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Socialist Appeal

June 2007 issue 154

Price: £1 - Solidarity Price £2

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Gaza, Iraq,
Afghanistan...

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“shock and awe” continues

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www.socialist.net

editor: Alan Woods
 PO Box 50525
 London, E14 6WG
 tel 020 7515 7675
 contact@socialist.net
 www.socialist.net
 www.marxist.com
 www.newyouth.com

www.marxist.com

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The Deadline for Issue 154 is June 17th

The Crowning of Gordon Brown

**"There is a whiff of *The Last Days of Pompeii* in the atmosphere."
Samuel Brittan in the *Financial Times*.**

AS THE Reverend Tony Blair heads off for a new career making millions from publishing royalties and sermons, the North Korean-style "coronation" of Brown as Labour leader has been met with widespread disappointment and anger. Thanks to the sabotage of some 300-odd members of the Parliamentary Labour Party, ordinary Labour Party members and affiliates, who were expecting a leadership election, ended up with no election and a "one member, no vote" imposed candidate.

In addition to this kick in the teeth, Gordon Brown displayed his true contempt for the rank and file and their views by stating: "The party has been unwilling to give candidates of the far left any space to put forward their views, because they simply don't have support in the Labour Party" (Gordon Brown, *The Guardian* 18 May 2007).

Of course, it was not the "party" but the tiny parliamentary Establishment that sabotaged a leadership challenge. This had nothing to do with lack of support for the left. On the contrary, the election was blocked precisely because this parliamentary cabal were terrified at John McDonnell's growing support. Clearly the membership could not be relied upon to vote the right way. In such circumstances, party democracy must be immediately ditched in favour of a papal imposition from on high.

The Brown camp believes they have now sewn up the leadership and the party good and proper. But they are sadly mistaken. As reformist politicians, they cannot see further than their own nose. This manoeuvre will inevitably blow up in their faces. Their undemocratic veto is producing even greater discontent. Brown, despite any new image he wants to cultivate, is set to continue with the deeply unpopular Blairite policies of the past. He has already given assurances to this effect to the bosses' trade union, the Confederation of British Industry. On this basis, Brown's support will fall below even that of Tony Blair.

Labour's depressing results in the local elections, as well as the elections in Scotland and Wales were a

reflection of deep-seated disillusionment with the last ten years of Blair and Brown. Over that period, under the Blair/Brown stewardship, some five million voters deserted the Labour Party. Under Brown, Labour's support is set to fall even further.

The call by John McDonnell for his tens of thousands of supporters to continue the fight for left policies in the Labour and trade union movement is absolutely correct. While John's failure to get on the ballot is a set-back, it will only be of a temporary nature. In the coming period left policies will become a point of reference for millions of workers.

John has put down a clear marker for a future leftwing challenge, when things go pear shaped for Brown and his entourage. In quoting Joe Hill, "Don't mourn, organize!", John has served to point the correct way forward.

Sectarians

As always, there are sectarian groups on the fringes of the labour movement who are rubbing their hands in glee at the failure of John McDonnell to get on the ballot - as proof that the Labour Party can *never* be changed. "See, the left can't even get on the ballot, let alone change the party. They are wasting their time", comes the usual defeatist refrain. They fail to see that their advice simply plays into the hands of the Blairites, who *also* want the left to leave the party and want to break the Labour-trade union links.

As with all sectarians, they foolishly believe that history begins with them. However, history is littered with the corpses of ultra-left groups who have set themselves up as the "alternative to Labour". The latest are the Scottish Socialist Party and Solidarity in Scotland who have been wiped out in the recent elections. The working class does not turn its back lightly on its traditional organisations, like a man changing his shirt. If only life was so simple, then every sectarian windbag would be a great strategist and leader!

So in the real world, where do we

go from here? John McDonnell has put down a marker over the last ten months that cannot be wiped away. The left needs to build upon this, particularly inside the unions. It is especially regrettable that the bulk of trade union leaders refused openly to back McDonnell. The likes of the TGWU, Amicus and Unison could have exerted pressure on trade union-sponsored MPs to have at least allowed an election. Moreover, they could have demanded that they support a candidate who backs union policies. Is this too much to ask for? Unfortunately, many of these "leaders" are wedded to the idea of a "sweetheart deal" with Brown and are relieved they will not be put in the 'embarrassing' position of having to publicly support McDonnell in an election.

We must demand answers from our elected representatives. We must demand that they be accountable to the rank and file of the Labour movement. The imposition of Gordon Brown and the danger of a Tory victory at the next election cannot be brushed aside. The trade union movement created the Labour Party to represent the interests of working people in Parliament. The Brown entourage believe that they can simply carry on where the Blair camp left off. Such a road leads to disaster for working people.

It has precisely been the imposition of pro-capitalist policies over the last decade that has brought us to this historic low point. The mass of people opposed Tory policies in 1997, resulting in Labour's landslide victory. Under the guise of "New Labour", they were treated to more of the same. Hence the historic low-point of Labour's support.

