

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

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Baghdad ruins: by late autumn the number of attacks by the Iraqi resistance was averaging 570 a week compared with 470 between February and August

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IRAQ-imperialists lose the plot

US and British imperialism cannot afford to admit any sort of defeat in Iraq. It is not simply that they might lose control of Iraqi assets and an important strategic position in the Middle East. Any sign of weakness would undermine their claim to global military dominance, a threat they are using to try and prevent an economic crisis from becoming a political one as well. Any retreat would give space for imperialist rivals such as France and Germany and other rising economic powers such as Russia, India and most particularly China to take advantage. This is why the US and British governments are in complete denial of the horror into which Iraq is sinking; why they maintain the myth that Iraq is moving towards peace and democracy and desperately cling to their timetable of sham elections.

The reality on the ground, however, is very different. It is phosphorus and napalm bombs, torture camps, death squads and a rising toll of casualties. The Resistance is growing, the occupying forces are becoming increasingly demoralised, the Iraqi government and security forces remain ineffective, corruption and crime are rife and the Iraqi economy and infrastructure are stagnant. In the US opposition to the war is growing and the ruling class is divided. JIM CRAVEN reports.

Chemical weapons and torture

In mid-November the state department admitted that US forces had used white phosphorus shells during their assault on Fallujah in 2004. White phosphorus burns spontaneously on contact with the air and on contact with skin can burn right down to the bone. US Pentagon spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Barry Venable said '[White phosphorus] was used as an incendiary weapon...one tech-

nique is to fire into [the enemy's position]: the combined effect of the fire and smoke - and in some cases the terror brought about by the explosion on the ground - will drive them out of the holes so you can kill them with high explosives'. In the callous jargon of the imperialist military this butchery is known as 'shake 'n' bake'.

But white phosphorus does not discriminate. Many Iraqi civilians, including women and children, were killed in the attacks; their skin 'dis-

solved, caramelised or turned the consistency of leather'.

The US and British governments have also had to admit, despite earlier denials, that napalm bombs and 'mark 77 firebombs' have been used in Iraq. Both substances are designed to make sure burning petrol or kerosene sticks to their victims. A senior US commander said 'the generals love napalm. It has a big psychological effect'.

Used directly against people, both white phosphorus and napalm would be classified as chemical weapons; the use of which, so we were told, was one of the reasons Saddam Hussein had to be stopped.

Also in mid-November, over 170 prisoners were discovered in an Iraqi interior ministry bunker. They had been starved, beaten and brutally tortured. Observers reported that at least two prisoners were paralysed and others had their skin peeled off. This horror is just one small glimpse of the widespread systematic terror being used against those who dare to resist. Even the US Department of Defence admits that over 13,000 Iraqi prisoners are being held at the present time in Iraq and a total of 35,000 have been held since the invasion. According to the American Civil Liberties Union and Human Rights Watch many pris-

oners have died in custody; at least eight of them following interrogation. Most prisoners have not been charged; fewer than 660 of the 35,000 have been tried and convicted. Worldwide, the US admits to holding more than 80,000 people since the attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001. At least 14,500 of these are presently being held in camps in eight countries including Guantanamo Bay in occupied Cuba, Afghanistan, Thailand and several eastern European countries believed to include Poland and Romania. In Guantanamo Bay prisoners on hunger strike, protesting at the conditions, abuse, torture and lack of legal process, are being force-fed.

Iraqi 'justice' made in the US

The trial of Saddam Hussein and six other defendants was intended to be another demonstration that 'normality' and justice were returning. The special tribunal to try Saddam had been set up by the US in 2003. The US is also in charge of security for the trial and is paying for 50 lawyers and support staff from the US, Britain and Australia. Hoshar Zabari, the puppet foreign minister, admitted the trial had been delayed so long because of the difficulty in finding judges willing to risk their lives. Of the five judges

eventually found to decide Saddam's fate, at least two have never sat as judges before. There will be no jury. According to the conditions laid down for the trial, the standard of proof required to convict any of the defendants will be less than the international standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'. Two of the defending lawyers have been shot dead and a third wounded. Most of the remaining defence team has threatened to resign because of lack of protection. When the trial eventually opened on 19 October, between 30 and 40 witnesses failed to appear. Saddam is accused of the massacre of 145 people in Dujail in 1982, a time when he had the full support and backing of Britain and the US. The trial was promptly postponed until 28 November.

Ruling class divisions grow

An indication that sections of the US ruling class are now turning on President Bush was the passing of a resolution in November by the Senate calling for stricter regulations on the treatment and interrogation of prisoners there and in the international camps. The Senate ignored a plea from Vice President Dick Cheney that the CIA should be exempt from the

continued on page 6

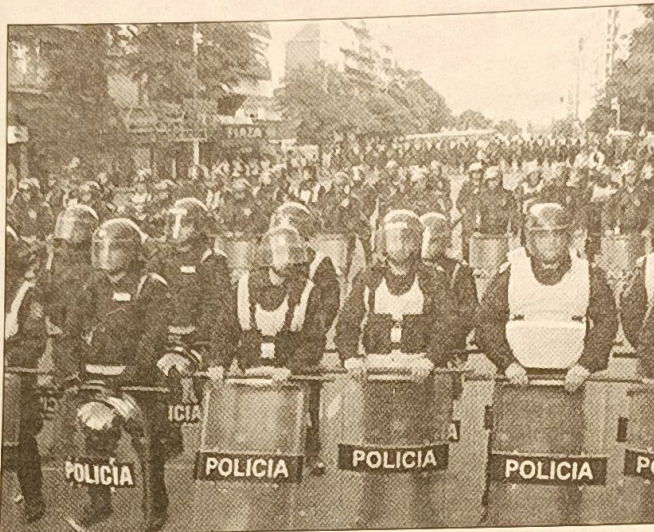
Welcome...

Finally, it has been confirmed that there are chemical weapons in Iraq. Not those sold to Saddam Hussein by Donald Rumsfeld in 1983 with that 'good-to-do-business-with-you' hand-shake. Not the fictional weapons that, back in 2002, Blair warned could strike Britain within 45 minutes. These are the chemical weapons fired on Iraqi people by the US and British armies; white phosphorus, which burns the skin to the bone; napalm and mark 77 firebombs, which cover their victims in burning petrol or kerosene. Iraq's dungeons remain packed full of starved, beaten, traumatised Iraqis, held for months without charge and tortured. They are prisoners of the Iraqi government – a puppet of US and British imperialism which pounced in a fury of shock and awe, claiming to be liberating Iraq.

Leaked documents scatter like a cluster bomb explosion bringing endless revelations about the lies, fabrications, corruption, and inhumanity of the war on Iraq. Lately we have heard evidence of CIA detention centres hidden throughout the world, where human rights violations secretly take place. The US and Britain are desperate to destroy the resistance in Iraq, before this costly war destroys them (see pages 1 and 6).

The US ruling class is split. The Neocons bribed the ruling class for compliance with their ambitious imperialist policies with the promise of a quick war to secure a certain profit, control over the unruly Middle East and as much oil as their gas-guzzling SUVs could burn. Meanwhile, all local barriers to US exploitation in Latin America would be knocked down like skittles with the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). But there was one small ingredient missing: reality!

The Iraqi resistance has escalated. The British government slammed the Official Secrets Act on the press to prevent publicity about the cracks in the special relationship between Bush and Blair after the genocide in Fallujah in October 2004 and the Bush administration's plans to bomb Al Jazeera. Meanwhile the FTAA has been booted out of Latin America as its revolutionary alternative, the Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America, moulded by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Cuban



Riot police line up to attack demonstrators against US imperialism at the summit at Mar del Plata, Argentina

President Fidel Castro, becomes a significant force for intra-regional cooperation and independence from US capital (see page 10).

The US and EU are also split in their approach to the surging economic power of capitalist China (see pages 8 and 9). In Beijing Blair smiled and signed on the dotted line, while Bush allowed his Neocon dogmatism to interfere and flew home practically empty-handed, his hollow words about human rights abuses echoing through a world worn out by US hypocrisy.

In Britain too, the cracks within the ruling class are growing. Blair suffered his first parliamentary defeat on the question of 90-day detention without charge for terrorism suspects (see page 16).

In Israel, too, colonial policy has created severe divisions. Sharon has resigned from his fascist Likud Party, to clear the path of opposition to his programme of speaking peace while extending the apartheid wall and the settlement building to annex more Palestinian land and ensure Zionist control of the whole of Jerusalem (see page 7).

This relentless brutality by imperialism is a manifestation of its deep-seated crisis. The more it falls into crisis, the more brutal it must be. The veneer of liberal democracy is scratched off to reveal the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. This violence turns in on itself, poisoning the imperialist societies themselves. Violence,

racism, poverty, alienation, depression and repression increase inside the developed capitalist countries. In France, the violence of the oppressed has burst into flames after years of racism, marginalisation and poverty (see page 13). The Spanish state murders another Basque activist, desperately trying to kill off the struggle for Basque national liberation (see page 13).

Britain brutalises 'terror suspects' (see page 16), immigrants (see page 4) and prisoners (see page 13). The back door privatisation of health (see page 5) and education (see opposite and page 3) continue apace.

It is precisely at this time when imperialism is over-extended, morally bankrupt, economically vulnerable and riven by in-fighting, that an anti-imperialist movement could turn an imperialist crisis into a political crisis for the capitalist system. Through our Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! student societies in universities across the country, we are beginning the vital work of rebuilding a youth movement, a Student Anti-Imperialist Network. SAIN is already active, combating the occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine, opposing the racism and attacks on civil liberties in Britain, supporting revolutionary movements in Latin America and defending socialist Cuba (see page 3).

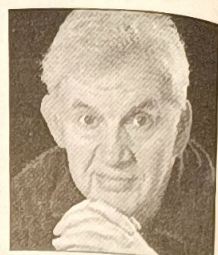
Today we have an historic opportunity to build a serious movement against war, racism, capitalism and imperialism, to capitalise on the splits in the ruling class, to raise our voices till we can no longer be ignored. We must shout our demands so that we are heard in every corner of the globe; where multinationals suck the life out of the planet and its people (see page 12); in Africa where food price rises lead to famine while western farmers live on subsidised wealth; in the frozen mountains of Kashmir where victims of the earthquake are left exposed by the 'compassion fatigue' of the west (see page 6), in Bolivia, Nepal (see page 12), Venezuela (see page 10) and Cuba (see pages 14 and 15), and everywhere else in the world where oppressed people are fighting back against the imperialist system that is destroying the world.

**Don't just get angry, get active!
Join us, join the fightback!**

Send your contributions, written and financial to:
**FRFI, BCM Box 5909,
London WC1N 3XX**

Education White Paper

— 'a barrel of monumental bollocks'



Ted Wragg

This is how Ted Wragg, a warm and witty commentator on education for over 20 years, described the new education White Paper in *The Guardian*, just days before his sudden and lamented death on 10 November. These words, robust, angry and down to earth, illustrate why Wragg will be sorely missed as a leading critic of government policies on schooling and defender of the right of working class children to a decent education.

The White Paper on education will be voted on in the new year, by which time it will have been trimmed to win Labour Party votes, in addition to those of the Tories. The first 5,000 copies had to be trashed, but the White Paper is still an incoherent mess that will lead to further chaos and anarchy in the secondary school sector.

It proposes that all new schools should become new-style independent trust schools freed from local education authority control, and encourages existing schools to do the same. Together with businesses, faith groups and individual entrepreneurs, secondary schools will set admissions policies, run their own budgets, appoint governors and vary the curriculum.

When Conservative Prime Minister Thatcher wanted to attack local government she created 'grant-maintained' schools and each school that opted out of local education control was awarded £250,000. Only 1,000 out of some 23,000 secondary schools did so, the others knew that only a local education service (LEA) could provide a support network for the learning and welfare of pupils far beyond the resources of any single school.

The White Paper proposes that LEAs are left with duties but no power. It gets unclear here which body is to be responsible for children with disabilities, learning difficulties, suspended pupils or indeed those left without a school place at 11 years old. There are also unanswered questions about who will decide on teachers' contracts, wages and conditions, as well as those of teaching assistants, improvements, extensions and even demolitions be paid for? What will happen to the extension of local authority powers proposed in last month's White Paper that included social services in the running of schools?

What Ted said about Tony

The proposals in this White Paper did not appear in May's Labour Party Manifesto. They are, and Tony Blair states this, a bid for radical change that will be a permanent and fixed legacy of the Blair government. In the words of Ted Wragg: 'Suddenly a new and chilling word is being used about education proposals, accompanying the "toughs" and "reforms". These changes will be "irreversible", says "Tony Zoffis" [Wragg's caricature of the government think-tank on education], arrogant and egotistical, in what is supposed to be a non-dictatorship'.

It is true that Blair is out of control, but it is also true to say that he knows who his voters are and his education proposals are designed to address the grievances of middle class parents, in London in particular. There is a shortage of places at successful secondary schools in London and a rise in the number of disgruntled parents who cannot get their children into the school of their choice. Education secretary Ruth Kelly has just ruled in favour of the London Oratory, a Catholic school in West London against a complaint that the school breached a national admissions code by interviewing prospective pupils and their parents. The school receives hundreds of applications from across 400 parishes, 40 local education authority areas and four dioceses. Happily for them the Blairs got their own sons in. Another school, Haberdasher Aske's, gets more than 2,000 applications for 180 places. This level of competition for places at the best achieving secondary schools is replicated everywhere.

Woolly words on White Paper

Blair's cheap salesman's trick is to offer his middle class voters parental choice as a solution to the shortage of decent state school places. Parents will choose which of ten types of specialist school they would like their child to attend and if they don't like any of the schools on offer, they can make their own. Parent power will be in the driving seat of educational reform. Except that it is the school governors who will in future decide on admissions and select the parents! Where the unselected pupils go and whose responsibility they will be is not answered by a scheme that gives every school the right to select.

Susan Davidson

website: www.rcgfrfi.easynet.co.uk
www.revolutionarycommunist.com

FRFI Fund Drive

FRFI reports on and supports the struggles of the oppressed resisting imperialism throughout the world. It is the only newspaper in Britain to expose the true nature of Labour imperialism. We work with all those who want to build a movement which represents the interests of the working class and oppressed. In this your support remains vital.

Please continue to dig deep.

Send your donations payable to Larkin Publications to FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX.

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Living in imperialist Britain? Then you must be in SAIN!

The Student Anti-Imperialist Network (SAIN) was launched at a conference in Newcastle-upon-Tyne on 29 October. Students were mobilised by Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! student societies across the country to begin the important work of rebuilding an independent student movement against war, racism and imperialism.

The conference split into work groups so that everyone could participate in discussion about the priorities for anti-imperialist work. Suggestions included:

- opposing the occupation of Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine;
- opposing the illegal incarceration and torture of detainees held by the US and Britain;
- opposing Labour's anti-terrorism legislation;
- opposing the racist hysteria about Muslims and immigrants
- joining local anti-deportation campaigns;
- supporting revolutionaries in Latin America and defending socialist Cuba;
- boycotting murderous multinationals such as Bacardi and Coca Cola, and boycotting Israeli goods.

There were also skills workshops on written publicity, public speaking and knowing your rights. We were able to put these skills into practice immediately after the conference when we marched to the city centre protesting against deportations. Once there, we held a militant rally using new skills to address the public and to assert our right to demonstrate.

LEX SEEDHOUSE opened the SAIN conference by explaining the urgency of building the Student Anti-Imperialist Network:

'When the war on Iraq broke out in March 2003, I was in the sixth-form. When war was declared, I left the classroom and went into our common room, where a large group of people

were assembled, ready to stage a walk-out in protest. We were told that if we walked out of school, we would all be suspended for truancy. We left anyway!

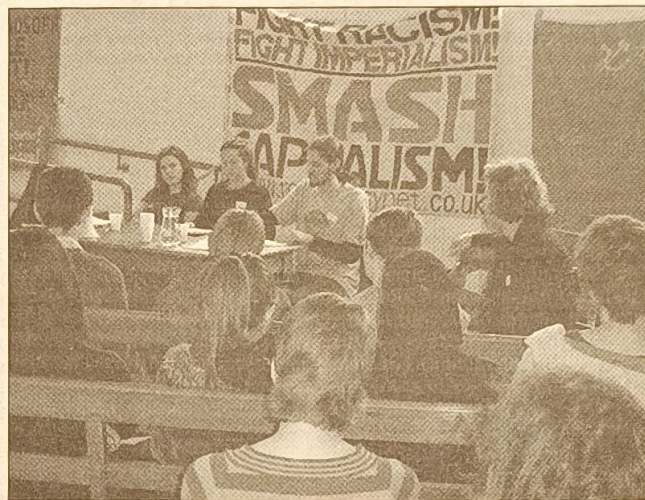
I expected the protesters to be older, sixth-form students because of the threat of suspension, but once the Durham protest was underway there was an amazing moment when we saw maybe a hundred students from schools in Durham marching down the road shouting and chanting anti-war slogans! That was unity; spontaneous solidarity with one of the most oppressed people of the world, and that was what politicised me, and many others.

Unfortunately, today, this lively student movement, which demonstrated disgust at the racist Labour government, is virtually non-existent. There was no real organisation: people fragmented, either joining groups

with ties to imperialist parties – Respect and Stop the War – or they became inactive. After the highs of the walk outs and mass protests this was such a frustrating anti-climax! When US President George Bush visited Blair's constituency in Sedgefield,

barely half-an-hour away from Durham, only three of us from the sixth-form turned out to protest!

Sadly, this was inevitable precisely because of the failure to create an independent student network. Imperialism will never be destroyed by a few



SAIN's first conference on 29 October

scattered individuals. Students must be united.

Most young people could see that war was wrong, but many failed to link it to imperialism and realise that there will always be racist wars under imperialist regimes. Students oppose privatisation and top-up fees in education, but may not understand this as another outcome of a deepening imperialist crisis. Capital needs to create new sources of profit in order to sustain itself. Education is increasingly run like a business. Crucially, students need to unite to share experiences and educate one another to better understand the root causes of issues like racism, sexism and globalisation.

This academic year Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! student societies are being set up in schools, colleges and universities across Britain. We aim to rebuild a student movement, involving all student groups committed to constructing a co-operative Student Anti-Imperialist Network.

We have already had very positive responses from students who understand that SAIN is an enormously crucial network to establish, particularly in one of the most powerful imperialist countries in the world. When politicised and educated graduates, who understand the causes of issues such as racism and the need for consistent and principled activism, emerge from universities and schools, the scope for social change will be much greater.'

Individuals and groups who want to get involved please contact us! Join SAIN!

Clampdown in universities

The academic year opened with a flurry of fear-mongering and threats depicting British university campuses as hotbeds of terrorist recruitment. Professor Anthony Glees, director of Brunel University's centre for intelligence and security studies, produced a report *When students turn to terror: terrorist extremist activity on British campuses*, published by the right wing think tank and 'charity' the Social Affairs Unit.

His report named 30 British universities where 'extremists' were recruiting actively. The groups named included the British National Party (BNP) at Cambridge, animal rights groups at Oxford and Islamic groups in London and Manchester universities. Typically it was the Muslim 'extremists' who attracted attention.

Glees recommends the employment of plain clothes police on campuses, the abolition of clearing, a ban on all faith societies, forcing student societies to accept academics on their committees and restricting discussion on certain topics. He advocates 'proper screening to exclude dangerous students', 'direct links between uni-

versity registrars and immigration officers at ports of entry' and an openly racist call to 'ensure that the ethnic composition of any single university reflects, broadly, the ethnic mix of the UK as a whole'.

Labour's Education Minister Ruth Kelly licked her authoritarian little lips calling on universities to clamp down on campus extremists following the London bombings in July. At the annual conference of universities she said higher education institutions need to identify and confront 'unacceptable' behaviour: 'That means informing the police where criminal offences are being perpetrated or where there may be concerns about possible criminal acts'.

