humanity:

- racism
- poverty/materialism
- war

Racism and its perennial ally, economic exploitation, provide the key to understanding most of the international complications of this generation. If we are not diligent in our determination to root out the last vestiges of racism in our dealings with the rest of the world, we may soon see the sins of our fathers visited upon our own and succeeding generations. If Western civilization does not now respond constructively to the challenge to banish racism, some future historian will have to say that a great civilization died because it lacked the soul and commitment to make justice a reality for all people.

Poverty, like a monstrous octopus, stretches its choking prehensile tentacles into lands and villages all over the world. Two-thirds of the peoples of the world are undernourished, ill-housed, and shabbily clad. We have the resources and the scientific know-how to provide everyone everywhere with the basic necessities of life. There is no deficit in human resources; the deficit is in human will.

The time has come for an all-out effort to eradicate global poverty. The rich nations must use their vast resources to develop the underdeveloped, school the unschooled, and feed the unfed. The wealthy nations must initiate a massive, sustained Marshall Plan for Asia, Africa, and Latin America, allocating two percent of their gross national income annually for ten to twenty years in order to conquer the ancient enemy, poverty.

All people are interdependent; all life is interrelated. The agony of the poor impoverishes the rich; the betterment of the poor enriches the rich. We are inevitably our brother's keeper because we are our brother's brother. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.

The final problem humanity must solve in order to survive in the world house is finding an alternative to war. Wisdom born of experience should tell us that war is obsolete. We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means. There may have been a time when war served as a negative good by preventing the spread and growth of an evil force, but the destructive power of modern weapons eliminates even the possibility that war may serve any good at all. It is as possible and as urgent to put an end to war and violence between nations as it is to put an end to poverty and racial injustice.

King suggests that the philosophy and strategy of nonviolence become a subject

for study and experimentation in every field of human conflict, including relations between nations. The United Nations is a gesture in the direction of nonviolence on a world scale. King proposes that it examine the uses of nonviolent direct action—the persistent and determined application of peaceable power to offenses against the world community.

In the final section of his essay, King states that the stability of the world house will require a revolution of values. We must rapidly shift from a thing-oriented society to a people-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.

We are called upon to be the Good Samaritan on life's roadside. But true compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it understands that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring. The whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be beaten and robbed as they make their journey through life.

America, the richest and most powerful nation in the world, can lead the way in this revolution of values. A nation that year after year spends more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death. There is nothing to prevent us from paying adequate wages to schoolteachers, social workers, and other servants of the public. There is nothing to prevent us from paying an adequate wage to every American citizen, whether a hospital worker, laundry worker, maid, or day laborer. There is nothing but shortsightedness to prevent us from guaranteeing an annual minimum—and livable—income for every American family. There is nothing, except a tragic death wish, to prevent us from reordering our priorities, so that the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war.

This kind of positive revolution of values is our best defense against Communism [substitute "terrorism"]. War is not the answer. We must seek to remove those conditions of poverty, insecurity, and injustice which are the fertile soil in which the seed of Communism/terrorism grows and develops.

A genuine revolution of values means that our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Every nation must now develop an overriding loyalty to humanity as a whole. This call for a worldwide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class, and nation is a call for an all-embracing and unconditional love for all people.

Love is the key that unlocks the door which leads to ultimate reality. We can no longer afford to worship the god of hate or to bow

before the altar of retaliation. History is cluttered with the wreckage of nations and individuals who pursued this self-defeating path of hate.

We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. There is an invisible book of life that faithfully records our vigilance or our neglect. "The moving finger writes, and having writ moves on." We still have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent co-annihilation. This may well be humanity's last chance to choose between chaos and community.

Summary excerpted from *Where Do We Go From Here. Chaos or Community?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968)

How you can promote Dr. King's World House Agenda

1. Read the World House essay. Give a copy to your minister, priest, rabbi, or imam and ask that it be used as the topic for a sermon and for study by the congregation. Copies of the complete essay can be obtained from the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) for \$.75 each; 10 for \$5.00. E-mail riforusa@aol.com. The essay is also on FOR's website at www.forusa.org/nonviolence/mlk_worldhouse.html.

2. Encourage educators to include the World House vision and agenda in their teaching about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Utilize as the theme for Dr. King Birthday observances in January. A complete packet of materials is available for \$10 from bookstore@forusa.org or Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960.