The trade unions must take back the Labour Party for the working class, for the millions ground down by capitalism. This means clearing out the Tory carpet-baggers from the Labour Party and fighting for real socialist policies that will take over the commanding heights of the economy under workers' control and management. Only then can we plan the economy democratically to provide for the needs of the majority not the interests of a tiny minority of millionaire parasites. Nothing less will guarantee success. ■

Hands Off Venezuela

Venezuelan Revolution hits PCS...

by Ben Peck

HANDS OFF Venezuela travelled to Brighton on the 15th May to attend the annual PCS conference, the 300,000-strong union of civil servants, of which HoV is an affiliate.

During the week HoV held its fringe meeting, which was attended by 40 trade unionists. To begin with a short film was shown of the HoV delegations visit to the worker-controlled Sanitarios Maracay factory. The final few minutes of the film produced quite a response from those watching, some mentioned they were near tearful at seeing the solidarity and pride on the workers faces.

Afterwards was discussed the background of events that led to Chavez's election in 1998, and his attempts to implement a 'third way', to beat a path between capitalism and socialism. The coup of April 2002 proved to dispel the illusion that capitalism can be reformed and that what was needed was a total break with the old system, which in the last 6

months the Chavez government has been attempting to do.

The revolution is not complete however, warned Rob Sewell, who addressed the meeting. This can only be achieved by land reform and the complete nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy under democratic workers control. The meeting concluded with an appeal to sign the petition in solidarity with the workers of Sanitarios Maracay.

Throughout the week 5 pages of signatures were collected from PCS trade unionists in support of the Sanitarios Maracay workers campaign for nationalisation.

On Thursday evening John McDonnell, honorary president of Hands off Venezuela and PCS representative in parliament, addressed conference. It was well known by now that he had been denied the opportunity to run for leadership by the Parliamentary Labour Party. Yet he received a standing ovation as he

entered, and as he concluded his address.

Also on Thursday evening, HoV participated in an all-Latin America fringe meeting. After excellent contributions from other campaigns, Pablo Roldan talked on the developments since Chavez was re-elected in December. Pablo recalled Chavez's address to the people on election night, when he said that the vote had not been for Chavez, or the Venezuelan government. It had been a vote for Socialism. Since then Chavez has campaigned for the for-

mation of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) and the formation of local community councils, run on a democratic basis, as one of his 5 motors for revolutionary change. He has also recommended the reading of Leon Trotsky's 'The Permanent Revolution' and 'The Transitional Programme' as staple reading for people determined to see the revolution defended. As the meeting finished people left understanding that what is taking place in Venezuela is nothing short of revolutionary change. □

... and the Fire Fighters' union!

THIS YEAR'S FBU national conference received a very special international visitor: Ruben Linares from the Venezuelan Transport Union and one of the founding members of the UNT (the Venezuelan TUC). He was invited to address FBU conference in order to give delegates a flavour of the Venezuelan Revolution and what it has achieved for the people.

Ruben gave a passionate speech, interrupted by much applause, in which he explained how the revenues from Venezuelan oil were now being used to alleviate the needs of the poorest in Venezuela. Illiteracy has been eradicated and a high-quality, free health system is now available for all Venezuelans. Ruben invited all FBU members to visit Venezuela to see the revolution with their own eyes.

Ruben also denounced the role of imperialism which has



Matt Wrack, General Secretary of the FBU presents Ruben Linares with an engraved Fire Fighter's Axe of Honour

attempted to overthrow the democratically elected government of Hugo Chavez and which today is trying to discredit the revolution through lies and distortions. He said "the capitalists were happy when we were giving away our oil to the rich companies and when the money was being put away in American banks. Now that we sell it cheap to the poor of the world, as we did to the poor in the Bronx, so as they can keep warm in winter, they scream blue murder, claiming that we are wasting our resources!"

He finished his speech by thanking the FBU and the labour movement in general for its solidarity with the Venezuelan people and encouraged us to work for our own revolution in Britain. □

by Espe Espigares

No Military Recruitment in Schools

by Ewan Gibbs

"IF YOU'RE between 14 and 15 years 9 months old, there's a special place for you with the RAF. By joining our altitude club, you can find out about an organisation where you can follow your dreams."

So reads the nice glossy leaflet with a picture of a shiny plane and the famous Royal Air Force badge on it that can be picked up at many Scottish state schools. As it happens, the RAF has been in schools speaking to first year students to try and get them to sign up for this "altitude club", in other words "recruitment club".

Also, on the leaflet, there are several quotes from members of the RAF encouraging people to join, one of them by a member of the RAF who as a result has joined the bobsleigh team, for after all most members of the RAF spend their time enjoying extreme winter sports and trying to compete for medals in the winter Olympics.

This seems to be a new swipe of desperation, in light of launching into an Imperialist war in Iraq, the ruling class is clearly finding it's forces in a dire situation. The army relies on young working class people signing up; unsurprisingly they have not been coming forth in large numbers after seeing so many others killed.

For this is the dynamic of imperialism, it is not enough for the capitalists in Britain to wage a war against another country, plunder its wealth and oppress its people. It is not down to them to actually do the dirty work of killing and suppressing the Iraqis, not to mention possibly dying in the process. No, this comes down to the working class of this nation. It is down to

us to kill Iraqi working class people so that the rich in Britain and America can gain access to Iraqi markets and resources, namely oil.