Despite condemnation of the Glees Report from vice chancellors and the National Union of Students (NUS), the government has given the green light for surveillance and witch-hunts in universities. At the London School of Economics (LSE), one of the universities pinpointed by Glees, the Islamic Society complained that an undercover reporter photographed students signing up at the freshers' fayre.

The LSE's student newspaper reported 'MI5 agents have also reputedly been operating around the LSE campus, using the Strand Palace Hotel as a recruiting point for informants' (*The Beaver*, 11 October 2005). At Imperial College London, students have been banned from wearing hoodies or *nikabs* (scarves worn by some Muslim women that cover the face) 'for security reasons'.

Along with the organisation Al Muhajiroun (described by Glees as 'a laughing stock'), and the Muslim Public Affairs Committee UK ('not a terrorist organisation, nor does it advocate violence against the state'), the Glees report specifically named the non-violent Islamic organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir. *The Sunday Times* then jumped on the bandwagon, claiming that Hizb ut-Tahrir was recruiting members through its Stop Islamophobia campaign at several universities. Tony Blair has said that the organisation should be banned under new anti-terror legislation.

The NUS has a no-platform policy for Hizb ut-Tahrir for 'supporting terrorism and publishing material that

incites racial hatred', but the policy was overturned by Middlesex University student union. At the start of the year, the student union president Keith Shilson was physically removed from campus for refusing to cancel a debate with members of Hizb ut-Tahrir which the university had banned. Following condemnation of the university's action from around the world, on 30 September Shilson was permitted to return on condition that he apologise, admitting that the university's decision was correct.

On the same day, six students at Lancaster University were convicted of aggravated trespass after a peaceful five-minute demonstration at a business conference at the university last year. The group held two banners and distributed leaflets opposing companies with a reputation for unethical practices. The group intends to appeal against the verdict which is a threat to the right of students to stage peaceful protests on their own campuses.

The best course of action for anti-imperialist students is to be vocal and visible with our opposition to racism, imperialism and war. That way we cannot be accused of undercover extremism, but rather of exercising our democratic rights and continuing to stand proudly with the poor and oppressed against British imperialism. **Join SAIN!**

Helen Yaffe

SAIN conference decisions

- SAIN opposes all forms of capitalism and imperialism, and in particular that of Britain, as the country we are living in.
- SAIN opposes racism within Britain in all its forms, including the racism of the state and its police force.
- SAIN actively supports all those fighting back against imperialism, whether people organising to defend their communities in Britain against racist attack, or national liberation movements in countries oppressed by imperialism.
- SAIN is independent of all imperialist political parties, including the Labour Party.

How to contact FRFI Student Societies by email:

- Glasgow University
- Caledonian University and Strathclyde University, Glasgow
strathclydefrfi@yahoo.co.uk
- Durham University and Newcastle University
frfi_northeast@yahoo.com
- Salford University, Manchester
salfordfrfi@hotmail.com
- Sheffield University
sheffieldfrfi@hotmail.co.uk
- SOAS University of London
soasfrfi@hotmail.co.uk
- London School of Economics
frfi_lse@yahoo.co.uk
- Kings College London
frfi_kings@yahoo.co.uk

The big business of higher education

Higher education in Britain is increasingly run as a business, with those who cannot afford to pay losing out most. University College London was recently estimated to have spent £600,000 on a campaign to build its 'brand', at the same time it is cutting back on staff and resources. Access to university-level education remains severely restricted. This year 106,000 applicants were refused places at universities, that is one in five. Provisional figures suggest that there will be fewer applicants to universities next year, the first year of top-up fees.

Despite Labour's claims of widening access, a smaller percentage of

university entrants in 2005 were from state schools than in 2004. For elite institutions such as Oxford and Cambridge, the proportion was under 60%. Looking at students' backgrounds in more detail the divide is even more stark. Figures compiled by the NUS for 2003 showed that only 17% of students were from working class backgrounds, 3% lower than two years previously.

This should come as no surprise when the total cost of doing a degree averages around £20,000, even without top-up fees. For certain courses, such as medicine, the fees alone come to £12,000 over four years, meaning that in most cases only the very rich

can apply. Over 90% of students are now in debt to the government-owned Student Loans Company, owing a total of over £5 billion. After such huge investment, students might expect to have a higher chance of employment after graduation, but official figures show unemployment amongst graduates is currently 5.9% compared to 4.75% in the general population.

Over 40% of students are forced to work at the same time as studying full-time just to stay alive, working an average of 13 hours a week, often for very little pay and with few basic rights. The more students work part-time, the lower their exam grades and final degree results. Many students have to live in cramped and poorly-maintained housing.

All of this puts students under pressure, leading to illness and stress. Of those who began university in 2002, 18,565 young students and over

1,000 mature students dropped out before completing their studies, a significantly higher proportion than for 2001. Many cited financial pressures as the major reason.

All of this seems set to worsen as students in higher education are squeezed tighter in the search for new profits. Universities are under pressure to close small departments and focus on specific subjects in order to increase 'efficiency'. Teaching staff who have more concern for students' education are being squeezed out of decision-making processes under the guise of 'academic restructuring', to be replaced by administrators aiming to deliver the skilled workers needed by the economy in the cheapest way – in short, running universities as 'profitable' enterprises in the service of capital.

Tom Vickers

LABOUR STEPS UP DEPORTATIONS

As the government is hauled over the coals by the opposition and media for failing to meet Tony Blair's promise that by the end of December 2005, the monthly rate of removals of 'failed asylum seekers' would exceed the number of applicants whose claims are rejected, the racist Labour government is stepping up its drive to increase deportations. Dawn raids, in which squads of balaclava-clad officers storm the homes of asylum seekers, kidnap families and deport them, have been occurring with alarming frequency.

Racist state attacks asylum seekers

On 20 November 2005, under cover of darkness, Britain forcibly deported 15 asylum seekers to Irbil in the northern Kurdish part of war-torn and occupied Iraq. In January the government signed a 'memorandum of understanding' with the 'interim' Iraqi government and in August it detained more than 70 people pending removal. Legal challenges and protests delayed the deportations, but on 28 August a high court judge refused to grant an order barring them from taking place. All the deportees were handcuffed and one, Hawar Ismail, was beaten up when he resisted.

Brutality and assaults are commonplace during removals, as in the case of Jamaican Angela Patterson, who was assaulted by her escort crew. They tried to deport her even though she was still bleeding from a previous assault, leaving airline crew refusing to carry her on two separate occasions. The Home Office says her ordeal in Jamaica, including being shot in the leg, was not covered by the UN Convention on Refugees.

Five Zimbabwean women are again on hunger strike at Yarl's Wood detention centre. Despite an asylum and immigration tribunal ruling on 14 October against deporting 'failed' asylum seekers to Zimbabwe, Labour is now rejecting evidence – including birth certificates – that the asylum seekers are Zimbabwean citizens, and deporting them to South Africa instead, using false passports as 'evidence' that they are South African nationals. Many Zimbabwean asylum seekers escape first to South Africa and use false South African passports to travel to Britain. Lizwane Ndlov, one of the over 140 Zimbabweans who went on hunger strike in July, died on 10 November after being released from Yarl's Wood Removal Centre in July. She had not been well since her release and subsequently went into a coma. Another victim of Labour's racist laws is Edmore Ngwenya, who committed suicide in September by walking into the Manchester Ship Canal in Salford Quays. His application for asylum had been rejected in March.

Sarah Hata, who fled Uganda in 2002, where she had been imprisoned for five years, raped and tortured, was deported on 26 October with her five children, the youngest of whom is nine. Mrs Hata suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and had been receiving treatment for psychological problems, but medical evidence of her torture was not used in her application for asylum. The family were kidnapped from their home in Wigan at 1am, taken to three separate planes and assaulted during the removal process. Terrified 9-year-old Morris had an epileptic fit and his mother was prevented from going to his aid. His sister was injured after her head was forced and held under the food tray attached to the seat in front of her. No anti-malarial drugs were provided before deportation and accord-

ing to her doctor 'Sarah and several of her children now have malaria'.

Another Ugandan victim of rape and torture was deported without her three children on 13 September; she was seized while she was signing a police station register, a condition of her temporary leave to remain, and taken to Yarl's Wood detention centre. The Home Office claimed in a letter to the family, whose 16-year-old daughter was also raped in Uganda, that 'rapes and beatings did not amount to persecution'. The family, including a three-year-old, is now in hiding: 'We don't trust them, they can do anything' (*The Guardian*, 12 October).

Six women, out of a group of 19 from Greece, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Poland and Turkey, were 'rescued' by 50 police who raided a brothel in Birmingham where the women had been locked up, threatened, fed just one meal a day and charged for their knives and forks. They were then locked up by immigration officials, threatened with deportation and refused access to lawyers.

Mary Coussey, an 'independent race monitor' appointed by the Home Office found a 'culture of disbelief' in which immigration officials 'decided in advance' to reject asylum claims and then 'looked for evidence to justify refusals'; stories of persecution are only ever accepted grudgingly. Anne Owers, the chief inspector of prisons has found that wooden staves [extendable police batons] are 'routinely deployed' at detention centres, themselves plagued by racism, brutality and a 'sub-culture of nastiness', and used to intimidate and hit detainees who have not been convicted of any crimes. Despite losing its appeal against the Law Lords rejection of its attempt to starve 'failed' asylum seekers [section 55 of Asylum and Immigration Act 2002], the racist Labour government is to 'clamp down on late and opportunistic' asylum claims, fast-tracking claims to two weeks while locking people up in 'holding' centres in Liverpool or Croydon.

Labour is developing a pilot scheme to deport unaccompanied Albanian and Vietnamese children whose asylum applications have been turned down. Previously all unaccompanied minors were granted leave to remain until they were 18 before they were deported, but now some 500 Vietnamese children are to be forcibly removed.

Charles Chinweizu

Deportations from Scotland

In Scotland, a movement against deportations is growing. Led by asylum-seeking families and their supporters, it is forcing members of the Scottish Socialist Party to take a stand. It is even drawing in sections of the Scottish bourgeoisie, who are beginning to protest against the more obviously brutal aspects of British immigration policy, in part because the policy is dictated from Westminster and not controlled by the Scottish parliament.

On 13 September 2005 a 16-strong snatch squad raided the home of the

Vucaj family in Glasgow. The father and son were both handcuffed and the family deported to Albania on 22 September.

On 14 October Suna and Yagmar Kupeli, just nine and six-years-old, pupils at a Glasgow primary school, were dragged from their beds at dawn by a 12-strong immigration snatch squad. Their mother and father were both handcuffed and the family was taken separately in caged vans to Brand Street Immigration Office, Glasgow, and then to Yarl's Wood detention centre.

On 11 November the Ahmed family were removed from their flat in Royston by dawn raid. 16-year-old Fahed Ahmed was not in the flat at the time of the raid and was unaware that his family had been deported to Pakistan; 13-year-old Zoha Ahmed was dragged from her bed in mid-sleep alongside her mother Farhat Ahmed and 19-year-old brother Fahem. The family were forced to use the toilet in full view of immigration officers. They were then sent on a 17-hour journey in a caged van, given only one sandwich for the entire journey; Fahem was beaten by security guards for refusing to board the plane without his brother and his mother was verbally abused for begging the guards to stop. Mrs Ahmed suffers from a serious heart and lung condition, which requires medication.

Dungavel detention centre, south of Glasgow, houses between 90 and 200-plus people, including families and children. The prisoners are held without charge or trial for months or years, exposed to racist abuse, isolated and have all support networks severed. Despite many having lived in Scotland for much of their lives, they are treated as worse than criminals.

A growing opposition to the

repression has arisen in Scotland, both inside and outside refugee communities, especially since the deportation of the Vucaj family in September, when several hundred people marched through the streets of Glasgow at short notice to protest against their kidnap and expulsion. School friends of Saida Vucaj from Drumchapel high-school have played a leading role in the campaign and the protests received high-profile support from people like actor Peter Mullan and Tommy Sheridan MSP, amongst others.

The immigration and asylum offices of the Home Office in Brand Street, Glasgow have become the target of increasingly frequent protests by groups of refugees sick of the inhuman treatment meted out to them by the government. In September, a demo against the Vucaj deportation took place there. Another demonstration by Congolese women in October was imbued with a new sense of militancy and anger as they chanted, danced and vowed to never surrender the fight against the government. Ahmed Khan, who began mounting a regular one-man weekly picket every Saturday, is now joined by increasing numbers of people on a regular basis. On 19 November 100 demonstrators were there as part of a national day of action, with demonstrations in central Manchester and London, calling for an end to the deportation of children and students. RCG members in Scotland will now be joining with other groups and individuals to ensure the weekly pickets grow in strength.

On 2 November the offices were occupied in protest against dawn-raids, by several high-profile campaigners, including Paddy Hill of the Birmingham Six, Tommy Sheridan, Sandra White SNP MSP, Robina Qureshi and Peter Mullan.

A similar blockade took place on 21 November, when Sheridan and two others were arrested. According to a Scottish Socialist Party press release: 'Tommy was arrested just as the demonstration was ending and following a short speech in which he thanked the police for the way they had handled the protest'.

Those arrested spent 30 hours in police custody and will appear in court on 16 January 2006. They were charged with acting in a disorderly manner, placing blockades on access gates, tampering with security gates, blocking an access road and committing a breach of the peace. They were given bail conditions which include staying away from Brand Street except on 'legitimate business'.

A recent poll has shown that 80% of Scottish people believe asylum seekers should be granted the right to remain. A campaign is growing throughout the country against dawn raids and deportation. The friends, neighbours and classmates of asylum seekers in the impoverished areas where they are housed are no longer standing idly by as their friends are kidnapped by the state. Driven to absolute desperation, the oppressed are beginning to fight back. FRFI will give them our full support.

Joseph Eskovitch



Children protest against the kidnapping of their friend at the hands of the state



Delegates at the SAIN conference held a demonstration against deportations in Newcastle upon Tyne

NHS in chaos

Foundation trusts 'should adopt the same marketing techniques as Tesco in their bids to win customers in the new choice-based NHS market'.

Sir Nigel Crisp, NHS Chief Executive

In FRFI 182 (December 2004/January 2005) we argued that the massive increase in NHS funding since 2003/04 had two purposes: first, to ensure there was an adequate level of service to meet the needs of the middle class and the better-off section of the working class, and second, to pay the costs of a necessarily more expensive privatised system. We also predicted that such a system would ride rough-shod over the needs of the working class. With widespread ward and hospital closures now on the cards, that prediction is about to be borne out. ROBERT CLOUGH and HANNAH CALLER explain why the NHS is descending into financial chaos.

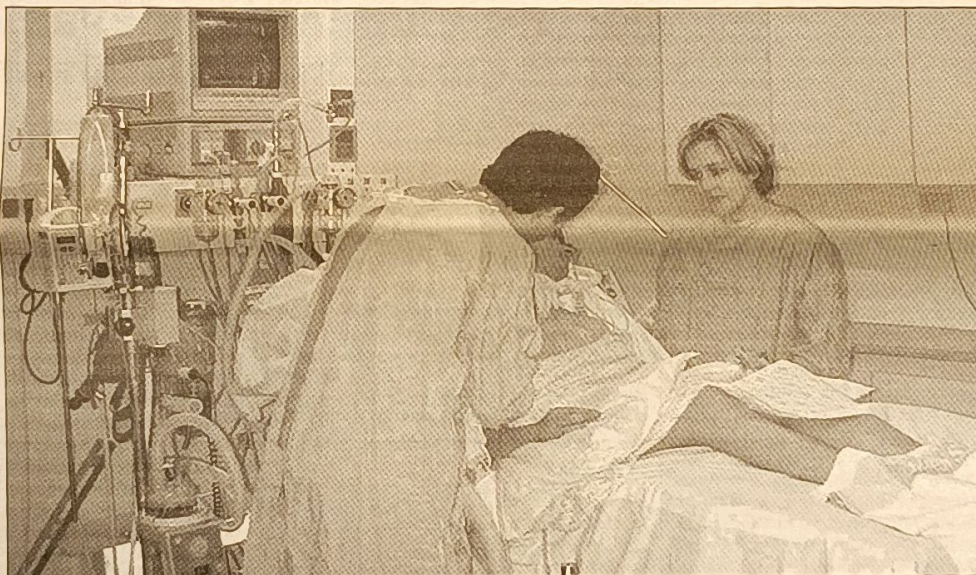
On 17 November, Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Health, made it clear that she expected the NHS to break even at the end of the financial year in March 2006. This will require a total of £750m cuts over the next four months – equivalent to an annual total of £3bn. The extension of Payment by Results to cover emergency admissions from next April will compound the financial instability that has followed its introduction this year for elective (non-urgent) treatments. On top of this comes yet another re-organisation: *Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS* which will reduce the number of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) from over 300 to about 120, and Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) from 28 to about ten. The aim is to cut management costs by £250m per annum, approximately 15%. This is a consequence of Labour's steady drive to privatise delivery of NHS services.

The significant rise in NHS expenditure over the last three years has been used to meet the demand for treatment that built up over the preceding period. Hospital trusts have managed their finances so that any overspend incurred by meeting government targets for waiting list reductions one year has been covered by the next year's funding increase, using a system called brokerage. This involves hospitals or PCTs with surplus cash at the end of the financial year lending it to those with a deficit. However, the limits of this arrangement were exposed when the NHS reported its first annual deficit of £536m for 2004/05. As the rate of funding increase has slowed, so the underlying deficit has increased, and the capacity for dealing with it without cuts has now disappeared. Even before Hewitt's announcement, a survey by the British Medical Association was predicting a budget shortfall of £2.4bn this year. Examples are:

- Three PCTs in Suffolk have a budget deficit of £48m on expenditure of £380m. In an attempt to save money, they are denying hip and knee operations to those deemed clinically obese;

- The NHS in Cambridge has a forecast deficit of £23m;
- Peterborough and Stamford NHS Foundation Trust may have to make 200 out of its 3,000 workforce redundant over 16 months as it closes

provider from the end of 2005, it is almost impossible to predict what levels of care have to be contracted for from each hospital. There are further complications. Each hospital trust needs to have a certain level of serv-



A survey by the British Medical Association has predicted a budget shortfall of £2.4bn this year.

- four wards to claw back a near-£8m deficit;
- Trafford Healthcare Trust is proposing to close Altrincham General Hospital to sort out debts of £12.5m;
- Walsgrave Hospital will lose up to 250 posts to address an £8m deficit;
- After posting a deficit of £30m in 2004/05, Surrey and Sussex Healthcare have an additional estimated £33m deficit this year.

Throughout the outskirts of London hospitals are reporting huge deficits as well. These deficits will be immediately deducted from the money they receive in the new financial year. Since they are having great difficulty in predicting their income because of the extension of Payment by Results, their financial plans will amount to little more than guesswork. Redundancies and service cuts will be the consequence.

Payment by Results is central to the government's privatisation plans. Each operation or hospital stay has had a price set against it, and PCTs will have to agree the number of such treatments they buy from each hospital. This sets hospital against hospital as PCTs try and find the cheapest healthcare provider. However, with patients supposedly having a choice of four NHS and one private healthcare

providers. These are, however, part of an integrated whole, and at a certain point the hospital ceases to remain a viable entity. This is the reason why the Audit Commission, reviewing the effects of Payment by Results on A&E departments, stated that 'the level of risk inherent in the current policy...is too great' and that hospital departments could be forced to close. Many District General Hospitals (DGHs) are at risk.