3. Mail copies of the World House essay to your newspaper editor, radio talk show hosts, and television news anchors and reporters. Urge them to report that Dr. King's legacy includes his World House vision and the challenge to eradicate racism, poverty, excessive materialism, and militarism.

4. Schedule use of FOR's World House replica (4' depth x 8' width x 6' height) for your congregation, school, or community group or get instructions for building your own. Ask for a speaker or workshop facilitator on the World House. Suggested donation: \$40. Call 401-273-4369 or 401-724-7700 x 6.

5. Join the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the oldest and largest interfaith peace and justice organization in the US. Write FOR, Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960. Call 845-358-4601. Online, go to FOR's website: www.forusa.org.

Carol Bragg, past member of the FOR National Council, is active with the Rhode Island FOR. She is a writer and activist with particular interest in the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.



"As democracy is perfected, the office of

president represents, more and more closely, the inner soul of the people. On some great and glorious day the plain folks of the land will reach their heart's desire at last and the White House will be adorned by a downright moron."
-H.L. Mencken (1880 - 1956)



From: The Guardian

by John Le Carré

Maybe there's one good reason - just one - for re-electing George W Bush, and that's to force him to live with the consequences of his appalling actions, and answer for his own lies, rather than wish the job on a Democrat who will then get blamed for his predecessor's follies.

Probably no American president in all history has been so universally hated abroad as George W Bush: for his bullying unilateralism, his dismissal of international treaties, his reckless indifference to the aspirations of other nations and cultures, his contempt for institutions of world government, and above all for misusing the cause of anti-terrorism in order to unleash an illegal war - and now anarchy - upon a country that like too many others around the world was suffering under a hideous dictatorship, but had no hand in 9/11, no weapons of mass destruction, and no record of terrorism except as an ally of the US in a dirty war against Iran.

Is your president a great war leader because he allowed himself to be manipulated by a handful of deluded ideologues? Is Tony Blair a great war leader because he committed Britain's troops, foreign policy and domestic security to the same hare-brained adventure? You are voting in November. We will vote next year. Yet the outcome in both countries will in large part depend on the same question: how long can the lies last now that the truth has finally been told? The Iraq war was planned long before 9/11. Osama provided the excuse. Iraq paid the price. American kids paid the price. British kids paid the price. Our politicians lied to us. While Bush was waging his father's war at your expense, he was also ruining your country. He made your rich richer and your poor and unemployed more numerous. He robbed your war veterans of their due and reduced your children's access to education. And he deprived more Americans than ever before of healthcare.

Now he's busy cooking the books, burying deficits and calling in contingency funds to fight a war that his advisers promised him he could light and put out like a candle. Meanwhile, your Patriot Act has swept aside constitutional and civil liberties which took brave Americans 200 years to secure, and were once the envy of a world that now looks on in horror, not just at Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib, but at

what you are doing to yourselves. But please don't feel isolated from the Europe you twice saved. Give us back the America we loved, and your friends will be waiting for you. And here in Britain, for as long as we have Tony Blair singing the same lies as George Bush, your nightmares will be ours.

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Building Peace for Israelis and Palestinians Action Details

(1) How to get the above TV shows on a station in your county/city.

Most cable companies provide a channel for public access programming. Residents in a cable company's area can produce programs for its public access channel. Many cable companies allow residents to bring them programs for possible airing on the public access channel.

Call your cable company and ask to speak to the person in charge of public access television. Identify yourself and where you live (so the person knows that you get or could get their cable service. This is very important). Ask this person if he/she would like a program to air on the public access station. Tell the person that the program promotes reconciliation and peace in the Middle East. Offer to send it to him/her to preview.

Assuming he/she is interested, call me (Bob Krasnansky, 410-461-2040) so I can get a copy of the show to you to bring to the station person to preview.

(2) Promote reform of the road map. (Congressional contact numbers are below.)

What to ask Congressmen:
Urge President Bush to fix the road map
---to spell out goals about ending the occupation and providing a viable state with contiguous borders. Use the Geneva Accord as a starting point.
---to stipulate that the talks will begin and continue whatever extremists on either side do to derail it.

Why the road map needs to be fixed.

As currently constituted, it contains flaws which guarantee failure.
Flaw #1.