In light of this desperation, efforts at military recruitment have hit new heights. On top of this leaflet pupils have also been exposed to other forms of military propaganda. When going to see a film with their school, pupils can expect that the only advert before the feature will be a five minute-long, short film with the aim of recruiting for the Royal Navy; typical of military recruitment, with the usual images of well-trained people bravely taking on the enemy, full of Ramboesque macho bravado, bravely laying down their lives for their country!

Rambo

Why, if Sylvester Stallone wasn't in the movies, he would surely be a member of the armed force, the logic goes. And if it's good enough for him, well, it would only be mad to let that kind of opportunity go begging. Also, schools have been found to be putting up military posters apparently trying to link the work done by the military with that done in schools, for example how physics is used in the military. This is a dangerous two-pronged attack when combined with the offer of free education, as this leaflet boasts: "Thanks to an RAF bursary I went to the university of my choice!"

This is a disgusting abuse of the circumstances of working class people. Because of the counter-reforms of Thatcherism and Blarism, students no longer receive grants to go to universi-



ty. Working class people often struggle to finance their way through it. As a result of this the military has cynically moved in on this territory and used it to attract working class people who aim to go onto higher education.

If we do not fight back against military propaganda then we face a future of military recruitment in schools similar to what we see in America today; schools in poor working class areas have have military recruiters on campus all day everyday. We must take the fight to them and organise counter recruitment, as well as raising the arguments of who fights this war. Why the war is fought and how we do not benefit from it.

As well as seeing scores of Iraqi and British and American working class people dying, we also see money wasted on war that could be spent on things that we need: a decent health and education system, reasonable housing and other things refused to the working class by the UK's ruling class.

At one American school where military recruiters were stationed on campus, students organised. Eventually this resulted in the military being chased off campus. This is a precedent for all schools! ■

Amicus members vote for merger - the fight for democracy continues

by an Amicus member

IN A 27% turnout, 70% of Amicus members voted to agree to the Amicus Executive recommendation to merge with the TGWU. The new union will be known as Unite. *Socialist Appeal* supports the principle of a democratic merger wherever that helps to improve bargaining strength. But is this the case in the formation of Unite?

During the merger debate Derek Simpson, the General Secretary of Amicus, said that the aims are to "improve working conditions and wages, campaign for political change and to promote international solidarity through affiliation with the TUC and the Labour Party". But he fails to advance a program that could deliver this by challenging the anti-union laws that help prevent the taking of effective action in the workplace or solidarity actions.

In the recent Labour Party leadership contest the Labour MP John McDonnell was seeking nomination on a program of support for the Trade Union Freedom Bill that would remove these Tory laws. But both Derek Simpson and Tony Woodley are supporting Gordon Brown as Labour Party leader, who is opposed to changing these laws. During the TUC conference last year Simpson described John McDonnell as a "no-hoper who was pushing Brown further to the right". Their refusal to back John McDonnell meant that no pressure was exerted on Amicus and TGWU sponsored MPs to nominate him and so allow an election to take place. This demonstrates that they are more concerned with ingratiating themselves with a right wing Labour government in the vain

hope of gaining influence rather than leading the fight to restore trade union rights.

Simpson has recently announced a link with the American steelworkers union but how will this transform itself into international solidarity action when it is not even legal to take solidarity action in Britain? At each Executive meeting of Amicus a long list of repudiations of Amicus members taking 'illegal' action is agreed with the members involved then receiving letters telling them that the union has repudiated them. Unless the laws are challenged this will only further serve to undermine the members' confidence in taking action against the employers and expose the words of Simpson as empty rhetoric.

Falling membership

The real reason for this merger and the search for further mergers can be explained by the crisis created by falling membership as industries close and non-unionised firms continue. The union leaderships main concern is to preserve their extravagant lifestyles rather than serving the members' interests. In 2002 Simpson said "Mergers are fine if it is to build strength and benefits

rather than just build income - certainly mergers shouldn't come before looking after our members." He criticised the spending of "£5 Million on a corporate Head Quarters in London" saying that "A fat lot of good that will be to you!" Yet since the beginning of 2006 over 40 Amicus offices around the country have been closed while millions of pounds continue to be spent on the Head Office!

The new rules of the union agreed in the instrument of merger now mean that democracy has been further eroded in the union and further control given to a bureaucratic centralised regime. The regular election of all officers allows for their accountability to the members they represent and allows them to carry out the wishes of the members instead of selling them short. At the time of his election as General Secretary in 2002 Derek Simpson argued that with election of officials the fear and favour regime and the careerism engendered by the system of centralised appointments would disappear. But he ignored his election pledges and the democratically agreed rule change made in 2005 to elect all officers by instead appointing a whole coterie of his supporters to newly created positions of Deputy,

Assistant and National and Regional Secretaries. Now the instrument of merger that was recommended to the members in the vote has removed the election of officials rule that was voted in at the 2005 Amicus Rules Conference.