The accelerated introduction of privately-operated independent treatment centres compounds this. Labour's plans are now to extend private provision to 15% of all elective care by 2008. These centres are protected in two ways: first, by receiving a 15% premium on top of the national rate for the operations they undertake, and second, by having guaranteed contract periods of 5-10 years. A significant proportion of DGHs will not be able to survive: mergers and closures will be the order of the day. Those Trusts with the highest fixed costs will be most at risk – which will be those Trusts servicing Private Finance Initiative repayments. Meanwhile the annual £1.5bn the private sector will receive from the NHS over the coming years will compare favourably with their private patient turnover of £2.3bn in 2003. The private sector will leach off the NHS.

Another pillar of the privatisation drive is the Foundation Trusts, the first 32 of which published a joint report after their first 18 months to show

Guy's and St Thomas's.

'One of the attractions of being a Foundation Trust is that if we manage our work within budget we can keep the surplus to use to fund developments in the hospital', said the chief executive of the Homerton University Hospital Trust at its launch. However, by this September it was a different story: in a letter to staff describing the financial problems facing the Trust – £1 million overspent against an annual income of £130 million – she wrote that 'the real problem with having a deficit is that all

The Office for National Statistics recently released figures that show men in the most prosperous parts of London live 11.5 years longer than their contemporaries in central Glasgow (life expectancy 80.8 years in Chelsea and Westminster versus 69.3 in Glasgow).

development work grinds to a halt and everyone becomes obsessed with money...Not only will there be few, if any, new posts, we will have to start to take posts out. All building and capital projects will have to be reviewed to see whether we can afford the new running costs associated with them'.

It is not just hospitals that face the threat of privatisation. *Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS* proposed that all PCT-delivered community services such as district nursing, health visitors, chiropody, family planning and other local health services be hived off – whether to voluntary or privately-run organisations it did not matter. Since then Hewitt has had to back-track to some extent: she is now trying to reassure community health chiefs that the staff will continue to be employed directly by the NHS unless local trusts decide otherwise. In another retreat, plans to contract out healthcare commissioning in Oxfordshire have been postponed after staff opposition. Bidders to run the service included Group 4, BUPA and a US health insurance company. However, the direction is clear: privatisation will take place if not by government diktat then by local decision – health service managers know what is expected of them. Hewitt has also declared that if GPs are unwilling to build good practices in poor areas with evening and weekend opening, then alternative private sector operators will be called in.

Rationing, cuts, redundancies, deteriorating services: these are the consequences of Labour's privatisation drive. Whilst the working class will bear the brunt of this, even the more affluent sections and the middle class will find that their demands for an adequate service cannot be squared with a profitable service. Now is the time to build resistance. ■

Bird flu hysteria

In mid-October, the Chief Medical Officer warned that more than 50,000 people could die from bird flu pandemic with a quarter of the British population (over 14 million) becoming ill should the virus mutate into one that is contagious in humans. Seasonal human flu, typically affecting 10-15% of the British population each winter, leads to around 12,000 extra deaths (although this figure was 30,000 in 1989/90). The death toll from pandemics is much greater: 'Spanish flu' in 1918 killed 40 million people worldwide and 250,000 in Britain. The pandemic contingency plan presented by the Chief Medical Officer is 450 pages long. However, at present bird flu is not at all contagious; although tens of millions of poultry have been infected over vast geographical areas for more than two years, to date, only 121 cases of infected humans have been identified globally, of whom 60 have died. In late

October, a virology professor, chair of the European scientific working group said that isolated outbreaks of avian influenza in western Europe did not 'substantially increase the risk of a flu pandemic'.

This has not prevented a panic reaction, with a report that the government will extend laws to allow surgeries and hospitals to be placed under armed police guard in case there is a stampede for antiviral drugs that the government is stockpiling. Such a frenzied rush has already happened, but for seasonal flu inoculation. This will not protect against bird flu, yet the national supply of 14 million doses has already been exhausted, mainly by the 'worried well', overwhelmingly middle class people who care only for themselves rather than for those who really need it, the over 65-year-olds and people with long term illness.

We should contrast the growing middle class hysteria over bird flu and

flu pandemics with the indifference towards the very real AIDS pandemic. More than 25 million people have died of AIDS since 1981; Africa has 12 million AIDS orphans; by December 2005, women will account for 46% of all adults living with HIV worldwide and for 57% in sub-Saharan Africa. Young people aged 15-24 years account for half of all new HIV infections worldwide and more than 6,000 become infected with HIV every day. Only one million of the 6.5 million people in the oppressed nations who need life saving anti-retrovirals are getting them. UNAIDS/WHO estimates for 2005 give total new HIV infections globally as almost five million and total global AIDS deaths as over three million.

121 bird flu deaths are as nothing compared to this. But AIDS is far away, it seems, and flu knows no social boundaries in Britain – it affects the rich as much as the poor. Hence the middle class is looking after number one.

It is estimated that exposure to cold causes an increased 30,000 deaths a year in Britain. This figure includes those who die solely because of hypothermia due to lack of heating. Those over 75 years old are five times more likely to die than those under 75.

Iraq – imperialists lose the plot

continued from page 1

regulations. The bill is likely to be vetoed by President Bush. Several senior Democrats who voted for the war in Iraq as well as ex-President Clinton are now saying the war was a mistake and claim they were misled by the administration. Lewis Libby, the vice president's chief of staff, is presently standing trial for lying to an inquiry into the leaking of the identity of a CIA agent, Valerie Plame, whose husband Joseph Wilson had been a leading critic of the 'weapons of mass destruction' excuse for going to war. President Bush's chief political adviser, Karl Rove has been forced to resign and may also be indicted. 55% of the US population believe Bush intentionally misled the US public. 60% now believe the war was not worth fighting. President Bush's overall popularity has hit a new low of just 37%.

Imperialist pressure on Iran and Syria

In an attempt to maintain an aggressive global posture and switch blame for the catastrophe in Iraq, the US and Britain are threatening Iran and Syria. At the beginning of October, President Bush denounced the countries as 'out-law regimes' and 'allies of convenience' for the Iraqi resistance. A US official said 'Syria had made the unwise choice of allowing its territory to be part of the Iraqi battlefield'. The US has made it clear they want President Bashar Al Assad replaced as leader of Syria, by a coup if necessary. They have threatened raids against Ba'athist supporters in Syria and have made several massive and bloody raids along the Iraqi border with Syria. A UN enquiry into the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, allegedly at the hands of Syrian agents, has been used to put further pressure on Syria. On 31 October the UN Security Council ordered the arrest of Syrian officials. The US wants to impose economic sanctions if Syria doesn't comply. Significantly, the EU is less keen on sanctions and Russia and China both oppose the threat.

In September, Iran restarted the production of uranium hexafluoride, the first stage of a nuclear enrichment programme. The International Atomic Energy Authority condemned the move, paving the way for UN intervention. The US called for UN inspectors to be allowed into the country. Meanwhile, Britain claimed that sophisticated bombs using infra-red trip devices that had killed eight members of the British forces in the autumn had come from Iran. A report in *The Independent*, however, pointed out that the technology had been in international circulation for many years and that it originated from British security forces during a botched sting operation against the IRA. On 12 October, Britain accused Iran of running training camps for Shia resistance fighters. In the summer Britain had tried to blame four bomb blasts that killed eight people in Ahraz near the Iranian border on Iranian Arab extremists.

Imperialist troops pinned down and demoralised

Though they continue to deny it, any plan the imperialist occupiers might have had of replacing their troops with Iraqi puppet government forces is in complete disarray. The reality is that only one battalion of around 1,000 Iraqi soldiers is able to function without coalition support. Instead, the occupying forces rely on more than 20,000 private security personnel from abroad. There are supposedly



The imperialists attack on Fallujah in 2004

115 battalions in the Iraqi army with a total of 80,000 members. However, many of these are 'ghost' soldiers, listed by their corrupt officers in order to claim and then pocket their pay. The British Ministry of Defence admits the real strength of the Iraqi army is only around 40,000.

Morale among British troops is deteriorating rapidly. Commodore Toby Elliott, chief executive of Combat Stress, a military charity for soldiers suffering psychological problems, said the seemingly indefinite struggle in Iraq has created the greatest crisis of morale among British troops for decades. Soldiers are leaving the army early to try and escape flashbacks, nightmares and guilt. The army is about 10,000 troops short of required numbers. The Territorial Army has lost over 13,000 members since April 2003 and is now 6,000 below full strength. The main reason given for resignation was Iraq. RAF officer Flight Lieutenant Malcolm Kendall-Smith said he was prepared to face gaol rather than serve in Iraq in a war he considers illegal. He is to be court-martialled for 'refusing to obey a lawful command'. Captain Ken Masters, who was responsible for investigations into abuse, torture and murder by British troops, was found hanged in Basra Camp in October, having allegedly committed suicide. In the US, Staff Sergeant Alberto Martinez is being tried for the murder of two superior officers using mines and grenades. In the Vietnam War such 'fraggings', as they were known, occurred frequently as soldiers became resentful at fighting an unpopular war.

By late autumn the number of attacks by the Iraqi resistance was averaging 570 a week compared with 470 between February and August. During the summer there were more than 100 attacks on British troops in the south of Iraq. By late November the number of US forces killed had risen to 2,100 with over 15,500 injured, almost half of whom did not return to duty. The number of British troops killed stood at 98. In the year to September 2005, 292 foreign contractors were killed in Iraq compared with 120 in the whole previous period since the invasion. The daily number of Iraqi casualties more than doubled in the six months from April 2005. Iraq Body Count says that since 1 May 2003, in reported incidents alone, between 27,000 and 30,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed by events that, according to international convention, were the responsibility of the occupying powers to prevent.

This is the horrific reality of life under imperialist occupation in Iraq, not the return to democracy and normality they would have us believe. The horror can only end when imperialist troops withdraw. ■

Hell-hole Guantanamo Detainees on hunger strike

Up to 250 detainees in Guantanamo Bay have been on hunger strike on and off since August. These emaciated weak prisoners are still undergoing cruel and unusual punishment at the hands of their captors, and are being force-fed while their charges are invented and their recourse to legal advice blocked. Thomas Wilner, a lawyer who has visited the camps, reports cadaverous men who have lost over three stone in weight. They are traumatised and severely distressed. In mid-October there were 21 detainees in hospital, with 20 being force-fed. The US Department of Defense refuses to name them or tell their lawyers. Force-feeding involves deliberately inserting large tubes down the noses of restrained prisoners – the same tube is used for many different detainees.

In early November, the US Senate approved a proposal which will severely limit the chance of the detainees' cases ever coming before US courts. In mid-November, UN representatives refused to visit Guantanamo Bay because the US authorities will not allow them access to the detainees in private.

The US has detained more than

80,000 people in prisons and camps from Afghanistan to occupied Cuba since September 2001. At least 14,500 people are in US custody in connection with the so-called war on terror. The British government is hiding reports that the CIA is landing detainees in Britain en route to its torture camps all over the world. CIA planes are also landing in Spain, Portugal,

Norway, Sweden and Iceland. An investigation is underway to determine whether the European countries involved are aware of the purpose of such flights.

Torture similar to that used in Abu Ghraib has been going on in occupied Guantanamo for over four years. This shocking abuse of human rights, committed directly by the US and indirectly supported by Britain and the EU, is part and parcel of the attack on civil liberties in imperialist nations.

Those of us who can must speak out on the side of the detainees and their families. Everyone who understands the significance of the Cuban Revolution and what it means today for the Cuban people and the poor and oppressed around the world must be part of a campaign to put a stop to the term 'Guantanamo Bay in Cuba'. The camps are a war crime committed by the US, opposed by Cuba.

Hannah Caller

'We have lost loved ones and we are not ready to lose our future'

Poor communities devastated by earthquake in Pakistan and Kashmir

On 8 October an earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale devastated parts of Pakistan-administered Kashmir. The earthquake has so far claimed more than 90,000 lives and if the relief effort is not stepped up the death toll will be far greater. This terrible disaster has worsened the suffering for the people of the area already divided by India and Pakistan's dispute over territorial control of Kashmir.

On 11 October, India responded to the relief operation by supplying medicine and other supplies. They have also opened up the Line of Control with Pakistan to make rescue work easier.

Pakistan is internally divided by language, class and social conflict. All forms of democracy have failed in Pakistan and military dictatorship is entrenched. Following the 1947 partition, Pakistan has repeatedly been involved in direct conflict with India. Its brutal politics led to the civil war of 1971 resulting in the division of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh. Under the leadership of General Musharraf, Pakistan plays the role of US lackey in South East Asia. He provided the US administration with a naval base during the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. He systematically oppresses both radical and reformist political groups and is a great supporter of globalisation.

While hunger and underdevelopment affect growing numbers in Pakistan, the government continues to increase spending on arms. It owns 460 to 780 kilograms of enriched uranium, enough to produce more than 25 nuclear warheads. Despite the need for billions of dollars for the earthquake relief effort, General Musharraf has declared there will be no cuts in military spending.

As usual it is the poorest people who have suffered the most in this earthquake tragedy. The most devastated areas are hidden by the extreme mountainous terrain and it is difficult for the rescue teams to reach them due



The UN estimates that over US\$5bn is needed immediately to prevent another wave of deaths in the quake-affected regions

to the many landslides. With the bitter Himalayan winter on the way, there will be even more deaths from hypothermia and malnutrition. The survivors are reluctant to leave behind their livestock and belongings, saying 'We have lost loved ones and are not ready to lose our future'. Survivors claim that government officials involved in the rescue effort are corrupt and that aid is being stolen.

While rich countries like Belgium, France and Spain have given no aid, Cuba has sent more than 200 doctors to the affected regions and plans to send more. The United Nations has stated that Cuba is playing a signifi-

cant and efficient role in the relief operation. The Pakistan government has urged the global community to make more generous donations, pointing out how much more ready rich nations are to respond to disasters in the western world.

The UN estimates that over US\$5bn is needed immediately to prevent another wave of deaths in the quake-affected regions. The food and shelter of 800,000 people who are living in horrific conditions now depends on the response of the rich world. Without immediate help further deaths are inevitable.

Khalid Mukerjee

Racist repression continues as Israeli coalition collapses

Peretz, a Moroccan-born immigrant and former leader of the Israeli Histadrut trade union federation, is calling for renewed peace talks with the Palestinians on the basis of the US-backed Road Map. He is being portrayed as a radical who will bring justice to the Palestinians. Nothing could be further from the truth. Peretz is a Zionist and his positions on the future of Jerusalem, the main Israeli settlement blocks on the West Bank and the Apartheid Wall are no different to Sharon's. At Labour's Central Committee meeting of 20 November, Peretz declared that if he were elected Prime Minister he would support the retention of Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel. He opposes any return of Palestinian refugees to Israel within the Green Line. Although this was the meeting that agreed the withdrawal of Labour from the government, the next day, Chaim Herzog, a Labour Party Minister, with Peretz' agreement approved the construction of 350 housing units in Ma'aleh Adumin. As Herzog's spokesman explained, 'there is general agreement within Israel that Ma'aleh Adumin will become part of Israel in any future agreement with the Palestinians'.

Peretz' election as Labour leader has therefore nothing to do with disagreement over Sharon's expansionist strategy; instead it is a reaction to Sharon's free market policies. These have led to growing levels of poverty and unemployment for Jewish workers, from a combination of privatisations, cuts in public sector budgets compounded by the effects of the Intifada and the continued funding of the settlements on the West Bank.

Gaza and the West Bank since the withdrawal

Since the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza on 12 September, the Zionists have either closed the border crossings at Rafah, Erez and Karni or severely restricted their operation. This has meant an almost complete lockdown of the whole Gaza Strip throughout the period. Simultaneously, they have also escalated their campaign of terror. On 23 September, Israeli forces launched a missile attack on a Hamas military parade in Jabalya killing 19 Palestinians. Resistance groups responded to this with a barrage of rockets into Israeli territory. The Israeli army reciprocated with an artillery bombardment of areas from where the resistance groups were firing the rockets. On 25 September, another Israeli missile attack destroyed part of a Hamas-run school in Gaza, killing four people and injuring at least 15, including a number of schoolchildren. In October the Israeli airforce began low-altitude night flights at supersonic speeds over Gaza. The resultant sonic booms, which sound like huge explosions, have terrorised young children, even induced miscarriages in pregnant women and are yet another form of collective punishment.

On 16 November, the US brokered a deal between the PA and Israel on border crossings which supposedly guarantees free passage for Palestinian goods into Israel. The US's purpose was to bolster PA prime minister Abbas' position against the resistance in advance of the Palestine Legislative Council (PLC) elections on 25 January. However, the resistance has condemned the move as it compromises

Ariel Sharon's decision to resign from Likud, the party he formed over 30 years ago, came as no surprise. It followed the election of Amir Peretz as the new leader of the Israeli Labour Party, and Labour's subsequent withdrawal from Sharon's coalition government. Without Labour's support, Sharon could not contain the neo-fascist majority faction within Likud which has been completely opposed to his strategy to defeat the Intifada. This strategy – the withdrawal from Gaza, continued construction of the Apartheid Wall to bring the main settlement blocks into Israel 'proper', the division of what is left of the West Bank into small easily controlled 'cantons' and recruiting the Palestine Authority (PA) to confront the Intifada – is the only viable way forward for imperialism in Palestine. Sharon has now set up a new party, National Responsibility, to contest the general election that will take place on 28 March. **BOB SHEPHERD** reports

STATEMENT BY IRANIAN PRESIDENT

At the end of October, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the President of Iran called for Israel to be 'wiped off the face of the map' at a conference on Zionism. Although this was little more than rhetoric, the response from imperialism and its lackeys was hysterical. Naturally Blair was to the forefront in declaring that he 'felt a real sense of revulsion'. He clearly feels no such 'revulsion' as Israel every day steadily wipes Palestine from the map. Morris Motamed, a Jewish MP in Iran's parliament, cut through all the hypocrisy: 'The unequal war and clashes between Israelis equipped with the most advanced weapons and Palestinians with stones in their hands should be taken as the root cause of the public resentment'.

Palestinian sovereignty. It leaves Israel, as before, controlling all movement of both people and goods between Gaza and Israel and in control of the entrance of goods from Egypt to Gaza. The only real change is that Rafah will open for the crossing of people between Gaza and Egypt and for the exit of goods from Gaza into Egypt. The crossing will be run under the auspices of 57 EU monitors. Israel, though, will continue to have the last word on who can cross the border; Israeli and Palestinian security officers will jointly monitor traffic by remote camera. The hollow nature of the deal was exposed the following day when Israel closed the Erez border crossing indefinitely for 'security reasons'.

On the West Bank the construction of the Apartheid Wall continues apace, as does the expansion of the main colonial-settlement blocks east of Jerusalem. On 17 November, a day after Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz declared that 'the settlement blocks will continue to be Israel's eastern border in the future', the Israeli Land Administration issued building tenders for 13 plots in Ma'aleh Adumin. In building the Wall, Israel is forging ahead with its plans to carve up and 'cantonise' the remaining areas of the West Bank. It is in the process of creating a massive new checkpoint to



Israel continues to annex and divide Palestinian land by extending the Apartheid Wall

the south of Nablus, which will in effect separate Nablus and Jenin from the rest of the West Bank.

The PA attacks the resistance

The 23 September Jabalya attack was a signal for a concerted PA offensive on

Hamas. It claimed that the premature explosion of a Hamas rocket on the parade caused the deaths. Palestinian police chief Ala Husni announced that 'the role of resistance weapons has ended in the streets. They should go back into storage... Any weapon now on the streets is a criminal weapon', as

Abbas and the PA used the incident to push for resistance disarmament. In mid-September Nabil Amre, a former PA Information Minister, addressed a conference on terrorism in Washington and pleaded for help in confronting Hamas and the resistance: 'We, Mahmoud Abbas, Mohammed Dahlan and I, understand your need for security. We are your friends and we really want to help you but you have to help us, financially and politically, to enable us to face Hamas and the terrorist forces.'