The road map stipulates that Palestinians must begin to dismantle the infrastructure of militant groups before peace talks can begin.

But the road map does not stipulate that the Israeli government begin to dismantle

the infrastructure of militant fundamentalist Jewish settlers, making them leave the West Bank. It does not stipulate that the occupation, which abuses Palestinians, end first. And why not? Because the timing is not right. Similarly, the timing is also not right to dismantle the Palestinian militants' infrastructure. The Palestinian militants' infrastructure exists to fight for freedom for Palestine. As this freedom is won through negotiation, the militants will cease to have a reason to exist.

The road map stipulates that Palestinians in effect turn the other cheek while the Israeli oppressive occupation continues. This is unrealistic. There will always be people who get fed up and can't take the Israeli abuse any more. Reactions to the oppression by a few should not be allowed to determine the fate of millions.

This stipulation also gives extremists who do not want peace veto power over the peace process.

They can derail it with violence. Rather, moderates and peace-loving people, the overwhelming majority, should be rewarded by having peace talks start and continue.

Flaw #2

The road map does not address Palestinian concerns specifically; it does not give them hope that the occupation will end and that they'll have a state. Without this hope spelled out, their experience is that

they shouldn't trust the Israelis. Their expectations are low. As a result they are not inclined to restrain their brothers' reactions to Israeli oppression.

What happens if the road map isn't fixed?

Violence by extremists or by someone who can't take the Israeli oppression anymore will erupt. Peace talks will stop. Palestinians will be blamed (as if the Israeli oppression didn't exist). Israel will resume its expansionism. President Bush will say he tried and will wash his hands of the matter.



The Great Media Breakdown

From the November/December issue of *Mother Jones*

All governments lie, the muckraker I.F. Stone used to say. They fudge and omit. They bury and muffle inconvenient facts. They do this repeatedly, relentlessly, shamelessly. That's hardly surprising. Why shouldn't they seek—as a Marine Corps public affairs officer, Lt. Colonel Richard Long, told a conference on journalism and the Iraq war—to "dominate the information environment"?

But of late, the government has had plenty of help in its efforts at dominance. To a disgraceful degree, the organs of news have been grinding out its tune.

Many are the reasons for deference. Reporters and editors are credulous, fearful, and flatly bamboozled. Timid about getting out ahead of a public, they respect more when it is "conservative" (read: rightwardly radical) than when it is liberal, they bend over backward to accommodate spin doctors. They grant officialdom the benefit of the doubt. They fear risking independent judgment, which they have defined as occupational hubris. They are terrified of missing out on the perks of access. They fear that detailing the anatomy of official distortion will turn off readers and viewers. Their proprietors, seeking favor in high places, cool their critical engines. So the media yield to temptation and morph into megaphones, and falsehoods too often and too loudly repeated take on the ring of plausibility.

Does that leave citizens clueless? Not quite. In a digital world, there's easier access to multiple sources of facts and analysis than ever before. But even as journalists lose their hold on a distracted public, they remain indispensable for arousing democracy and holding liars, bullies, and cheaters accountable.

If ever there were a time for unbridled journalism, this would be it: terrorist mayhem, war, corporate scandal, ecological crisis, economic upheaval. Public passion and curiosity have been stoked. But the potential investigators have been, to a considerable degree, otherwise occupied. Historians will someday burrow among the musty artifacts of America's supercharged 24/7 news organizations—TV with its glammed-up sets, its convention skyboxes and satellite feeds; the well-fed correspondents on a first name basis with second-rate sources; the newsmagazines with their gloss, gossip, and fluff—and they will rub their eyes and marvel that a nation possessed of such an enormous industry ostensibly specializing in the gathering and distribution of facts could yet remain so befogged.

Befogged we have been, and don't take my word for it. With the nonappearance of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, the problem grew sufficiently glaring that, earlier this year, the spirit of self-scrutiny spread throughout the nation's prestige press like a belated burst of antibodies. Here is the *New York Times*' ombudsman, Daniel Okrent, writing on May 30—14 months after the bombs began falling on Baghdad: "Some of *The Times*'s coverage in the months leading up to the invasion of Iraq was credulous; much of it was inappropriately italicized by lavish front-page display and heavy-breathing headlines; and several fine articles that provided perspective or challenged information in the faulty stories were played as quietly as a lullaby." Two months later, the *Washington Post*'s Howard Kurtz

issued his own paper's self-critique, chastising "coverage that, despite flashes of groundbreaking reporting, in hindsight looks strikingly one-sided at times." Make due allowance for the boilerplate qualifications—"in hindsight," "looks," "at times"—and you see a condemnation so harsh, you know the blunders must have been grave indeed. Never before has American journalism been driven to correct itself so lavishly.