All the years of fighting to restore this basic democratic principle that was part of the AEU will now have to begin again. When the election of officials rule was first abol-



ished by the Jackson regime following the formation of the AEEU it took a whole decade to restore. The first opportunity for rank & file members to alter the rules of the new union will be at the November 2010 Rules Conference. But that conference could be delayed if any new mergers push back the timetable still further, as happened at the time of the AEEU/MSF merger.

The new instrument says that the branch will be the cornerstone of the new union. But on the contrary the role of the branch has been significantly reduced. There is now no provision for a branch to elect delegates and send resolutions to a Regional Branch Conference and from there to the National Conference. The current 25% representation from branches at Amicus policy conference will be abolished by the 2009 policy conference. Branches will no longer be entitled to elect delegates to local Trade Councils, Labour Party Constituencies or any other local bodies as the new regional committees are to take over this function.

Representation

Regional Council finances will now be cut by half. The number of delegates to the policy conference will be cut by half and to the rules conference by three-quarters. The Joint Executive of the union is only represented by 15 members from the Amicus sector, leaving many Amicus sectors with no representation as a result. The running of the union is in the hands of the two General Secretaries in between meetings with no requirement to account for their actions to the Executive. The General Secretaries will also have a right of veto over all proposals unless 75% of the Joint Executive vote to overturn a decision.

The proposal for Derek Simpson to stay on to age 66 flies in the face of the arguments he used against Sir Ken's Jackson's two year extension of office and for a policy of early retirement, that he used in 2002. He correctly argued that Jackson had only been elected by EEPTU members and did not

truly represent the whole union. But Derek Simpson himself was only narrowly elected by 410 votes by members in the AEEU section in 2002. The Amicus members in the former MSF, GPMU and Unifi sections have never had the opportunity to vote for their current General Secretary. So who does Simpson truly represent? Only the small minority of Amicus members from the former AEEU section who had the chance to vote for him five years ago.

The abandonment of Derek Simpson's election promises explains the political witch-hunt that he launched against the former leadership of the Broad Left organisation Amicus Unity Gazette. His sacking of the three employees Des Heemskerk, Jimmy Warne and Cathie Willis was designed to undermine their credibility and to remove Des and Jimmy from the Gazette leadership. Des Heemskerk recently won an employment tribunal for unfair dismissal that exposed his sacking on fabricated charges that Amicus admitted were false. But despite admitting to the false charges Amicus opposed his re-employment arguing that there had been a breakdown of trust. Simpson defended this position at the Executive by saying that it was not Amicus policy to argue for reinstatement of members who win their tribunal! What precedent does this set to employers! The tribunal subsequently upheld the Amicus refusal to re-instate on the grounds that since his dismissal Heemskerk had conducted a campaign for reinstatement and against the merger with the T&G! This decision meant the union had to pay £56,000 compensation plus legal costs as a result of their refusal.

In the elections to the new Executive in nine months time a clear break with the policies of Simpson and the current Executive must be made. Unless the Gazette can reflect the growing mood of anger and discontent amongst the membership with the leadership, and the failure to carry out a program to transform the union into a fighting organisation for the members, then it will be defeated by candidates who can. □

The ecology of Capitalism- Corporate 'Greenwash'

by Hamish McLaren

RECENTLY LISTENING to Rupert Murdoch pay lip service to environmental issues was an odd experience. My instinct was to guffaw loudly and spit raisins everywhere when I heard him jump on the 'green band wagon' by guaranteeing that News Corp was going "Carbon Neutral" by 2010, but instead, I ended up questioning reality. Had the world become a cube? cement a drink? And a fool wrapped in an idiot, an intelligent, accountable environmentalist? Or is there a buck to be made in the increasing unlikelihood of human sustainability, because if there is, Rupert will be there!

If a man who has the power, through his monopoly of information, to topple governments, end world famine and stop war, doesn't because it isn't good business, then why the humanitarian streak? Especially when his various news companies and subsidiaries, such as Fox, have been instrumental in denying and hiding for so many years the emerging disaster of global warming. Corporate Watch, the Oxford-based campaign and research group stated; "News Corporation's move to go 'carbon neutral' smacks of greenwash and opportunism," (first published by the Guardian, on 17 May 2007).

NewsCorp reported in a 34 page strategy document that in the last year alone they produced a, not insignificant, 641,150 tonnes of CO2, and Ruperts plan to fix all this amounts to using different light-bulbs. "HarperCollins in the UK have entered arrangements to buy renewable energy," said Murdoch. "In London, we have done an analysis of one issue of the Times - from the tree to disposal - looking for ways to reduce carbon up and down our supply chain." (MediaGaurdian.co.uk) What Ruperts analysis failed to note was that the only way to deal with carbon emissions is democratic control of the means of production. Perhaps the workers of NewsCorp should have some input into the process??

But I'm sure whatever happens, whether NewsCorp actually reduce carbon emissions or fail to utterly, but receive what is no doubt an expected buzz of 'footfall', the news will be favourable. □

Democratise the Labour Link

THE ESTABLISHMENT of the Labour Party to give a political voice to the trade union movement was a historic achievement. Even today, after more than a decade during which the Party has been firmly in the grip of Blairite, pro-capitalist interlopers, the link between the unions and the Party remains.