At the end of September, the Zionists initiated a major attack on Hamas in the West Bank and arrested over 400 activists. The purpose was to help the PA by disrupting Hamas' organisation in the run up to both local and the PLC elections on 25 January. The raids targeted not just individuals but Islamic charities associated with both Hamas and Islamic Jihad as Israeli forces shut down 15 charity offices and seized records and computers. Meanwhile Sharon declared he would not accept Hamas running in the PLC elections unless it 'disarmed and renounced its intention to destroy Israel'.

On 2 October PA police and Hamas militants clashed in Gaza City after the police attempted to arrest a leading Hamas member. It ended with three people dead, one a police commander. A PA inquiry into the clash unsurprisingly blamed Hamas. Hamas' response was to point to the developing alliance between the PA and imperialism against the Palestinian resistance:

'We in Hamas hold the PA police command responsible for the incidents as the PA police director, Ala Husni, issued shoot to kill orders against Hamas militants... We believe that there was a pre-planned conspiracy against the movement designed by American and Israeli hands, and implemented by local and regional parties so as to hit the infrastructure of the movement and deprive or marginalise it from participating in the Palestinian political and country building process.'

As if to prove the point, a US spokesman praised the PA for confronting Hamas, considering it a 'positive and encouraging step'.

The PA is now directly engaged on a day-to-day basis in attacking the resistance and it is co-operating with Israel in these attacks. On 10 November Israeli forces killed a militant from the Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AMB) near the Al Buraij refugee camp in Gaza. Later in the day 20 armoured vehicles invaded Nablus and after a gunfight five Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) militants were arrested. The same day, on Israeli demand, PA security forces arrested a commander of the AMB in the Al Doheisha refugee camp near Bethlehem. It followed the arrest of five other AMB militants by the PA from the camp. On 5 November PA police attacked a student protest rally outside the Muqata'a (PA headquarters) in Ramallah. The demonstrators were demanding the release of a student coordinator of the Islamic Bloc at Bir Zeit University who was arrested earlier that week by the PA for organising against Israel on campus. Meanwhile the PA continues to hold the leader of the PFLP, Ahmed Sa'adat, and other PFLP and Islamic Jihad militants in prison in Jericho under British and US supervision. As the PLC elections approach, so the co-operation between the PA and imperialism will become more and more apparent. ■

ZIONISTS MURDER CHILDREN

The recent case of Israeli army Captain 'R' highlights once again the racist arrogance and contempt for Palestinian life that permeates all parts of Israeli society.

On 15 November an Israeli military court found Captain 'R' 'not guilty' of illegal use of his weapon, conduct unbecoming of an officer and perverting the course of justice. At the beginning of October 2004, Captain 'R' had emptied the contents of his automatic rifle into the body of a 13-year-old Palestinian girl, Iman Al Hams, near Rafah. An Israeli army lookout had identified her as being young and of no threat, radioing his control, 'It's a little girl...A little girl about 10, she's behind the embankment, scared to death'. This didn't stop the officer from riddling her body with bullets. After 'confirming' the kill, he announced on his radio, 'This is the commander, anything that's mobile, that moves in the zone, even if it's a three-year-old, needs to be killed'.

The Israeli army's initial investigation found that the captain had not acted 'unethically', a decision that was upheld by the findings of the military tribunal. Iman's father was clear that the army had never intended to punish the captain, 'They did not charge him with Iman's murder, only with small offences and now they say he is innocent of these even though he shot my daughter so many times. This was the cold-blooded murder of a girl. The soldier murdered her once and the court has murdered her again. What is the message? They are telling their soldiers to kill Palestinian children'.

Since the Intifada began in September 2000 the Israelis have murdered over 780 Palestinian children. This October they killed nine Palestinian children. On 3 November Israeli soldiers shot and killed a 13-year-old boy in Jenin and five days later a 14-year-old boy in Nablus.



CHINA

'Let China sleep, for when she wakes, she will shake the world.' Napoleon

On 1 October 1949 Mao Zedong announced 'China has stood up.' A quarter of humanity, led by the Chinese Communist Party, had thrown off imperialism and its comprador bourgeoisie and begun dismantling semi-feudal land-ownership. They began constructing socialism: banks and industries were nationalised and land redistributed to the peasantry.

Fifty-five years later the Hong Kong based brokerage firm CLSA says that the private sector is now responsible for three-quarters of China's output and employment, making the Communist Party government more dependent than ever on entrepreneurs to sustain high-speed economic growth. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports that private business generates nearly two-thirds of non-farm output. It says that the number of state controlled enterprises has halved to 150,000 since 1995. Private companies increased output by 400% and foreign companies 200% between 1998 and 2003 compared with the state sector increase of 70%. TREVOR RAYNE examines the routes China has taken since 1949.

A new police force is being established in Chinese cities, equipped with helicopters and armoured vehicles to combat 'the threat of terrorism and the rising incidence of rioting and social unrest across the country'. The Public Security minister, Zhou Yongkang, said the authorities dealt with 74,000 protests and riots last year, involving 3.7 million people, compared with 10,000 incidents in 1994. Professor Xiaozheng of Renmin University doubted that the new force would have any impact on the causes of unrest: 'The crux of the problem lies in an unbalanced society which lacks justice and equality. As the income gap widens, and officials become more and more corrupt, better equipped police will only be used to protect the rich people and residents of big cities.' (*Financial Times*, 19 August 2005)

China has been presented as an example of the success of market socialism in achieving development and one to be emulated by others including Cuba. Market socialism is a contradiction in terms; it is an ideological formulation allowing pro-capitalist tendencies to assert themselves. History demonstrates: society can revert from socialism to capitalism.

The new El Dorado

China has approximately 1.3 billion people or one in five of humanity, 50% more people than the combined populations of all the developed capitalist countries. 66% of the people live in rural areas compared with 80% in 1949. 300 million rural residents are expected to move to towns and cities before 2020. 885 million people world-wide have Mandarin as their first language compared with 322 million whose native language is English.

Since 1978 China's annual average growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been 9.4%, during which time real income per head grew 300%. China has over 300 million mobile-phone subscribers, more than any other country, and 100 million people with Internet access. In 1978 China

accounted for 1% of the world economy, today it accounts for over 4%. China's economy is one seventh the size of the US's and one third the size of Japan's. Its foreign trade is worth \$851 billion and is exceeded only by those of the US and Germany. From 1993 to 2002 the volume of China's exports rose at an annual rate of 17.3%. On current trends China's exports will exceed those of the US within five years. Imports and exports combined were 10% of GDP in 1979, 20% in 1989 and over 60% in 2004. About half of China's exports are produced by foreign subsidiaries; the proportion rises to 80% for electronic goods exports. China overtook Mexico as an exporter of manufactured goods to the US in 2002. Average Chinese wages are one fifth of those of Mexico and one twentieth of the average British wage. 49% of the world's DVDs are exported from China, 42% of PCs, 50% of cameras, 29% of colour TVs, 75% of clocks and watches, 70% of toys, 24% of clothes and 83% of tractors. China is integrated into the world capitalist trading system.

Total accumulated fixed direct investment in China in 2003 was \$501.5 billion. The stock of foreign direct investment in 2004 was \$245.5 billion. British companies are the biggest European investors in China, spending \$11.4 billion in 2003. Fixed asset investment in 2003 was an extraordinary 47% of GDP. China consumed 27% of the world's steel in 2003, 31% of its coal and 40% of the world's cement. In 2004 China accounted for 40% of the increase in world demand for oil. China is now the world's second biggest oil importer. China's combined consumption of aluminium, copper, nickel and iron ore has doubled in 10 years to become 20% of the world's total. Between 1990 and 2002 the value of additional industrial output grew by an average 12.6% per annum, while agricultural value grew 3.9% per annum. This is a pronounced expression of uneven-development, generat-

ing social and political problems for the Chinese state with rural unrest.

Official military spending is \$30 billion or 2.4% of China's GDP. US military spending is 18 times that of China or 77 times per capita. However, the US claims that China understates its real military spending, estimating it at up to three times the declared figure.

China's foreign exchange reserves rose to \$740 billion earlier this year and are on target for \$1 trillion by June 2006. The US current account deficit is forecast to reach \$760 billion or 6.1% of US GDP in 2005. China's purchase of US Treasury bonds is preventing the collapse of the US dollar and steep rises in US interest rates that would plunge the US economy into recession.

Capitalism and imperialism have been given an extension of its life by the discovery of this 'last frontier for significant growth', as Unilever describes China, but in doing so it is producing a rival to US global hegemony.

'As long as it makes money'

Between 1952 and 1976 Chinese industrial production grew at an average annual rate of 11.2% or five times the rate of agricultural growth. This was a problem when 80% of the people lived in the countryside. A process of agricultural collectivisation begun in the 1950s did improve rural education, health, housing, social security and food distribution for the masses; together these were known as 'the iron rice bowl'. The infant mortality rate measured per 1,000 people fell from 200 in 1949 to 81 in 1956.

The Great Leap Forward 1957-59 and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution 1966-76 promoted a model of development based on agricultural collectivisation and the Commune. The Commune combined agricultural production with light industry. The development of farming and light industry, serving both farming and consumption, would set the rate of growth of heavy industry; in turn heavy industry would serve the



The entrance of China, India and Russia into the global capitalist market, has in effect doubled the world's labour force

Communes. This was Mao's model of development, a model of self-reliance as opposed to dependence on Soviet technology and capitalist imports. Communes were presented as a means of strengthening working class and peasant control over the means of production and political power.

Mao opposed Lenin's view that 'The more backward the country, the more difficult is the transition from capitalism to socialism.' For Mao the very backwardness of the peasants drove them to want revolution and socialism all the more. The peasantry was like a blank sheet of paper on which wonderful things could be drawn. Mao condemned Khrushchev for rejecting Stalin, Lenin, Marx and Engels. He saw in the Soviet Union a privileged stratum of bureaucrats that had degenerated into a 'new bourgeoisie', handing on privilege to their sons and daughters and using the means of production to exploit the workers.

Criticising the Soviet Union, Mao said that over-reliance on material incentives was a futile attempt to 'beat capitalism at its own game'. Mao proposed moral incentives. His criticism of the Soviet Union was also a criticism of a major trend in the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CCP). Mao was determined to prevent the restoration of capitalism in China and saw class struggle intensifying as socialism progressed. The Cultural Revolution was launched against 'those Party persons in power taking the capitalist road.' The 'number one and number two capitalist roaders' were senior CCP Central Committee members, Liu Shaoqi and

Deng Xiaoping respectively.

Mao used the cult of his personality to attack the trend he opposed in the Party. In a 1958 speech 'On the problem of Stalin' Mao argued that the cult of the individual, or the correct side of an individual, was justified in so far as a person 'represents the truth'. Marx, Engels and Lenin and the correct side of Stalin all held the truth so why should they not be revered?

Opponents of Mao, 'raising the Red flag in order to deny it', sabotaged the Cultural Revolution and the country suffered from this. The cult of personality, the reverence for Mao's thought, rather than encouraging the masses to investigate, debate and solve their problems, was used to promote factionalism and inhibit genuine study using Marxist texts. Negative experiences of the Cultural Revolution contributed to demoralisation among the working classes. Socialism is a process produced by the masses for the masses; it cannot be made for them. Given the experiences of the past century it is also more difficult to achieve than many anticipated, though no less necessary for that. Barriers to strengthening working class control provide possibilities for bourgeois restoration. It would be useful to contrast China's Cultural Revolution with Cuba's Rectification Campaign and the current Battle of Ideas as forms of combating bourgeois trends emerging in the effort to construct socialism. The issue is political: socialism requires democracy for the working classes.

Mao died in 1976 and Deng became leader of China and the CCP in 1978. Markets were introduced by government directive, not by popular de-

along the capitalist road

mand. The Commune system was demolished and the household contracting system introduced in rural areas: land became private property which, when converted into commercial real estate, could be rented or sold, and labour could be hired. In 1983 state enterprises were allowed to hire workers on part-time contracts with no job security or welfare benefits. Managers were given autonomy to sack people and even close businesses. Communes' industrial assets were taken over by Township and Village Enterprises, run by government officials who could involve foreign capital, hire and fire workers at will and were profit based. State enterprises' share of urban employment fell from 78% in 1978 to 70% by the mid-1980s.

In 1979 Deng declared an 'Open Door' policy to attract foreign investment to four special economic zones along the coastal region. In 1983 joint-ventures and wholly-owned foreign business operations were allowed. The CCP-run government abolished the right to strike in 1982. Some 100 million rural workers began to migrate to the towns and cities in search of work. Wage rates often fell below the state's prescribed minimum level. Deng talked of 'Crossing the river by feeling the stones.' As Mao predicted, China was crossing from the socialist road to the capitalist road.

When the students' movement protests resulted in the Tiananmen Square deaths of 300-700 people on 4 June 1989, FRFI said that demands for democracy were being used by imperialism to undermine the Chinese state, as they were used to undermine the Soviet and east European states. However, we said that repression would not solve the problems for Chinese communists and workers. It is now clear that the Tiananmen movement had been joined by independent workers' organisations and that this had unnerved the leadership of the CCP.

Deng's response to the Tiananmen events was at first public silence and then an assertion that Chinese political stability required break-neck speed development. For this Deng said that 'if capitalism has something good, then socialism should take it over and develop it'. 'The proportion of planning to market forces is not the essential difference between socialism and capitalism....A planned economy is not equivalent to socialism...a market economy is not capitalism.' The 1992 CCP Congress said that China must 'get rid of highly centralised planning and develop a socialist market economy'. From 1993 state-owned enterprises could be privatised. Between 45 million and 60 million state enterprise employees were made redundant by 2000. By 2001 the state sector accounted for just 15% of total manufacturing employment and less than 10% of employment in domestic trade. This was defended by the CCP on the basis of superior private sector efficiency.

With privatisation, CCP cadres used their positions to set themselves up as capitalists. This took place with the blessing of the Party: To get rich is

glorious. As Deng put it in 1992 'as long as it makes money it is good for China'. In 2001 Premier Jiang Zemin announced on the 80th anniversary of the CCP a Chinese version of the 'trickle down effect' justifying tax cuts for the rich in the US and Britain, 'When some people and some regions Get Rich First, others will be brought along....' In 2002 the CCP opened membership to entrepreneurs. The following year it recommended changes to the constitution placing private property 'on an equal footing with public property'. All of these were justified on the grounds that they are necessary to make China strong in the world.

Central to the pace of China's growth has been foreign investment. Foreign direct investment was \$1 billion in 1985, \$50 billion in 2002 and \$61 billion in 2004. By 2000 the share of foreign companies in China's manufacture was 31.3%. By 2004 foreign funded enterprises were responsible for over half of China's exports. In recent years export growth has accounted for three-quarters of overall economic growth. This October the Chinese government announced that it was preparing to issue shares to international investors in its vast railway network. Foreign investors were banned from this sector in 1949. Major capitalist finance houses such as Goldman Sachs, Carlyle Group and Warburg Pincus have set up funds to multiply their stakes in Chinese assets. These funds are prepared to pay up to 100% more for shares in these assets than markets would normally tolerate. In October Carlyle bought a controlling interest in Xugong, a previously state-controlled construction equipment maker. In the same month the China Construction Bank said it would issue shares overseas. This is the first of China's four big state-owned banks to do so. These banks control \$1.8 trillion in deposits.

The effects on the working class

Many Chinese people have experienced primitive capitalist accumulation, wresting the means of production from their control and throwing them at the mercy of capital. This transition towards capitalism has meant that Chinese people no longer have a universal education system. Lenin remarked that the development of socialism could be judged by the changing position of women in society. The 1950 marriage law advocated equality of men and women, and an end to arranged marriages. Nurseries, kindergartens, public canteens and homes for the elderly helped reduce the burdens of domestic work on women. By 1960 the number of women college and university students had risen five-fold in a decade. The demolition of the Communes reinforced traditional patriarchy. Women were routinely denied inheritance rights. The *Lancet* reports that the rural suicide rate is three times that of urban areas and, uniquely in the world, the rate for Chinese women is above that for men (cited in John Gittings*). Today in rural areas there are entire provinces where less than

half the girls attend any school at all. Nationwide public health care coverage fell from 90% of the people in 1978 to 4% in 1997. In 2003 the official figures showed that 80% of the population were without medical insurance. Prostitution has grown rapidly as have human trafficking, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases – all made worse by the collapse of the health care system. Women are the first to be laid off from state enterprises. They form 40% of the state enterprise workforce but 60% of those sacked. Women remain unemployed for longer than men do.

The tradition of female infanticide was largely eliminated in the 1950s to 1970s. By 1997 the World Health Organisation reported that 'more than 50 million females were estimated to be "missing" in China because of the institutionalised killing and neglect of girls...'. The government policies of one child and the destruction of the social welfare system in the countryside are responsible for this attack on women. National census results for 2002 showed more than 116 male births recorded for every 100 female births. The main cause of the gender imbalance is sex-selective abortion. Over 70% of aborted fetuses are female. About 95% of the children in China's orphanages are girls with living biological parents. The director of the British TV documentary on China's state orphanages, *The Dying Rooms*, estimates that up to a million baby girls are deserted every year. China's Academy of Social Sciences reports eight 'disaster provinces' where there are 26% to 38% more boys than there are girls. The United Nations warns of 60 million missing women in 10 years time with 'enormous implications' for China's prostitution industry and human trafficking. Kidnapping and slave-trading of women have increased.



'For Mao the very backwardness of the peasants drove them to want revolution and socialism all the more. The peasantry was like a blank sheet of paper on which wonderful things could be drawn.'

Rates of industrial fatalities resemble the horrors of Dickensian England. 4,600 miners were killed in the first nine months of 2003. The environment has been degraded; satellite images show permanent brown clouds over parts of China. The deserts are spreading; water is polluted and the water table falling with rivers silted up from dam building. Inequality exceeds that of India and resembles the extremes of Brazil and South Africa. A 1997 UNICEF study reported 40% of children in rural areas to be malnourished. Meanwhile, Shanghai has a property bubble and elsewhere there is an over-production of property, but not for the working class. State enterprises no longer provide workers with housing.

China and the world economy

Japanese manufacturing employment is falling as companies like Toshiba and Minolta relocate to where wages are one twentieth of those of Japan. Mexico's Maquiladora employment is down by a fifth because Chinese wages are one fifth of those of the Maquiladora. In South Korea, the Philippines, Malaysia etc. if wages are not driven down firms threaten to move out. Even in France lavender growers complain that Chinese lavender is forcing them out of business.

The Economist (30 July 2005) notes that with China, India and Russia entering into the global capitalist market, the world's labour force has, in effect, doubled, with China responsible for over half of this increase. 'So, with twice as many workers and little change in the size of the global capital stock, the ratio of global capital to labour has fallen almost by half in a matter of years.' As a result wages in the most developed capitalist countries are at their lowest level as a proportion of national income for decades while profits are at their highest level in Japan and the euro area for 25 years. Last year, US after-tax profits rose to their highest level for 75 years but wages lagged 6% behind cyclical trends. China's influence on low commodity prices and purchase of US Treasury bonds has kept inflation rates low, allowed central banks to set low interest rates fuelling an expansion of credit thereby driving up house prices and consumer debt.

As China has expanded so world commodity prices for oppressed nations' producers have risen. China is a rival to imperialist nations for investment in underdeveloped nations and for purchases of their commodities. Trade with Africa grew from \$12.4 billion in 2002 to an estimated \$30 billion in 2005. This year Chinese trade with Africa will overtake Britain's. China buys a quarter of Angola's oil and owns 41% of Sudan's oil consortium. In Nigeria, Libya and Algeria China is investing in oil. China is the biggest foreign investor in Zimbabwe. Trade between Latin America and China has multiplied five-fold since 1999. In the World Trade Organisation the alliance of China and Brazil has countered the efforts of the imperialists to impose their rules for investment, patents and terms of trade.