Yet even now, the news industry remains unwilling or unable to come to grips with the full scope and system of its failures, and the narrowness of the media's self-criticism does not inspire confidence that they will refuse to swallow government propaganda the next time. (Television news bigwigs, for one, have yet to admit any responsibility for having escorted the nation into a calamitous war.) In fact, the malfunctions extend far beyond the question of WMD, beyond even the routine deceptions of George W. Bush. The machinery of truth-telling has broken down.

THE MACHINERY was creaky already. In truth, journalism's golden age of Vietnam and Watergate exposés was not so golden. It took years to undo the lies about "progress" in Vietnam, and for many months, most news organizations missed the magnitude of the criminal operations running out of the Nixon White House.

Much of the time since then, the Fourth Estate has remained distracted. The Iran-Contra scandal lay scattered about in plain view until the dots were connected by a Beirut magazine. In the 1990s, any sense of proportion went missing: As murderous Islamism oozed out of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Osama bin Laden fine-tuned his massacre machine, O.J. beckoned... and Whitewater... and Princess Diana. In 1998 and 1999, when Al Qaeda was gathering force and bombing embassies, the obsession of America's media was... Monica Lewinsky (and Clinton was accused of only seeking to distract us when he bombed bin Laden's camp).

Journalists have missed many a boat. But the problem of the past few years is that the media have taken to escorting the boat—amplifying disingenuous claims, downplaying doubts, belittling dissent. As it thrashed about in a state of emergency, America needed solid reporting—and solid skepticism—more than ever. Instead, large numbers of people were left believing that some of the September 11 hijackers were Iraqis, that Saddam Hussein was implicated in the terror attacks, and that the United States had actually found weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

IT IS NOT TOO MUCH TO SAY that the press has let the public down on every one of the big life-and-death stories of our time. Begin with those unforgettable 35 days in Florida in 2000, when reporters let Republicans get away with their chosen

story line: Bush was the presumptive victor and Gore was trying to deprive him of his due. NBC's Tim Russert again and again suggested that Gore be the statesmanlike gent and bow out. Never once did I see a network bigfoot suggest that Bush do the graceful thing and step aside. Bush was cast as president-in-waiting, Gore as the interfering usurper.

Then, from the moment George Bush walked into the White House, he was excused from serious scrutiny. It would have seemed invasive, ungenerous, downright mean to inquire too forcefully of a chief executive so, well, unchieflike. Anyway, this White House was known to slam the door on overly feisty reporters.

In a remarkable piece three months into Bush's term, John F. Harris of the *Washington Post* wrote that Bush "has done things with relative impunity that would have been huge uproars if they had occurred under Clinton. Take it from someone who made a living writing about those uproars.... Do you suppose there would have been an uproar under Clinton if Democrats had been rewarding donors with special closed-door briefings by Cabinet secretaries? GOP donors received just such a briefing with Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson as thanks for their efforts. Far from an uproar, the story has had only a faint echo. Clinton's 'donor maintenance' coffees led to a year of congressional inquiries."

Bush received an even broader pass after September 11. At least until American bodies piled up in Iraq and the Abu Ghraib revelations cracked through, journalists clearly feared that seeming to cast discredit on the commander in chief would smack of insufficient patriotism. (The *New York Times*' chief Bush watcher, Elisabeth Bumiller, commented on a Bush press conference on the eve of the Iraq war: "I think we were very deferential because... nobody wanted to get into an argument with the president at this very serious time.") Obsequious stenography would protect the Washington press corps from cries of "liberal media." There was—and remains—considerable reluctance to invoke what a *Times* reporter I spoke to called "reportorial authority," which, as he put it, would require that "when the president says the sun rose in the west, we take it upon ourselves to say no."

Todd Gitlin, a professor of journalism and sociology at Columbia University, is a contributing writer for this magazine. He is the author of several books about the media and social activism, including his latest, [Letters to a Young Activist](#).



