

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Revolutionary Communist Group Number 186 August/September 2005

(unwaged 50p) 80p



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Iraq: no exit for imperialism

On 28 June 2004, Iyad Allawi, Prime Minister of the newly inaugurated Iraqi interim government boasted, 'In a few days Iraq will radiate with stability and security'. One year on and the average daily number of attacks by the Iraqi resistance has risen from 45 to 70 per day. The total number of coalition troops killed has almost doubled. At least a further 10,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed. All roads around Baghdad have been cut by resistance fighters and can only be travelled by Coalition and Iraqi government troops in armed convoys. Killings and the bombing of mosques have broken out between sections of the Shia community who support the puppet government and Sunnis who oppose it. The US and Britain invaded Iraq both to secure Middle East oil supplies and to maintain their role as the world's leading imperialist powers. Any hope they had of quickly establishing a united and stable Iraqi government with strong Iraqi forces to police it has crumbled and with it an important plank of their global strategy is being undermined. The resistance in Afghanistan also gathers momentum. Dissent and division is rising within the US. JIM CRAVEN reports.

Iraqi resistance intensifies

The Iraqi resistance grew in strength and scope throughout the early summer. On 23 May Iraqi resistance fighters assassinated Major-General Waed Al Rubaye, head of an Iraqi government counter-terrorism unit. On 12 June the resistance launched a daring

raid at the heart of the high security army headquarters in Baghdad aimed at the notorious Wolf Commando Brigade responsible for attacks on Sunni civilians. Between 11 and 18 June, 13 US troops were killed in Anbar Province. The following week six US marines were killed in

Fallujah. The resistance killed the senior Iraqi police officer Colonel Riyadh Abdul Karim on 25 June. A second member of the Iraqi collaborationist parliament, Sheik Dhari Ali ay-Fayadh, was killed on 28 June. Three members of the British forces were killed on 15 July. Altogether, resistance fighters assassinated 52 senior Iraqi government or religious leaders in the year following the institution of the interim government.

In the same period over 480 car bombings were carried out. The monthly average number of Iraqi military and police force members killed rose from 160 to 219. In June 2004, 42 US soldiers were killed. In June 2005 the number was 75. By mid-July, 1,956 Coalition troops had been killed, including 1,755 US soldiers and 92 from Britain.

Occupying forces in disarray

Desperately attempting to stem the rising tide of Iraqi resistance, US and puppet government forces launched a series of operations. Operation Lightning from 29 May involved 1,000 US troops and 40,000 Iraqi soldiers and police in raids throughout Baghdad.

There were reports of mass arrests and torture. Those arrested were kept in barbed wire enclosures without food or water for 24 hours, but of the hundreds arrested only 22 were detained further. Operation Dagger was launched on 18 June in the Lake Tharthar region of central Iraq.

Several campaigns were carried out in the western provinces near the Syrian border. In Operation Spear on 18 June the US fired seven missiles killing 40 people including civilians. In response the local population threatened a general strike.

All these special operations have little long-term effect. Resistance fighters melt away and either relocate or return when the offensive is over. The US government admitted in June that they are trying to open negotiations with leaders of sections of the resistance. 15 Sunnis have now been co-opted onto the Shia and Kurdish dominated committee drafting a new Iraqi constitution. The aim is to divide the armed resistance by diverting part of it into the political arena.

The other fork of this attack is to terrorise the Sunni community, the chief stronghold of support for the

resistance. Alongside the sweeping arrests of Sunni citizens the Iraqi security forces, consisting mainly of Shias and Kurds, is working in collusion with the Badr brigade, a Shia paramilitary unit accused of operating death squads against Sunnis. This is classic counter-insurgency strategy as proposed by British Brigadier Frank Kitson in his books *Gangs and Counter-Gangs* and *Low Intensity Operations* and as used by the British in Ireland.

Further indicating the desperation of the occupying forces, the US has announced a \$50 million expansion of Iraq's prison system, including the notorious Abu Ghraib prison, which the US had promised to demolish after the torture and atrocities they committed there had been uncovered. At present there are around 11,000 known prisoners, almost all held without formal charge, twice the number held a year ago. There are reports that some prisoners have been shot without trial.

On 22 June in Brussels the US called an international conference on Iraq. The aim was to rally political

continued on page 3

London bombings fuel state terror

On 7 July 2005, at least 56 people were killed and hundreds injured by bombs planted on a bus and three underground trains in London during the morning rush-hour. The first attacks were followed, two weeks later, by four more attempted bombings of the transport system. It is clear that more may follow. The 7 July bombings were indiscriminate, killing London commuters from a wide range of backgrounds and origins. For the victims, their families and friends, these outrages are profoundly tragic. For the world, the London bombings have contributed to a wider tragedy. The bombings have provided Britain's cowardly politicians, and in particular the Labour government, with ample opportunity for hypocrisy about 'freedom' and 'civilisation'. The barbarous activities of Al Qaida and its supporters, who have claimed the first bombings, are the consequences of imperialism, and like all monsters, this one has turned against its creators.

Osama Bin Laden, the Taliban and the Afghan warlords were promoted, financed and armed by the West in order to destroy a progressive regime in Afghanistan, and ultimately, the Soviet Union. The fate of the local people was of no concern. It was only after the attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001 that the US and Britain intervened in the name of 'freedom' and the 'war on terror'. Afghanistan has once again been handed over to the drug barons and the warlords, while the US and Britain continue to bomb and terrorise ordinary Afghans. Tell us now, gross liar Blair, how many Afghani women you have liberated! On 1 July, six days before the London bombings, a US B52 killed 17 women, men and children in Kunar Province, Afghanistan. Are the lives of innocent Afghans worth less than those of Londoners?

Saddam Hussein and his regime were promoted, financed, and armed by the West in order to destroy Iran and opposition to US/British influence in the Middle East. The imperialists did nothing when the regime was gassing Kurds and murdering the opposition. Only when Saddam Hussein turned maverick, no longer to be

relied on, did the imperialists invade and wage war on the Iraqi people in the name 'freedom' and 'civilisation'. It is conservatively estimated that at least 67,365 civilians were reported killed or wounded in Iraq between 19 March 2003 and 19 March 2005. Millions have no jobs, no electricity or access to clean water. Thousands were killed in Fallujah. If Londoners are brave and 'stoical' in the face of 56 dead, how do you measure what the Iraqi people have suffered under foreign occupation?

The experience of young Muslims is that the British and US governments do not care about the suffering in the Middle East; that they care most about dominating the world. In Palestine, Israel, with the backing of the US and Britain, has continued to occupy and steal Palestinian land, terrorising and murdering Palestinians. The Apartheid Wall has been built despite the International Court of Justice finding it illegal one year ago. More than 60 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli army during the latest ceasefire. You have not heard Bush and Blair condemn Israeli terror; on the contrary they make common cause with Israel against the Palestinians.

The suffering of ordinary people in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine at the hands of the US, British and Israeli armies has been ignored or excused. It can be no surprise that Muslim youth are misled by zealots into believing they are fighting imperialism. The bombs in London did not fight the US and British imperialists; they added to the imperialist slaughter. The bombers did nothing to defeat imperialist terror: they added to the suffering it inflicts.

The turn of the screw...

In the wake of the first bombings, the Labour government - already armed to the teeth with 'anti-terror' powers to stop and search, detain and question suspects - has announced that further laws will be rushed through Parliament (see page 16). The Metropolitan Police are asking for the maximum time for detention and interrogation to be extended from two weeks to three months. The Home Secretary believes that the recent events justify the introduction of ID cards as fast as possible, even though identity fraud has not been an



One of the armed 'police' at Stockwell station shoot-to-kill operation

issue in the recent events (see below). In the name of 'freedom', the Labour government is using the atmosphere of threat and panic as an excuse to curb civil liberties.

MPs have left for their summer holidays while 'security' in Parliament is boosted. A law will soon ban political demonstrations within 1 kilometre of the Houses of Parliament; Whitehall already resembles an armed camp (see page 16). In the City of London, the centre of business and finance, millions of pounds have been spent building a so-called 'ring of steel' which allows road blocks and continuous surveillance of all traffic. But the targets of the terror, ordinary people using London transport, urged by Prime Minister Blair to 'remain calm' and carry on working, are entitled to think that their security is not a priority.

Just before FRFI went to press the police shot dead a man at Stockwell tube station who they claimed was wanted in connection with the second round of bombs. An eye witness described how plain-clothes police chased the man into the tube and then pumped five bullets into his head as they held him on the ground in a tube train. 'He looked like a frightened fox', a shocked witness reported. 24 hours later and the Met Police Commissioner admitted that the man had no connection with the bombings. He was a totally innocent 27-year-old Brazilian who the police 'didn't like the look of'. This military-style execution has all the hallmarks of Shoot to Kill - the policy used in the north of Ireland to murder Republican suspects.

Asians in London have been targeted for special surveillance and stop and search by Labour minister Hazel Blears: so being Muslim means you are guilty. They, and all young Londoners, must now add the fear of being shot dead by armed police - the same trigger-happy police that killed Harry Stanley as he walked down the street with a table leg in a plastic bag. As usual the press, pensioned off police and a whole gamut of politicians are covering up murder - happy to sacrifice the lives of innocent people in Britain and abroad, as long as it's not their own.

At Stockwell the driver of the tube train involved was alarmed by the gunfire and fled down the tunnel. He was then chased and a gun held to his head by armed police. Shortly afterwards the leadership of the RMT railworkers union was refused extra staff at

stations and other measures to ensure safety by London Labour mayor, Ken Livingstone who is responsible for London Transport. The union has now guaranteed support for any railworker who refuses to work on the underground for safety reasons.

In this issue of FRFI...

We report on anti-imperialist struggles all over the world where working class and oppressed

people are fighting to live in dignity and peace. In Latin America new movements representing the working class and oppressed are winning the battle to take control of their own land and their own destinies (see pages 10-12). The latest news on Iraq and Palestine is analysed on pages 1/3 and 4. On pages 8/9 we review the G8 fraud which failed miserably to act against poverty in Africa or take any steps to halt climate change. On the frontline against imperialism, Cuba leads the battle to organise a society in the interests of all its people - we report on their strategy against the ravages of climate change, and brigadistas from RATB write about their experiences (pages 6 and 14).

The future of humanity lies in the hands of human beings, acting together to meet their common needs and to solve their problems. The slaughter generated by imperialist terror and by the agents and puppets of imperialism must stop. Our aim is to build a movement to oppose war and to defeat imperialism. We ask you to join us.

**End the occupation of Palestine!
Destroy the Apartheid Wall!
End the war on Afghanistan!
Release Guantanamo detainees!
End the occupation of Iraq!**

Labour pushes law on ID cards

After the terror bombings in London, the government has returned to its ID card bill with fresh vigour, even though false identity played no part in the events.

When first proposed by then Home Secretary David Blunkett we were told the card would cost us £25, very soon it became £40 and then £90. A recent London School of Economics study estimates that the realistic price will be more than £300. It will need to be renewed at least every ten years and every time your details change. As the average UK citizen moves address every seven years (more often in the cities), ID cards are going to be costly.

An IT outsourcing company which will probably tender to run the scheme is EDS. It is in charge of Israel's smart card system which is used for the control of Palestinians. EDS is also famous for its IT failures at the Inland Revenue which have cost the taxpayer a fortune.

ID cards will have your name, address, date of birth, gender, immigration status and biometric information like finger print, iris image and a digital photo. Not much to worry about you may think. But in some parts of the UK where you live can be a matter of life or death.

It's not just the card, alongside it there will be a centralised database, which will store personal information, such as criminal record, NHS records, benefit and state pension details, etc. Under Blunkett's notorious Crime and Security Act 2001, 'Gateways' are permitted between government departments and even other European governments to access your private data. There are few safeguards and no penalties for abuse of the system.

The spurious excuses given by the government for introducing the cards do not get close to the truth. ID cards do not combat terrorism, nor do they prevent

identity fraud. In a letter dated 4 July 2003 from then Home Secretary Blunkett to Deputy Prime Minister Prescott it was confirmed that anyone claiming NHS treatment or state benefits would have to produce an ID card. No card, no treatment or benefit. Also, anyone applying for documents like a passport or driving licence will be forced to buy an ID card.

It is claimed that ID cards will cut out benefit fraud. According to the Department of Work and Pensions only 2.5% of fraud involves false identity.

The flaw with any identity document is that it has to use another document to prove the person actually exists. In the BBC television documentary *Kenyon Confronts*, Kenyon managed to obtain a provisional driving licence with Blunkett's details but his own photo. This was despite the fact that Blunkett is registered blind and uses a guide dog. All he needed was a copy of Blunkett's birth certificate. The system will not stop people fraudulently using your identity.

This is an example of the lies and spin from the government over the issue. In an interview on *Breakfast with Frost* on 25 April 2004, Blunkett said '...35% of terrorists, I'm told by the Security Service, use multiple identities'. There is nothing about the government's ID card proposals that will prevent them from continuing to do so. He also claimed that biometrics are not forgeable. Even the manufacturers of the equipment don't make that claim.

ID cards are not about cutting crime or stopping terrorism. They are about control and intimidation. Primarily this Labour government wants to use them to ration social services and medical treatment. The gulf between the haves and have-nots will inevitably widen.

Jimmy German

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.

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IRAQ: no exit for imperialism

continued from page 1

and economic support for the occupation. The conference, co-sponsored by the EU, attempted to demonstrate a united front among imperialist powers who in reality are manoeuvring to improve their own interests. Before it began an EU diplomat said, 'There will not be much substance' – and so it proved. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice railed against Syria and called on other nations to fulfil their promises.

Iraqi finance minister Ali Allawi admitted his government could not meet its capital or current expenditure without grants and loans from the imperialist countries. The US had promised to provide more than \$18 billion in direct grants. But by the time the Coalition Provisional Authority gave way to the Iraqi interim government in June 2004 it had spent up to \$20 billion of Iraqi money compared to just \$300 million of US funds! According to US government monitors and auditors most of this money had been squandered through incompetence and corruption, much of it going to Kellogg, Brown and Root, a Halliburton subsidiary. US Vice President Cheney headed Halliburton until 2000. Japan told the conference it might delay its \$3.5 billion loan agreed in Madrid in 2003 because of the lack of security.

So-called friendly countries such as Jordan still refuse to send their ambassadors to Iraq because it is unsafe. At the beginning of July the Egyptian ambassador was kidnapped by the resistance who claimed he was a US spy. Foreign nationals in Iraq may also find themselves the target of trigger-happy US troops. Their latest victim was a Swiss citizen shot dead by a US convoy in Baghdad.

Continuing misery for the Iraqi people

For the Iraqi people there is little sign of improvement in their daily lives. A quarter of all children under five years old are malnourished. 39% of the population has no access to clean water and for a further 28% supplies are interrupted. Only 37% of urban households have a sewage connection. This falls to 4% in rural areas. Primary school enrolment stands at 83% for boys and 79% for girls; educational

standards and overall literacy are declining.

Unemployment remains the same as last year, around 40%. Electricity supplies, so important for cooling systems in such a hot country, are unreliable. People in Baghdad currently receive six to eight hours supply a day. Total electricity generation has fallen by 6% in the past year. In June all civilian air traffic was brought to a two-day standstill because of administrative chaos and because the British company responsible for airport security, Global Strategies Group, had not been paid.

The Iraqi police and army, riddled with corruption, increasingly operate in an authoritarian manner. In June, doctors in the main Baquba hospital went on strike in protest at the abusive treatment that they had received. Mohammed Hazim, a specialist at the hospital, said, 'We want the governor to protect us from the organised terrorism of the police and army ... they seemed drunk or medicated – they were crazed.' Iraqi doctors are leaving the country in increasing numbers.

Disillusion spreads among US ruling class

In May Condoleezza Rice claimed the resistance had reached 'a kind of peak ... and so as Iraqis see their interests as represented in the political process the insurgency will lose steam.' Cheney surpassed this particular piece of ostrich and sand activity in June when he claimed 'the insurgency is in its last throes'. These are vain attempts to paper over growing divisions within the US. Republican Senator Chuck Hagel responded, 'Things aren't getting better, they're getting worse. The White House is completely disconnected from reality. It's like they're making it up as they go along. The reality is we are losing in Iraq.' Even Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld admitted, 'Insurgencies tend to go on five, six, eight, ten, twelve years'. Senator Edward Kennedy said the US was in an 'intractable quagmire' and called on Rumsfeld to resign. General John Abizaid, head of US Gulf operations, admitted, 'More foreign fighters are coming into Iraq than six months ago.'

A leaked CIA report stated that the



Blindfold captives: there are now double the number of prisoners there were a year ago and the US has announced a \$50 million prison expansion programme

chief result of the present campaigns against the Iraqi resistance was to train a new generation of guerrilla fighters. Over a hundred congress members have backed a petition signed by half a million people demanding that President Bush explain the 'Downing Street Memo', which indicated that the Bush administration had decided to invade Iraq at least a year before the invasion and had fixed intelligence reports supporting that policy. However, the White House brushed aside the criticism and in a major televised speech in June President Bush announced there would be no change in direction. His poll approval rating is now down to 40%, the lowest for a second-term president since Richard Nixon in the early 1970s.

53% of the US population now believe the invasion of Iraq was a mistake and over 60% believe the US government has no clear policy for victory that would allow US troops to return home. Republican Walter Jones, a previously strong supporter of the invasion, is one of the sponsors of a congressional resolution demanding a timetable for US troop withdrawal. The fact that US troops know support for their presence in Iraq is dwindling is bound to damage their morale.

The crisis in US army recruitment deepens. The military planned to enlist 80,000 recruits this year but each successive month has shown dwindling results. By the end of May they were over 6,600 short of their target. Furthermore, in March 17.4% of new recruits failed to complete training and another 7.3% did not finish the first three years with their unit. In order to encourage recruitment and cut losses the army is reducing the standards required and piloting a 15-month active duty enlistment rather than the usual four years.

Afghan resistance flares

In June the US appointed a new ambassador to Iraq. Zalmay Khalilzad said he believed 'the back of the insurgency can be broken within a reasonable period of time'. Khalilzad was previously the US ambassador to Afghanistan where, following presidential elections last October, the US had hoped they were achieving stability and claimed 'the Taliban rebellion

was finished'. But in the three months to the end of June there was unprecedented fighting both by the Taliban and other groups in which at least 45 US troops were killed. On 18 June the Taliban captured 30 Afghan police when their convoy was ambushed. At the end of June a US Special Forces unit went missing. Three of the four members were killed. A US Chinook helicopter searching for them was shot down, killing all 16 soldiers on board. US command admitted it was their worst week since 2001.

Australian special forces, who left in 2002, are to return to Afghanistan. The British Army plans to send 3,000 troops to Afghanistan before the end of next year, but this is contingent on equivalent reductions in the 8,500 strong force in Iraq. This will only be possible if the Iraqi security forces prove capable of taking over their role. Iraqi puppet foreign minister Hoshyar Zebari said coalition troop reductions would 'take the country into hell'.