China's declared foreign policy stance is for 'a peaceful rise'. The strategy is to reduce the risks of beligerence in order to allow maximum economic growth. China's stock of overseas investment was just \$39 billion in 2004, but it is growing in key areas. China has competed for and won access to gold in Bolivia, coal in the Philippines, oil in Ecuador and natural gas in Australia. Iran signed a deal to supply China with as much as \$70 billion worth of oil and natural gas – China's biggest deal with any major OPEC producer. Venezuela has found a new outlet for its oil to help reduce dependence on the US market. In December 2004 President Chavez said, 'We have been producing and exporting oil for more than 100 years. But these have been 100 years of domination by the United States. Now we are free, and place this oil at the disposal of the great Chinese fatherland.' China is overtaking the US as Australia's second biggest trading partner. Canadian and Chinese firms have signed a memorandum to build a pipeline to carry oil to Canada's west coast for shipment to Asia. US Vice President Dick Cheney's 2001 national energy security report stressed the importance of Canada's oil tar sands to the US. China may seek 'a peaceful rise' but imperialism cannot allow itself to surrender resources and markets crucial to its existence that were won by war and military interventions over centuries. FRFI will consider the changing relations between imperialism and China in a future issue.

Resistance in China

Deng hoped that the policy of encouraging rapid development would give political stability to China, but the capitalist form it has taken has provoked workers to resist. Foreign investment has greatly increased social mobility in China, both occupationally and geographically (and with this the prospects of higher incomes for some). This mobility may serve to reduce the tensions caused by greater regional and income inequality. However, China's Ministry of Labour's own figures state that in 1992 there were 8,150 labour disputes, in 1999 120,000 and in 2000 327,152 disputes. These disputes are over demands for unpaid wages, for pensions, for compensation and against corruption. They are frequently met by force from paramilitary police and soldiers.

In 1999 legislation set new rules for gatherings of over 200 people: they have to get permission from local authorities. If over 3,000 want to meet, the permission must come from a higher level of state authority. The state arrests anyone seeking to form independent worker organisations. In 2001 the government ordered cities to 'augment their anti-riot police'. Workers have resorted to legal means to defend their conditions and rights. They are using gains achieved in a previous period to try and stop the encroachments into their lives that capitalism demands today.

On 19 October the Chinese government issued a paper entitled 'The Building of Political Democracy'. It states: 'Democratic government is the Chinese Communist Party governing on behalf of the people...while upholding and perfecting the people's democratic dictatorship...China's socialist political democracy has vivid Chinese characteristics.' As the new police forces are established and armed, as the state's repressive apparatuses are aimed at them, the Chinese people are questioning on whose behalf the Communist Party governs.

* Acknowledgements to John Gittings, *The Changing Face of China*, Oxford University Press, 2005 and to Martin Hart-Landsberg and Paul Burkett, *China and Socialism: Market Reforms and Class Struggle*, Monthly Review Press, 2005.

Understanding the Venezuelan Revolution

■ **Understanding the Venezuelan Revolution: Hugo Chávez talks to Marta Harnecker, translated by Chesa Boudin, Monthly Review Press 2005, 193pp, £10**

■ **Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution, Richard Gott, Verso 2005, 291pp, £9.99**

'Chávez may go, but Chávez is not only Chávez... The situation we are in has awakened very radical tendencies, feelings. I'm sure that no matter what happens to me, these radicalised sectors would keep going and new leadership would emerge... I'm certain that the process is irreversible. This... revolution, will not be stopped.' **Hugo Chávez, June 2002 (Harnecker pp102-3)**

Since 1994, the revolutionary national movement in Venezuela has successfully developed as a popular movement guided by determined anti-imperialist military officers and civilian leaders. As President Chávez says, the aim was to convert the already existing popular rejection of the oligarchy into 'a bottom up avalanche' (Harnecker p153), and to do this peacefully 'but not disarmed' (p45).

Richard Gott's account provides an excellent background for those seeking to understand Venezuela today. He writes sympathetically of the progressive forces in Venezuela. The general nature of his book means we must go elsewhere to learn in detail of the recent economic changes, and the results of government and social policy with appropriate statistics. Nor do we learn of the substance of the current political discussions between the left parties in the ruling coalition, although disputes over the economic programme are referred to in chapter 24.²

Gott's book consists of 37 short and readable chapters plus appendices. He uses the adult life of Chávez, 'heir to the revolutionary tradition of the Venezuelan left' (p16), as the vehicle to present the new Bolivarian revolution – the pursuit of Simon Bolívar's mission to expel imperialism and unify the peoples of Latin America. Gott shows how the younger Chávez and his army colleagues were shocked by the dire conditions of the Venezuelan people as they travelled the country and how the earlier guerrilla campaigns of the 1960s, and the Peruvian (1968) and Panamanian (1968-81) national military conceptions of independence affected him. In 1977, aged 23, he decided to form his own revolutionary group and began to build the

contacts and knowledge he would use to such brilliant effect 20 years later. He is clearly a revolutionary intellectual, admitting wide influences: from Mao Zedong to John Kennedy, from Nietzsche to Rousseau and Che. Gott points to important Latin American influences in Chávez's thinking: Simon Bolívar, Simon Rodríguez and Ezequiel Zamora. Yet Chávez prefers learning from his exchanges with workers and peasants. Harnecker's interviews show that, as President, Chávez became overwhelmed with direct contact and correspondence with the poor, he was forced to reorganise how his office dealt with this.

In 1982, from the Military Academy, Chávez formed the Revolutionary Bolivarian Movement within the army (MBR-200). The February 1989 'Caracazo', a nationwide, popular but leaderless uprising against IMF-imposed cuts in state spending (with thousands killed) pushed opposition further. In 1992 Chávez attempted a coup that was betrayed. He surrendered on TV 'for now' – becoming a national figure. Involved from prison in a second failed coup that year, he was released in 1994 but permitted to stay in the army. Between 1994 and 1998 Chávez discussed his civilian-military 'mega-project' with the other key left parties. This centred on a debate over MBR-200's abstention campaign, intended to express its rejection of the existing party system. This was part of a campaign to forge unity around the demand for a Constitutional Assembly, in which 'our local leaders in almost every state were finding themselves up against not only the Right but also against the Left'. (Harnecker p62). In Harnecker's book we see his awareness of the dangers of 'the electoral path', but he could no longer support 'a traditional military coup'. His total opposition to 'populism' is very clear (p176).

We see how in preparing for the 1998 Congressional elections, which his alliance won, he formed the Fifth Republic Movement (MVR) drawing on the MBR-200 and some non-party civilians. Gott refers to Chávez's battle against left sectarianism, but detail is given by Chávez in Harnecker's book. This covers LCR's (Revolutionary Cause) attempted entryism into MBR-200, attempted sabotage of his meetings by the PPT (Fatherland for All), and the shameful counter-revolutionary activities of Red Flag. He finally attracted majority sections of the PPT and MAS (Movement Towards Socialism), themselves the results of earlier splits from the Venezuelan Communist Party. These parties and individuals

formed the Patriotic Pole to fight the election. However, throughout his accounts Chávez always defends members of any party who deal honestly and fairly with political questions. He tries to involve the most capable from all areas in the formulation of the Bolivarian project.

The second half of Gott's book deals with the period from 1998 to the recall referendum in 2004. He deals succinctly with the Constitutional Assembly, the creation of new economic and foreign policies and the obstacles Chávez faces: the establishment, racism, the judiciary and the old trade unions. He then covers the three subsequent counter-revolutionary efforts by the old order: the defeated coup d'état of 2002 – which finally pro-

gnises Chávez's determined fight for women's and indigenous peoples' rights.

Significantly, Gott starts and ends with Chávez's relation to Cuba. The visits to Havana in 1994 and 2004, illustrate the unity of vision, the exchange of experience, the advice, the development of close economic ties and the deep friendship between the two countries. This demonstrates true internationalism. The historic tenacity of the Cuban people has made the struggle for true democracy in Venezuela less difficult for the Venezuelan masses.

Marta Harnecker's interviews with President Chávez, made two months after the unprecedented popular defeat of the pro-imperialist coup d'état in April 2002, show how a living struggle has exposed all the formulae and caricatures of 'revolution' trumpeted for years by the opportunist petty bourgeois 'left' in the imperialist heartlands. Her interviews force the reader to reflect on what has to be done by socialists living in the imperialist states to support revolutionary nationalism. The very opposite concern worries the SWP's Chris Harman, inexplicably placed on the same platform as Marta Harnecker in London on 5 November at an 'Historical Materialism' (Journal) conference. Harman continuously threw doubt over whether a 'revolution' was taking place in Venezuela, thereby saving the listener any concern with supporting it, concluding that we should 'never ever trust the military'. He meant the constitutionally and popularly elected President Chávez and his government, who have 'passed the electoral test eight times in six years, a record unparalleled in Latin America' (Gott p272).

Chávez says that, 'It is not true that there is no revolution. We have a revolution here. There has been a change in the political legal structure... we must protect it, strengthen it.' (Harnecker p107) The new Constitution is the most democratic ever conceived in Venezuela and is hated by the bour-

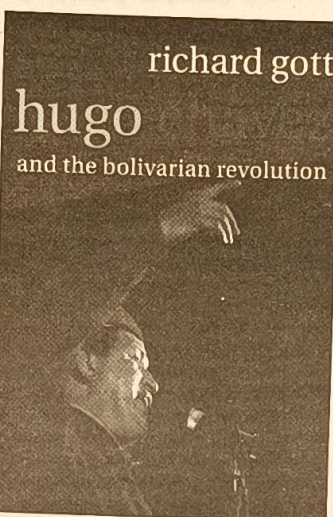
geoisie (see FRFI 177). Although Gott reprints chapter 8 of the Constitution on the rights of indigenous peoples, and briefly covers some key issues for these peoples in chapter 28, neither book examines it as such, despite its enormous significance. The new Constitution was the basis for the rejection of privatisation of Venezuela's oil. It is the basis for every progressive step being taken in Venezuela; no wonder the Constitution has been printed by the millions in a pocket-sized booklet for everyone to have.

President Chávez's interviews are now over three years old, and have already been published in Spanish, and some online in English.³ However, these valuable interviews give a clear impression of how Hugo Chávez views the left parties, his reflections on how he can stimulate the transformation of the country, and how he can develop a new type of interstate relations, especially within Latin America. The story of these exciting changes is very satisfactorily told in these two books, both of which any socialist should read with care. Each complements the other.

We can leave the last word here to Fidel Castro, who has made the key point with respect to the relatively peaceful course of Chávez's revolution: 'It was a good lesson for revolutionaries: there are no dogmas nor only one way of doing things.' (Gott p283).

Alvaro Michaels

- 1 An update of his book of 2000, *In the Shadow of the Liberator: Hugo Chávez and the transformation of Venezuela*, with an appropriately changed title.
- 2 For such information see FRFI 177 and 180.
- 3 *Hugo Chávez Frías, Un hombre, un pueblo*. Published in Venezuela by Asociación Civil Universitarios por la Equidad in 2002 and in Spain by Gakoa in 2002. An online translation of some sections was prepared by M Harnecker in 2003, translated by Alejandro Palavecino and Susan Nernberg as *The military in the revolution and counter-revolution*.



voked the interest of the European 'left'; the attempted economic coup of 2002-3; and the recall referendum campaign. It is noticeable that Gott barely refers to 'imperialism', preferring the 'US attempt to rule the world' (Gott p13) or damaging western policies. Nevertheless the book has many strengths. It stresses the disastrous effect of racism on the poor and rec-

ALBA vs ALCA

ALBA is the new Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas. Initiated by President Chávez, it is a model for integration aimed at solving poverty, unemployment and debt. It is the re-initiation of Simon Bolívar's idea of a union of republics, presented at the Congress of Panama in 1826. It is based on economic complementarity, co-operation, solidarity and respect for sovereignty. It is a social and political project, not a commercial one.

This 'titanic task', the construction of an anti-imperialist project, has already seen solidarity in a new oil agreement 'Petrocaribe'. Venezuela sells oil to 14 countries at 40% discount, paid over 25 years at 1% interest, with three years' grace, and paid in goods and services to assist the weaker states. Co-operation has seen Brazil and Venezuela sign a new oil agreement, alongside very many agreements in place between Cuba and Venezuela, the founding nations of ALBA. Additionally, a new Latin American TV station, Telesur, has been created to combat Yankee propaganda. Outside of ALBA, but consistent with it, Venezuela has prompted the formation of the South American Community of Nations (2004), an initiative to integrate South American countries.

At the fourth 'Summit of the Americas' in November, President Bush pushed Mexican President Fox to call 29 of the 34 countries present, whose ruling classes have sold out to the US, to go ahead with the treaty for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (ALCA in Spanish). This would

leave Venezuela and Mercosur (the Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay trade bloc), to one side, including the three most significant South American economic powers.

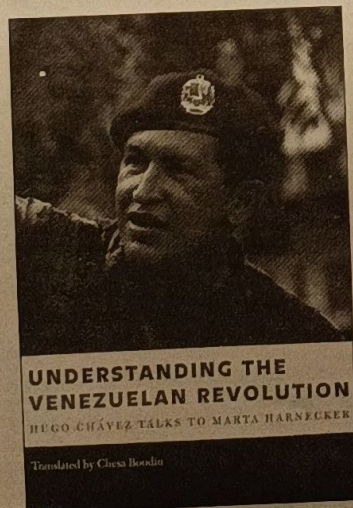
At the same time and also at Mar del Plata in Argentina, President Chávez addressed the third summit of the Peoples of America, declaring that the task of those assembled was to end US imperialism, promoted by Thomas Jefferson 200 years before to 'swallow' one by one the ex-Spanish colonies. Asked about US threats against Venezuela, Chávez replied that this would start a 100 years' war, the present situation was, as Noam Chomsky has said, a question of 'survival or US hegemony'. He stressed that a series of battles faces the Latin American peoples; quoting Rosa Luxemburg, he repeated that we face 'social-

ism or barbarism' – in fact, 'socialism or death'. He referred to capitalism's destruction of the environment and the destructive orgy of privatisation, but he stressed that without the people of north America the battle could not be completed. In all his speeches he retrieves the history of the people's struggle against oppression. The ALBA is a project to be built from below, from the masses, not from the 'elites'. In this speech Chávez proposed a ten-year alliance against hunger funded by US\$10 billion. He foresees a future South Atlantic Treaty Organisation, with a united self-defence strategy. As President Chávez has said, 'If we had applied... (this)... approach during the Falkland Islands war, for example, the British never would have retaken those Argentine islands'.

Alvaro Michaels



Venezuelan President Chávez with Bolivian political activist Evo Morales, at the Summit of the Peoples of America



Bush regime at the crossroads

The Bush administration likes to talk tough and enjoys shocking its critics. However, its dogmatic Neoconservative ideology prevents it responding pragmatically to the strategic problems which US imperialism faces. The US ruling class is now divided about what to do about this. Our US correspondent **STEVE PALMER** reports.

At home, the Bush regime keeps racking up the debt to pump up the economy as if it will never have to pay its bills with real money. Abroad, its economic hegemony is slipping: the emergence and rise of the Euro as a world currency is a measure of US economic strength against Europe. The Neocons are losing control of their own backyard, Latin America. In Asia, the US faces the rise of a capitalist China and a strong India, while it has fawned on the strategically important but economically weak Pakistan. In Iraq, its army is breaking. Opinion polls show that support for Bush has dropped to an all-time low.

The administration has virtually ignored Latin America and finds it slipping out of control. The Neocons were forced to watch as, in country after country, populist socialist governments were elected. Hugo Chávez, the Venezuelan President has been working hard to encourage intra-regional collaboration and independence of the US. Of the major Latin American economies, only Vicente Fox, President of Mexico supports the US. This independence from Washington led to the humiliation inflicted on the US government when its proposal for the Free Trade Area of the Americas, denounced by Chávez as an imperialist plan to ensure US domination, was rejected by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela.

In Asia, the Bush regime has focused on security, trying to draw Asian countries into its 'Global War on Terror'. The US has negotiated minor bilateral trade agreements with Australia and Singapore. Meanwhile, Asian intra-regional ties have been growing much faster than with the US: intra-regional exports have risen from 32 per cent to 40 per cent, and intra-regional imports from 32 per cent to 50 per cent between 1981 and 2001. China is quietly harvesting the resulting fruit. It has negotiated a huge Free Trade Area with the ten nations of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which comes into effect in 2010. In mid-December, a Chinese-sponsored summit of the ASEAN countries, India, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and China will open in Malaysia. The US has not been invited. Bush's November visit to the region was recognition of the US declining importance. Typically Bush threw red meat to his right-wing conservative base, by denouncing the lack of democracy in 'Communist China'. His very capitalist Chinese hosts politely ignored these fleabites, let him be photographed at a church in Beijing and then sent him home, empty-handed except for an agreement 'in principle' to buy some 70 Boeing aircraft.

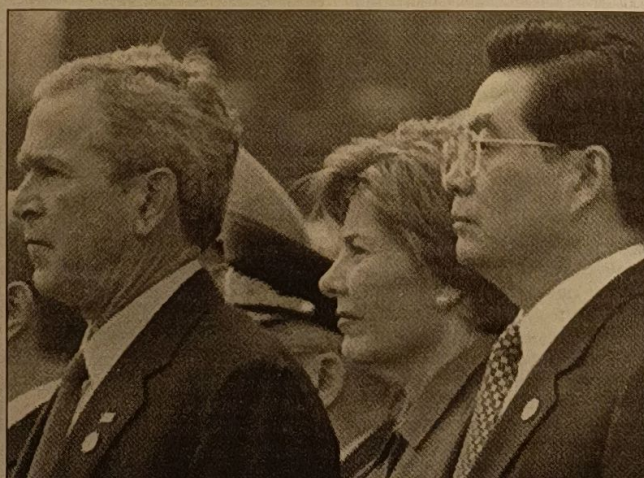
All these are chronic problems facing US imperialism. However the most acute threat is the war in Iraq. The war is destroying the US army, with over 2,100 killed, more than 15,500 wounded, many disabled for life. It had insufficient troops to impose order after the war. Its equipment, already outdated, is wearing out



Demonstrators against the Free Trade Area of the Americas at Mar del Plata, Argentina

without being replaced. Soldiers have had to buy their own body armour; communities have been holding bake sales to buy armour for vehicles. There aren't enough troops to secure Iraq's border; the army chases around Iraq after the insurgents. It wins individual battles – then has to return weeks later because the insurgents are back. It is losing the war. To continue in this way is not going to achieve US imperialism's goals in Iraq, and seriously weakens its ability to use military power elsewhere.

This is not the place to rehearse everything that went wrong from the point of view of the US ruling class.¹ There were mistakes of omission – most spectacularly, failing to plan the occupation. There were sins of commission – for example, the unbelievably foolish decision to disband the Iraqi army without pay. But the biggest mistake of all has led the ruling class to where it finds itself now: the denial of reality. Everybody makes mistakes, some small, some large, some, like those in Iraq, on a staggering scale. But the biggest mistake of all is to not acknowledge mistakes.



Bush in China: typically Bush threw red meat to his right-wing conservative base, by denouncing the lack of democracy in 'Communist China'

This has been an unwavering characteristic of the Bush regime, which has incensed sections of the ruling class: that it has made serious mistakes which are now weakening US imperialism and those in power are refusing to acknowledge this and remedy them. Bearers of unwelcome messages are denounced, culprits hunted, innocents punished. Then eventually, scarcely acknowledged changes are grudgingly made, usually inappropriately, half-heartedly and too late to remedy the situation. Meanwhile, the denials continue: the ship of state – we are expected to believe – sails calmly and steadfastly on, on its unwaveringly correct course under the faultless navigation of the omniscient Neocon crew and its helmsman.