One of the objectives of the so-called Blair project, we should remember, was the breaking of the link and the remodelling of the Party along the lines of the US Democratic Party. In this the project failed spectacularly. The unions still retain 50% of the vote at Party conference, most Labour MPs rely on union donations to fund their election campaigns, and it is the cash from union members' dues that keeps the Party afloat.

Has the Party always acted firmly in the interests of working people and their families? Sadly not. Have the union leaders always used their muscle to press for measures that favour their members? Clearly not. Today, the retention of the Tory anti-union laws and the continuing binge of privatisation of public services, which has accelerated under New Labour, stand as testament to the failure of the union leaders to use the enormous power of the movement to challenge anti-working class policies.

Many Unison members have been disgusted at the way the leadership of our union not only failed to come out in support of John McDonnell, the only leadership candidate to have consistently voted and campaigned on policies democratically passed at our conferences, but deliberately blocked his candidacy in membership publications. The Scottish Labour Link committee's decision to back John was a reflection of the strength of feeling among the membership.

Members pay their political levy for a reason: to ensure their views and interests are represented on the Party's NEC, at national conferences and at discussions between union leaders and the Labour Government.

It is no exaggeration to say that the

by Mark Turner, Branch Secretary, Cardiff County; Terry McPartlan, Sunderland Local Government; Ray McHale, Cheshire Labour Link Officer; Pam Woods, Islington Local Government (all in personal capacity).

majority of Unison members are in the dark when it comes to the activities of our Party NEC delegates. Most APF payers see the Labour Link as a shadowy body operating outside their scrutiny and under the control of unelected paid officials.

We must demand that the Labour Link represent the views of those members who pay their affiliated political levy, that elections be open and democratic, and that regular reports be provided to all APF payers by the Party NEC delegates.

We recognise that the problem of bureaucratic control of the APF cannot be solved by organisational reform alone. Bureaucracy thrives when there is a low level of activity in both the unions and the Party. The question of transforming the Labour Link is a political issue that goes hand in hand with the building of a fighting, democratic union.

However, democratic reform is essential if we are to ensure the views and interests of the members are truthfully and forcefully represented within the Party, as well as to encourage members to become active in the Labour Link.

There are huge regional anomalies in elections to LL committees. In London, for example, the regional com-

mittee is elected on the basis of one ballot paper per branch, delivered to the branch secretary.

This is clearly a ridiculous state of

affairs which denies Affiliated Political Fund payers their democratic rights. In the North West region, delegates to the biennial regional forum elect their regional committee, with votes weighted according to the number of APF payers in the branches they represent. The North West region conducts elections to the national committee by individual ballot of every APF payer, with hustings where there is a contest.

These anomalies must be addressed, and democratic procedures put in place in all regions. We demand:

An individual ballot of all APF payers in elections of regional committees, with hustings organised by the regional Labour Link officials.

Individual ballot, with hustings, in elections of regional members of the national committee.

The union's delegates to the Party's NEC to be elected by individual ballot. Election addresses to be circulated to all APF payers. Delegates to provide written reports of their interventions and voting patterns after each NEC meeting, to be circulated to all APF payers.

We also demand the retention of a proportion of dues by each branch for use specifically in Labour Link activities. This will facilitate the setting up of active Labour Link branches by providing funds to publicise our activities to branch members and allow us to conduct local political campaigns. Active Labour Link branches will allow us to ensure that delegations to Party GCs are taken up, through which we can bring pressure to bear on councillors and MPs.

We must place the Labour Link firmly in the hands of the membership and make it an effective weapon for demanding an end to PFI and the privatisation of public services, an end to two-tier terms and conditions, an end to low pay and redundancies. We must turn the Labour Link into a fighting body that demands socialist policies. □



Civil Servants plan for further action

by Julian Sharpe, PCS ECGD Branch (personal capacity)

MEMBERS OF the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) have again responded magnificently to the call by the Union's National Executive Committee (NEC) to take strike action. On 1 May 2007, International Workers' day, Civil Servants were on strike across the whole of Britain in the dispute with their employer, the Government, on pay, cuts in jobs and cuts in services. All the indications are that the action on 1 May was as well supported as the earlier one-day strike on 31 January 2007.

Civil Servants are angry with the Government on a range of issues. The vast majority of civil servants are not the well-paid mandarins portrayed in the media. Half of PCS's members earn less than £20,000 a year, a quarter less than £15,000, thousands are on the minimum wage and many claim the same benefits they themselves administer. Gordon Brown's announcement in the last budget that public sector pay should be no more than 2%, well below the rate of inflation, will mean a cut in real pay and further hardship for many civil servants.