Global oil crisis

The deteriorating military and political situations for US and British imperialism in Iraq and Afghanistan are

occurring against a growing crisis in world oil supplies that exacerbates inter-imperialist rivalries. In 2004 demand for oil grew by 3.4%. China accounted for more than a third of this rise. The price of oil presently stands at around \$60 a barrel, more than twice its average long-term real price. Refineries are working so close to maximum capacity that the G8 countries are suggesting tax breaks to help companies expand.

It was intended that the invasion of Iraq would secure an extra two million barrels of oil a day. But Iraqi oil production is less than before the invasion and has fallen further since the creation of the interim government. Required foreign investment is withheld because of the security situation. Furthermore, the quality of oil produced is getting worse and oil fields are being damaged in an attempt to stretch supplies.

In May the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline opened, carrying oil from the Caspian Basin through Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey to the Mediterranean coast. BP has a leading 31% share in the project. To secure a corridor for the pipeline the US and British governments engineered a change of government in Georgia and befriended the notorious Azerbaijan leader, Ilham Aliyev, widely condemned for human rights abuses. The pipeline ends near the US base at Incirlik in Turkey and the US is training rapid response teams to guard its length. The imperialists hope the pipeline will deliver one million barrels a day and reduce reliance on Middle Eastern oil. However, earlier forecasts of 200 billion barrel reserves have proved massively over optimistic.

All the imperialist countries and China and India are competing to secure oil supplies. Turkey, a close US ally, threatens to close the Bosphorus to tankers, an important route for Russian oil. Russia is building its own pipeline to Kazakhstan. China, India and Japan are forging new agreements with Iran and Latin American oil producers. All the imperialist powers are after African oil under cover of debt relief and assistance. The IMF has estimated that global oil demand will rise 68% by 2030: an extra 56 million barrels a day. The IMF says the Middle East will have to produce at least 32 million of those barrels, an increase of 120% in production. The Gulf holds 62% of known oil reserves. Its future is central to the gathering struggle between the imperialist blocs. The Iraqi people's resistance to occupation is a major obstacle for US and British imperialism's global strategy. ■

■ As we go to press more than 50 detainees in Guantanamo concentration camp are on hunger strike against their conditions and their indefinite detention.

Communists massacred by Turkish Army

On the night of 16-17 June, 17 members of the Maoist Communist Party (MKP) of Turkey were killed by the Turkish Army. They were journeying to a meeting of the Second Congress of the MKP in the east of Turkey when they were ambushed and killed. Fourteen of the delegation came from European cities and others from the west of Turkey. Four of the dead were members of the Central Committee including chairman and leading comrade Cafer Cangoz.

No accounts exist of what exactly occurred and Turkish authorities, as always, censor the truth but it has been established that the group were

bombed from helicopters and a gun-fight ensued. Mutilated remains were left on the scene, though whether the people had been tortured before or despoiled after death is not clear.

Revolutionaries in Turkey built organisations in 1972 in opposition to the fascist Turkish ruling class and the MKP was established in 2002. Protests erupted in several cities in Europe when expatriate political exile communities received the news. One thing certain is that organisation and defiance will continue to emerge in Turkey until the defeat of this repressive, racist and fascist state.

Deniz Tara

Zionists and Palestinian Authority attack Palestinian resistance

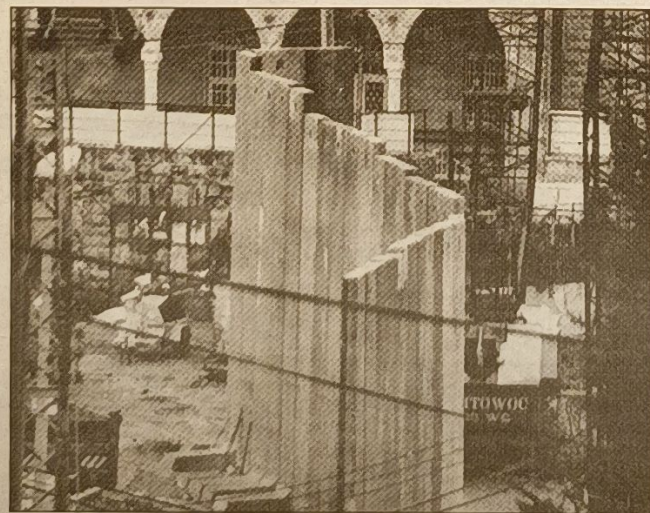
In mid-July the Israeli government massed its troops and armour on the borders of the Gaza Strip threatening an all-out invasion, in the words of Sharon, to 'crush the Palestinian terror groups'. This show of strength was intended to reassure Israeli public opinion following an increase in actions by the Palestinian resistance, and was accompanied by a threat to the Palestinian Authority (PA) demanding it clamp down on the resistance. **BOB SHEPHERD** reports.

Since the 8 February summit at Sharm el-Sheik between Sharon and Abbas and the acceptance of the ceasefire/calmdown by the Palestinian resistance, the world's media has focused on the proposed pull-out of Israeli settlers from Gaza, now scheduled to take place at the end of August. For ordinary Palestinians, though, Sharm el-Sheik has not changed their lives much: the Israeli occupation remains, the steady killing of Palestinian youth continues and there are more Palestinians in Israeli gaols now, even after the release of two groups of prisoners. The construction of the Apartheid Wall proceeds and on 11 July the Israeli government agreed its final route around Jerusalem. Islamic Jihad's response to this relentless and expanding occupation was a suicide attack in Netanya on 12 July, killing five Israelis. Meanwhile the resistance escalated missile attacks on Israeli settlements both inside and outside the Gaza Strip. The Israeli government demanded that the PA immediately intervene against Jihad and Hamas. For Israel, the withdrawal of settlements from Gaza must not be seen to be a retreat under fire from Palestinian resistance forces.

PA confronts the resistance

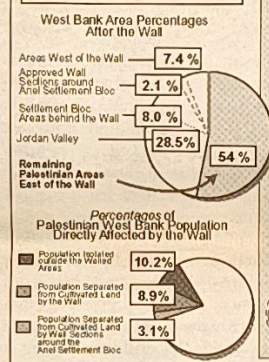
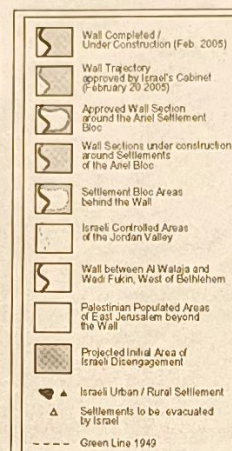
The PA took no time to follow the bidding of Israel. On 13 July PA security forces opened fire on fighters from Islamic Jihad and on 14 July PA police attacked a group of fighters from the Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, in the north of Gaza, wounding four of them. The next day they again fired on Hamas militants and supporters in Gaza City killing two people, one a 14-year-old girl, and wounding about 20 others. At the same time Israel resumed its policy of targeted killings of Palestinian militants. Helicopter gun-ships launched air-to-ground missiles that destroyed a car north of Ramallah killing three Hamas supporters and in a second attack, killed five more Hamas militants in Gaza. On 17 July a Qassam com-

mander was assassinated by an Israeli sniper in Khan Younis, Gaza, whilst Mahmoud Abbas declared on TV that 'from now on we will not allow the phenomena of arms in the streets'. In response, Islamic Jihad accused the PA's security apparatus of serving as an agency of the Israeli occupation forces. Over the preceding weeks Israel had arrested a number of Islamic Jihad supporters; on 15 July PA forces arrested three members of the movement in the West Bank: 'At a time when we were expecting the PA to release our detainees in its gaols, we were surprised with a frantic campaign against Islamic Jihad cadres, this time with PA hands who arrested three of the movement's members in Salfet and Qalqilya districts in the West Bank'.



The apartheid wall under construction

Abbas and his allies in the PA are willing tools of imperialism in attempting to neutralise the resistance. They are desperate for a successful Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and for the PA to be the dominant force left running the area. They want to be able to portray their political strategy of compromise and subservience to the



interests of Zionism and imperialism as the only way to gain freedom. They do not want the resistance to be able to claim that Israeli withdrawal is a result of sustained armed confrontation and action. It is though, a forlorn hope, as the mass of the poor and oppressed Palestinians know it is only through the sacrifice and struggle of the resistance that the settlements are going.

On 13 July, in response to the Netanya attack, Israeli troops stormed

year-old boy as local youth defied the curfew and resisted the invading troops with stones and bottles. During this same period Israeli troops swept through a number of West Bank towns and villages including Nablus, areas of Bethlehem and Salfet where they ordered the Palestinian police to take off their uniforms and stay indoors. Islamic Jihad declared although it still supported the calmdown, 'every Israeli violation must be confronted with a Palestinian response, otherwise we will lose our momentum'.

Jack Straw intervenes

At the beginning of June, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw had met Abbas and

by Israeli forces and 515 injured up to 16 July. In the same period 18 Israelis were killed by Palestinian actions, including five at Netanya (Palestinian Red Crescent);

- Zionists have seized approximately 33,803 dunums of arable land up to 15 June (1 dunum = 1,000sq metres, Palestinian Ministry of Interior).
- 1,249 Palestinians were arrested during Israeli army raids in the period between 1 March and 30 June, 349 more than the Israelis had released under the Sharm el-Sheik summit agreement.

For Straw and British imperialism the problem is not the occupying power, Israel, which acts in their interests in the Middle East, it is the just struggle of the Palestinian people for national liberation. In the perverted logic of Straw the onus for progress towards freedom for Palestine is not on the violent occupiers who have the third strongest military force in the world but on the occupied to show they deserve a few crumbs of freedom.

Apartheid wall construction continues

On 11 July the Israeli government agreed the final route of the Apartheid Wall in the Jerusalem area and set 1 September as the deadline for its completion. The route of the wall will cut off and isolate Palestinian communities, such as Anata, that are historically part of East Jerusalem, from the city. The Israeli government accepts that the wall will isolate 55,000 Palestinians, the majority holding the blue Jerusalem ID card. The true figure could be as high as 100,000. Israel says it will build new public service centres such as hospitals and post offices on the Palestinian side of the wall to substitute for the ones on the Israeli side that used to serve these communities. This is a further step in the Zionist plan to rid Jerusalem of the majority of its Palestinian citizens. In May the Zionist Jerusalem Municipality announced plans to demolish 88 buildings in the Silwan district of East Jerusalem, home to more than 1,000 Palestinians.

After the completion of the Jerusalem section of the wall the Israeli government will ask for tenders to build 700 homes in the settlements that flank the east and south of the city, Ma'ale Adumin and Gush Etzion. This is in addition to the 3,500 already approved to be built in Ma'ale Adumin (see FRFI 185).

The enlargement of strategic settlement blocks and the continuing construction of the Apartheid Wall in the West Bank expose the true nature of the withdrawal from Gaza. At the end of June the Israeli Agriculture Ministry announced it had drawn up plans to more than double the number of settlers in the strategic Jordan Valley area of the West Bank over the next two years. Their numbers will rise from just over 6,000 now to over 14,000. Settlers from the Gaza Strip are to be given big financial incentives to encourage them to move to the area.

The Zionist plans are clear: withdrawal from Gaza on one hand and expansion and consolidation of Zionist control in the West Bank on the other. In the process they need to crush Hamas and the Palestinian resistance. However, this will not be a simple task even if they have PA support. Already a Hamas spokesman has declared 'I'm sure we will have to reassess our commitment to the ceasefire if Israel continues to murder our people. There is no such thing as a one-sided ceasefire' and Mushir Masri, a Hamas spokesman in Gaza, told reporters that an Israeli incursion into the Gaza Strip would cause more violence: 'They should understand that by this serious escalation they have opened the gates of hell, and if they enter Gaza we are not going to stand by silently.' The Palestinian people will not give up their struggle for freedom.

other leaders of the PA in Ramallah. His message to them was the same as that which Blair had delivered to the London conference on Palestine in March: the PA had to rein in Hamas and other Palestinian resistance groups and prevent any resumption of armed actions. Straw went on to claim that the creation of a Palestinian state was in the hands of the Palestinians, whatever the intentions of the Israeli government: 'If the Palestinians are to provide security...there will be a dynamic toward the next two stages of the road map...If they are able to deliver the security required and reconstruction and political reform with our help, then they will create a dynamic toward the two states we want to see.' Turning reality on its head he perversely declared that 'no Israeli government could obviously stand idly by' if there was a breakdown of the ceasefire and a resumption of violence.

For the Palestinian people the ceasefire/calmdown has not for one day stopped the violence of regular Israeli incursions and their assaults on ordinary people. It hasn't stopped the checkpoints or the continued construction of the Apartheid Wall and the stealing of ever more land. For instance a report detailing the events of one week, 7-13 June, recorded 14 attacks by armed settlers on Palestinians and their property. It also documented 113 instances of Israeli troops closing roads, crossing points and Apartheid Wall gates in addition to establishing 93 mobile roadblocks.

Since the ceasefire/calmdown was declared at the Sharm el-Sheik summit on 8 February:

- 61 Palestinians have been killed

ASBOs: criminalising the working class

New figures published in July 2005 show a sharp rise in the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). ASBOs were designed to criminalise whole sections of the working class, whilst protecting the interests of the rich. Since their introduction in April 1999 ASBOs have been increasingly used against the most oppressed and vulnerable sections of society – including working class youth, travellers, prostitutes and people with mental health problems. ASBOs are being used against children at an accelerating rate with the number of orders issued against 10 to 15-year-olds rising fourfold in the last five years.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 gives police and local councils the right to impose curfews and restrict the movements of young people. However, a 15-year-old boy, known as 'W', has recently challenged these powers. Two high court judges ruled that police should not be granted detention powers unless they suspect a criminal or anti-social offence has been committed. This is a victory for all young people.

The Home Office's own statistics show that 34% of all ASBOs (1,528) issued since April 1999 were issued between June and December 2004. This shows a massive rise in the use of ASBOs and is 51% of the total of ASBOs given in the first five years.

The majority of ASBOs are being imposed in some of the poorest areas in the country. Greater Manchester Council has now issued a total of 710 ASBOs – 28% of which have been issued in the six-month period from

June to December 2004. Greater London has seen the most significant rise in the use of ASBOs with over 40% of ASBOs issued there given in that same period. The West Midlands and West Yorkshire also have high numbers of ASBOs with 37% and 32% respectively of total ASBOs for this period being in these areas. These four areas account for approximately 40% of all ASBOs given across the country.

The government is intensifying its attack on working class youth. More than half of all ASBOs have been imposed on people under the age of 18. However, youth are not targeted indiscriminately. The children of the rich do not face the harsh realities forced upon the working class and laws against anti-social behaviour specifically target the poor.

Breaching ASBOs is linked to the imprisonment of approximately 50 children every month. At least 400

children have been handed custodial sentences for breach of ASBOs. These draconian measures have forced criticism from sections of the ruling class. Even the Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner, Alvaro Gil-Robles, has criticised Britain's use of ASBOs for criminalising children and said that no-one under the age of 16 should be at risk of imprisonment.

ASBOs are increasingly being used against people with mental health problems. The British Institute for Brain Injured Children has identified 15 cases where children with special needs, including Asperger's syndrome and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, have received ASBOs. A 12-year-old girl from the Midlands was given an ASBO for swearing in the street despite suffering from Asperger's syndrome. A 15-year-old boy was given an ASBO for the same offence despite suffering from Tourette's. A paranoid schizophrenic was given an ASBO after being given inadequate support and treatment for his illness.

A recent study in Leeds has shown that around a third of anti-social behaviour cases have involved someone with a mental health problem. Not only is the state refusing to provide the care and attention needed by people with mental illnesses, it actually punishes them by prosecuting them for being 'anti-social'. This helps the government to deny the scale of these illnesses by discarding those affected.

ASBOs and other legislation brought in to 'tackle anti-social behaviour' do not provide an answer to the genuine problems of crime and anti-social behaviour which beset working class communities, but are a further tool for oppressing those very communities. The fundamental aim of these measures is the protection of the privileged lifestyle of the middle class. They offer no solution to the alienation of unemployed working class youth. Instead, they are used to further divide and rule communities, by demonising any individuals or groups who, for whatever reason, do not or will not 'fit in' or quietly put up with their lot.

Heather Keating

Education Notes

The bad news

A recent *Dispatches* programme, filmed undercover, exposed tactics used by schools to pass Ofsted inspections (sending difficult children out of school) and a high level of disruptive behaviour by pupils. Up to 60% of parents in London are already very anxious about secondary school provision. The government response is to deflect responsibility onto parents and spin its line about anti-social behaviour and parental duty.

Where has all the money gone?

Following a period of disastrous underfunding a huge injection of money was needed to normalise school provision. Since 1997 real spending by central and local government has risen by £16bn to £38bn a year. Most of the new cash has gone to bribe teachers to work in awful conditions and accept their imprisonment in a system of targets, tests and league tables. Teacher numbers have increased by a fifth to 432,000, while teachers' average pay increased from £22,000 in 1997 to over £30,000 in 2003.

It's not working

Despite increasing funding the Labour government has created a system that does not work. By dismantling a comprehensive system and opening up schools to competition in an education market, chaos has grown. This results in an uneven distribution of resources,

which cannot be controlled. So, for example, more than 24,000 primary pupils (15%) are being taught in classes that are so large that they break the law, which since 2001 says that 5- to 7-year-olds must be taught in classes of 30 or fewer.

There is now an £8bn backlog in school building repairs and a threatened 10-15 year wait for basic improvements in secondary schools and an even longer wait, till 2023, for primary schools.

The use of teaching assistants (TAs) is proving problematic where they are being used to solve staffing shortages. TAs around the country are threatening strike action in September because they are already on the minimum wage and have been offered an increase of just 15p extra per hour to take classes as cover for teachers.

The most telling part of the *Dispatches* film was when, unscripted, a Year 10 pupil tells the teacher secretly filming her that she is writing a letter of complaint to Mr. Blair because her science class has had 26 supply teachers this year. Meanwhile the class around her was erupting into the bad behaviour of the bored and disaffected. Boys' exclusions from school have just hit a 5-year high with almost 10% of 13 and 14-year-old boys suspended last year for poor behaviour.

Skills shortages?

On the one side the chaos of the market place, on the other authoritarian governance. Since taking office ministers have outdone each other with claims that the key to Britain's future economic success in the global economy is to address the skills shortage and to direct education to this end.

The globalised economy, however, does not work this way. There is a lessening demand for skilled workers as jobs are restructured by out-sourcing, re-skilling, de-skilling and multi-skilling. This has polarised the workforce. At one end, one in three jobs today require no certification at all. At the other, the oversupply of qualified jobseekers has led to higher and higher entry requirements. About 6.4 million people are qualified to the equivalent of NVQ level 3 but only 4 million jobs demand this level of qualification. Training for a 'higher technical' middle range of jobs is weak and has stagnated on with declining uptake for modern apprenticeships and foundation degrees and overall neglect by employers unwilling to make their own provision for 'skills shortages' as they have done traditionally.