After more than two years of denial about the failure of its adventure in Iraq, sections of the US ruling class have started to vent their frustration with the Bush regime – and it is not a pretty sight. Initially wooed and seduced by slick spin and glitzy promises, doubts anesthetized by generous tax cuts, the honeymoon with the Neoconservatives has degenerated into a

shouting match. There have been hesitations, tiffs, worries and spats the whole time. But now the bitter realization of the truth of its position has culminated in a loud public howl at the failure, deception and betrayal. The headaches, nightmares and arguments are going to continue for a long time.

Tensions are running high: retired General Franks, who led the invasion, has described Neocon Douglas Feith, a principal architect of the war, as 'the fucking stupidest guy on the face of the earth'.² Marine Colonel Wilkerson, Colin Powell's Chief of Staff at the State Department and former Director of the US Marine Corps War College, publicly agreed: 'Seldom in my life have I met a dumber man'.³

Despite appearances, these are not personal attacks, but symptoms of the depth of division and extent of frustration within the ruling class.

It was not some peacenik, but ex-Marine John Murtha, a Democratic Representative for 30 years who called for a new policy: 'it is time for a change in direction. Our military is suffering. The future of our country is at risk. We can not continue on the present course'. Murtha is a hawk, a crusty decorated 37-year career Marine Colonel, who voluntarily fought in Vietnam, a member of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee which oversees government expenditure. A long-time supporter of increased military spending and of the Iraq war, he visits war casualties every week and has been to Iraq many times. He wants a 'redeployment' of the military to outside of Iraq to pressure the Iraqi puppets to get their act together, hoping that this will remove the prime reason for the insurgency and take the stress off the US army, while keeping it close at hand to provide support for the Iraqi army: 'immediately redeploy US troops consistent with the safety of US forces...create a quick reaction force in the region...create an over-the-horizon presence of Marines'. Whatever this is, it's not a total and immediate withdrawal: when the Republicans put the Democrats on the spot with a motion calling for immediate withdrawal, 403 voted against the motion, only three Democratic representatives supported it. Although billed as a fight over immediate withdrawal, that is the one thing that the US ruling class is not discussing: this is a fight over how best to conduct the war and defend US imperialism. Despite this, when Murtha stood up to call for a change in policy, he was viciously attacked as a coward by a junior Republican representative. The White House accused him of surrendering and compared him to Michael Moore. Even Democrats – Hilary Clinton, John Kerry and House Democratic floor leader, Nancy Pelosi – have dis-

tanced themselves from Murtha as if he has become radioactive.

The problem with this 'Party Line' approach is that it makes policy very brittle and inflexible. It has become almost impossible for the ruling class to discuss seriously the options before it and impossible for it to debate this in an open way which can prepare its supporters and swing them behind necessary and pragmatic adjustments in course. Acknowledgement of mistakes puts in question the façade of infallibility the Bush regime attempts to project and with it its entire slate of policies, and weakens the ideological grip of the ruling class on its supporters. As Murtha put it: 'The American public is way ahead of us.'

For more than 18 months, the constantly 'trotting' insurgency, forever 'on its last legs', somehow succeeds in staggering from strength to strength. US imperialism has 'turned a decisive corner' in Iraq so many times that the American people have become dizzy. In recent months they have also seen the US military death toll top 2,000. The President's Deputy White House Chief of Staff, the Vice-President's Chief of Staff and the Republican leaders of the House and Senate are under investigation or indictment. There has been very visible cronyism: the attempt to appoint the President's own lawyer as a Supreme Court Justice, and other cronies to the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, as well as the hapless 'Brownie' who helped screw up the response to hurricane Katrina. Most dramatically, the crisis of Hurricane Katrina exposed, in the US, the administration's incompetence, its cronyism, the gulf between its words and deeds. It has become clear that the public were lied to about intelligence about Iraq: it is becoming typical for TV shows to report fervent denials of administration statements, followed by clips of the original statement. There is the ludicrous spectacle of the President telling the world that 'the United States does not torture' at the same time as his Vice-President runs round Capitol Hill, beating up on Senators and Representatives to legalize it. No wonder that only 37% of people believe that Bush is doing a good job. Congress has even lower ratings: 26%. Without a policy change in Iraq, popular support for immediate withdrawal will grow, and so will dissatisfaction.

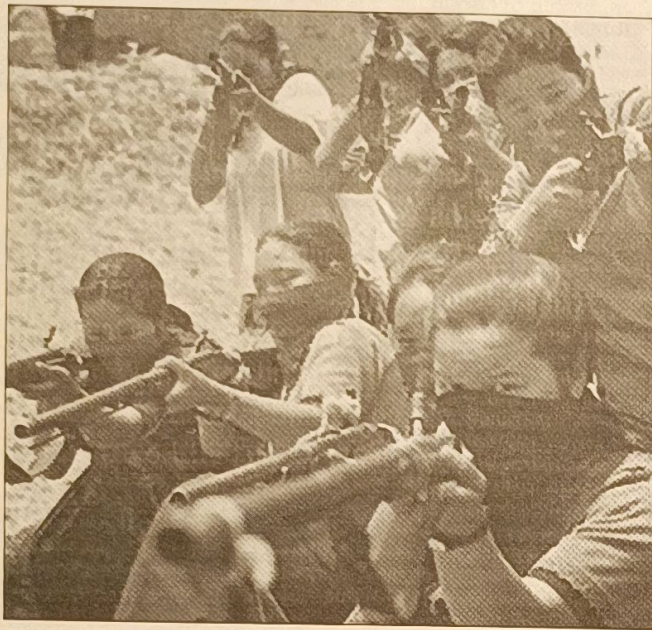
The bourgeois parliamentary systems, as in Europe, have a great deal of flexibility. With the executive drawn from the legislature, a government can be thrown out and a new one installed quite rapidly. Countless triggers are available: backbenchers rebel, votes of confidence are lost, compromising affairs are disclosed, illegal payments discovered, party leaders switched. This flexibility permits rapid changes in policy and an opportunity to regain voter support at moments of crisis. However, the US constitution prevents any significant change of the executive by the legislature between Presidential elections unless it takes the dramatic step of impeachment. While Congress can frustrate existing policies – by refusing money etc – it cannot impose new ones on the Administration. Short of something drastic, like impeachment or assassination, the bourgeoisie is stuck with Bush until 2008. Congress won't change for another year – until the 2006 mid-term election, when the whole House and one-third of the Senate are up for re-election. This crisis within the ruling class has opened up real political discussion again and is a wonderful opportunity for the anti-war movement to make its case. ■

1 For a good early attempt, see George Packer, *The Assassin's Gate* (New York, 2005)

2 Packer, p138.

3 Lecture to the New America Foundation, Washington DC, 19 October, 2005

Nepal – parties forge links



Maoist rebels will not surrender their arms

ANDREW ALEXANDER

In the last issue of *FRFI* we reported on the increasing isolation of the dictatorial king Gyanendra in Nepal (*FRFI* 187, 'Rebels declare ceasefire'). Since then the main social democratic parties in the country have held meetings with the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN(M)) to discuss how to create a united front between all forces against the monarch.

The leader of the social democratic Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) (UML), Madhav Kumar Nepal, confirmed that dialogue with the Maoists had recently opened. Mr Nepal declined to give any details of the talks but said that from now on the seven-party opposition alliance and the Maoists would have a common target of 'fighting the monarchy.' Two weeks before the meeting the CPN(M) and UML met and signed the Rolpa Accord – an agreement pitched at a broader alliance for democracy.

This is a huge step forward and it has come about for two main, interrelated, reasons. Firstly, the refusal of the king to even heed any basic bourgeois demands, and secondly, the increasing poverty of the working class. The social democratic parties have been forced to make a move to the left and this has resulted in the meeting with the CPN(M). On 19 November there was a rally of tens of thousands (deemed illegal by the authorities since the royal takeover of 1 February) organised by the UML in the western town of Butwal in protest at the king. Addressing the meeting, UML leaders claimed such protests would continue until 'total democracy' is restored in the country.

In further developments the Nepali Congress President Girija Prasad Koirala confirmed that he had had a telephone conversation with the CPN(M) and asked them to join the political mainstream. The CPN(M) have released a statement that 'the rebel leaders have put forth a stringent condition: The king should be ready to end autocratic monarchy and go for a constituent assembly election that will pave the way for a new democratic constitution in the country...Our common meeting point (with the democratic forces) would be the constituent assembly election.'

The developments are promising but there are new pitfalls for the impoverished Nepali people as they enter on this new path. Imperialism is

beginning to distance itself from the king, realising that his stubbornness can no longer protect their interests. An influential member of the United States Senate, Senator Patrick Leahy, said on 18 November that the US government and the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) may have to make a choice between the monarchy and 'the people'. Speaking on the Senate floor he asked the US government to encourage negotiations between Maoists and 'representatives of all sectors of society who support a democratic, peaceful Nepal, as their pleas to King Gyanendra have fallen on deaf ears.' Sounds reasonable enough. But coming from imperialism we can deduce that the US is not interested in supporting the interests of the oppressed in Nepal, but is manoeuvring to cut deals with the more opportunist elements that will become involved in the new political process. Senator Leahy, in his speech, also went on to sharply criticise the 'ruthless Maoist insurgency'.

US ambassador to Nepal, James Moriarty, speaking in New Delhi said 'Nepal was reaching a crossroads and that the monarch has some tough choices to make.' He added that 'if the monarch chooses to restore democracy it would be easier to tackle the Maoist insurgency, failing which the security situation could get worse'. It will be India that will play the broker on behalf of imperialism as far as Nepal is concerned. As well as speaking with the CPN(M), President Koirala also met with Indian Prime Minister Singh, who expressed his 'moral' support to the democratic forces of Nepal for the establishment of democracy.

The Nepali struggle has reached a new promising stage, one in which the working class and the peasantry are beginning to forge tentative links. Pressure will no doubt be put upon the insurgency to give up their arms, something that they have so far refused to do. Though opportunism will seek to sabotage the new political developments, the course of struggle may lead some of the more progressive social democrats to side with the most oppressed. It has long been stated by many commentators that the defeat of the RNA and the overthrow of the king can only be achieved by a unified insurgency in the countryside and in the cities. That unification is manifesting itself and the king's days are beginning to look numbered. ■



THOMAS VINCENT

Multinational corporations are the main means by which imperialism seeks to divide the world according to economic power. With vast concentrations of wealth they dominate world trade, investment and the living conditions of entire populations. Posters around Britain display the mysterious slogan; 'GE - Imagination at Work', alongside young, smiling faces. But what is GE, and what does it do?

With annual revenues of over \$152.8 billion in 2004 (slightly larger than the gross domestic product of Argentina), the US-based General Electric company is the world's largest multinational corporation. It employs over 300,000 people in 160 countries. GE's operations range from high-tech materials to commercial finance, energy production to household appliances, bio-sciences to construction, transport to the media. The media giant NBC Universal and the Hotpoint brand are just two of its relatively smaller businesses. Over half of GE's revenues are gained from financial services, demonstrating the parasitic nature of imperialism; other substantial revenues are gained from the arms trade and producing nuclear power plants, expressing imperialism's militarism.

In the 1980s and 1990s former head of GE, Jack Welch sacked 112,000 people in his first four years in the job. He was called 'Neutron Jack', for eliminating people whilst leaving buildings intact. Recently GE has profited from contracts in occupied Afghanistan and Iraq, including energy provision and helicopter engines which have powered 70% of US military flights over Iraq. GE has also cashed in on clearance and reconstruction contracts in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. Although GE has recently expanded investment in more 'ethical' areas, wind and solar energy and hybrid engines, Chief Executive Jeffrey Immelt is clear about the cynical profit motive behind this: "'green' is green" – an environmentalist image means big bucks.

'A monopoly, once it is formed and controls thousands of millions, inevitably penetrates into every sphere of public life, regardless of the form of government and all other "details".' (VI Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, 1916)

For seven successive years GE topped the *Financial Times* poll of the world's most respected companies, conducted among Chief Executives in 25 countries. GE's history reveals the ruthlessness and corruption which commands such admiration from the bosses of monopoly capitalism. For decades GE carried out experiments on the effects of radiation involving whole working class communities, prisoners, hospital patients and the elderly. In the 1990s GE sacked the 'lowest performing' 10% of the workforce every year: an 'aggressive approach to flexibility'. In 1992 GE pleaded guilty to involvement in fraudulently channeling money from the Pentagon to the Israeli military, just one example of a level of corruption which in the 1990s forced the Pentagon's Defence Contract Management Agency to set up a special office specifically to investigate GE. A 2002 study of the US government's top 43 contractors ranked GE top of the list of 'repeat offenders' since

Imperialism at work

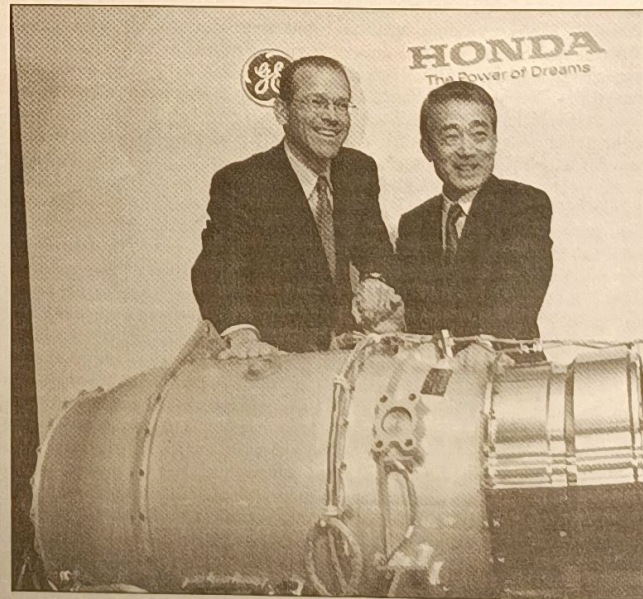
1990, with environmental violations, fraud, work place safety violations and employment discrimination. More recently the company has been forced to 'restate' its financial reports for 2001-2004 due to inaccuracies and undeclared revenues that it claims were due to its 'hedge accounting'. This constant shifting of money around the world is an attempt to avoid increasingly unstable local conditions and maximise profits without making a thing: the pinnacle of parasitic capitalism's achievements.

In 1998 the United Nations ranked GE as the world's most transnational company in terms of foreign direct investment, and in 2004 GE's revenues from the underdeveloped nations reached \$21 billion, up 37% from 2003. Chief Executive Immelt announced that he expects 60% of future revenue growth to come from 'emerging markets including China, Russia, Eastern Europe, India and the Middle East'. GE explains how these revenues will be gathered: 'We will deliver vital systems for water, power, healthcare and transportation.' GE wants to restart work on the Dabhol power plant in India, having purchased Enron's 65% share jointly with Bechtel in 2004. Before work on the plant was halted in 2001, when GE already had a 10% share, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch alleged that brutal police repression was used against local people opposed to its construction, with complicity from the companies involved. Through the forced privatisation of the basic necessities of life abroad GE will try to expand its profits, which in 2004 amounted to \$16.6 billion.

Crucial to GE's monopoly power is its fusion of financial and productive capital, with banks in 19 countries and GE Commercial Finance funding capital expansion in 'healthcare, manufacturing, fleet management, communications, construction, energy, aviation, infrastructure and equipment, as well as many others', and owning assets of \$219 billion. Through such investments GE exerts control over capital officially outside the company. Lenin described this as 'finance capital', and cited GE (then called AGE) as a classic example of a monopolist company holding dominant shares in other companies. In May 2005 GE acquired a

49.9% stake in one of Central America's largest banks, BAC International Inc, proudly announcing a 'foothold' in the region. The recently renamed outsourcing company Genpact in which GE maintains a dominant 40% share, illustrates the way that finance capital behaves. According to Genpact's Chief Executive Pramod Bhasin, 'It's our job to tap into the intellectual capacity of a country...If we need engineering skills and they are available in Romania, that is where we go.'

The readiness with which GE moves capital around the world may give the impression that GE is a truly transnational company. Yet while just under 50% of the total workforce and 47% of revenues come from outside the US, all but one of GE's board of directors live in the US; the single exception lives in Britain. Between them these directors also sit on the boards of Microsoft, Kimberley-Clark, Procter and Gamble, the Kellogg Company, General Motors, ChevronTexaco, Coca-Cola, Dell, Anheuser-Busch, Motorola, Bechtel etc. They help run Harvard and Oxford universities and the US Nuclear Threat Initiative. Two US banks, JP Morgan Chase and Citibank, hold dominant shares in GE. The former head of JP Morgan Chase sits on the board of GE. GE maintains 'strategic alliances' with other US companies, including Dow Jones, publishers of the *Wall Street Journal*, and Microsoft, with whom it jointly runs MSNBC media corporation. Through such networks the US ruling class is held together and acts not on the basis of companies, but as a national ruling class. This concentration of ownership of finance capital in imperialist countries, and the consequent ruling class alliances, exposes the falsity of the idea that the power of 'transnational companies' has made nations obsolete as the primary grouping for the governance of capitalism. Rather, it is that multinational companies are being used as vehicles for the division and redistribution of the world amongst national ruling classes, each competing for a bigger share of the plunder. Far from making national ruling classes obsolete, the incessant corporate mergers and takeovers of globalisation increase their power and relevance. ■



General Electric: yet another grim deal

Basque country: death in prison and political trial

On the morning of 31 October, guards at the Spanish prison of Soria found the Basque political prisoner José Angel Altzurguren, known as Kotto to his comrades, dead in his cell. Kotto, who was 39, had suffered from severe clinical depression, but had been placed in three different prisons within a week, denied access to a doctor and kept in solitary confinement. He finally hanged himself using bed-sheets. **JUANJO RIVAS reports.**

The Basque movement blamed the Spanish state's appalling policy of 'dispersing' prisoners, and reacted by turning Kotto's funeral into a political protest. Meanwhile, repression, criminalisation and money trials against youth, social movements and private companies continue, under the excuse of 'fighting terrorism'.

Kotto was a member of Batasuna, the Basque left-wing nationalist party banned by Judge Baltasar Garzón. Like many other political activists, he was deliberately portrayed by the state as belonging to the periphery of ETA, and therefore when he was arrested on 23 March 2001, he was accused of 'collaboration with an armed group'. After his arrest, Kotto reported that the police gave him blows to the head, ears and stomach, put a plastic bag over his head to suffocate him and used psychological torture.

On 7 January 2005, he was released on bail pending appeal. By then, he was suffering from serious depression and requiring medication and psychological and psychiatric support. However, with-

out warning he was arrested again on 22 October and ordered to complete the remaining two years of the sentence. For the next nine days Kotto was kept in isolation, transferred from Iruñea prison to Zaragoza, and finally to Soria, and was at no time seen by a doctor.

The dramatic end to his life was followed, on the night of 31 October, by a mass march of remembrance and protest against the prison system. It finished with the police shooting in the air to disperse the crowd.

The Basque media reported the scandal of Kotto's treatment and death and

social and political movements called for events and protests. Kotto's funeral in his hometown Bera (Nafarroa) was attended by thousands of neighbours and activists waving Basque flags with mourning ties attached to them. Batasuna spokesperson, Arnaldo Otegui, carried the coffin and spoke, denouncing Spanish state repression of prisoners. As the Spanish king, Juan Carlos I, is head of the Armed Forces, Otegui named him as 'chief torturer'. Immediately, the Spanish prosecutors added new charges to his file, ones which could lead to an indeterminate prison sentence.

After the protests to remember Kotto, Basque political activism turned to the defence of the accused at the largest mass trial in recent history. On 21 November, the trial began of 56 people charged with being part of a network to financially aid ETA, and to represent 'its political apparatus, media coverage and international voice'. The truth is that the accused are the leadership of a Basque youth group (KAS), the editors of a Basque newspaper, the members of a group in solidarity with Basque exiles and the owners of pubs where social events have been held. All these organisations and private companies were dismantled by repressive laws, between 1998 and 2001.