Come Clean: Gorbachev Launches Global Campaign Against WMD

By Sanjay Suri, Inter-Press Services

Friday 24 September 2004

LONDON - Mikhail Gorbachev is an ex-president going after weapons of mass destruction. But not the way U.S. President George Bush thought he was going after them in Iraq.

That war on Iraq was a mistake, Gorbachev said in London this week. "It not only undermined international law, it undermined democracy. Millions spoke out, but the war was launched in spite of their democratic views," he told media representatives.

Gorbachev was in London to launch an offensive against weapons of mass destruction (WMD) of quite another kind; he came to launch a Come Clean campaign put together by several NGOs including Greenpeace, the Campaign of Nuclear Disarmament (CND) in Britain and Medact, a group supporting health issues in conflict areas.

Mikhail Gorbachev became President of the Soviet Union in 1990, and stepped down as head of state at the end of 1991. He was earlier one of the key Soviet leaders as a member of the Soviet presidium. Since 1992 he has been president of the International Nongovernmental Foundation for Socio-Economic and Political Studies, better known as The Gorbachev Foundation.

The leader of the former Soviet Union seemed at peace with his new role. A naïve attempt? "I have been suspected of being naïve many times," he said.

He had been called naïve in 1986, he said, when he appealed for elimination of nuclear weapons by 2000. "There were two reactions to that," he said. "One, that it was all propaganda. Two, that it was an illusion. But we were able to eliminate whole classes of nuclear weapons."

Gorbachev was emphatic about his campaign against WMD. "If they exist, sooner or later there will be disastrous consequences. They can fall into the hands of terrorists. It is not enough to safeguard them, they must be abolished."

Anyone who supports the existence of weapons of mass destruction should not be allowed to run for the post of president or prime minister, Gorbachev said. "You may again think I'm naïve. But I'm not stupid, I know what I'm saying."

As Soviet leader Gorbachev knew what he was sitting on. His initiative led to a joint declaration with former U.S. president Ronald Reagan that a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought.

Gorbachev, who won the Nobel peace prize in 1990 for helping bring the Cold War to an end, now sees new cause for alarm. "In recent years we are seeing a tendency to change military doctrines to

declare use of nuclear weapons more acceptable and perhaps pre-emptive strikes with nuclear weapons more conceivable."

The new campaign launched in London Thursday seeks to counter new dangers. The campaign is being led in London by 96-year-old Prof Sir Joseph Rotblat, who won the Nobel peace award in 1995. Prof Rotblat, who is Polish by birth worked on building the atom bomb in Britain during the Second World War. He abandoned the project when it became clear that Germany was not building the bomb.

He turned instead to a peace mission to avert the danger posed by nuclear weapons. As someone who almost built the atom bomb, he too knows just what he is talking about.

But as a former president Gorbachev knows that peace does not mean pacifism. Terrorism has to be countered. He believes "in traditional methods like police methods, use of commandos against terrorist structures, and this too with the approval of the United Nations Security Council."

There are financial flows that need to be stopped. "There are many well-known things happening in the financial system, and these channels need to be cut, there needs to be a better central financial system." And with terrorism arising from fundamentalism, "religious leaders need to speak out against the actions of their followers".

Finally he said there is a need to fight terrorism by fighting poverty. "Where billions are deprived of hope and a decent life, it becomes possible to recruit followers for terrorism."

But was all this being naïve too? What about pragmatic solutions?

The agreement between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Bush on reduction of weapons should be implemented. "And other members of the nuclear club should join in the process. Otherwise there are about 30 threshold countries that can start testing and acquiring nuclear weapons."

But is he the leader who unleashed unrest and lack of security through his policies of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring) that led to the break-up of the Soviet Union?

Gorbachev had an answer to that one earlier in the day for a 13-year-old schoolgirl of Russian origin at a London school.

The results of perestroika as he had planned it would have taken 20 to 30 years to attain. He blamed his successor Boris Yeltsin for offering what he could never have delivered.

"They (the Russian people) believed the promise of a quick fix and they felt that if Gorbachev was not delivering on a better life quickly let's support Yeltsin," Gorbachev told the girl, according to a local news agency.

"The result was the disintegration of the country, shock therapy in the army and chaos," he said. "We are still feeling the consequences of this."

For more Information:
<http://www.comeclean.org.uk/>.