Employability

Employers are now oversupplied with certified, if not qualified labour. As the core diminishes middle managers and other professionals are de-layered and de-skilled along with the remaining craft workers. Education is urged to train the workforce for the core skills that increasingly make up a curriculum of 'bite-size' training packages. Employability is the justification for increasingly narrowing learning horizons. Failing 14-year-olds and under-qualified school leavers are prepared for entry into a pool of semi-skilled flexible labour to be drawn on as required.

In the future no undercover agents will be needed to expose this government's agenda, which is the creation of a state education system in subservience to the profitability of big business. All the rest is lies.

Susan Davidson



FRFI defeats prison censorship

In the last issue of FRFI we reported that at least two prisoners at Belmarsh high security prison in south London had been stopped from receiving copies of the paper. The prison has now been forced to back down, as have other high security prisons which also tried to withhold the paper from prison subscribers.

Initially, Belmarsh argued, absurdly, that *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* is a racist publication. Basque political prisoner Iñigo Makazaga and Kevin Nevers were handed empty envelopes, with the words 'racial paper, needs to be returned to sender or destroyed under 10-day rule'.

When Larkin Publications and the prisoners' legal advisers wrote to protest, the grounds suddenly changed to some equally spurious nonsense about the paper infringing the prison's

'Incentive and Earned Privileges Scheme' (IEPS), as it came from the publishers rather than being purchased through the prison canteen. This did not explain why the papers were marked 'racial paper and not for issue' and doesn't make sense in any case, as the IEPS refers to purchases made by prisoners and we send FRFI free of charge as an act of solidarity.

We protested about this censorship by writing letters to the prison and Prison Service, publicising it in the prison newspaper *Inside Time*, on Indymedia, through activist email lists and elsewhere. We urged others to email, write and fax the prison complaining. And, through Iñigo Makazaga's legal representative, Daniel Guedalla of Birnberg Peirce solicitors, we threatened to begin a High Court action to judicially review the prison's decision.

We then learnt that FRFI was also

being stopped in Frankland and Full Sutton and widened the campaign to encompass those prisons, encouraging our supporters to protest to the Directorate of High Security Prisons.

On 29 June the Head of Office Administration at Belmarsh wrote to Birnberg Peirce solicitors and to Larkin Publications apologising for the implication that FRFI was a racist paper, confirming that the IEP scheme was irrelevant to us, assuring us that Iñigo would not be stopped from getting FRFI in future, and informing us that we could send an additional copy to the prison library! A week later the High Security Briefing and Casework Unit confirmed that all three prisons would allow prisoners to receive the paper without further hindrance.

We will continue to oppose all attempts to censor our newspaper or prevent its distribution in prisons.

RASBOs

The following have been nominated for a RASBO (real ASBOs) following the 7 July London bombings.

- All the hotel owners and cab drivers who cashed in on the suffering by hiking their prices by up to three times the normal rate.
- The city traders who made millions by buying cheap when share prices fell on news of the outrage. They call this 'making a killing'.
- Phone company Cable & Wireless, which tried to charge grieving relatives of the dead and missing a 40p premium rate on the official hotline number they had to ring for news. After an uproar the company backed down.



• Lastly, a big RASBO to Shami Chakrabati, director of Liberty, who, responding to remarks made by Home Secretary Charles Clarke on the BBC's *Today* programme, said in a press release: 'I want to express my unequivocal respect and admiration for the leadership shown by the Home Secretary this morning. He signalled effective but proportionate responses to the threat, which distinguish between the innocent and the guilty. In the difficult times that lie ahead... Charles Clarke will have Liberty's general support for the values he outlined today'. Chakrabati later said she was 'not unhappy' with the shoot-to-kill policy.

JW

HURRICANE DENNIS: when the going gets tough...

From 7 to 9 July, Cuba was battered by winds of up to 220 kilometres per hour, six-metre high waves and heavy rains, leading to flooding, power cuts and communication systems breakdown, as a result of Hurricane Dennis, which also hit Jamaica, Haiti and the southern US. **HELEN YAFFE** witnessed the national mobilisation to protect Cuban people, land and property.

Meteorology Exercise 2005

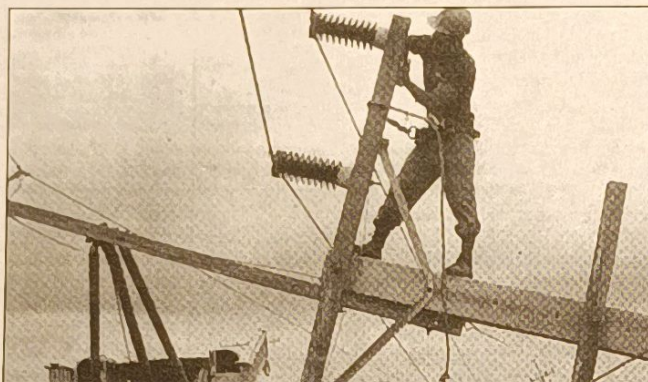
The weekend before the hurricane hit Cuba, hundreds of thousands of Cubans engaged in Meteorology Exercise 2005, a national mobilisation to prepare for the tropical storms which historically strike Cuba in late summer. The aim of the exercise, which involved workers, farmers, students and specialists from the municipal Defence Councils, work centres, social institutions, grassroots organisations, the Ministry of the Interior and units of the Revolutionary Armed Forces was to train the population in the 'execution of tasks of protection.' These include:

- organising evacuations of people and livestock
- measures to prevent flooding
- dealing with gas leakages and explosions
- ensuring food and medical provisions for shelters
- securing economic resources
- ensuring the flow of information in the case of power cuts and communication breakdown
- clearing up as quickly as possible after the disaster, focusing on hygiene.

Meteorology 2005 was intended to demonstrate the strengths and weakness in Cuba's national emergency contingency preparations. It was hailed as a success.

Hurricane Dennis

By Tuesday 5 July, Cubans were



Power workers mend overhead lines in the wake of the hurricane

preparing for the real thing, as the tropical storm heading towards Cuba escalated to a category 2 hurricane. By Thursday afternoon Hurricane Dennis was a category 4, just short of category 5 on the Saffir Simpson scale.

Television, radio and newspapers were key to the revolutionary government's strategy of preparing and informing the population. By Thursday afternoon, there were televised images of six-metre waves lashing the coast of Santiago de Cuba. The Cubans remained calm, purchasing supplies, securing homes and streets and tuning in to watch the daily live 'round table' discussion, which was extended by several hours for a full analysis and report on the hurricane. President Fidel Castro participated in the programme, communicating via telephone with the Communist Party's First Secretary in

Granma province where a television tower had been felled by 100kph winds. Other provincial representatives reported in detail on their contingency measures. More than 200,000 people had been evacuated by Thursday afternoon.

By dawn on Friday, Dennis' winds and heavy rains were battering the southeastern provinces, while in Havana we woke to blue skies. Maintaining its force, Dennis moved west, severely damaging the beautiful historical city of Trinidad; Cienfuegos in central Cuba was hit by gusts of up to 200kph, destroying homes and knocking out the province's electrical supply. By Friday afternoon, overcast skies announced the hurricane's advance on Havana. Shops closed and Cubans waited, playing dominoes and watching the news until the blackout hit Havana. 168,000 people were evacuated.

Some time around midnight, the eye of the hurricane crossed Cuba, leaving Cuba's northern coast several miles east of Havana. The winds reached 124kph, but after all their preparations, the people of Havana dismissed Hurricane Dennis as a big wind, and little damage was seen in the centre. Just 184 homes were destroyed in the province. By 5am, brigades were out cleaning up the rubble, and by 7.30am the famous M7 'camel' bus had resumed service.

However, power cuts continued, affecting gas and water supplies. Daily newspapers gave information about progress in restoring telephones, radio, water, gas and electricity.

The rain continued throughout Saturday. By Sunday clear skies were back but there was still no refrigeration, no ventilators and no gas; water had to be drawn in buckets from underground supplies. Even bread rations were affected. People grumbled, but were kept informed about when services would resume. At no point did medical services stop. By Sunday morning gas, water and electricity were returning sporadically and by the afternoon, people in Havana could see on their televisions the devastation suffered in eastern and central Cuba and know how comparatively lucky they were. In one town, 94% of homes had been completely or partially destroyed.

Overall, the sum of the devastation was:

- 16 people dead, 13 of them in Granma, one of the most rural and least developed provinces in Cuba
- \$1.4bn of damage (£800 million)
- 120,000 homes seriously damaged, including 15,000 destroyed
- 1,531,000 people evacuated throughout the country
- 1,025 electricity posts felled and 21 municipalities left without electricity.
- 2.5 million people without a direct water supply.

President Castro announced an additional investment of \$400 million in food supplies and that Venezuela was sending Cuba electric towers, fuel and other materials. Cuba has, however, declined the offer of 'humanitarian aid' from the US and European Union, a rejection of US and EU hypocrisy, given previous EU reductions in aid and US measures to reduce remittances to Cuba from Cubans in the US. Any non-Cuban US citizen sending money – including humanitarian aid following the hurricane – to Cuba faces imprisonment. The US offer also came with the condition that inspectors be sent to Cuba to evaluate the damage. As Pascual Serrano wrote in *Rebellion*, 'we all know what happened to the last country where US inspectors have been and the type of inspectors they were.' Meanwhile, Cuba has already airlifted emergency food and other supplies to hurricane victims in Jamaica.

Experiencing Hurricane Dennis in the heart of Havana demonstrated the unique level of national mobilisation, cooperation and solidarity with which Cubans confront whatever threatens their revolutionary way of life. Whilst recovery continued, news arrived of Hurricane Emily circling close by. Another dozen tropical storms are predicted in the area this season. Times are tough. In addition to a year-long drought and the ever-tightening US blockade, since May there have been weeks of regular power cuts due to essential maintenance work on generators in the national grid, compounded by the unforeseen need to withdraw two faulty thermoelectric plants in Matanzas and Camaguey. The result has been a major deficit of electricity, distributed equally through the island in the form of blackouts. However, despite all its problems socialist Cuba has shown once again that, when the going gets tough, the tough get going. ■

The bloody trail of Luis Posada Carriles

On 17 May, the United States reluctantly arrested CIA agent and terrorist Luis Posada Carriles on immigration charges. Posada entered the US illegally and lived in Miami for two months while US authorities turned a blind eye (see FRFI 185). Now the US administration is in a quandary, caught between loyalty to a man who has for decades been a faithful operative in its bloodiest operations and its self-professed 'war on terror'. In particular, the US cannot accede to Venezuela's request to extradite Posada to face trial for the 1976 bombing of a Cuban civilian aeroplane in which 73 passengers were killed. For, as recently declassified FBI and CIA files reveal, Posada's testimony could expose a vile and sordid relationship with the US intelligence services that stretches back over 40 years. Whatever crimes, including torture, murder and terrorism, Posada has committed – and he has left a trail of bloody footprints the length and breadth of Latin America – he has committed in the name of US imperialism.

Trained to kill and torture by the CIA

Cuban-born Posada, a Batista henchman, travelled to Miami after the triumph of the Revolution to join the terrorist Nationalist Cuban Movement and was soon in contact with the CIA. He was recruited into 'Operation 40', a group of viciously counter-revolutionary cadre who included Orlando Bosch (Posada's mentor and co-conspirator); Felix Rodriguez (alias Max Gomez, later to murder Che Guevara in Bolivia); Francisco Fiorini (alias Frank Sturgis, CIA killer and Watergate burglar) and Guillermo Novo. Operation 40 was a key plank of the US-supported Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. Its role, as Frank Sturgis put it, was 'to assassinate either members of the military or the political parties of the country that you were going to infiltrate...we were concentrating strictly in Cuba at that particular time'. The CIA trained the 40 in 'third degree interrogation, torture and general terrorism'. Their first act was to blow up *La Coubre*, a Belgian ship carrying arms for Cuba, in Havana harbour in 1960.

Over the next two decades the same names crop up again and again in CIA-sponsored terror and repression: Operation Mongoose against Cuba; Operation Phoenix in Vietnam; the destabilisation of the Dominican Republic; Operation Condor, the US-co-ordinated programme of mass terror repression launched against popular movements throughout Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s.

Targeting Cuba

Meanwhile there was a parallel move by George Bush Senior, then head of the CIA and his deputy director for special operations, Ted Shackley, to focus resources specifically on Cuba. Shackley had established a reputation for training anti-Castro extremists, including Posada, for invasion, sabotage and biological warfare. In 1976, Orlando Bosch set up the Coordination of United Revolutionary Organisations (CORU), bringing together five anti-Cuban organisations into a single, murderous whole. Its mission, as again the FBI documents, was to 'jointly participate in the planning, financing and carrying out of terrorist operations and attacks against Cuba'. Over the summer of 1976, CORU placed bombs in Costa Rica, Portugal, Jamaica, Barbados, Puerto Rico, Panama and Colombia; it also attempted to kidnap the Cuban ambassador in Mexico. In September, Posada was in-

volved in planting the bomb that killed Chilean Foreign Minister Orlando Letelier and his aide. Emboldened by this cowardly murder, CORU boss Bosch stated: 'Now that our organisation has come out of the Letelier affair looking good, we are going to try something else'. The FBI records Posada's boast: 'We are going to hit an airliner'. On 6 October 1976, the Cuban flight was blown out of the sky.

Declassified FBI reports from 1976 make it clear that from the outset the US was fully aware of CORU's activities. Yet CORU continued to operate unmolested and by the end of 1977 was setting up military cells in the US to attack Cuban sympathisers.

Posada: loyal CIA henchman

After being directly recruited to the CIA in 1965, Posada became a high-ranking official in the Venezuelan secret police, apparently on behalf of the CIA, and was involved in the torture and murder of more than 60 Venezuelan civil rights activists. By 1976, as we have seen, he was an active bomber for CORU. Jailed in the US for his role in the Cubana bombing, he mysteriously escaped and fled to Venezuela, where he was jailed again. However, after eight years he escaped to El Salvador, where he became a 'support director' in the illegal US re-arming of the Contras, importing cocaine into the US to fund the war effort and fly-

ing supplies out to the Contras in Nicaragua. In 1997 Posada organised the planting of four bombs in Cuban hotels and tourist resorts; an Italian tourist was killed. In 2000, he and Guillermo Novo were arrested with suitcases full of explosives at the Pan-American Summit, having planned to assassinate Fidel Castro. They were convicted and imprisoned but, this year, both were released early by puppet president Mireya Moscoso.

Since then, across Latin America the voices of those who suffered at the hands of US terror, ruthlessly implemented by men like Posada, have been raised to demand Posada's extradition to Venezuela to face justice. Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets in Cuba, Venezuela, Chile, Uruguay – even in cities across the US.

But the United States protects its own. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has admitted that immigration proceedings against Posada could be drawn out for months, with no question of extradition considered until they are settled. Already the next hearing has been put off till 29 August. No doubt Posada hopes to emulate his boss Orlando Bosch, a murderer and criminal recognised as a terrorist by the US Justice Department who was granted a pardon by George Bush Senior and now freely roams the streets of Miami.

Cat Wiener

European Union: not so cordiale

Last year Prime Minister Blair and President Chirac celebrated the centenary of the Entente Cordiale, an agreement settling disputes over colonial possessions and paving the way to Franco-British co-operation in the lead-up to the First World War. A year on and the celebrations are for Britain's triumphs at Trafalgar (1805), Waterloo (1815) and, to cap it all, Singapore (2005), where London triumphed over Paris for the 2012 Olympics. It was all too much for President Chirac to stomach; he sneered at English cooking, insulted the haggis and remarked that the Olympic committee could 'trust France', implying that Perfidious Albion was untrustworthy. **TREVOR RAYNE reports.**

This descent into national stereotyping might be mildly amusing if it were not for the very unfunny ruling classes that it serves. With European capitalism in crisis its ruling classes are tempted to retreat from pan-European collaboration to national chauvinism. In the context of rivalry with the dominant US ruling class this is unsustainable.

The French voted No to the European Union constitutional treaty on 29 May, followed by the Dutch No on 1 June. The British government then said it would defer a referendum. Chirac had campaigned for a Yes vote. The Labour government breathed a sigh of relief at the No votes, pleased at not having to choose between a consolidated EU and a less integrated alliance favoured by the US. Blair was happy not to campaign for a Yes vote which he would most likely lose.

Blair and Chirac then clashed on Britain's EU rebate at the Brussels EU summit. France and 23 of the now 25 EU countries demanded an end to the rebate, a repayment from Britain's EU budget contributions, originally negotiated by Mrs Thatcher. Blair refused to surrender the rebate and insisted that the Common Agricultural Programme (CAP) be reformed. Behind these manoeuvres are different factions of the European bourgeoisie contending for power in Europe, seeking to assert their own versions of European imperialism in the context of an accumulation crisis.

Since 2000 the EU's annual economic growth rate has been about 1.5%, less than half that proposed at the 2000 Lisbon summit. Unemployment in the 15 older EU member states has risen from 7.4% in 2001 to 8.1% in 2004. French unemployment is 10.2%, German 11.7%, Dutch 6.6% and Britain's official unemployment rate is 4.7%. Average unemployment in the ten new member states is 14.4%. Part-time workers constitute 15% of the French workforce, 20% of Germany's, 35% of Dutch workers and almost a quarter of Britain's workforce. Women form over three-quarters of part-time workers in each of these countries. The share of wages in the EU's gross domestic product has fallen from 73.4% in 1962 to 68% in 2004. Profits have correspondingly risen as a proportion of incomes from under 25% to almost 33%. Nevertheless, EU investment has grown only 0.5% a year for 2000-04, while in the 12 euro-zone countries it fell by 0.2% a year. (John Grahl, *Le Monde diplomatique*, July 2005). This is the real EU crisis and cause of ruling class divisions.

In *Socialist Review* (July/August 2005), Alex Callinicos describes the French No vote as rebellion against EU elites. 'The astonishing achievement of the campaign for a left No – a coalition of Socialist Party dissidents, the Communist Party, *altermondialistes* [anti-globalisation campaigners] and the revolutionary left – was that



A British tourist is offered French farm produce as part of a protest about Blair's attack on the Common Agricultural Policy

they made neo-liberalism the central issue of the referendum... One French Marxist told me it was the first real victory for the left in more than 20 years.' The proposed constitution certainly placed the rights of money above those of labour and deserved to be defeated. However, the stand against neo-liberalism became a defence of the 'French social model' that has pushed millions of workers into unemployment and increased racial oppression. Defence of national sovereignty mingled with anti-US chauvinism, anti-globalisation merged with calls for protectionism against Chinese imports, talk of Polish plumbers taking French jobs and the need to stop Turkey joining the EU to stop worse happening. 42% of French No voters said 'there are too many foreigners in France' compared to 21% of Yes voters. 80% of French blue-collar workers and 60% of white-collar workers voted No. They rejected what they correctly saw as an attack upon them, but it is a tainted victory for the French working class to be allied with the chauvinism that propelled the National Front No vote.