INSIDE NEWS

Censorship of Larkin Publications

As readers will be aware, FRFI always takes seriously any attempt to ban our publication from prison. On this occasion, it is not the newspaper which has been stopped, but copies of books produced and distributed by Larkin Publications.

Michael Westwood, who was convicted of participating in the Lincoln Prison uprising in 2002 and who is now in Full Sutton prison, has been told that he may not have copies of *Strangeways 1990: a serious disturbance* and *Rock around the Blockade's* pamphlet *The streets are ours - revolutionary Cuba*. Furthermore, he has been told that he cannot even write to FRFI to protest about this, because our address is a box number!

As with all such harassment and censorship, we have written to complain, and we ask readers to do the same. Write to Bob Mullen, the governor at HMP Full Sutton, Full Sutton, York YO41 1PS.

Prison overcrowding - blame the foreigners

On 26 October Home Secretary Charles Clarke told a House of Commons Select Committee that the prison system was close to its maximum capacity of 78,147, and that part of the problem was that 12-13% of these prisoners were foreign nationals, whose rate of imprisonment over the past five years had increased by 75%, while that for British prisoners had only gone up by 11%.

Crunch the numbers how you wish, they are climbing inexorably. Distinguishing 'foreign' from British prisoners, just side-steps discussions about why such a very high proportion of all prisoners in British gaols, whatever their nationality, are black, and why, despite endless reports, investigations and inquiries, the system remains as racist as ever.

Stop deaths of women prisoners

On 28 October 30-year-old Karen Fletcher died in London's Holloway women's prison. Since April 2004 there have been four deaths in Holloway. Julie Hope, who died on 17 April 2004, had

not even been found guilty and was on remand. Another woman is still in a coma, having been cut down from a noose in May 2004.

Holloway is a vermin-infested hell-hole. When the Chief Inspector of Prisons visited in 2004 she found 'serious problems with infestations of mice, pigeons and insects', filthy toilets, a 'poor standard of cleaning' and 'inade-

quate arrangements for rubbish disposal'.

On 9 November 2005 Pauline Campbell led a demonstration outside Holloway in protest about the death of Karen Fletcher and all those women who have died there. Flowers were laid outside Holloway in memory of Karen. Pauline is the mother of Sarah Campbell who died aged 18 in Styal Prison, Cheshire in January 2003.

The police were called to the demonstration and arrested Pauline for blocking the road, preventing a van carrying women prisoners from entering. She demanded that the women inside the van were taken instead to 'a place that is safe'. This was the tenth time she had been arrested during her campaign to improve prison conditions.

Jim Willis

FRANCE: the fire this time

CAT WIENER

On the night of 27 October, over 400 youth, mainly of north African origin, clashed with police on the streets of Clichy-sous-Bois, a north-eastern suburb of Paris; police responded with tear gas and rubber bullets. Within days riots had erupted all over France, from Rouen in the north to Avignon in the south. Over the next 18 days and nights nearly 9,000 cars were torched and schools, buses and shops set alight as young people fought running battles against the hated police. On 5 November there were 1,400 arson attacks in a single night. On the night of 9 November, vandalism at two power stations caused widespread blackouts in Lyon, France's second largest city. The unrest even spilled over the border into Belgium.

Police responded with brute force and mass arrests and on 9 November, President Chirac imposed a state of emergency throughout France, giving cities sweeping powers to impose curfews, limit the movement of people and vehicles, close public spaces where 'gangs gather' and place those identified as trouble-makers under house arrest. These special powers, which date back to the Algerian war of independence and have never before been used in France itself, are now in force across 40 cities and suburbs of France. At the same time the scale of the revolt has forced France to confront the issue of the appalling poverty, ghettoisation and discrimination faced by its immigrant community. In this there are parallels with the uprising by mainly black working class youth that erupted in Britain in 1981.

State racism, police brutality

The riots followed the death of two boys, Bouna Traore, aged 15, and Ziad Benna, aged 17, in Clichy-sous-Bois, who were so desperate to escape from police that they were electrocuted as they scaled the wall of an electricity power substation. Police immediately

claimed they had been running from the scene of a crime; it swiftly transpired they had been fleeing a routine ID check. The situation was further inflamed when, two days later, police hurled tear gas into a mosque where community leaders were meeting to try to dissolve the resistance and when the right-wing populist demagogue, Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy defended police over the deaths and proceeded to refer to the rioters as 'scum', saying the immigrant ghettos needed to be hosed down with a power spray or flushed out with industrial cleaner. However, these events were merely catalysts for an explosion waiting to happen.

The sprawling estates, or *banlieues*, around France's major cities, which house a third of France's north African population, are a byword for deprivation and squalor. In areas like Clichy-sous-Bois half the population is aged under 20 and unemployment stands at around 40%. At the same time young people are subject to constant police harassment and brutality, usually in the form of random ID checks and raids, which have intensified since the attack on the Twin Towers in 2001. Funding for social projects in the *banlieues* has been slashed in recent years. Small wonder crime, anti-social behaviour and drug trafficking flourish under these conditions, alongside a simmering resentment and hatred of all forms of French authority.

France is a deeply racist, former colonial power where those with Arab or African-sounding names struggle to find employment and even second and third generations are still viewed as 'immigrants'. Young people of African origin - the 'Maghreb' from Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria and increasing numbers from war-torn sub-Saharan Africa, who made up the majority of the rioters - are routinely refused entry into hotels, nightclubs and restaurants. A French 1992 survey found 21% of the population prepared to describe themselves as out-and-out racists ('*racistes convaincus*'), with a further 9% being 'lukewarm racists' ('*racistes tièdes*'). The polarisation is on the increase, as under the cover of secu-

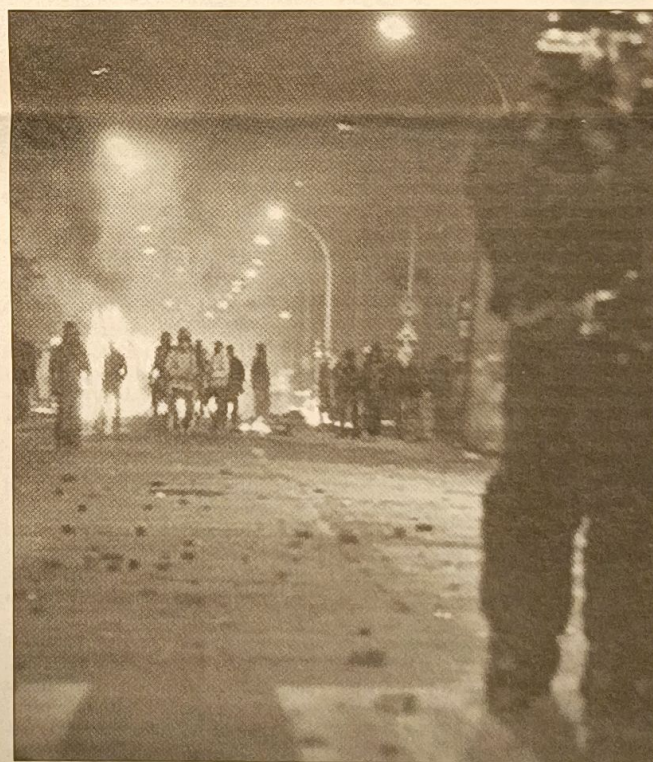
larism and equality, the French government is introducing legislation aimed at discriminating against Muslims. Small wonder Sarkozy's inflammatory racist comments have sent his popularity soaring. Even Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of France's powerful National Front, struggles not to be outdone, demanding that those of north African descent involved in the riots be stripped of their French citizenship and deported back 'to where they came from'. France does not have even one black member of parliament. Since April 2005, there have been three fires at hostels housing African immigrants; 48 have been killed. It seems almost certain these were murderous arson attacks but they were never properly investigated.

Parallels with Britain

Political and media pundits in Britain have been smug in comparing 'multicultural' Britain with events in France. Their memories are short. In 1981, in Brixton, London and Toxteth, Liverpool, black and white youth took to the streets to fight pitched battles with bricks, petrol bombs and barricades against a racist and brutal police. But the anger was against years of discrimination and harassment, unemployment and appalling housing conditions.

The state response was classic - on the one hand, to buy off a whole section of the black population, to create, in effect, a black middle class, while on the other meting out mass repression against those whose rage and power had forced the government to act. Money for regeneration and social projects flowed into the estates. In 1987, four black MPs were elected. But in reality, the trappings of this spurious multiculturalism benefited only a tiny minority. For the poor, the reality has continued to be racism, harassment, poverty and discrimination, particularly, since 2001, for those of Arab or Asian descent or anyone who appears to be Muslim.

And, just as in France today, where SOS Racisme, the major anti-racist organisation, has condemned the riots (while weakly calling for better provi-



Stand-off on the streets of Paris

sion for the *banlieues*, police reform and an end to discrimination), so the vast majority of the left in Britain disassociated itself from the violence of the oppressed. The SWP may today scoff at France's major Trotskyist organisation, Lutte Ouvrière, which condemned the 'lack of social conscience' shown by French youth. Its memory is short, too. In 1981 it described the black youth as 'lumpen' elements, the 'soft underbelly of the working class'.

In France, the mass repression has begun. By 10 November 120 young north Africans had been deported. Police have made nearly 3,000 arrests. At a local level a vicious vengeance is being meted out by the French authorities, such as in the Paris suburb of Draveil where the mayor announced on 14 November that the municipal council would stop all funding for canteens and crèches for

families of those convicted of rioting or arson: 'If they want their kids to eat in the cafeteria, the first step is not to set it alight' Mayor Georges Tron is a member of Chirac's centre-right UMP.

Soon the money for regeneration, education and retraining, possibly even 'affirmative action' will flow - but the beneficiaries will not, in the most part, be those who took part in the uprising. In reality nothing will change for the oppressed.

Already, in the wake of the protests, organisations are beginning to be formed and events organised to defend those arrested and victimised by the state. It is groups like these, made up of those who took to the streets and their communities, who are best placed to continue the struggle against police harassment, racism and poverty and to stand up for their own rights and for justice.

FRFI ROUNDUP

Out on the streets fighting imperialism and racism



Out on the streets with FRFI: Street theatre in London; anti-deportation demonstration in Manchester; an afternoon discussion including a visit to Marx's grave in Highgate cemetery



Members and supporters of Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! have been extremely active throughout October and November, campaigning against the brutal occupation of Iraq, against racist deportations and in support of the Palestinian struggle for national liberation, particularly during the international week of action against Israel's apartheid wall.

With Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! student societies now established around the country, our presence on campuses has been consistent and lively. In London, the North East, North West and Scotland we mobilised bus loads of students to attend the founding conference of the Student Anti-Imperialist Network (SAIN – see page 3 for details). That work has forged groups of committed student activists.

FRFI students at Strathclyde University have teamed up with other left groups and progressives on campus to campaign against the university's investment in the arms trade. In Glasgow students have held stalls opposing the war in Iraq and supporting Palestine.

In London, as well as regular stalls on campus opposing the occupation of Iraq, we held two street theatre events during the week of protest against Israel's apartheid wall, blocking first LSE, then SOAS campuses with a symbolic wall. Dressed as Israeli soldiers we demanded ID from students before they could pass. During this theatre, described as 'controversial' in the student press, we stood up to harassment from the university establishment, student union officials and Zionist students. Future street theatre will focus on illegal detention and torture of US and British detainees in Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib and other secret detention centres. Contact us to get your costume!

In Newcastle, FRFI also participated in lively street theatre, with members of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC). On Saturday 12 November, we visited M&S and high street shops which stock Caterpillar products, a company which makes the bulldozers Israel uses to flatten Palestinian homes. With a large fabric 'apartheid wall', we set up mock Israeli checkpoints at the entrances. Since then there have been lively pickets of Marks and Spencer (M&S) stores in Newcastle and Dur-

ham, facing up to police harassment and abuse by a Christian Zionist.

In Manchester where the boycott M&S pickets began over five years ago, the Victory to the Intifada group run by FRFI organised a picket of M&S for the week of action. Zionists mobilised through the *Jewish Telegraph*, hurled racist abuse and insults at us. However, our picket was a large, defiant, militant and multicoloured demo, and members of the public joined us.

The final court hearing for the M&S 9, arrested during the police ban on the Manchester picket, was heard in late October. Five of the nine were forced to plead guilty to the charges under the Public Order Act, incurring costs and fines totalling £1,350. Please send donations to Defend the M&S Picket Campaign, PO Box 20, Bridge 5 Mill, 22A Beswick Street, Manchester M4 7HR.

The weekly boycott M&S pickets in London's Oxford Street have employed street theatre, poetry, singing and drumming in keeping our solidarity vocal and our feet warm. The Zionist counter demonstration continues without impact. In Argyle Street, Glasgow, pickets of M&S continue to receive a positive response from local people. On Saturday 26 October, FRFI was joined by the PSC and the Glasgow Palestine Human Rights Campaign.

Across the country we have held regular stalls opposing the illegal occupation of Iraq. In Brixton, London, FRFI activists opposing the war faced harassment from the council and police. We united with other left groups, successfully challenging the council officials by citing the Human Rights Act and have continued undeterred (see letter). On 15 October in Glasgow centre, FRFI highlighted the ongoing hunger strike in the Guantanamo Bay prison camp.

As the war in Iraq generates a crisis for British imperialism, so the racist attacks on immigrants in Britain intensifies. FRFI is actively supporting anti-deportation campaigns around the country.

In Glasgow FRFI has joined a campaign against the Brand Street Immigration Centre, campaigning with asylum seekers, particularly Congolese and eastern Europeans, against forced deportations. We joined 600 marchers on 22 October opposing the deportation of the Buvaj family to Albania.

On 1 October northwest FRFI joined

over 300 people in Bolton demonstrating against the deportation of the Sukola family and opposing Section 9 of the Immigration Act which denies benefits from 'failed' asylum seekers. On 19 November we supported the 300-strong 'Schools Against Deportations' demonstration in Manchester with the Defend Eucharis and Timey Campaign.

In Newcastle, FRFI are working with the SWP/Respect-organised campaign to defend a Nigerian student activist, Courage. We are involved in a local network to defend asylum seekers. The first

public meeting on 21 November was a success. The asylum seekers participating demanded 'solidarity not sympathy'. Unfortunately, within this network, FRFI has had to battle against the censorship of literature, ours and other people's.

In London, FRFI joined a march on 19 November against the deportation of children. We also took part in the annual demonstration against deaths in custody called by the United Friends and Family Campaign.

Please join us in this important work against war, racism and imperialism!

Events

LONDON

Wednesday 7 December, 7-9.30pm
Public meeting of LSE FRFI society with film of the Venezuelan coup
The Revolution will not be televised.
Room S330, St Clements Building, London School of Economics, Houghton Street, WC2 (nearest tube Holborn)
Entry free

Wednesday 18 January, 7-9.30pm
Public meeting of LSE FRFI society on Palestine with film showing of resistance within Israel.
Room to be confirmed, London School of Economics, Houghton Street, WC2 (nearest tube Holborn)
Entry free

Every Thursday, 6-8pm
Victory to the Intifada picket of M&S Oxford Street M&S at the Marble Arch end W1 (nearest tube Marble Arch)

Every Saturday, 1-3pm
Stall with leafletting and petitioning
Venue available by phoning 020 7837 1688

Weekly 12-2pm
Stall run by members of the FRFI student societies.
At LSE, SOAS or Kings university campuses. Contact us for details.
(nearest tubes Holborn for LSE or for Russell Square for SOAS)

For further details call 020 7837 1688 or email victoryintifada@hotmail.com or office@ratb.org.uk

NORTHWEST

Manchester
Saturday 3 December, 12-3pm
Picket of M&S
Market St, city centre

Contact 07816 547 066
Victory_intifada@hotmail.com

Saturday 10 December, 12-3pm
Defend Eucharis and Timey Campaign
Campaign stall Market St, city centre
Contact 07904 880 039
Defend_eucharis@yahoo.com

Sunday 29 January, 2-5pm
Anti-Imperialist Forum
Cross St Chapel
Cross St, city centre
Contact 07816 547 066
Manchesterfrfi@revolutionarycommunist.com

NORTH EAST

Durham
Alternating Wednesdays during university term time, 7pm
Public meetings, all welcome
Elvet Riverside Lecture Rooms, Durham University, New Elvet (meet in the foyer)

Newcastle
Alternating Wednesdays during university term time, 7pm
Public meetings, all welcome
Newcastle University Student Union (nearest Metro Haymarket, meet at the entrance)

Stalls and street meetings every Saturday 12-2pm in either Durham or Newcastle. Weekly mid-week stalls in both Durham and Newcastle.

For further details call 07813 073 846 or email frfi_northeast@yahoo.co.uk

SCOTLAND

Glasgow
Thursday 8 December, 5-6.30 pm
Thursday 22 December, 5-6.30 pm

Picket of M&S
Argyle Street, Glasgow

For further details call 07779 785 529 or email glasgowfrfi@yahoo.co.uk

World votes against US blockade of Cuba

On 9 November, at the United Nations, almost every country in the world voted against the illegal US blockade of Cuba. 182 countries supported Cuba's resolution against the blockade – the highest number ever (179 in 2004). The three new countries to vote with Cuba are Uzbekistan, Vanuatu and Chad. Four countries, the same as last year, voted in favour of the US Blockade – US, Israel, Marshall Islands (population 59,000) and Palau (population 20,000). Only Micronesia abstained.

The US blockade violates Cuban sovereignty and international law. Felipe Perez Roque, Cuban Foreign Minister stated: 'Never before has this blockade been applied with the viciousness and brutality seen over the last 18 months. Never before has a government of the US so cruelly and mercilessly persecuted the economy and the right of the Cuban people to live a decent and respectable life.'



Felipe Perez Roque, Cuban Foreign Minister

In 2004 alone 77 companies, banking institutions and NGOs were fined by the US for violations of the blockade; this included the US offices of third country organisations such as Alitalia, Daewoo and the Bank of China and 11 US subsidiaries operating out of other countries.

The tentacles of the blockade reach into every area of Cuban life, affecting health, sport, culture, science and of course, overwhelmingly, trade. Cubans living in the US have restrictions placed on their travel to the island and on the remittances they can send back. Over all, Perez Roque stated, the illegal US blockade has cost Cuba \$79 billion over the past 46 years. 'No economic or social activity in Cuba escapes the consequences of such figures. There is not a single human right of the Cuban people which is not violated by this blockade.' He also condemned US 'radio and television aggression', which bombards the island with thousands of hours of propaganda every week.

Perez Roque referred to what the US calls transition as a 'cruel and bloody annexation of Cuba'. He reminded the world of the courage and political consciousness of the people of Cuba who will defend their Revolution.

UN General Assembly resolutions are non-binding and the resolution will in any case be vetoed by the US. However, the vote is a political defeat for the US and a moral victory for Cuba.



US continues to protect terrorist

On 26 October, the time allowed for the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to appeal against the right of terrorist Posada Carriles to remain in the US expired (see FRFI 187). The DHS, with its multimillion dollar budget and remit to protect US citizens from terrorism, has therefore given its blessing to the permanent accommodation of Carriles on US territory. Recently declassified CIA and FBI documents add to the mounting evidence proving beyond a shadow of a doubt Carriles' responsibility for the bombing of the Cubana airliner in 1976 which killed 73 people. Carriles had warned the US administration he would spill the beans on US involvement in and backing for all his terrorist activities over the past 40 years.

Cuban political prisoners still in US gaol

On 9 August a panel of judges from the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta made the unanimous decision to overturn all convictions against the Cuban Five and order a new trial. On 31 October however, the same 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta agreed to consider the US Attorney's appeal against the August decision. This serves only to prolong the process and delay justice for the Cuban Five. As a *Granma* editorial stated on 2 November: 'Those who are silent are granting refuge to terrorists and prison to those fighting against terrorism'.