Attacks on jobs and services

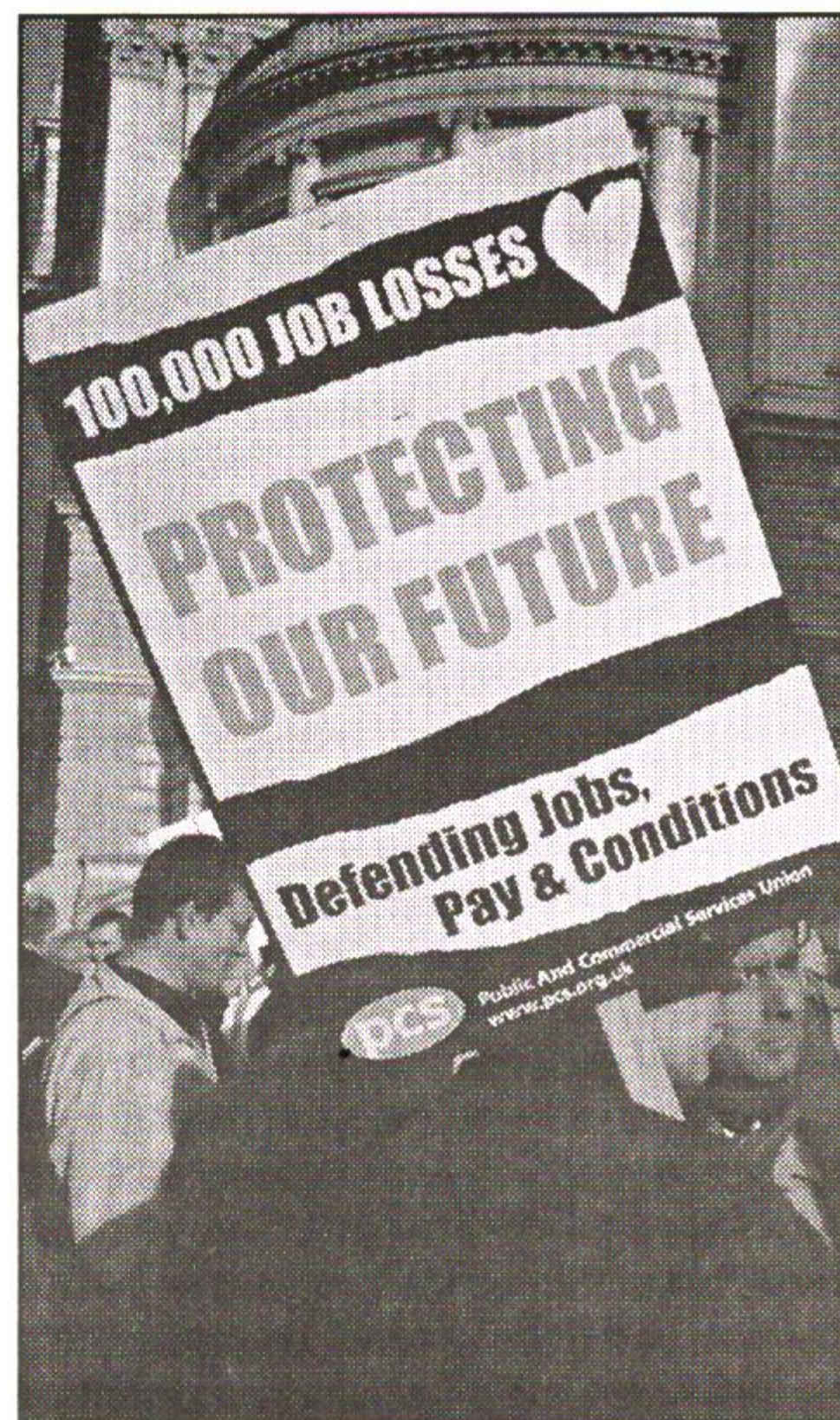
The Government are engaged in a frenzy of privatisations and contracting out of work. Fat cat consultants and contractors are doing very well out of the Government and have been awarded huge contracts. These privatisations have resulted not just in job losses, but also in deteriorating services for the public, and those civil servants who remain in jobs face poor working conditions.

The mood of PCS members can be seen in the results of the elections for the NEC announced on 9 May. The Democratic Alliance, an electoral coalition between the Broad Left and PCS Democrats (a small centre-left grouping), has won almost every seat on the NEC. The other factions, two right-wing

groups and an ultra-left sectarian group, were well behind. While the turnout was not high (around 11%), Socialist Appeal welcomes the result of the NEC elections. Clearly members have responded to the strong lead that the Broad Left dominated NEC has given on the current dispute and rewarded the Broad Left with a further mandate.

The major questions are: where does the dispute with the government go from here, what forms of action should be used, how to engage rank and file members, and what form any future ballots for industrial action should take? The Government is not interested in negotiations. It is playing a long game and hopes that the dispute peters out. But it faces problems both at home and abroad which PCS can take advantage of.

Conference agreed to consult on next steps and further industrial action. The NEC needs to remain resolute and continue to press the Government with further industrial action. Ideally this should be in co-ordination with other public sector unions who are facing similar problems. Rank and file members of these unions are calling for



such action. But given the vacillations of many of the General Secretaries of the other public sector unions, especially over whether to support John McDonnell in the Labour leadership campaign, PCS should not give these people the final say in the future of their dispute.