The popular Mr Blair

On 1 July Britain took over the EU presidency for six months. Pointing to Britain's relatively lower unemployment rate the Labour government will champion the interests of multinational corporations and banks across the EU. Methods of calculating British unemployment have been repeatedly adjusted to produce figures with little resemblance to reality. Regardless of this and regardless of the fact that unemployment in Britain is increasing, the British government will promote Britain as a model for others to follow. This means the removal of rights that offer protection for workers in the wealthiest EU countries and preventing the transfer of such rights to the new EU member countries.

Blair was praised by Ernest-Antoine Seilliere, head of French employers' group Medef: 'I can't hide the fact that from the business side, we see a strong leader in Tony Blair.' Seilliere sees Blair building on

Thatcher's legacy and lamented the French No vote, '15 million people worked in French private companies, but some went to the café after work and said "Down with capitalism"' (*Financial Times*, 29 June 2005). Britain has more and bigger multinationals than any other EU country, with more overseas assets, and the City dwarfs other European financial centres. Consequently, sections of the European ruling classes will seek alliances with the British bourgeoisie to promote their own interests. A priority is to make central and eastern Europe a source of cheap labour and an export market for capital, services and goods. They must also attack their own domestic working classes.

The British Labour government calls for reform of the CAP. Total developed OECD countries' subsidies to agricultural producers in 2004 were \$380 billion, of which the EU's were \$133 billion. They amounted to 33% of EU farm incomes. Such European subsidies were originally introduced after the Second World War to buy loyalty from social classes regarded as unreliable and potentially pro-communist. Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer Brown criticised these subsidies for their impact on underdeveloped countries' economies; preventing sugar exports for example. However, the Labour government is most selective in what and when it chooses to target. It acts not out of altruism but out of self-interest.

In 2002 the British government blocked an EU proposal limiting the amount of subsidies to approximately £200,000 a year per farm. Last year sugar multinational Tate and Lyle received a £120 million subsidy and, according to Oxfam, the Dukes of Bedford, Westminster and Marlborough received a combined £120 an hour. This year the Labour government refused to allow any contributions to the new east European member countries' agriculture and called for a free market in farm produce. 40% of Poland's 40 million people live in the countryside. Exposing central and eastern European farming to a so-called free market is a recipe for chaos and poverty, but this is what the clamour for profit demands.

British capitalism, with Blair as its figurehead, is fighting to assert its position among the European bourgeoisie and stand as an independent imperialist power, depending on the global role of the City to elevate its status. At the same time it seeks to maintain the alliance with US imperialism. Rivalry between the US ruling class and those of France and Germany will push the British ruling class to choose between them and when it does the City's role will diminish. For the European left we can have no siding with any version of capitalism, French, British or whatever. All are based on imperialism and as such are necessarily racist and oppress other nations.

Ireland nationalists resist loyalist intimidation

PAUL MALLON

The loyalist marching season in the Six Counties led to a dramatic increase in sectarian attacks against nationalists. The most serious of these incidents occurred in North Belfast where nationalists came under attack from both the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and loyalist gangs following a series of Orange parades in the nationalist Ardoyne area of the city. Sinn Féin responded, as it has in recent years, by attempting to police its own community. This year however an increased number of nationalists, primarily youth, rejected the Sinn Féin leadership's line and fought pitched battles with both the security forces and loyalist mobs to defend their areas.

Once again 12 July, the height of the loyalist marching season, became the focal point of conflict following the decision to force an Orange march through the Ardoyne area. Last year this same parade caused tensions to explode into protests, which resulted in open confrontation between nationalist youth and the British army (see FRFI 180). Sinn Féin intervened and saved British soldiers from nationalist youths. This year in Ardoyne escalated in a similar way with Sinn Féin again policing its own community. Nationalist youth responded throwing petrol bombs, blast bombs, bricks and bottles at the military. Around 80 PSNI officers were injured, they responded by firing plastic bullets at the nationalist protesters in the first use of baton rounds in almost three years. Several nationalists were injured by these lethal weapons, which have previously killed 17 people, the majority children, in the Six Counties. The next day Sinn Féin's Gerry Kelly, who spent the day before acting as a policeman, complained of being 'disempowered' by the British military as they began baton charges and used water cannon to disperse the crowds. Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams played a similar role and was soaked by police water cannon for his efforts. Adams spent much of the day trying to call the British and Irish governments to get them to intervene. Many nationalists viewed Adam's posturing as a political stunt.

On the same day in the nationalist town of Dunloy, County Antrim, Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness was deployed to defuse the anger of nationalists engaged in a tense stand off with the police and army. Nationalist residents objected to the presence of racist Orange marchers but were urged by McGuinness

to be 'cool, calm and collected'. Following talks between McGuinness and the PSNI the Orange convoy was allowed through. Adams' and McGuinness' interventions are their first visible return to the streets since the January killing of Robert McCartney in Belfast by Republicans.

The Orange 'Tour of the North' parade on 17 June also descended into violence as the PSNI used dozens of Land Rovers to hem in the local nationalist community along the Crumlin Road, Belfast to facilitate the Orange marchers. Following the march the presence of known members of loyalist death squads led to nationalists throwing missiles from behind police lines. A water cannon was used to try and disperse the nationalist community from their streets. Sinn Féin continued its policing role, attempting to restore order alongside the PSNI. These efforts demonstrate Sinn Féin's under-estimation and misunderstanding of the deep-rooted anger felt by the nationalist community at their rights being trampled on by loyalist bigots.

Following these disturbances in North Belfast, well-known republican ex-prisoner Seán Kelly had his licence revoked by British Secretary of State Peter Hain. The freedom of political prisoners released under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement is entirely conditional. Kelly had been accused by Unionists of being involved in violence in Ardoyne prior to his re-arrest. With no evidence to support this Hain bowed to Unionist pressure. Sinn Féin responded, calling on the British government to 'play fair'.

The latest British government Labour Force Survey confirms the true nature of the Six Counties as a sectarian state. Despite the introduction of successive fair employment laws, Catholics remain twice as likely to be unemployed as their Protestant counterparts. Catholic women are over three and a half times more likely to be unemployed than Protestant women. Nationalist areas (West and North Belfast, Derry Foyle and West Tyrone) suffer disproportionately high social deprivation. Unionist areas (North Down, Strangford, Lagan Valley and South Antrim) have least deprivation.

On 12 July nationalists unfurled a banner saying 'Make sectarianism history'. That sectarianism is deeply rooted in the power structure of the six counties controlled by British imperialism. FRFI supports the nationalist people's right to protest and defend themselves from loyalist attacks. We call for the removal of the 15,000 British troops stationed in Ireland.



Sinn Féin's Gerry Adams intervenes on the Crumlin Road



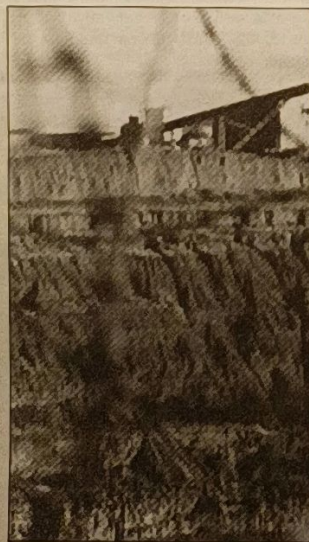
G8 the dead hand of global domination

The protests against G8 at Gleneagles in the first week of July had more publicity than probably any world summit has ever had. From the moment that Bob Geldof and Make Poverty History announced their London Live8 concert on 2 July it was clear that, rhetoric apart, the protests would be the least effective, the tamest and the most rigorously policed and manipulated. Politically the Labour Party was in charge. Protesters who honestly believed that G8 should be a force against poverty in Africa and against global warming, soon realised that they would be allowed to demonstrate only as much as the Labour government and their hirelings would tolerate. The G8 summit ended as the G8 imperialists wanted with a token gesture in the direction of Africa and no progress on measures to redress climate change. Bob Geldof gave G8 '10 out of 10', and swiftly disappeared down his own publicity trumpet. A few weeks later the famine in Niger hit home: the promised international aid had failed to materialise even though the disaster was predicted. A UN aid programme sputtered to life promising relief, too little, too late. The children died as they always have.

Below we print our comrades' account of the protests in Scotland, and **Charles Chinweizu** and **Louis Brehony** analyse what G8 did for Africa and climate change.

Helping themselves to Africa

The Labour government's sudden passion for eliminating Africa's chronic poverty is phoney. They have failed to eradicate poverty in Britain, the fourth richest country in the world where poverty levels have doubled since 1979. Their 'liberation' war has doubled child poverty and malnutrition in Iraq. British imperialism has a 'Marshall Plan for Africa'. This began with a series of initiatives in 1998 and culminated in the Commission for Africa report on 11 March and the G8 summit's communiqué at Gleneagles. This is a humanitarian façade for the benefit of liberal fools. Behind the façade is a new imperialist scramble to recolonise this enormously wealthy continent. **CHARLES CHINWEIZU** reports.



Multinationals like de Beers own and control Africa's mineral wealth

Africa is rich

Contrary to corporate media misinformation, Africa is not poor but extremely rich in the strategic raw materials on which the world's industries depend, in particular those in the G8 industrialised nations. 64% of world reserves of manganese, 90% of cobalt and 98% of chrome are found in Africa. These are crucial to the manufacture of cars, buildings, engines, electronics and arms. Over 30% of uranium, 90% of platinum and 40% of gold reserves belong to African people, but are controlled by US, French and British multinationals which are steadily plundering the continent.

Gold, chrome, cobalt, oil, timber, cassiterite, rubber, diamonds and coltan (used in laptops and mobile phones) are being systematically stolen from Africa's richest country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The thieves are 85 G8 companies, including 18 British firms. All diamond and gold mines in Botswana and South Africa are owned by De Beers and Anglo-American. The apartheid-supporting Oppenheimer dynasty controls both companies, and De Beers controls half the world's diamond supply. British multinationals Unilever and Shell control 70% of mineral mines in DRC and 50% of crude oil production in Nigeria. Seven French multinationals control electricity, water, transport, communications (Orange) and banking (Crédit Lyonnais) in Côte d'Ivoire.

Africa's main strategic resources are oil and natural gas. Excluding Sudan, Africa has 10% of proven world reserves. As the domination of the Middle East proves trickier than expected, alternative sources of raw materials have to be secured.

The racist G8's real aims are unlimited access to key African markets, energy and other strategic resources, and the military securing of communi-

cation channels to allow the unimpeded transport of raw materials to their countries. This includes stationing thousands of rapid-deployment and semi-permanent troops and mercenaries throughout Africa, such as those used in the recent attempted coup in Equatorial Guinea. Training and arming of these killers is to be intensified: the G8 has announced an extra 75,000 African 'peacekeeping' forces, in addition to the secretly established military training programmes already in place, such as the Africa Contingency Operations Training Assistance, officially set up to provide 'peacekeeping and humanitarian aid', run by the US army's European command in Stuttgart using special forces and CIA terrorists.

None of these 'peacekeepers' have been able to prevent the barely documented deaths of well over 10 million people, through the official and secret wars ravaging Africa. That is not their role. Protecting Shell's oil installations in Nigeria and tin and gold mines in DRC, and the safe passage of their loot, is the real priority. In Liberia, the cosmetic UN mission UNMIL has been kept away from areas along the border with Côte d'Ivoire where illegal diamond mining and timber logging have been continuing unchecked.

British imperialism out of Africa!

British Gas plc has bought up 60m tonnes of liquefied natural gas (17 years' total output) from Equatorial Guinea. This is worth \$15bn but the government will only receive 5% of the production-sharing deal and 10% royalties from the original processing plant contract. In any case, most of the royalties remain in London and Washington bank accounts or 'fiscal black holes' in Cyprus, Luxembourg and Jersey in slush funds set up for



President Obiang Nguema and various sidekicks.

Whilst the children of the Equatorial Guinea elite are educated in London, funded by oil companies, the rest of the population suffers malaria, dysentery and starvation; the majority lack safe drinking water. British Gas has refused to publish how much it actually paid the government.

Another British firm, AngloGold Ashanti, part of AngloAmerican, has been giving 'financial aid and logistical support' to regional warlords responsible for rape, torture and massacres in DRC in order to gain access to gold mines. These are then looted via Uganda and Rwanda and the gold shipped to Europe. AngloGold said it had a 'moral right' to operate in DRC, and 'will enhance the pursuit of peace and democracy'.

In Darfur, the bodies of the dead were barely cold before British oil firm White Nile and French corporation Total began circulating like vultures, disputing ownership of Sudan's massive oil fields. While the British media has kept silent about the 40,000 rapes of girls and massacres in DRC, there has been a cacophony over Sudan and Darfur in particular, with missionary NGOs calling essentially for an invasion. They got their wish and 10,000 UN troops are now in place in southern Sudan's oil fields, while Darfur's people still wait for the £2.4bn aid promised last year, starving in disease-ridden camps, where rape and abuse continue.

In Angola, where \$4.22bn went 'missing' between 1997-2002 and ten members of the ruling elite have more than \$100m each, 70% of the people live in abject poverty, with life expectancy at 36.6 years and infant mortality at 191 per 1,000 live births. G8 banks including British parasites Standard Chartered, Barclays and Royal Bank of Scotland have loaned

state oil company Sonangol \$2.35bn at an interest rate 2.5% above the London base rate. This will guarantee control of all future oil production as Angola, Africa's second largest oil producer, repays the debt.

London International Bank, French radio software firm ATDI and the MoD, set up secret deals to monopolise Liberia's telecommunications and its alluvial diamond production, worth \$800m annually. £2bn looted from Nigeria by late President Abacha still resides in British banks that refuse to hand it back. Despite urging corrupt African leaders to 'commit to transparent governance', not one G8 country has itself ratified the UN Convention against corruption.

The root of the problems

Africa's problems are well documented: 17.9 million people in the horn of Africa and 16.41 million in southern Africa face starvation due to food shortages; 10 million die each year, 30,000 a day, including 4.8 million children under five, from hunger, preventable diseases and extreme poverty. 25 million are infected with HIV/AIDS, with 8,500 dying each day from related illnesses (the real figure is much higher as vile African governments downplay the pandemic). About half of the children, 43 million, are out of school. 300 million sub-Saharan Africans live on less than 65p a day.

These problems began with slavery, the worst of which was grotesque European transatlantic slavery which removed tens of millions to the Americas in chains. European racists then scrambled to colonise Africa: 10 million were killed as a result of Belgian colonialism in the Congo (now DRC) alone. The criminal plunder continues to this day despite 'independence'. The major imperialist powers Britain, France and the US put

in place structures to ensure that 'independence' continued to mean dependence.

Will G8 eradicate poverty?

In 1958, the British Foreign Office said '[aid is] a weapon in the armoury of foreign policy'. US President Richard Nixon once said 'the main purpose of aid is not to help other nations but to help ourselves'. A recent ActionAid report revealed that most G8 aid (61%) is creamed off by western 'consultants' as technical assistance; about 30% of British aid is fake, double-counted money, spent on business class flights, administrative costs or inflated salaries; about 90% in the case of France and the US. US and Japanese aid is tied to purchase of their goods. For every 40 cents of phantom 'aid' Africa gets, it pays out \$2 to the rich G8 nations.

Unsurprisingly, most African countries are poorer now than they were in 1950, despite some \$450bn (£260bn) in aid, and their debt (now over \$300bn) is unpayable. The plans of the *Global Fund for Aids, TB and Malaria*, set up by Labour Chancellor Gordon Brown, George Bush and Bill Gates, excludes provision of cheaper generic drugs to protect monopoly patents, hence guaranteeing lucrative contracts and markets for US and British pharmaceutical firms.

The G8 has promised to provide \$48bn, a \$25bn annual increase in aid by 2010, however only \$8.5bn (£4.9bn) of the promised \$25bn-odd (£14bn) extra aid is really new money. They have spent \$200bn 'liberating' Iraq, and the global arms trade – of which the G8 are in the top ten arms suppliers – reached £1 trillion in 2004. Africa gets more real aid (£110bn a year) from remittances from the African diaspora. G8 aid is tied to privatisation, deregulation, and opening up of African markets. This neoliberalism has been discredited and rejected in Latin America and India as backward, but is championed by the G8, because as Brown admits '[without this] we are unlikely to maintain the growth rates we have enjoyed over the past 20 years'.

100% debt relief is only to be given to 18 eligible countries, 14 of them African, who have completed a long-term programme of World Bank/IMF-imposed economic reforms, known as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. The debt proposal provides debt stock cancellation of \$55bn. It may include nine more African countries in the next two years, if they too complete the HIPC programme and agree to privatise state assets and deepen imperialist control of their resources.

Make Poverty History and Live8

Asking the G8 to eradicate poverty is like asking the Nazis to eradicate anti-Semitism. However, this is the strategy of the MPH campaign, led primarily by the Labour Party, NGOs and celebrities. The NGOs play a similar role to that of the Christian missionaries in Africa who legitimised slavery and colonialism. They perform a task for imperialism, presenting its human, benevolent face while hiding the reality of barbaric neo-colonialism. They also benefit directly, with 61% of all aid expenditure going on providing them with a living.

As for the celebrities, the MPH and Live8 events were hugely successful; loads of white MPH T-shirts were sold, as were loads of fashionable white arm-bands, made in Chinese sweatshops with child slave-labour and emblazoned with Tommy Hilfiger logos (see *The Scotsman*, 30 May 2005). Sales of artists who played Live8 shot up 1,000%; LiveAid CDs have been re-released and that great friend to Africa, Bob Geldof, who omitted to include any African artists in the Hyde Park concert, has another book on Africa on sale.

G8 nations squander the Earth's resources and make the poor pay

Prime Minister Blair went into the G8 proclaiming his mission to lead the G8 nations in a bid to halt climate change. With Blair as G8 President, the liberal press speculated that US President Bush might be forced to accept the realities of climate change and do something about it. President Bush duly acknowledged that human activity contributes to global warming, but prevented any practical decisions beyond a commitment to further talks. The G8 Summit represents the interests of the eight richest imperialist countries (US, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Italy, Canada and Russia) and above all the US is determined that its economic superiority will not be fettered.

Last winter was Britain's driest for over 100 years. The country is now facing one of the most severe water shortages for decades, with a large number of reservoirs containing dangerously low water levels – the result of eight months of below-average rainfall. Most scientists don't doubt that the effects of global warming – caused by the accumulation of heat-trapping gases, like carbon dioxide (CO₂), in the earth's atmosphere – are upon us.

The effects of this man-made disaster will be most felt in the poorest parts of the world. Everything afflicting Africa today will be made far worse – poverty, disease, shortage of clean water, 'natural' disasters. Imperialism, which divides the world into oppressed and oppressor nations, has caused all of these problems in Africa in its relentless drive for profits.

With the industrial revolution a

process began in which the concentration of CO₂ in the Earth's atmosphere has increased by 35% – one third of this in the last 40 years. Average global surface temperatures have risen by 0.6 degrees Celsius in the past century. A three degree rise will melt the ice caps and flood coastal cities. On current trends, it is estimated that temperatures will increase between 1.5 and 4.5 degrees before the end of this century.