Art and culture in Cuba

On 28 October, Fidel Castro addressed newly qualified art instructors at the second National Graduation Ceremony and announced that Cuba now has 6,318 art instructors, enough for at least one for every preschool, primary school, secondary school and special education school in Cuba. Fidel said 'Cuba is today a source of inspiration and a beacon of hope for many. The Revolution's humanitarian goals and quest for justice are a point of reference for those who believe that a better world is possible and can replace the world of savagery, violence, egotism and squandering which the powerful have created... The Cuban artists and intellectuals

who have gathered under the standard of "in defence of humanity" have become a bulwark for the Battle of Ideas... spreading progressive ideas and lucidly spearheading our struggle for culture, freedom and the dignity of our people'.

Guardian reprints CIA lies

'Rumours of my demise have been greatly exaggerated' Mark Twain

On 17 November, the British 'liberal' *Guardian* newspaper uncritically repeated CIA allegations that President Fidel Castro is suffering from Parkinson's disease and is rapidly degenerating. 'The CIA says the US should be "ready for trouble" as Castro's symptoms become more evident and his grip on Cuba's 46-year communist regime weakens'. Ironically, Cuba is one of the five leading countries in the world in the development of neuro-rehabilitation treatment for Parkinson's; such treatment is a major source of medical tourism to the island. But why is *The Guardian* recycling CIA propaganda, first circulated about seven years ago (along with other rumours, over the years, claiming Castro had had a series of strokes, had cancer, or was dead) if not to attack Cuba? In a five-hour speech a few days later, Castro robustly denied the rumours and, in a television interview with Diego Maradona, joked that when he does actually die, no one will believe it any more!

Rock around the Blockade remembers Che

On 8 October, to mark the 38th anniversary of Che Guevara's murder in Bolivia, Rock around the Blockade held a day of debate and discussion on Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution and the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela. After the dayschool, we marched to Trafalgar Square behind a banner of the Cuban Five. There we held a lively, noisy demonstration, with speeches, chants and readings to demand the immediate release of the Cuban Five and call for the defence of Cuban socialism – a fitting tribute to the memory of Che Guevara.

To get involved in the work of Rock around the Blockade around the country contact our national office on 020 7837 1688, email us at office@ratb.org.uk or write to Rock around the Blockade, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX.

Hannah Caller

LETTERS

FRFI BCM Box 5909 London WC1N 3XX e-mail: rcgfrfi@easynet.co.uk
website: www.revolutionarycommunist.com and www.rcgfrfi.easynet.co.uk

Struggle for revolution

For over a year now I have been having my copy of your informative news-sheet denied to me by Whitemoor, Full Sutton and Frankland Prisons under the pretext that it had not ordered it via recognised channels. Then out of the blue at Frankland, I received October's edition and I feel obliged to send thanks to you all for your continual solid solidarity towards prisoners such as myself, who value a real alternative perspective in contrast to the right wing/fascist media exploitation of both world and local events. Only your group's editorials remain eye-openingly shit-hot with methodical precision time and time again.

As with many black prisoners, I stem from a background of inner-city urban 'grime', which led to years of incarceration and ongoing hardship. Over the years I have suffered at the hands of the penal system which, along with your group's orientation, has inspired my studies into basic sociology in an attempt to 'overstand' the hows and whys of the way of things.

I realised I had been conditioned into wearing blinkers, accepting as the norm my typical cycle of ghetto-prison-ghetto, as with so many of my peers, ie black males from poor inner-city communities. Now I am but 200 days from overdue release, I'd like to take this opportunity to urge other black prisoners within this fascist system to also study the way of things in resistance towards this system's implementation of what is now the stereotypical cycle of black male mindset. I can only describe as one of mental slavery. I believe there are but two options open to those of us who cannot force ourselves to digest the imperialists' pill: 1) find religion 2) actively struggle for revolution. And while I can respect the religious path of acceptance, a maxim my Irish grandfather once told me springs to mind: 'God won't put food on the table'. The social downside of our communities within inner-city urban environments (ghettos) will only cease when we, as a collective, black and white alike, gain a foothold via 'overstanding' the root causes of capitalist instigated social decay as the first step towards enlightened liberation (know your enemy). Take it upon yourselves while imprisoned to become politically aware before opting for a course of action. If you have not decided on a solution you are part of the problem! Books are available via FRFI if your prison library has limited scope! But I urge you to respect the fact that donations are much needed to maintain the provision of books.

Many of my black friends in the prison system have no knowledge that any alternative to the imperialist media diatribe exists. It burns my soul when I see the increased influx of predominantly young, black prisoners caught up in a dead-end cycle. Ditto to all you Muslim readers – your countries are being bombarded, invaded and pillaged, your civil liberties disregarded and abused; you may even end up as a victim of shoot-to-kill. We are all victims of the 'new world order' agenda of globalisation. A world where individuals and ideologies are downtrodden and the betterment of humanity as a whole is put on the back burner. We must resist or become reshaped into imperialist abnormality.

I leave you with a pearl from Mao – Give up illusion; prepare for struggle! Again, many thanks to all at FRFI for your continual support for prisoners.

SHAUN HIGGINS VA 3977
HMP Wakefield Segregation Unit

Stand up for your rights

On Saturday 5 November we were outside Brixton tube station in south London selling FRFI and petitioning against the war in Iraq. Nearby was a CND stall and an SWP stall. Activists have been selling their papers in this area for decades.

The stalls were approached in turn by two Lambeth council officials who threatened to seize our tables and literature. They then returned with four police officers and began to threaten the SWP stall and vendors. We decided that this attack on the SWP was also an attack on our rights and went to help the SWP defend their stall. Together we faced up to the cops and council for over 30 minutes, after which the SWP felt they had made their point.

The following week two different council officials came back and threatened the SWP, Workers Revolutionary Party, Workers Power and ourselves. We pointed out our

right to freedom of political expression under Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights. We informed them that Section 3 (1) of the Human Rights Act 1998 actually places an obligation upon the council to implement legislation in a way that is compatible with our rights under the convention. We handed this information in writing to the two officials. Nevertheless, they said they were still going to get the police. But after 50 minutes nobody had come, although the police station is less than five minutes' walk away. We had agreed with the SWP and Workers Power that we would support each other if any stall was threatened by cops or council.

If you don't stand up for your own rights you will never stand up for the oppressed and if you don't defend each other's democratic rights against the class enemy you won't defend your own.

JIMMY GERMAN
London

Emissions rise as world warms

More dramatic signs that global warming is worsening include the worst drought in 40 years in the Brazilian state of Amazonas, resulting in 40 school closures and widespread diseases caused by water pollution. The drought is down to warmer ocean temperatures. Amazonas is also plagued by deforestation as US multinational companies like McDonalds clear whole sections of the rainforest to graze cattle.

Meanwhile ice caps both north and south are melting at an alarming rate. The ice cap on Greenland is vanishing more quickly than anyone had expected, with the island's glaciers speeding towards the ocean. The disappearance of the Greenland ice cap would be catastrophic, with world sea levels rising by 20 feet, causing death and destruction for low-lying areas like Bangladesh and cities such as London and New Orleans. The immediate effects of ice caps melting will be increased strength hurricanes, floods, droughts and dramatic changes in temperature. Britain, apparently, is headed for a long, cold winter.

Yet Britain is failing to meet its Kyoto Summit target of reducing CO₂ emissions by 20% by 2010. Indeed, since 1997 such emissions have increased by 5.5%, and 2.5% in the first six months of this year. Tony Blair has said emission targets make people 'very nervous and very worried... What people fear is an internal target that is going to restrict your economic growth'. Replace the word 'people' with 'my rich friends' and you get the picture.

LOUIS BREHONY
Manchester

NCADC censors anti-deportation campaign

On 8 November 2005, the Defend Eucharía & Timey Campaign (DETC) held a public meeting in Gorton, Manchester. The DETC is campaigning to save the life of Eucharía and her 4-year-old son who are threatened with deportation to the war-zone in the oil-rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria, from where they fled after members of their family were killed. Eucharía's husband and six-year-old daughter disappeared in March 2004 and have not been seen or heard of since. All deportees to Nigeria are immediately incarcerated and over 95% of Nigerian prisoners are routinely brutalised and tortured by Nigeria's British-armed dictatorship. Eucharía's claim for asylum was rejected by the Home Office and she is seeking to appeal against this decision but has been denied legal aid.

To help publicise the meeting, on 24 October the DETC sent Emma Ginn, northwest coordinator for the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns (NCADC), a statement to issue with NCADC's weekly update up to 8 November. The statement condemned the racist policies of the British government, appealed for 'opposition to the atmosphere of hate legitimised and given credence by Labour's racist immigration laws', and ended with the slogans: 'Oppose all deportations! No to all immigration controls! No to the racist Labour government!'

Emma Ginn did not include the advert until 6 November, just two days before the meeting. The phrase 'the racist policies of the British government' had been replaced by the 'inhumane and unjust policies of the British government' and now we needed to 'oppose the atmosphere of hate legitimised and given credence by many'. The slogans:

CHOOSE THE RCG

If you believe that the treachery of the opportunist British labour and trade union movement must be challenged, then there is no alternative – Join the RCG!

I would like to join/receive more information about the RCG ☐

I would like to join an FRFI Readers & Supporters Group ☐

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'Oppose all deportations. No to all immigration controls! No to the racist Labour government!' had disappeared. We asked Ginn why she had censored us and we were told that otherwise it would 'jeopardise [NCADC's] National Lottery funding'!

JAMES TAYLOR
Defend Eucharía and Timi Campaign,
Manchester

Spirit of Che lives on

In November in Argentina, the nation that witnessed Che Guevara's birth in 1928 once again felt the spirit of Che shining his light over the world as crowds gathered in Mar del Plata for the Third Forum of the Peoples.

Che was present not only in the placards, flags and banners but also in spirit, informing the theoretical discussions of leaders, workers' spokespeople, indigenous movements, students with the principles of unity and integration in an age when it is ever more necessary to globalise hope, solidarity and peace.

In Mar del Plata, the people said 'yes' to the burial of the Free Trade Area of the Americas which does not encourage the development of Latin America but rather its annexation by the most powerful nation of the world.

The presence of Che was felt in the voices of leaders such as the President of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez Frias, as an auditorium of hundreds reverberated to his cry of 'Long live Che Guevara, damn it!' Che's ideals now inform the generation of a new century.

Hasta la victoria, siempre!

TATIANA MARTINEZ HERNANDEZ
Havana, Cuba

Terrorism Bill: another step towards a police state

On 10 November the Terrorism Bill 2005 had its third reading in the House of Commons. On 21 November it passed through a second symbolic reading in the House of Lords and is now to be deliberated on by a parliamentary committee. This is the sixth law against terrorism, and by extension against organised dissent, which Labour has brought in since coming to power eight years ago.

NICKI JAMESON reports.

The Bill includes new measures against preparation of terrorist acts, 'encouraging terrorism' by indirect incitement, providing or undertaking 'terrorist training', or simply being present at a place where it is provided, and 'disseminating terrorist publications'. It was drafted prior to the 7 July London bombing but beefed up and talked up afterwards, with more controversial measures added, in particular an offence of 'glorifying terrorism' and an increase from 14 to 90 days of the period a terrorist suspect can be detained without charge.

In the run-up to the Commons debate, Labour announced it was dropping the plan for a separate offence of 'glorifying terrorism'. This was hailed as a victory by opposition parties and described as a 'U-turn' by the media but in reality the same wording outlawing 'the glorification of the commission or preparation (whether in the past, in the

future or generally) of acts of terrorism' was simply moved into a section on 'Encouragement of Terrorism'.

The 90-day detention period was quite another matter. Although up until the day before the debate it was anticipated that a compromise would be struck, Tony Blair and Charles Clarke announced they would be sticking to 90 days. The conciliatory facade was replaced by a bullish one: this, they said, was what the police wanted, what the public wanted, and what was needed for national security, to prevent more bombings, to save us from the enemy within and the enemy without.

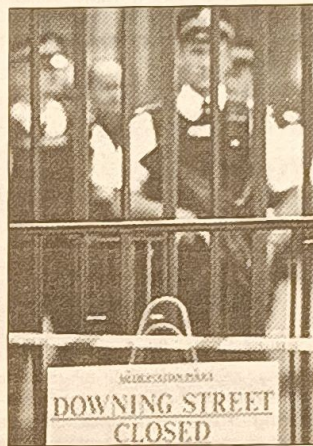
The Commons voted 291 in favour of 90-day detention; 322 against. It then voted on an amendment to double the current 14-day period to 28 days. The vote was carried 323 for and 290 against. The phrasing of the amendments meant that if both fell the Bill's original wording of 'three months', as opposed to 90 days, would stand. Having failed to build any real opposition to this shameful Bill, and with George Galloway having been too busy on lucrative speaking engagements to even turn up for an earlier amendment debate on the 'glorification' section, which the government won by a single vote, the 'left' in Parliament had no option but to vote with the Tories and Lib Dems in support of 28-day detention.

This was the first parliamentary defeat since Blair became Prime Minister. His personal reputation hit an all-time low or high, depending whose opinion you canvass. He made a noble, or ostrich-like speech about how it was better to be right than to win. *The Times* described him as 'once merely messianic, now completely unhinged'.

Police state

The run-up to the vote on the 90-day detention proposal saw a lobbying alliance of the Labour Party and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). Blair and his ministers flouted all notions of MPs being there to independently represent their constituents, without fear or favour, by openly encouraging ACPO to urge its members to contact MPs and lobby their support for Labour's proposal.

The appalling prospect of allowing



the police to set the political agenda was spelt out in the House of Commons by the unlikely of speakers. Ex-Tory Minister John Gummer MP explained that it is Parliament's job to legislate and the police's to enforce the legislation, not vice versa. And Tory leader-in-waiting David Davis (who wants to withdraw Britain from both the European Convention on Human Rights and the UN Convention on Refugees) pointed out that the police will always demand 'the most powers they can'. They should therefore specifically not be invited to make decisions about the extent of such powers, as they cannot be expected to

give proportionate respect to civil liberties. It also took Michael Howard, the Tory leader, to point out the similarity between Labour's heinous 90-day detention proposal and a law that was one of the main planks of the framework used against opponents of apartheid in white South Africa.

Given this golden opportunity to lobby for more power, at no point did ACPO actually produce any hard evidence to back up a demand for any increase in the detention period, and even the information they did come up with turned out to be inaccurate. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Peter Clarke delivered a convincing sounding speech to the Joint Committee on Human Rights, which was repeated by Charles Clarke in the parliamentary debate. The Committee was told that 'had we had this provision in 2002, the outcome of a recent court case, the so-called ricin trial, might have been very different. Mohammed Meguerba was one of the suspects in that case and it is likely that we would have held him or applied for his detention for sufficient time to find that his fingerprints were on the ricin recipe and he would have stood trial...had he not fled the country...' The Home Secretary told the Commons that this was 'a compelling argument that 90 days might have made a difference and allowed things to be dealt with far better.' This was in fact complete nonsense as the police had released Mohammed Meguerba after two days in custody.

After the Commons vote, hysterical tabloid journalists and Labour MP columnists castigated parliament for being out of touch, ignoring the police, selling out the people and leaving us prey to terrorist attack. Following the Lords' second reading, opposition politicians announced their intention to introduce amendments at the committee stage, which would remove the glorification clauses. However, with or without its most draconian excesses, the Terrorism Bill will inevitably pass into law. All the original sections will be implemented in full. Under Labour, Britain's inexorable march towards a police state will continue.



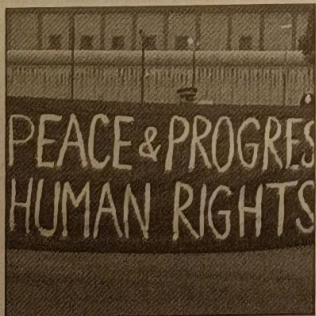
Britain's political prisoners

In August, in the wake of the July London bombings and as the Labour government cranked up the media hype for the current Terrorism Bill, it announced new guidelines, using existing legislation, for detaining and deporting people whose presence was deemed 'not conducive to the public good'. Three sets of arrests followed: on 11 August, 15 September and 3 October. There are now 23 men held in high security prisons and Broadmoor 'special hospital' awaiting deportation to Jordan, Algeria, Libya and Iraq, the same countries Britain had previously accepted it was too dangerous for them to be returned to. A further four Algerians were bailed. Two other men remain subject to house arrest provisions brought in under the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005, which replaced those sections of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001 ruled unlawful by the House of Lords in December 2004.

Some of the detainees are being held in the re-opened Special Secure Unit at Full Sutton prison in York. This unit was built to house Irish political prisoners and 'mothballed' following the Good Friday Agreement. Others are in Long Lartin and Belmarsh high security prisons.

All are Category A and all but one are totally isolated and denied association with any other prisoners.

Several of the 2001 ATCSA detainees ended up at Broadmoor, having been transferred there at various points during their incarceration at Belmarsh, when the combined effects of previous mental stress and torture with indefinite detention led them to states of mental breakdown.



Demonstration outside Belmarsh high security prison

The detainee known as B is now back there. He is a single man with no family who was released from Broad-

moor in March on a control order with stringent conditions, including electronic tagging. He was unable to cope with sudden release to a place on his own, and had to be moved to an open psychiatric hospital ward. He remained there until rearrested in August. He was put back into prison where his mental state immediately deteriorated. It was only following an urgent bail application by his solicitors that he was moved out of prison, to Broadmoor psychiatric hospital.

G was the only ATCSA detainee to have been previously released on account of his mental state. He had been bailed in April 2004 to house arrest. Following his re-arrest, he made a serious suicide attempt and is now among the few detainees granted house arrest bail by the Special Immigration Advisory Committee (SIAC).

A third man who was in Broadmoor prior to his arrest on a control order is P, who is both mentally ill and severely physically disabled, having had both his arms amputated. He is currently detained in Long Lartin prison, having been refused bail, even under the stringent control order conditions previously imposed.

As well as the ex-ATCSA detainees,

the recent raids re-imprisoned some of the men tried and acquitted for the non-existent 'ricin conspiracy'. They are also now threatened with deportation.

In addition there are prisoners on remand under the Terrorism Act 2000. They include Waseem Mughal, Younis Tsouli and Tariq Al Daour, who were arrested in October and face a range of charges from conspiracy to murder and conspiracy to cause an explosion, to having a piece of paper with 'Welcome to the Jihad' written on it. The Terrorism Act remand prisoners include juveniles, who have been until now held in the segregation unit at Woodhill prison but are currently due to be transferred to a wing of the Closed Supervision Centre at that prison.

There are also a number of prisoners awaiting extradition to other countries. Babar Ahmed and Rachid Ramda have both just lost judicial attempts to prevent their extradition to the US and France respectively. Basque prisoner Inigo Makazaga, who FRFI readers will be aware of following his successful fight against the prison authorities refusal to allow him our newspaper, has been detained in Belmarsh for five years, resisting his extradition to Spain.

Bernard Gardener

HARRY STANLEY

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has announced that the two cops who shot Harry Stanley dead will not face trial. Yet their own report says 'the officers haste and lack of planning led them to breach their duty of Mr Stanley and cause his death.' If that's the case, why aren't they in the dock at the Old Bailey?

What has sickened local people is the lies and vile press campaign against Harry and defence of the killers. The latest exposure of a lie was that we were all told that PC Kevin Fagan had been taken off firearms duty. It turns out that since Harry's death he has been employed by SO19 as a firearms instructor. The other culprit was promoted to Chief Inspector. Irene, Harry's widow, is thinking of appealing to the European Court.

Jim Wills
Friend of Harry Stanley