Over 40 attended a successful Hands Off Venezuela meeting chaired by Rachael Heemskerk of the DWP with Rob Sewell speaking, and Socialist Appeal supporter Pablo Roldan spoke at a 50-strong Latin America solidarity meeting. □

Healthcare, subject to status!

In what amounts to nothing less than a continued ad-hoc privatisation of the NHS, a second wave of contracts have been signed that entitle BUPA to set up independent surgical treatment centres, and ultimately, to profit out of the misery of NHS patients. BUPA shareholders will be laughing themselves to sleep as they trouser millions of pounds of public money, with the knowledge that the NHS is now set to put profit before patient need.

The scheme, which will initially cover hospitals in Cheshire and Merseyside, is planned to be expanded drastically as 13 other 'contracts' are under negotiation. It will amount to nothing less than a chaotic decline in the quality of medical care, with the small print reading "healthcare for everyone.....subject to status".

***Financial Times* exposes carbon trading fraud**

Harry Nielsen

A RECENT investigation by the *Financial Times* found widespread profiteering and fraud in carbon trading, the main mechanism for greenhouse gas reduction proposed by the Kyoto treaty. Many schemes will produce only limited reductions in greenhouse gases and will have little or no effect on global warming.

This raises a major question mark over the figure of 0.12 per cent of global GDP that has been quoted in recent newspaper articles as the cost of reducing greenhouse gases. Carbon trading is a central part of the calculations used to obtain that figure. If carbon trading does not work then the true costs will be dramatically higher.

The USA and Europe have promoted carbon trading as a market solution for the problem of global warming. Companies could offset the effects of their pollution by paying for "carbon credits" in projects elsewhere that would reduce greenhouse gases. Yet the *Financial Times* says that it found "widespread instances of people and organisations buying useless credits that do not yield any reductions in carbon emissions". They quote an environmental advisor working for HSBC as saying that he found "serious

credibility concerns" after evaluating the offsetting market for several months: "the police, the fraud squad and trading standards need to be looking into this."

The European emissions trading scheme (worth \$18 billion in the first nine months of 2006) was also strongly criticised by the *FT* investigation. The EU issued carbon credits to companies by setting allowed ceilings for pollution. Yet the first round of permits issued by the EU set such high ceilings for allowed pollution that they have led to no overall reduction.

Rolling Stones

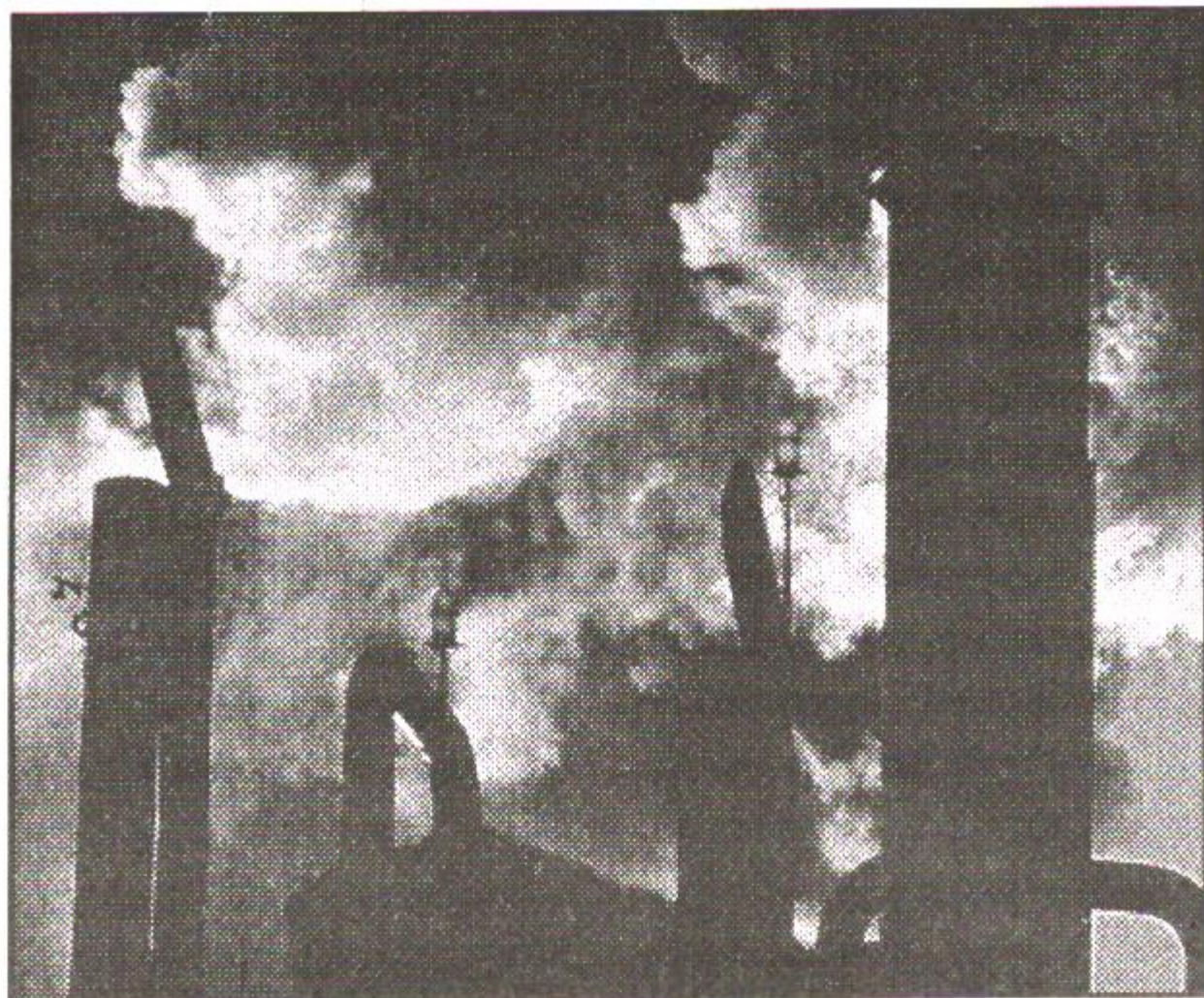
The *Financial Times* cites projects both in India and the UK being funded to grow trees, to cancel carbon dioxide emissions elsewhere, where there is no verification that the trees have actually been planted. Rolling Stones fans, for instance, were encouraged during the band's UK tour in 2003 to donate £8.50 to plant trees in Scotland. The private company managing the scheme has since been accused of using only 40-45p of the £8.50 payment to plant new trees, and of instead buying carbon credits in trees that have already been planted or were funded from other sources such as the Forestry Commission.