The Kyoto Protocol, signed by all G8 countries except the US, aims to cut overall emissions of heat-trapping gases to 5.2% below 1990 levels by 2008-12. This requires curbing the use of coal, oil and natural gas. But Kyoto is not worth the paper it is written on. This is not even close to the sort of targets that could stop the effects of global warming from worsening. Yet even Kyoto is too much for the Bush administration whose sole aim is to maintain the US as the dominant imperialist power. The US is the world's biggest polluter. A quarter of all CO₂ emissions – 40,000 pounds – are released on average by each US citizen every year. US emissions total more than those of China, India and Japan combined. Bush made it clear before the G8 Gleneagles summit that the US would not sign up to Kyoto.

The US has flatly refused any legally-binding limit on greenhouse gas emissions and has put nuclear power forward as a solution. Bush mirrors the views of US multinational Exxon-Mobil, rejecting the scientific consensus and calling for more research. The company provided \$2.8 million to the Republican Party between 2000 and 2004, and former

US Climate Change Advisor, Phil Cooney, now works for the company. It also recently emerged that BP has been privately lobbying in Washington to block legislation to curb greenhouse gases in the US.

Liberal sections of the British press are eager to commend Blair's efforts at tackling the environment. Tony Juniper of Friends of the Earth claimed that 'Tony Blair is right to plan a public split with President Bush at the G8 on climate change if there is no dramatic improvement in the US position.' No one at the G8 publicly condemned the US government's intransigence.

Labour may attempt to portray itself as green but it fails to meet its own targets and Britain's emissions continue to rise. In 2003-04 Britain increased total emissions more than all other EU countries except Italy and Finland. The 1.3% increase, equivalent to 7.4m tonnes of carbon, was mainly due to Britain's car culture: there has been no real attempt to improve or cheapen public transport or to discourage car use nationally. The latest figures for Europe's greenhouse gas emissions show that in 2003 15 EU member countries increased their overall emissions by 1.1%. Under Kyoto, EU countries must reduce emissions by 8% by 2012.

Meanwhile, British imperialism's environmental hypocrisy is laid bare:

- In June a 1,770 km oil pipeline opened, snaking its way from Baku in Azerbaijan to the Turkish Mediterranean coast. The \$4 billion pipeline was built mainly by the British multinational BP – with a

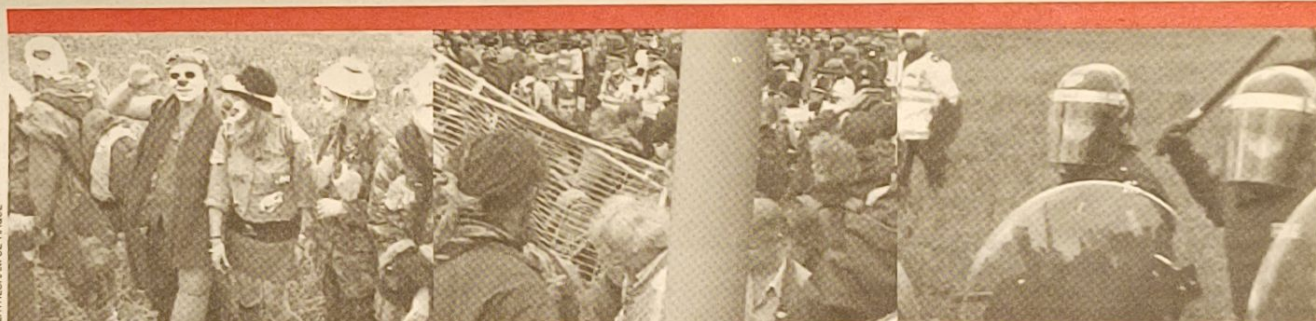
30.1% share – to supply a cheaper source of fuel to the west. Huge areas of land have been destroyed and Turkish activists have been arrested and brutalised for defending villages affected by the pipeline.

- Amid revelations about air travel being one of the most environmentally destructive industries, companies such as British Airways, Virgin Atlantic, easyJet and the airport operator BAA have introduced 'efficiency gains' targets of 2% a year to make their businesses 'greener'. These targets are completely irrelevant as a 3-4% growth in emissions has been forecast, fuelled by the profiteering expansion of the industry. The Labour government has given the go-ahead to expand Stansted and Heathrow airports. Britain does not tax air fuel.

- Energy Minister Malcolm Wicks says: 'We are going to be burning lots of fuels, lots of coal, lots of oil and lots of gas. If we can find ways of burning the stuff more efficiently and more significantly if we can find ways of capturing CO₂, maybe in the North Sea, I think we have to look at that very hard.'

Global warming and the destruction of the environment are the result of the expansion of monopoly capital. In their thirst for profits, multinational companies and their rich, imperialist governments force the consequences of their actions on the same people they economically exploit, the world's poor. The fight to save the environment must be a fight against imperialism.

Louis Brehony



Labour and police manipulate protests

Protests took place throughout Scotland. From the official 'Make Poverty History' rally in Edinburgh on Saturday 2 July to the attempts to break down the fence at Gleneagles the following Wednesday, the G8 protests exposed the relative weakness of the opposition movement and the stranglehold of the Labour Party. Labour Party supporters, including Chancellor Gordon Brown, church leaders and assorted do-gooders dominated the platform at the main rally. Behind the scenes, the potential of Britain's police state could be seen as police prepared their biggest operation in Scotland since the miners' strike in 1984/85. Over 15,000 police from around Britain were deployed to contain and at times attack protesters, arresting, searching, filming and detaining them under section 60 of the Public Order Act.

Edinburgh's Meadows turned into a sea of white, with a scattering of red, on Saturday 2 July as a 250,000-strong Make Poverty History became the largest demonstration in Scotland's history. Everyone from cardinals to the revolutionary left were

present, with many ordinary people who feel strongly about debt relief, aid, poverty and so on. Arriving at the Meadows they found three large concert stages and an array of NGOs and charities already firmly entrenched.

At the *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* stall we raised the issue of poverty not as charity but in the context of opposing capitalism, imperialism and the Labour Party. Our slogan 'Another World is Here' highlighted the struggle for social and economic justice in Venezuela and Cuba and support for anti-imperialist struggles in Iraq and Palestine.

On Sunday, the official meetings and workshops organised by G8 Alternatives, in Usher Hall, were dominated by George Galloway MP, who received multiple standing ovations. Galloway used the platform to bolster support for his Respect coalition. The anarchist Dissent! network, which included the Wombles group held an unofficial counter-summit of its own.

Monday's Carnival of Full Employment turned into a Carnival of Full Police Deployment when the clown army of the small carnival, which was supposed to be a lively, enjoyable

march through the streets of Edinburgh was violently attacked by riot police, most with ID numbers hidden. Sections of Edinburgh were closed down, trapping protesters and public alike for hours behind police cordons while police subjected them to stop-and-search. On the same day, the blockade at Scotland's nuclear submarine base, Faslane, near Glasgow, successfully shut down the base for the first time.

Tuesday's protest at the Dungavel Detention Centre was harassed by a heavy-handed policing operation, as around 900 demonstrators were matched by hundreds of riot police in balaclavas, on horses and using continuous video-recording to intimidate protesters. Several buses on the way to the protest were searched and delayed by the police. The authorities, afraid that the asylum seekers might be heartened by solidarity from the demonstrators, had already moved the detainees to other prisons for the duration.

On Wednesday the G8 leaders arrived in the Gleneagles hotel for the opening of the Summit. Early in the morning, some successful blockades were created, particularly on the M9

motorway. Most protesters based in Edinburgh and Glasgow travelled in coaches towards Stirling and then Gleneagles. The first coaches were turned back by police claiming the march had been cancelled because of disorder at Stirling. Finally police let coaches continue but their tactics had reduced the march to 5,000. The police controlled every aspect of the protest as if our steps had been pre-planned.

Since the high points of Seattle in 1999, Prague 2000 and Genoa 2001 the failure of the anti-capitalist movement to develop in strategy has brought stagnation. This failure was clearly expressed in Scotland, in the increasingly depoliticised forms of protest, the disorganisation of opponents to imperialist war, and the lack of solidarity with those who combat imperialism daily. Today support for the Iraqi and Palestinian resistance, support for socialist Cuba and revolutionary developments in Latin America, especially Venezuela, mean connecting these struggles against imperialism abroad to the fight at home. This is key to the emergence of a serious anti-capitalist movement in Britain.

Joey Simons and
Elthesham Ul-Haque

Battle for Bolivia

On 6 June, President Mesa was finally obliged to submit his resignation following massive and escalating protests by the Bolivian working class and peasantry. That day, some 400,000 people had participated in a *cabildo* (open assembly) in the centre of the capital La Paz. Their demands, for nationalisation of the country's hydrocarbon (gas and oil) reserves and the formation of a transitional government representing workers, peasants and sections of the middle class, were a complete rejection of imperialism and of a local ruling class which had sold their country's wealth to foreign multinationals. **ROBERT CLOUGH** reports.

The latest round of mobilisations started in the middle of May (see FRFI 185) when Congress approved a hydrocarbon law which fell far short of nationalisation. From 23 May, FEJUVE, the neighbourhood alliance from El Alto, led a general strike within the city in collaboration with the El Alto Regional Workers' Confederation (COR), and, along with other working class and peasant organisations, placed the neighbouring La Paz under blockade. Daily demonstrations within La Paz attracted tens of thousands of supporters. Travel to and from neighbouring Peru and Chile was cut off. Elsewhere, demonstrations took place in Cochabamba, whilst the Potosi Departmental Workers' Confederation called for an indefinite general strike to start on 2 June. In Santa Cruz, cen-

tre of the gas and agribusiness cartels, a 48-hour strike of bus workers took place, and a march of indigenous people was attacked by the fascist Cruzista Youth Union. Others, such as Oscar Olivera, leader of the Gas Coalition and Felipe Quispe, leader of the indigenous confederation CSUTCB, supported the El Alto general strike call. On 24 May, MAS leader Evo Morales was shouted down for not supporting the call for nationalisation. A truce took place on Thursday 26 May in observance of the Corpus Christi religious holiday, but Morales' call for it to be extended to 31 May was ignored. The next day demonstrators were back in force.

The ruling class was in disarray. In desperation, it turned to the church; over the weekend Cardinal Julio Terraza tried to broker a deal with

President Mesa, the right-wing Santa Cruz leader and Congress President Horando Vaca Diez, President of the Supreme Court Eduardo Rodriguez and Evo Morales. The proposal, which Morales endorsed, was to agree to a Constituent Assembly at the same time as calling for a referendum on departmental autonomy – a key condition as far as the gas cartel in Santa Cruz was concerned. Meanwhile the Church called for an end to the blockades and strikes. On Monday 30 May, up to 50,000 people assembled in La Paz, and even more the following day. Miners threw sticks of dynamite, Aymara peasants tried to break up Congress. The answer of the masses was clear. Two Bolivian army colonels appeared on a private TV station supporting the demands of the people; they were hastily dismissed. It was evident that there were already divisions in the army, and reports were soon circulating about divisions within the police, with the 1st Regiment refusing to 'gas our women and children'. Neither development was surprising: the rank and file of both is overwhelmingly indigenous in origin and would naturally support the demands of the people. On 1 June, Aymara people from Omasuyos province attacked one of their leaders, the radical Gualberto Choque, in a

call for a more radical mobilisation, and then declared 'We will sack this city tomorrow if there is no solution.'

By Friday 3 June, there were 46 peasant blockades in place across the country. Oil installations and refineries in Santa Cruz and Cochabamba departments (belonging to Repsol and BP) were under occupation by Guarani and Aymara peasants. Three hydroelectric power plants were also taken over, workers shut down valves on a pipeline taking gas to Chile, whilst peasants blew up a canal taking water to La Paz. All sectors of the population were caught up in the struggle. Mesa's position was becoming untenable. He could not depend on military support even if he had wanted to. He had lost the support of the ruling class for his failure to repress the demonstrations. On the Monday, there was an expectation that he would have to resign. The 400,000 people who poured into the centre of La Paz to participate in the *cabildo* represented the working class, poor and oppressed throughout the country. Evo Morales was absent. There were now over 100 blockades in operation. A final effort to bring the two agendas together – that of the ruling class demand for autonomy, and that of the masses for a Constituent Assembly and nationalisation – failed. Demonstrators burned effigies of a cow to show that they would not accept Vaca Diez as a replacement for Mesa (Vaca is Spanish for cow). In the evening, Mesa cut and ran.

The problems of the ruling class were not over. Vaca Diez refused to withdraw his nomination for the presidency. Blockades prevented Congress from meeting in La Paz, so the meeting was adjourned till Thursday to be held in the historic capital Sucre. Immediately the Central Obrera de Bolivia (COB) mobilised 10,000 miners and despatched them to the city. When the meeting convened, crowds demanded nationalisation. Mesa's resignation was accepted at 10.30am. But for hours, as Congress failed to agree on his successor, tension rose, and at

about 5pm people tried to invade the palace. A miner was shot and killed. The crowds refused to disperse. The politicians realised that this was serious, and that appointing Vaca Diez would mean insurrection. Swiftly they moved to agree Eduardo Rodriguez as the least controversial choice, and by the end of the day he had been sworn in as president.

For the moment the Bolivian ruling class was able to stave off disaster. Politics returned to the discredited bourgeois institutions. The class-based anti-imperialist movements demobilised: the blockades had exhausted the people for the present, and their strategy for moving forward was not yet properly developed. As congressional deputies debated the next steps, it was evident that provisional arrangements for a referendum on autonomy in Santa Cruz set for early August would have to be abandoned. By mid-July, agreement had been reached for presidential and congressional elections to be held in December, with a Constituent Assembly and departmental autonomy referenda to be held in July 2006.

Workers, peasants, indigenous people continue to organise

There are now intense debates taking place within the anti-imperialist organisations about how to move forward. A second national meeting of the coalition supporting hydrocarbon nationalisation took place in Cochabamba on 17 July. It was attended by COB, FEJUVE, CSUTCB, COR Oro, the Federation of Miners, the Federation of Rural Teachers, student bodies and many others. The meeting agreed that no bourgeois government could meet the demands of the people, particularly that for nationalisation. It had no trust in the bourgeois elections due at the end of the year. Instead it agreed that the way forward was to take power and establish a government of indigenous peoples, the poor and working class. In particular it spoke of strengthening the Asamblea Popular Nacional Obreros (Workers' Popular National Assembly, APNO) which met for the first time on 6 June at the height of the struggle. It also declared that those leaders who agreed to December's electoral game were traitors. The discussion about a Constituent Assembly acknowledged that the ruling class wanted an assembly which would be entirely toothless. The issue therefore was how to build a genuine one that reflected the interests of the mass of the people. The APNO itself is a possibility. These debates are set to continue throughout the next period, and will be vital in determining the basis for unity between all the various anti-imperialist movements. The latest battle is over; the Bolivian people are now deciding how they will win the war.



Demonstration in La Paz in June 2005

Interview: building worker-peasant unity

FRFI correspondent in Bolivia Juanjo Rivas spoke with Jaime Solares, Executive Secretary of the Central Obrera de Bolivia (COB), just after the fall of President Mesa in early June. The COB was formed in 1952, and was nearly destroyed as an organisation in the 1980s when Bolivian governments implemented IMF and World Bank-dictated structural reforms. It is a significant component of the Bolivian anti-imperialist forces, and consequently it is important to consider Solares' views. This is an edited version of the interview.

Can you describe the COB and explain its historic development?

The COB was founded in 1952 with the overall aim of socialism. It was created as a means for workers to confront a corrupt government and above all to confront imperialism. In 1985, the government imposed structural reforms that sought to destroy the revolutionary union movement, but they did not completely succeed. The fundamental aim was to destroy any

political consciousness amongst the workers. The best union movement for the neo-liberals is a 'yellow' one that has sold out. After 1985, almost all the COB Executive Secretaries made an art of destroying trade union life. When I joined, the COB was on the floor. Now in Latin America a united union movement exists only in Cuba, Uruguay and Bolivia. This is a threat to imperialism. In Argentina and Venezuela imperialism has been

able to divide the trade union movement.

What is your position in relation to the call for hydrocarbon nationalisation?

The imperialists have come to exploit us and seize our raw materials. It is the same with Bush's and Blair's invasion of Iraq: they wanted war because Iraq has huge potential oil reserves. And we have to pay for that war through the servicing of the foreign debt. In Bolivia, economic struggle has become a social necessity. We need to recover our hydrocarbon resources, and other natural resources such as wood and water that have also been privatised. The first thing that can unite us is the nationalisation of hydrocarbons, and after that, the recovery of all our resources.

What strategies do the social movements have to develop to secure the leadership of the movement?

COB statutes dismiss neither legal struggle nor revolutionary struggle. In the enormous assembly we held [on 6 June in La Paz] the workers were asking themselves: When are we going to have parliamentarians that defend the working class? When are the parliamentarians going to fight for workers' rights, for economic sovereignty?

In tomorrow's meeting, I am going to argue that the workers can start to develop the political structures we need on the basis of what we have created already: the Asamblea Popular Nacional Obreros (APNO), which includes federations of miners, of peasants and of other social sectors. This is of concern to imperialism, to the ruling class and to the multinationals that are taking advantage of us. There will be a condition that any representative who serves in government has to share the conditions that the people are living in now. This isn't the case today, as they have free telephones, free social security, tickets,

dinner expenses, and so on whilst people are dying of starvation.

How do you see the Movement towards Socialism (MAS)?

Some years ago [during the 2002 elections], the US ambassador to Bolivia said that people should not vote for MAS and that it was against the interests of Bolivia. People reacted with rage and voted for MAS. But the MAS, despite its name, is not a left-wing movement. In truth it should be called 'Movement away from Socialism', because of its agreement with and support for the neo-liberal government.

It would be nice if Evo were a revolutionary, but he believes it is necessary to live with foreign capital, and he criticised those in the armed forces who wanted to join the battle on the side of the Bolivian people.

interview continued on page 12

Venezuela: first steps towards socialism

'President Chavez has said...that capitalism is slavery and that the Bolivarian Revolution must go towards socialism. This conclusion is not by chance. It is the product of many discussions, many experiences and an in-depth analysis of the situation. The President used to consider the option of the so-called "Third Way" – a way between capitalism and socialism. We examined that and, as the President said, we have realised that for the Bolivarian revolution there is no third way possible, we must choose the way of socialism. This does not mean we are going to import other models from outside. Socialism is a system in which man is above capital. That is clear. But we must adapt the ideas of socialism to the concrete conditions.'

Adan Chavez, Venezuelan Ambassador to Cuba, April 2005.

Venezuela is a society with sharp social contradictions, where corruption and clientalism, succoured by imperialism, have been endemic for generations. There are a relatively small number of organised workers. Some of these are militant and class conscious workers who led the opposition against the attempted privatisation of the oil industry from December 2002 to February 2003. Efforts to construct militant trade unions in the past were suffocated in the vice of corrupted leaderships and employer intimidation. Today a new National Union of Workers (UNT) is striving to create and implement a revolutionary programme of economic management, based on workers self-management.

A key challenge is to prevent the development of an aristocracy of labour, the better paid, skilled and more securely employed sections of workers, creating a militant economicism which displaces a conscious attitude of solidarity among all workers. Thus the education system will now emphasise 'coexisting, knowing and doing'. This in turn needs a determined anti-imperialist campaign to break the promotion of anti-socialist self-interest amongst the privileged employees of large international corporations, for instance in oil, food, motor manufacturing. However since

over half of the Venezuelan working class scrape a living through self-employment, or 'informal' occupation, solidarity can only fully be achieved in the day-to-day political campaigns to meet the pressing needs of the masses.

In this, education is vital. Presently 26 Bolivarian high schools exist in Venezuela. By September there will be 307, and by 2007 all high schools will be Bolivarian, ie community schools, whose purpose is to transform young people from individualistic, competitive consumers into socially aware, co-operative, and creative humans...the exact opposite of Tony Blair's new City Academies! In Venezuela the entire educational system is being transformed, from pre-school up to university level.

Chavez has recently called upon Venezuelan youth to reject 'imperialistic anti-values'. Given the very strong hold that Catholicism has on the poor in Venezuela, strengthened by years of economic despair and misery, Chavez has called for the rescue of 'authentic Christian values, lost by the capitalist model'. The workers have to defeat traditional clientalism and corruption among those drawn to government by ensuring that they themselves run matters honestly, democratically and transparently.

Exposing abuses

In May, to demonstrate the central threat to Venezuela, the Minister of Energy and Mines, Rafael Ramirez presented a clear account to Congress of the abuses committed by transnational corporations in the country's oil sector – 'a true assault was carried out against Venezuelan petroleum'. He showed that 90% of transnationals had cheated the country, avoiding \$3bn taxes and \$1bn royalties, in a strategy that started immediately after the nationalisation of oil in 1976. ExxonMobil still refuses to accept the October 2004 contracts which set up joint ventures and set royalty payments at normal international levels. Sincor – the joint venture with France's Total – constantly violates its contract by exploiting oil beyond its allocated blocks. Meanwhile Citgo Corp, a Venezuelan State Oil (PDVSA) subsidiary with 14,000 petrol stations and five refineries in the US, has overpaid taxes to Washington! The previous privateering PDVSA management bought the refineries so that 48% of assets lay outside of Venezuela's jurisdiction, removing their control and profits from government.

Leadership

Key to the development of a revolutionary national consciousness is the



President Chavez addresses the people

leadership based around Chavez, who are struggling against the old society, the old state, the old order. The leadership is organised through the governing Movement for the Fifth Republic. Yet still the political parties themselves either will not, or have not yet learned to work consistently and closely with the masses, so that Chavez constantly appeals directly to them, for example in the successful referendum campaign in 2004. When it was clear that the opposition had the requisite number of signatures to trigger the referendum, the instinctive reaction of many pro-Chavez party members was to abandon the Constitution and reject the referendum. Chavez himself turned to the people and called upon them to organise in small groups to defeat the opposition in the referendum. The initiative didn't come from the parties. The response was a resounding victory, and the emergence of new local leaders, many of them women. The process has moved on from just opposition to neoliberalism (suggesting that an imperialist policy, not imperialism itself was the problem), to opposition to capitalism (the destructive nature of capital itself) and now to an alternative

Bolivarian socialism developed by the masses and their leaders.

Naturally, in this process there are daily disputes within the Chavist camp, the parties, the unions, the social movements. On the fringes, there are the abstract, immediate demands for the nationalisation of all industry and banks with workers control, the slogan of some Trotskyists in Venezuela, the demands for 'communism now', and from the odd eccentric, for the 'abolition of the state'. These are symptoms of a complete separation from the actual revolutionary struggle for national independence in the epoch of imperialism. None of these particular demands come out of a concrete understanding of the historic task required of Chavez by the Venezuelan masses. Of course there can be no alternative to completely transforming the state structures, which were designed to perpetuate Venezuelan subordination to imperialism, into a 'self-government of the producers' and to driving forward the development of a new state form – the question is how to ensure that this really succeeds, and as quickly as possible.

Alvaro Michaels

Columbia: terror deepens

local guards, or with long-term unemployment payments, the deal is attractive. 4,000 have so far signed on. Effectively the government and paramilitaries are buying and selling mercenaries to sow terror in the countryside and towns.

As an effective state force is built through massive funding the Colombian military receives from the US, the AUC has become less necessary for the ruling class. President Clinton's \$3.5bn Plan Colombia, projected as a war on drugs when it was set up in 2000, was only ever intended to destroy the revolutionary opposition – FARC and the ELN. Colombia is the third largest recipient of US military aid after Israel and Egypt. The US wants to ensure access to oil and other natural resources. To ensure this, the AUC depopulates land through terror campaigns, and large landlords then seize it. Three million rural workers and small peasants have been displaced in the last 20 years, a figure currently growing by 700 a week. They are forced into the cities or across the borders to Venezuela or Ecuador.

In fact the AUC is as strong as ever, some 10,000 strong and it operates in a third of the country, along most of the north coast, in Magdalena Medio in the centre, and Narino and much of Putumayo in the south, where it accompanies the army. It murders

and intimidates social workers, human rights activists, those opposing privatisation of oil and water industries, and those who owe them drugs money – such as 12 youth murdered on 19 April and 11 more on 21 April in the port of Buenaventura – or refuse to accept their writ in local political or business matters. In June the AUC 'Liberator's Bloc' declared 20 members of the Teachers' Union SIMANA 'military objectives'. AUC supporters control about 30% of the national Congress, picking candidates for mayors, town councils and governors, and then running municipal contracts. Uribe is currently trying to reverse Congress's rejection of the right of paramilitaries to stand for office.

Fightback

FARC has constantly attempted to hold peaceful negotiations with the present and previous governments. It has called on the US to legalise narcotics in order to destroy the trade. The *Washington Post* has stated that 'if the US keeps producing millions of drug users and addicts someone will be there to supply them'. Whilst the US administration boasts of the success of its fumigation policy in decreasing coca plantations by 21% from 144,450 hectares in 2002 to 113,850 in 2003, the reality is that overall supply into the US has not been affected. Cocaine sold at roughly

\$1,000 dollars a kilo in the Andes fetches \$80,000+ in New York, and the dealers who live in Miami are untouched. 95% of all cocaine revenues accrue to those outside Colombia. While 17,000 people in the USA die of illegal drug use every year, some 440,000 die from tobacco: the priorities don't match. The idea of a 'war on drugs' being waged in Colombia is the most transparent rubbish imaginable. The aim is to destroy FARC and the ELN.

FARC resistance

Despite the whole-hearted support of US and European imperialism the latest Colombian 'Plan Patriota' has not defeated FARC. Not one FARC leader has been captured or killed, despite a price of \$1m on their heads. In June 300 FARC guerrillas attacked an arms convoy near Puerto Asis in southwestern Putumayo State, killing 25 soldiers despite immediate helicopter and aircraft counter-attacks by the state. The same weekend six more soldiers were killed in a state offensive in north-eastern Colombia. It took the government a week to relieve a FARC siege of Toribó in Cauca this year. In February 50 troops were reported killed. Officially the total is 130 this year. The lesson is that despite the terror, the resistance continues.

Victory to FARC/ELN!

Alvaro Michaels



FARC guerrillas

Alvaro Uribe, President of Colombia, visited Tony Blair during the second week of July directly after meeting the Spanish Prime Minister to talk about arms purchases. His aim was to seek more support, more investment, and continued military links. Between 2000 and 2003 Ministry of Defence experts visited Colombia at least 10 times to advise on 'counter-terrorism' tactics and to provide training. Such backing means support for the Colombian army's AUC terrorist allies.

In December 2004, the Colombian House of Representatives voted to let Uribe stand again for election in May 2006, a change to the constitution yet to be approved by the Constitutional Court but rejected by a previous national referendum. Meanwhile in June, Uribe pushed through a 'Justice and Peace' law to pardon the 20,000 strong AUC, a neo-fascist paramilitary force built by landowners, funded by drug dealing and which works with

the army. The move will bring neither justice nor peace. It follows a deal in July 2003 on demobilisation which is to be completed by December this year. This June the imprisoned AUC leader Diego Murillo (aka The Terminator) directed the demobilisation of 450 AUC members. In July, 200 more from the 'Heroes of Granada' block were demobilised. Pardoned for their awful crimes, and with new jobs in the police, military,

Bolivian working class on the march

■ **Cochabamba! Water War in Bolivia**, Oscar Olivera, South End Press 2004, ISBN 0-89608-702-6, £10.99

■ **Patterns of protest: politics and social movements in Bolivia**, John Crabtree, Latin America Bureau 2005, ISBN 1-899365-71-0, £7.99

The key task facing the Bolivian people is the completion of the national-democratic revolution in conditions where the ruling class – a tiny minority – has taken the country's resources and handed them over to imperialism, and where the political institutions of the state have become the private clubs of these robbers. The questions that follow are: what are the key demands that express their class interests most clearly, and around which they can unite other social strata? And how will the working class and oppressed exercise their leadership in this process?

The people have already answered the first question: the nationalisation of hydrocarbon resources and the establishment of a Constituent Assembly were the slogans that united urban and rural workers, peasants and sections of the middle class in the insurrection that toppled President Mesa in early June. Nationalisation of hydrocarbon resources expresses the aspiration of the people to take back that which has been stolen by imperialism courtesy of the Bolivian ruling class. The call for a Constituent Assembly is perhaps less well understood outside the country, but those who want to know more about its background and significance should read *Cochabamba! – Water War in Bolivia* by Oscar Olivera.

Olivera, a factory worker and union leader, was the leader of the Coordinadora de Defensa del Agua y de la Vida which led the struggle against water privatisation in Cochabamba in 1999-2000. The victory of the people of Cochabamba against the US corporation Bechtel in April 2000 was a defining moment in the struggle, not just of the Bolivian people against imperialism, but also in that of the whole of Latin America. Olivera narrates the development of the struggle, the way new popular and democratic forms of organisation emerged, and how different sectors of the population were brought together to defeat the multinational and the Bolivian ruling class.

Water management had long been a major problem for people in and

around Cochabamba. Farmers had established local committees for the purpose; these would invest in development of wells and agree how to distribute water for irrigation purposes. Within Cochabamba itself there were co-operative water houses for the half of the population which did not have piped water. Law 2029, which was the framework for privatisation, expropriated all this infrastructure without any compensation and then handed it over to a consortium led by Bechtel. It allowed the company to cap any privately-owned well. It even forbade the installation of cisterns to collect rainwater. Everything was to be handed over to the new company. The law itself was established at the behest of the World Bank, which had in June 1999 demanded the privatisation as a condition of new loans, and which had also insisted there be no 'public subsidies' for the poor of Cochabamba. The law was passed three months later, and in November Bechtel took control. This whole process was undertaken in conditions of great secrecy, necessary to obscure the immense corruption involved.

The entire experience was the stimulus for the concept of a Constituent Assembly which first gained expression in September 2000. Two essays in the book, 'For a Constituent Assembly' and 'Petroleum and natural gas: reconquering our collective patrimony', are particularly important in explaining this. The Assembly gives a 'non-party content to the social movement of the last few years'; 'through it, working men and women recover the ability to participate in, to discuss, and to decide collective issues in a direct manner, without intermediaries, and without the patronage of "advisors" or "experts"; it "should be understood as a great sovereign meeting of citizen representatives elected by their neighbourhood organisations, their urban or rural associations, their unions, their communes." (p136). Further, 'The Constituent Assembly is a form of recovering and exercising political sovereignty, that is, of gaining the capacity to make and to execute public policy. This capacity is currently mortgaged to the political parties...The Constituent Assembly does not seek to become the government, but to create the space where the people can decide their own future. It recovers the very first premise of a republic "Sovereignty resides in the people". In this way it sets in motion a

general transformation of political institutions to correct the present situation of exclusions and lack of political rights of the citizenry.' It should be noted that in the Bolivian context, those who are excluded – the working class and oppressed – also happen to be overwhelmingly indigenous in origin: the ruling class especially in Santa Cruz expresses itself in more or less racist terms.

Nationalisation – the recovery of economic sovereignty – has now been coupled with a Constituent Assembly – the recovery of political sovereignty: 'During the last twenty years, the state apparatus has been administered directly by the business class, what could be called the different sectors of the Bolivian elite.' This is one peculiarity of Bolivian politics: there is no class of politicians separate from the Bolivian business class. Former president de Lozada was the second richest man in Bolivia, the family of the President before him, Quiroga, has a stake in the country's airports. Ministers in Bolivian governments are all business men, using their political power to advance their own individual economic interests, in a completely corrupt manner: having committed the greatest robberies during the period of privatisation, they are now no more than 'vulgar pickpockets' (p145). Political institutions and the parties that contest within their framework have therefore become completely discredited. Olivera is clear that the basis of the proposed Constituent Assembly excludes such parties with their powers of patronage, the mechanisms through which the tiny minority of the rich seek to extend their influence. Today there are intense debates about how to realise a Constituent Assembly and how to ensure it is a tool for confronting the ruling class. Olivera remains a leading figure in the class-based anti-imperialist movements in Bolivia today, and this book is a very timely reminder of how a single victory can transform the political landscape of a country.

Patterns of Protest sets out to show how new mass organisations have developed over the decade in Bolivia, whom they organise and represent, and the issues over which they have struggled. Not surprisingly, it covers Cochabamba and the Water War, but it also deals with, for instance, the resistance of *cocaleros* to US-sponsored coca eradication programmes; the fight of the landless and indigenous



peoples in Santa Cruz against agribusiness and the Gas War of October 2003. It paints a rich picture of the mass activity of the Bolivian people over the last decade, and for that it is very useful. Yet its political perspective is limited, and that is expressed in its examination of the new popular organisations as mere social movements – as the title implies – rather than class-based anti-imperialist movements in the way James Petras, for instance, has described. The weakness of its theoretical framework – essentially a radical liberalism – means that when it addresses the

question of the Constituent Assembly it speaks of it providing a route 'to build a new social compact by reforming the country's political institutions' and hopes that 'a frank and open dialogue between social and political actors may help create confidence and new institutional devices to mediate and mitigate conflict.' The aspirations of the Bolivian people are thankfully of a completely different order: it is to sweep away these institutions and with them the system which has imposed such conflict upon them – imperialism.

Robert Clough

Interview: building worker-peasant unity

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Is the MAS clearly opportunist or is it possible to establish an alliance with it?

The MAS hasn't got any philosophy, it has no principles. A revolutionary party has to have an ideological, political, organic standpoint and if necessary a military one as well to reach power. But the MAS is politically ignorant. If it wanted to behave properly, it would first have to remove Evo Morales. I believe the revolution will fail if there is not unity between the working class and the peasantry.

This is not the MAS position: Evo Morales is a sectarian who discriminates against the working class; he does not want their support. He equivocates, he is on the right, or he is anyway a false leftist. If he wants to be in government he will have to have a pact with the working class, but one without conditions, because otherwise he will be on his own as a plain *cocalero* and he won't get the votes he got at the last elections.

Two colonels recently declared themselves to be in favour of nationalisation and a Constituent Assembly. Could there be a fraction in the

armed forces that would take part of the side of the working people?

We have no knowledge of who these gentlemen are who are against the established regime, but as Mao Zhe Dong said, 'power grows out of the barrel of a gun'. We won't make the same mistake as Allende, who was overthrown because he did not understand the importance of armed struggle. **One of the factors that impeded the real transformation of Bolivian society in October 2003 was the absence of a collective strategy. Is this now changing?**

It has been changed a lot since then

because of the COB. We believe that the people's consciousness has been awakened and we want the widest possible unity of all of the workers around the COB.

I believe that we should talk about a broad front, about Latin American unity, with the broadest unity of anti-imperialist workers fighting the capitalist philosophy that one man should be a wolf to another. I don't want anyone to say that the Church will resolve the conflict by playing the role of Jesus Christ. They are hypocrites: in the name of God, they steal, exploit us and want us on our knees when the

neo-liberals have looted our raw materials, abused our cheap labour and made the rich richer.

Against this, the working class must aim for a planned economy that can save the planet. I am convinced that the only thing that can save the planet is socialism with its rational use of resources, its support for bio-diversity and where the fundamental rights of mankind are not subordinated to capital. This is a class struggle and as much as Tony Blair insists, there cannot be a third way, as his alliance with Bush proved. The only option is socialism.

Death at Full Sutton

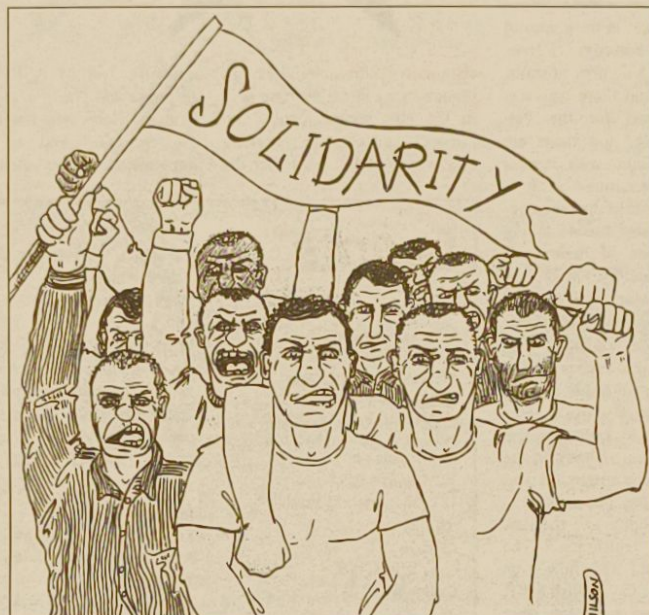
On 11 March 2004, 32-year-old Arif Hussain died in the segregation unit of Full Sutton prison. In June 2005, an inquest jury at Hull Crown Court recorded that his death was an accident, due to his ingesting heroin received on a visit seven days before his death. They also recorded that there were defects in the system that materially contributed to his death. Among those they listed a lack of resources and a lack of appropriate protocol and power to deal with suspected drug ingestion. **ERIC ALLISON** attended the inquest.

The jury was shown a video of a visit on 4 March 2004. It was clear that something was passed to and with difficulty swallowed by Arif. He was taken from the visit and strip-searched. Nothing was found. He was taken to the segregation unit. A week later he was dead.

The inquest lasted eight days and the majority of this time was taken up with the accounts of members of staff – dozens of them: prison officers, psychiatrists and members of medical staff. Everyone who had worked in the seg that week gave evidence. Even their accounts, biased as they were towards exonerating the system, revealed serious inadequacies in Arif's treatment; however two things were missing from the inquest. The first was the detailed evidence of prisoners who had been in the segregation unit and who had seen that during the last week of his life Arif Hussain was not merely neglected but abused and tormented. The second was an informed and robust cross-examination of witnesses and presentation of the evidence to the jury in a way that might cause it to seriously question the circumstances around Arif's death and produce a detailed narrative verdict.

What emerged from the prison staff accounts was that Arif had been a 'difficult' prisoner. Hardly surprising, given he was a disturbed young man at the best of times. The consultant psychiatrist at the prison said he had treated Arif as 'mentally ill', and that was before he went down the block. He said that his patient was depressive and a crack cocaine addict.

The inquest learnt Arif had complained of feeling ill all week, had kept other prisoners awake every night with his cries, and had allegedly thrown a cup of water over a screw, been restrained and taken to the strip cell.



We were told that every day staff asked Arif to 'give up his parcel' and that he replied that he would if staff gave him his tobacco. He was told that he would only get his tobacco after he had given his parcel up. We learned that Arif was in the habit of barking at prison dogs and that the seg unit log recorded that on the night he died he was screaming that there were prostitutes in his cell. All this, from a man who was regarded as mentally ill and who was almost certainly known to have swallowed a sizeable amount of heroin.

But no one took any action. Professor Alexander Forrest, a leading forensic toxicologist, attested that if six hours before his death Arif had been in hospital with nursing and monitoring he would, 'Have been more, rather than less, likely to have survived.'

The staff didn't entirely ignore Arif – they did not help him or try to comfort him, but they logged his actions. These are some entries from that log. 'Hussain is a total pain in the arse'. 'There is something seriously wrong with this individual, everyone getting on at him. Could be an interesting day.' 'Hussain at it again. Lots of unhappy teddy bears.'

We learned Full Sutton had carried out an internal inquiry into the inappropriate remarks in the log and other matters, and that some staff had been 'spoken to' about their behaviour. Presumably those 'spoken to' included the officer who logged that he had checked on Arif five times during his last night. The CCTV recording showed that those checks did not take place.

Segregation unit solidarity

After Arif's death, some prisoners were so incensed at his treatment that they smashed up their cells. Some were then removed to other prisons. Nearly every single one then gave statements to the coroner's inquiry, many containing serious allegations of abuse of Arif Hussain by prison staff.

Almost 30 prisoners indicated that they were willing to give evidence at the inquest. Just four were called, including the segregation unit cleaner who, surprise, surprise, like every seg cleaner, thought that all the staff were wonderful (that is how they get their jobs).

One of the only three prisoners called to give evidence of the abuse was Murat Mavrici, who was brought from Whitmore and made to stand behind a bullet-proof security screen, in the dock rather than the witness box. Despite this intimidation, Mavrici delivered a harrowing account of Arif's treatment, starting when Arif told him there was no water in his cell. He said that staff refused to give Arif food all day because he 'did not put a chair in the right position in his cell'. He said Arif was constantly banging on his door and yelling that he was in pain, while staff were eating biscuits outside Arif's door, taunting him and calling him a 'fat bastard'. He rang his own bell and told staff that Arif needed help. He was told to mind his own business.

Another prisoner, Craig Smith, told the court that the night he died Arif was shouting 'I need a doctor', that he 'could not see' and had pains in his chest.

Where were the rest and why were they not called to speak when every member of staff who had been anywhere near the seg was there? Where was Dean Lowe, who had been released and was willing to travel, who had written after Arif's death that his last night on earth was, 'spent without dignity'; that all night Arif had been making a noise that, 'was a cross between vomiting and growling or crying' and that those cries were 'ignored by night staff'?

Kevin Nevers, who was in the cell opposite Arif, had told the coroner's inquiry team that two days before he died, Arif was beaten up in his cell by six or seven staff after he had spat at a doctor. He said that Arif had been

'begging staff for help' and that on his last night complained that he was losing his sight. Kevin maintained that staff had repeatedly taunted Arif during his last days, calling him a 'fat Paki' and 'a terrorist'.

Legal representation

It seems that the witness list was drawn up by the coroner, counsel for the Prison Service and counsel for Arif's family. It is understandable that counsel for the Prison Service would not want too many prisoners saying nasty things about staff, but why did the family's side stand for it?

Following every death in prison, staff are supposed to notify relatives of the existence of the campaigning and support organisation Inquest. Prison Service Order 2710 'Follow Up to Deaths in Custody' clearly states:

'...the leaflet prepared by the organisation Inquest, in conjunction with the Prison Service, will be of help and is to be forwarded to the family at the earliest opportunity.'

When this actually happens, Inquest gets solicitors and barristers who are familiar with the prison system. This usually results in a lot of the truth coming out. Witness, for example, the inquest into the death of Paul Day in Frankland (see FRFI 184) or most of those involving the six women who died, in the course of one year, at Styal Prison.

Arif's family were not told about Inquest. Of course they had never had to deal with a terrible situation like this before and had no idea where to turn. They therefore instructed Arif's criminal solicitor to represent them. It seems he had little experience of inquests. The barrister he briefed appeared to have limited knowledge of the prison system. Consequently he asked virtually no searching questions of any witness, and chose not to speak to the prisoner witnesses before they gave evidence.

And so, in the case of Arif Hussain, who died in agony, coughing up blood and excrement, the jury returned a verdict as weak as prison tea used to be. Staff at Full Sutton, who had expected a rough ride, had a smooth time of it.

In the last 18 months, I have attended many inquests into deaths in custody. In my view, the death of Arif Hussain was by far the most avoidable. This year, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, Anne Owens, intends to carry out a 'Thematic Review' of segregation units in the dispersal system. She should start, I suggest, with the block at Full Sutton.

Wakefield brutality exposed

A former senior prison officer at Wakefield prison was hounded out of her job after complaining to senior management that prison staff regularly bullied and intimidated prisoners and conspired to foment violence among them.

Carol Lingard told an employment tribunal at which she won her case that within 48 hours of complaining to governors she was ostracised and verbally abused by colleagues – 'work became a very unsafe environment and I was made to feel that I was going to be made to pay for blowing the whistle.'

The tribunal condemned Prison Service management, including governor John Slater, deputy Colin Blakeman and Prison Service Deputy Director General Peter Atherton, for whitewashing investigations into Lingard's complaints and attempting to silence her by medically retiring her. Their behaviour was described as 'startling and disturbing' and dishonest beyond belief.

If the prison system treats its own in this way, one can only imagine



the degree of abuse and victimisation prisoners experience when they complain about staff behaviour.

Six years ago a group of prison officers were imprisoned following a sustained reign of terror at Wormwood Scrubs. Martin Narey, then Prison Service Director General, was forced to

publicly state his determination to root out and punish such behaviour. The case of Carol Lingard shows that neither Narey nor anyone else in Prison Service headquarters has lifted a finger to prevent prison staff abusing and brutalising prisoners.

John Bowden, HMP Saughton

Prisoner wins compensation for unlawful segregation

Life sentence prisoner Kenny Carter, who was unlawfully segregated on more than one occasion between 1997 and 1999, while on the controversial Continuous Assessment Scheme (CAS), has won a record £8,500 damages.

The CAS was set up to deal with prisoners regarded as disruptive. They were removed from normal location, placed in segregation, and moved every 28 days between high security prison seg units. As a result, it was almost impossible to maintain family contact, let alone personal relationships. By the time prisoners notified loved ones of their location they would be moving again. Visiting was out of the question and even receiving mail a lengthy affair. In effect the scheme was designed to wear prisoners down.

Although the Directorate of High Security Prisons managed

CAS prisoners, normal segregation procedures still had to be adhered to. This meant when a prisoner arrived at a new prison, he was entitled to see the Board of Visitors (BOV) and receive written reasons for his continued segregation. Some prisons tended to overlook this, using the very fact the prisoner was on the CAS as evidence of their unsuitability for normal location.

Kenny Carter's claim centred around periods when he was not seen or signed on by either a governor or the BOV, and when his segregation was therefore unlawful. He also claimed he suffered psychiatric injury, in particular adjustment disorder with mixed disturbance of emotions. The psychological results of the unlawful segregation were also said to have contributed to his developing post-traumatic stress disorder.

John Shelley, HMP Long Lartin

FRFI ROUNDUP

The last two months have seen FRFI supporters out on the streets fighting racism and imperialism on a number of fronts. Comrades in Scotland and from the north of England supported the mobilisations against the G8 summit in early July (see page 9).

In Manchester, supporters have been campaigning with Eucharía Jakpa, a Nigerian asylum seeker. Eucharía and her 7-year-old son Timeyi have been refused leave to remain in Britain, and have been told that they will be deported in the near future. Lively street stalls have been held in the Gorton and Longsight areas as well as door-to-door campaigning to gather support and signatures for a petition for them to stay. The fight against deportations and against immigration controls is part and parcel of the struggle against imperialism and the Defend Eucharía and Timeyi Campaign (DETC) highlights Britain's parasitic role in Nigeria which is responsible, through the actions of multinational corporations like Shell, for thousands of murders and disappearances, forcing many like Eucharía to seek asylum. Get involved in the DETC campaign: email defend_eucharía@yahoo.com, phone 07904 880 039 or send donations, letters of support and for more info on getting involved write to: Defend Eucharía and Timeyi Campaign, c/o PO Box

20, Bridge 5 Mill, 22A Beswick Street, Manchester M4 7HR. **Defend Eucharía and Timeyi! Oppose all immigration controls!**

M&S pickets continued up and down the country. In London a special demo was held to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the International Court of Human Rights declaration that the Apartheid Wall is illegal and should be torn down. On Thursday 15 July supporters were out in numbers ensuring that the protest was not disrupted either by police or Zionists in the wake of the London bombings the previous week. Frequent pickets of Marks & Spencer have also been held in Manchester, Rochdale and Preston, as well as stalls in Longsight and Chorlton. These included an energetic protest outside the flagship Market Street store in Manchester centre on 9 July, the International Day of Action Against the Wall. This came two days after the bombs in London but the picket went ahead as planned – after all this was an international day called by the Palestinians, and they wouldn't be calling off their protests. Supporters handed out leaflets exposing the real nature of the Apartheid wall and about M&S' continuing support for Zionism, as well as a statement on the London attacks clearly exposing the reactionary role of British imperialism in the Middle East. The usual gang of Zionist

counter-demonstrators was present to disrupt the protest, singing the national anthem and waving Union Jacks. However, their efforts were in vain, and they made themselves look ridiculous when they accused our group of supporting, and even carrying out the bombings! Lots of people gathered round to watch and we used the opportunity to speak about what was going on in Palestine. Thirty people joined an all-day picket in the centre of Newcastle on Saturday 25 June. Spread out on a number of stalls, supporters found there was significant support for the Palestinian people, and there are plans to continue with regular events after the summer break.

Fighting racism and imperialism also means taking up the defence of democratic rights in this country. On 18 June FRFI joined other members of the Anti Imperialist Bloc for a street stall in Dalston, east London. Called to urge people to 'Stand up for your rights', participants exposed the many-sided attacks on basic rights in this country: the use of ASBOs, the racist nature of immigration controls, continuing police harassment and brutality and the new anti-terrorist legislation. The event coincided with news that 17 members of the Turkish MKP, some of whose supporters were present, had just been murdered by the Turkish state. Supporters made speeches denouncing the attack, chanting 'down with fas-



cism, down with imperialism.' In Manchester a street meeting held in the city centre focused on Labour's attacks on working class youth and in particular the

council's use of ASBOs. The response was positive, especially from teenagers who had been on the receiving end of police harassment. Given that Man-

chester is the ASBO capital of England, comrades will be doing more work in this area.

Other activities in London included:

- On the Saturday of G8, an event in Angel, Islington which exposed the role of British imperialism in the impoverishment of Africa.
- A stall at this year's RISE festival, focusing on Cuba, a society building socialism and confronting racism and exploitation.
- Supporting two demonstrations protesting the brutal deportation of a Kurdish family.
- Joining a demonstration outside the US embassy to demand the extradition of the CIA terrorist Louis Posada Carilles back to Venezuela to stand trial for the murder of 73 innocent people in 1976 when he bombed a Cuban airliner.
- Weekly Thursday evening pickets of M&S in Oxford Street.

Events

LONDON

Every Thursday:
Picket of M&S, Oxford Street (Marble Arch End), 6-8pm
for details email
victoryintifada@hotmail.com

Street stalls every
Saturday/Sunday,
12-3pm For details email:
rcgfrfi@easynet.co.uk
call: 020 7837 1688
or write to BCM Box 5909,
London WC1N 3XX.

MANCHESTER

Every Saturday:
Picket of M&S, Market Street
Manchester City Centre

For details of our work on Iraq and Palestine email:
victory_intifada@hotmail.com

For details of the August Anti-Imperialist forum, or to get active with Manchester RCG email
manchesterfrfi@revolutionary-communist.com
call: 07816547066, or visit
www.manchesterfrfi.5u.com

ROCHDALE

Every Saturday pickets of
M&S, Rochdale town centre
12-3pm
For more information email:
victory_intifada@hotmail.com

MIDLANDS

For information on activities email:
midlandsrcg@hotmail.com

NORTH EAST

Regular pickets of
M&S in Silver Street, Durham and other events in Newcastle
call: 07813 073 846

SCOTLAND

For details of FRFI activities in Scotland
phone: 07779 785 529 or email:
frfiscotland@yahoo.co.uk
For more information on anti-war activities email:
active_against_war@yahoo.co.uk

In September and October FRFI student society stalls will be held at university freshers' fayres in:
Durham, Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian, LSE & SOAS (London), Newcastle, Salford, Strathclyde.

Rock around the Blockade

Brigade reports from Cuba

When the history of Guantanamo is written up there will be a space left for Rock around the Blockade', the second secretary of the UJC in Guantanamo Province told RATB brigadistas currently in Cuba on the tenth anniversary of the foundation of our campaign and our collaboration with the UJC. This is the third consecutive brigade to visit Guantanamo Province since 2000. In Caimanera they are building the disco where the sound system donated by RATB will go.

So far brigadistas have met Cubans from many sections of society. In Guantanamo City we spent time with a street committee, known as the Committee for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR), which exist in every street and rural community in Cuba. The members of the CDR told us about their work in the neighbourhood helping with social problems and the needs of the local people. They were very interested to learn about our own lives and work and had many questions concerning Britain's occupation of Iraq, asking when we thought the troops would be withdrawn. They demonstrated a

deep understanding of imperialism.

Everywhere we go there is a strong emphasis on the Battle of Ideas, the current stage in Cuba's socialist Revolution, which extends education and culture as a tool for strengthening socialist consciousness. The Battle of Ideas aims to build an inclusive, democratic society where all Cubans participate.

RATB has also had a fruitful meeting with the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) with whom we discussed the role of women in Cuban society, the social character of their work and how they deal with the concrete problems of daily life. They told

us how they are building on the Family Code, giving rights to all family members. They explained their relationship with other organisations in Cuba, including the Communist Party.

Cubans are currently dealing with constant power cuts due to work being carried out in generators in the national electricity grid. Despite the problems this brings, Cubans have demonstrated a form of stoicism which the British media could only dream of, working collectively to overcome the difficulties.

Everywhere revolutionary slogans adorn the walls – particularly 'There is no problem without a solution'.



RATB members raised £800 in solidarity with the UJC in Cuba – they cycled 30 miles on the hottest day of the year

In Caimanera we met children taking a swimming lesson and asked them what they thought of the US naval base which shadows over them. They told us they hated it, not only because it was on illegally occupied Cuban land, but because it was being used to hold Arabs in inhumane conditions.

On a visit to an old people's home, the residents greeted us with songs and other performances and told us about their own roles in the revolutionary struggle.

We have also visited the Jose Martí museum in Baracoa and a computer centre, which provides free training and access to computers for Cubans of all ages.

On Friday 22 July we leave Guantanamo for Havana where

we will stay another week. There we will meet members of the Communist Party, and have a conference with Angel Arcos, a close collaborator of Che Guevara in the early 1960s Ministry of Industries, and possibly other comrades of Che. We are also excited about taking part in the annual 26 July celebrations, commemorating the attack on Moncada Barracks led by Fidel Castro in 1953.

In our time here we have been truly impressed with the strength of the Battle of Ideas and those of us who were here for the brigade in 2002 can notice the ideological difference since that time. The level of knowledge, interest and commitment to the Revolution has deepened. Everywhere

we go Cubans question us about our own society, our political work and talk with great knowledge about imperialism.

In the words of Carlito, head of ideology in Guantanamo 'so far in Cuba they measure time in terms of before and after Christ. Soon it will be measured in terms of before and after the Battle of Ideas'.

FRFI 187 will carry a full report of the brigade and from the RCG delegation to this year's Festival of Youth to be held in Venezuela in August. Reportback meetings from the brigade will take place around the country in August. Contact Rock around the Blockade on 0207 837 1688 for details. www.ratb.org

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 ☐

Name _____

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LETTERS

Asylum seeker stigmatised

I came to Britain in 2004 with my four-year-old son. We applied for asylum at Gatwick airport at about 5.30am, but didn't leave until about 10pm, because I had to do a series of interviews. We had our fingerprints taken, and were taken to the detention camp at Oakington Reception Centre in Cambridge. We were searched then taken to the family block. We stayed there for one week, undergoing screenings and interviews. My application for asylum was refused but my solicitor appealed against their decision. Seven days later, I was asked to get my things ready; I was moving to temporary accommodation.

I didn't receive any money from the National Asylum Support Service for three weeks. My case was transferred to an Immigration Advisory Service solicitor in Manchester. She went to the appellate court with me, after which I received a refusal letter

and was asked to apply to the tribunal within 14 days. I called my solicitor several times, leaving messages. She didn't return my calls or write. I was shocked to receive a letter from her just a day to the deadline, saying she was sorry she couldn't represent me any more, as she was sure I did not have grounds for appeal. I applied without a solicitor and was refused again. Ever since, I have been going from one solicitor to another. Most do not get legal aid funding, so I cannot afford them. Most of the Law Centres cannot give you more than 20 minutes. How on earth can 20 minutes be enough to explain the anguish, fear and desperation you feel?

I tried to study access to nursing but they were unable to offer me a crèche place for my son, and could not pay for an outside school crèche for me, because I have been in Britain for less than three years. I couldn't cope with dropping off and picking up my

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

son and going to college full time. Even the asylum seeker's fund of £300, in three instalments of £100 per term, was denied me. When I got to the campus, I was told that I had already collected the money. It took an hour before they admitted their mistake and told me they would sort it out and contact me. I have not heard from them since.

The moment people know you are an asylum seeker; they treat you like you have no rights and deserve no respect. Going to the post office every week to collect my money is always a nightmare. The moment I walk to the counter and present my Home Office card, the staff will nearly tear your skin off snatching the card from you. They fling the card and money at you. Being an asylum seeker is now like a stigma that follows you wherever you go.

EUCHARIA JAKPA
Manchester

Defend the right to protest!

For the last year, there have been weekly, noisy but peaceful protests outside arms manufacturers EDO MBM in Brighton. Early this year EDO served 14 activists in Brighton & Hove with interim injunctions. There have been 10 arrests since the injunction has been in force.

EDO MBM manufactures bomb racks, release clips and arming mechanisms which have been used by the US and British forces in the illegal invasion of Iraq. They also supply products to other countries such as Saudi Arabia and Israel.

In March 2005 *Smash EDO: Bombs out of Brighton* and 14 activists were served with injunctions using the Harassment Act 1997. The Harassment Act, originally intended to protect people against stalkers, is now being used to attack the right to protest. One of EDO's demands was to limit the protest to two hours on a Thursday afternoon with a maximum of 10 silent protesters.

On 29 April *Smash EDO* challenged the injunction in the High Court where Judge Gross ruled that in the run up to the trial an 'interim' injunction could not restrict the timing, frequency, or numbers allowed on the demonstrations. He threw out 11 of

15 draconian terms, describing them at one point as 'using a sledgehammer to crack a nut' and added: 'Freedom of expression is a right jealously guarded in English law'.

Prior to the court hearing three activists were arrested for breaching Section 14 of the Public Order Act 1986 after an hour of peaceful protest outside EDO on 22 March, Sussex. All three are due to appear in Brighton Magistrates at the end of July.

On 31 May, *Smash EDO* held a Big Noise demo, where activists came down from all over Britain to support the campaign against EDO. The protest started peacefully yet Sussex Police choose to arrest one member of the protest, a man in his 80s, for obstruction of the highway. They then pushed demonstrators up against a barrier that was in front of a 40-foot sheer drop. Altogether seven protesters, including me, were arrested. We were all charged and released on bail conditions preventing us from protesting within 500 yards or metres (depending on the wording of each individual's bail conditions) of EDO.

But two weeks later all the injunctions and bail conditions were changed, despite the best efforts of Sussex police, allowing

us to protest right outside EDO, as long as they used Home Farm Road to access the grass verge opposite EDO. Sussex police and EDO were not happy and took their revenge on 15 June, arresting Paul Leonowski for breaching the injunction. Paul wasn't even protesting, he was acting as legal observer and wearing a bright yellow vest (with 'legal observer' written on the back). One EDO agent had been filming another slapping injunctions on protesters, so Paul had filmed them back. He was arrested and remanded to Lewes Prison for one week. He is now banned from going anywhere near EDO.

Four weeks later another activist, Jaya Sacca was seized by four EDO agents. Jaya is accused of breaching the injunction, breach of bail, and assaulting the four men who 'arrested' and handcuffed him. No police were present at the time. Just like Paul, Jaya was refused bail and remanded to Lewes Prison. He was later released.

From 13 August to 19 August there will be a Peace Camp, at Wild Park in Moulsecoomb, Brighton.

Support the Brighton activists! Defend the right to protest.
ROBERT FROST
Brighton

Poor care for nothing

According to the summer issue of *Population Trends* from the Office for National Statistics, the highest proportion of people providing 'informal' unpaid care comes from areas of Britain with above average levels of deprivation and long-term illness.

'Informal' unpaid care is provided mainly by close relatives, with significant geographic variations in the proportion of the population providing informal care for 20 or more hours per week - the most in Wales and the north of England and the least in the south of England.

In April 2001, 5.2 million people (mostly in their 50s and mostly women) were providing unpaid care in England and Wales. There were also 109,000 children in Britain providing some informal care. Seven of the ten local authorities with the highest proportions of adult carers were in Wales, and most of the ten local authorities were

the ones with high rates of long-term illness and disability. Local authorities with the lowest proportion of adult carers were concentrated in London, with figures of around 8 per cent.

13 per cent of adults aged 16 to 74 provided some unpaid care in 2001; part-time workers were more likely (15 per cent) to provide care compared to full-time workers (11 per cent) and self-employed slightly more (13 per cent) compared to employees (11 per cent). The people most likely to provide care were those not in paid work (24 per cent) with this group having the highest proportion of carers (43 per cent) providing 50 or more hours per week. Retired people were more likely (17 per cent) than the average to be carers and the proportion of carers themselves sick or disabled was 14 per cent.

Death registrations in England and Wales in 2004 give the level of mortality. The level of mortality was highest in the Northeast (14

per cent) and North West (11 per cent) and lowest in the South West (9 per cent below national level) and the South East (8 per cent below the national level). Mortality levels were highest in Liverpool (29 per cent above the national level) and lowest in the London borough of Kensington and Chelsea (33 per cent below the national average).

These figures clearly show a society divided along class lines, where those who are most marginalised, with a burden of ill health and increased chance of premature death, are the unpaid and unrecognised carers for their close relatives. Under capitalism in crisis, with the slow but steady removal of state welfare, fewer local authority services, fewer hospital beds, there will inevitably be an increasing assumption that relatives, mainly women, will take up where the state will not provide.

HANNAH CALLER
North London

Fighting injustice

I am a prisoner who has served 13 years of a 28-year sentence. During my sentence I was unlucky enough to spend some time in 'The Cages' at HMP Wakefield segregation unit.

During my time there I was subjected to a regime of systematic physical and mental abuse. I have since been diagnosed as suffering from severe post-traumatic stress disorder as a direct result of my experiences in the seg unit. In October 2005 (some 11 years later) a case of misfeasance in public office is due to be heard on my behalf against the Home Office and the staff at HMP Wakefield.

One of the claims made by the Home Office in their defence is that 'in 30 years there has never been any allegations of abuse of assault of inmates by staff at Wakefield seg'.

For many years now (over 15) I

have read various reports in your publication in the Prisoners' Fightback section of inmates relating tales of treatment in 'The Cages'. I would be very grateful if you could allow me to appeal to your readers for any information from inmates or ex-inmates who suffered whilst at Wakefield. I know you have your hands full fighting injustices and the oppression of others around the world, but if you could let me have anything from your archives on the subject I would be eternally grateful.

If you or anyone else can help they can write to myself at this address or to my solicitors A S Law, Myrtle Parade, Liverpool L7 7EL; telephone 0151 707 1212.

TONY WILSON NW1208
HMP Whitemoor, Longhill Road, March, Cambs PE15 0PR.

Still resisting

Thanks for sending me the FRFI newspaper and the Vive Cuba newsletter.

Yesterday marked 18 years I've been down for crimes I didn't commit, and truthfully I'm not all that much closer to justice and pardon than the day I was arrested. Must be my anti-government disposition, vocal support for the use of armed struggle, resistance as a means to achieve change, etc etc, as opposed to building a reputation as a spiritual person, cultivating peaceful means to change in order to create a base of support for my struggle!

Incidentally, I heard the other day that the Bank of Iraq has begun to issue credit cards. I feel for the Iraqis in the future when their oil is sucked dry and there are no resources to sustain the population. Well, I suppose they

could grow poppies like the poor in Afghanistan. Although years ago I read an article in *National Geographic* of how apricots were a staple there and life expectancy was pretty high; course, that all changed when the progressive government was attacked by the Islamists at the instigation of the west that resulted in the government requesting aid from the Soviet Union etc that brings us to the present era and the western push to take over the world for exploitation.

Anyhow, please include my address should you publish in the event that someone wants to write. In the spirit of resistance,

ERIC WILDCAT HALL
BL 5355, Unit A-B, 10745 Route 18, Albion, PA, USA

Women exploited

Recently published statistics show that in Britain 24% of the population works part-time. Of this 24%, a huge 77.8% are women. This gives just a small indication of the way women are exploited in an imperialist country and does not take into account the tens of thousands who are unemployed or 'economically inactive'. The fact that women are forced into low-paid, part-time work is largely due to the huge burden of domestic

labour - housework etc - which capitalism forces on women. If we are to fight successfully for the liberation of women then we have to fight for the socialisation of domestic labour which can only come with the destruction of capitalism and imperialism and with the struggle for socialism and communism.

LOUIS BREHONY
Manchester

EU: imperialism on the march?

The latest FRFI is the best for a long time. The coverage of Latin America is most welcome, and Robert Clough and Jim Craven's analysis of the bourgeois election spot-on. I would welcome some explanation of the EU: is it an example of imperialism on the march, or could it become a

strong collective weapon of a united European working class? I know Rosa Luxemburg wrote about this subject (I'm a big fan of Rosa Luxemburg) but something educational in FRFI would be most welcome.

JON KEMPSTER
London

Poem from a prisoner

Behind da wire, behind these walls
Tortured souls are made to crawl
Muslim men are made to kneel
To quench the thirst of Bush's zeal

Hidden away on Cuban soil
In the pursuit of Iraqi oil

Delta, X-Ray, Guantanamo Bay
American dream, Islamic prey

Racist privilege

Many people who benefit from white supremacy like the fact that racism works to their advantage. They enjoy the history of how countries expanding outwards from Europe were able to conquer most of the world. They themselves are on the receiving end of social subordination, but in response they seek power over other people. They fear the increasing percentage of people of colour in the US, because of the possible threat to their privilege.

Many white people try to ignore how racism caused the death of millions of people in the 20th century alone. Like the slave owners in US history who thought that they were going to hell and their slaves were going to heaven, they can't help supporting an unjust system which operates to their advantage. What kinds of disasters will happen in the future? Will white people learn, or will they continue to seek domination?

My homeland (Hawaii) has all the forms of discrimination of the US, but retains something of the old native Hawaiian culture, making social interactions relatively more egalitarian. Local people demand that whites migrating here adopt local culture or return to the continental US!

MILTON TAKEI
Oregon, USA

Britain attacks human rights

Since its re-election in May 2005, the British Labour government's policies on immigration, immigration detention and 'anti-terrorism' have been criticised in not one but three reports from human rights watchdog bodies. Firstly, on 8 June, the Council of Europe (COE) Commissioner for Human Rights, Alvaro Gil-Robles, published a report of his visit to the United Kingdom in November 2004 which is highly critical of many aspects of British policy (see also article on ASBOs, p5). The following day, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) published its report into the treatment of Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) detainees. Finally, on 20 June, Amnesty International published a report entitled UK: Seeking asylum is not a crime – detention of people who have sought asylum. NICKI JAMESON reports.

Immigration and asylum

FRFI believes that under capitalism there can be no such thing as a non-racist immigration control. And even within the measured tones of the COE report it is apparent that as soon as immigration and asylum are mentioned, the discussion becomes one about racism and xenophobia. The Commissioner openly laments that 'attitudes openly hostile towards foreigners and foreign cultures are being expressed with increasing insistence and have even slipped, throughout Europe, into mainstream political discourse'.

In February 2003, the UK government announced a target of a 30-40% reduction in asylum applications, a target that it subsequently achieved. The COE Commissioner questions the appropriateness of such an absolute objective prior even to the consideration of claims and regardless of the situation elsewhere in the world, going on to say that 'recent legislative changes...raise a number of concerns for the full respect of human rights in practise. These relate primarily to the increased use of

detention, weakened procedural guarantees and reduced social assistance.'

Detention of asylum seekers

Both the COE and Amnesty International are disturbed by the increased detention of asylum seekers, and particularly of whole families including children. Amnesty concludes that it is the number of places available in detention centres that drives the numbers detained, and not vice versa.

According to Amnesty, the detention of asylum seekers in Britain 'has a terrible human cost, inflicting untold misery on the individuals concerned and their families'. The organisation calls for 'a statutory presumption against detention, and for an automatic and regular review by a court or similar competent, independent and impartial body of the lawfulness of the decision to detain.'

Although the government was recently forced to cancel plans to build 'Accommodation Centres' to house asylum seekers whose claims are being processed, mainly due to planning objections in the proposed

localities, there are currently nine Removal Centres in Britain, primarily holding people who are about to be deported. There are plans for a further 1,000 places by the end of 2005, which will bring the total number of spaces to around 2,750.

Immigration detention under anti-terrorist legislation

Following 11 September 2001, the British government rounded up and detained without trial a small group of men who had sought asylum in Britain, having fled persecution, and in most cases torture, in their countries of origin. The House of Lords finally declared this detention unlawful in December 2004, but when the CPT visited the imprisoned men earlier that year, what they found was horrific. Examples include:

- a detainee at Broadmoor, 'suffering from a most severe post-traumatic stress disorder...[who] has endured frequent episodes of verbal abuse by members of staff...as well as assaults from other patients.'

- a man in Belmarsh who 'suffered from major physical disabilities...depression provoked by his detention had led to significant weight loss and a further loss of function, which necessitated the use of a wheelchair or crutches'.

- a detainee in Woodhill 'with no previous history of psychiatric disorder, had developed depression and an anxiety disorder with panic attacks; he also displayed psychosomatic symptoms...he complained of dizziness, difficulties in breathing, a fast heart-rate, nightmares, concentration and memory problems. He also said that he had started speaking aloud to himself and that he had lost interest in most things.'

Control orders

Following the House of Lords judgement, the ATCSA indefinite detention provisions were replaced by 'control orders' introduced by the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005. The government turned defeat into victory by replacing a piece of repressive legislation that was only applied to foreign nationals with one that can be applied to anyone. A wide variety of restrictions can be imposed, ranging from prohibition of the use of specified articles or substances, restrictions on work and activities, through a range of restrictions on association, communication, movement and residence, up to the obligation to remain at a certain area or place, including house arrest.

There are two types of control order: those with the less stringent restrictions being described as 'non-derogating', while those which are

more draconian are 'derogating'. This refers to the need for the government to 'derogate' from, or opt out of, Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which forbids detention without trial, if it is to impose house arrest.

The COE report points out that there is 'no precise dividing line' between the two and describes the court proceedings in which 'non-derogating orders' are scrutinised as 'inherently one-sided', involving closed hearings, secret evidence and special advocates 'unable subsequently to discuss proceedings with the suspect of the order'.

In essence, despite a thin veneer of cosmetic judicial scrutiny, the Commissioner concludes that 'control orders are intended to substitute the ordinary criminal justice system with a parallel system run by the executive'.

Evidence from torture

Alvaro Gil-Robles also comments with horror on the British government's refusal 'to rule out taking evidence suspected of being obtained under torture into account...so long as the evidence was not extracted by, or with the connivance of, UK agents.' In the Commissioner's view this stance cannot be reconciled with the prohibition of torture in Article 3 of the ECHR – 'torture is torture whoever does it, judicial proceedings are judicial proceedings, whatever their purpose – the former can never be admissible in the latter.'

The future

State attacks on human rights are set to continue. As ever, asylum seekers and refugees will be among the primary targets of repression but, following the London bombing, second and third generation immigrants, who already suffer from racist policing, will also – once again – come under attack. The media will, as always, play its part by ensuring that 'foreigners', 'refugees', 'Muslims', 'Asians' and 'terrorists' are conflated into a single image of 'the other', who to preserve Tony Blair's 'British way of life' must be feared, vilified, legislated against, imprisoned and deported ■

Defend the right to protest

Just before the dissolution of the last parliament in May 2005 New Labour rushed through its Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill. Part of the bill limits the right to protest in the vicinity of parliament.

Brian Haw is a 56-year-old former furniture maker and merchant seaman, who in June 2001, following Labour's re-election, set up a one man demonstration against policies – especially the continued sanctions on Iraq – that were killing children in their hundreds of thousands. His demonstration has now lasted four years. During that time the invasion of Afghanistan has taken place, as have the subsequent invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Brian has fought off attempts to remove him by the Royal Parks and, most famously, Westminster Council, who he defeated in the High Court, where the judge upheld his right to protest as a basic human right. In 2003, when war fever was at its height, he was twice brutally attacked and hospitalised. Each time he returned to his pitch. Neither of his attackers has been brought to justice. Twice Brian has been accused of assaulting police officers. Both times he was dragged through the courts only to be exonerated. Over the years he has suffered much verbal abuse

(whilst at the same time receiving great support from people from many nations). Despite the harassment and aggression he has stayed put, determined to keep to his task.

So why has the government brought in a law to remove Brian? Why is he such a thorn in its flesh? It is true that he sometimes uses a megaphone to put across his message. It is also true that he has erected a display of placards and banners along most of one side of Parliament Square.

However, it is not the level of noise from his megaphone or his alleged spoiling of the 'visual aspect of Parliament Square' that so upsets this government and its supporters. It is the words he speaks and the pictures he shows. Tony Blair fervently wishes to move on from the Iraq War, but Brian will not let him. He continues to speak of the lies Blair used to take this country to war. He displays pictures of Iraqi children suffering cancers and terrible deformities as a result of the use of depleted uranium weapons by Allied forces in the first gulf war (a crime repeated in the second war) and others injured or killed by Coalition bombing in the second war.

The liberal press seeks to portray Brian as a lone eccentric (see *The Guardian* editorial 27 June 2005) and

the privileged politicians of Westminster (with a few honourable exceptions) as nothing more than an irritant and hindrance to the successful operation of the tourist industry, precisely because they do not want to deal with what he is actually saying.

During the Vietnam War the Labour government stonewalled attempts in the House of Commons to discuss civilian casualties resulting from the obscene bombing of North Vietnam by the United States, as such discussion would inevitably show Britain's support for the US to be indefensible. Today, Labour will not discuss casualties in Iraq for the same reason. That is why they are determined to remove Brian.

On 1 August the Stop The War Coalition will demonstrate in Parliament Square against the new laws. One hopes that they will be there to support Brian on the following day. According to the Evening Standard, it is from the 2nd that the police will make arrests.

All opponents of British imperialism should support Brian. To find out more, log on to his website at: <http://www.parliament-square.org.uk/>, contact me on: 07792 119 469; visit Brian at Parliament Square.

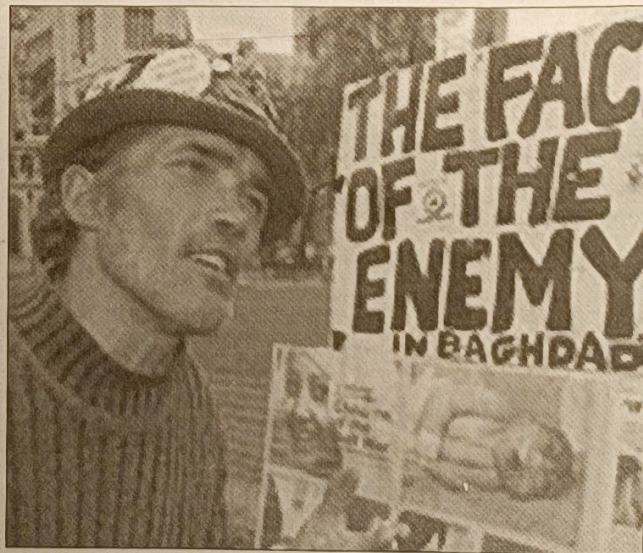
Peter Tadjasque

Aliens Act 1905 – an infamous anniversary

In 1905 Britain introduced its first immigration act. The Aliens Act was designed to limit the influx of impoverished Jewish refugees fleeing pogroms in Eastern Europe. Richer immigrants were unaffected. One hundred years later an entire system of controls is in place to ensure that while the rich can still come and go as they please, poor, working class people from war-torn countries are discouraged from immigrating to Britain and persecuted when they do arrive.

Counter-Terrorism Bill 2005

The British government used the attacks on New York in 2001 as a pretext to introduce first indefinite detention and then control orders. Labour Home Secretary Charles Clarke is now using the London bombing to expedite another 'anti-terrorist' law already in the pipeline. The Counter Terrorism Bill, creates new offences of receiving training in terrorist techniques; committing acts 'preparatory to terrorism' and 'indirectly inciting terrorism'. The last is supposedly targeted at 'radical preachers'. There is nothing to say it will not also be used against political activists.



Brian Haw opposite the Houses of Parliament