There are also serious scientific questions about the benefits of using forestry to offset emissions. The trees must be allowed to grow to maturity to obtain the full benefits (and the emissions reductions for which the finance has been given) and this may not occur. Some scientists have even suggested that planting trees in northern latitudes can actually speed up global warming, as dark forest canopies may trap more heat than the ground they cover.

Companies have found they can make money by asking consumers to pay them for cleaning up their own pollution. BP has a program which offers motorists the chance to pay to offset the emissions from their driving, at a price which is approximately 5 times the cost of the credits bought by BP. The chemicals company DuPont has a program which offers people the opportunity to buy carbon credits to reduce refrigerant emissions from one of its plants. The equipment required is relatively cheap; Du Pont "declined to specify its earnings from the project, saying it was at too early a stage to discuss". Well-meaning individuals may contribute to these programs believing they are doing something to help the environment. In reality they are offering these companies a chance to clean-up in more ways than one.

Carbon trading is central to the plans of the major industrialised nations to reduce greenhouse gases. The evidence shows that it will produce only limited environmental benefits. Even if that was not the case and the trading schemes worked, the real and fundamental failing of this approach is that *the pollution is left unstopped*. The polluters would continue to be able to evade the central question, which is the urgent need to stop burning carbon-based fuels. This is the only measure that can have any real effect.

The proposal to move to bio-fuels as a replacement for oil is another attempt at a short-cut that is fraught with environmental dangers. A recent UN report points out that the massive profits that are on offer has led to a rapid increase in forest clearance in those countries that plan to grow bio-fuels. Amongst other effects this is releasing the car-





bon stored in the forest trees and will actually lead to an increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide. The market mechanism is exposed here for what it really is – unplanned and anarchic, with consequences that are the opposite of those intended.

20 to 30 years ago scientists were aware of the danger of global warming, but their warnings were dismissed. If there had been sufficient investment in alternatives over the last 30 years the problem of global warming could have been avoided. But the capitalist owners of industry preferred instead to use energy produced at a lower cost than is safe to the environment, in order to avoid a reduction in profit. This is nothing more than is to be expected from capitalism. There are many industries – the food and drug industries for example – where the owners routinely cut corners to increase profit, regardless of the cost to the health of workers or consumers. But energy is so central to every aspect of production that the cost cutting here has led to a global threat to life and health.

The consequences of this short-sightedness are now becoming apparent. The recent UN report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a committee of 1200 climate experts from 40 countries, was very clear – “there is a 90% certainty that the burning of fossil fuels and other human activities are driving climate change”. Sea levels are rising and will continue to rise as the ice caps melt, and some

of the most densely populated and poorest areas of the world are at risk of major flooding. Massive famines could occur as a result of crop failures caused by changes in weather patterns. And the increased amount of energy in the earth’s atmosphere will produce increasingly severe weather, similar to hurricane Katrina or the recent severe tornadoes in the central United States.

Rapid increase

The full consequences are in fact impossible to predict. Some scientists have suggested that at a certain point the temperature changes might become irreversible or could even “run away”, with ever increasing temperatures leading to a still more rapid increase in temperature and so on. It is not an exaggeration to say that this places a question mark against the future existence of humanity.

The capitalists can focus only on the short term, the immediate search for profit. The system itself demands this. Any major polluter that seriously attempted to reduce its pollution would see its share price and profits collapse. Its management would be forced to change direction or lose their jobs. Whatever their individual intentions might be, and

despite all their green propaganda, they are locked into a system of production for profit and are forced by the logic of that system to continue to pollute. It is not individual greed, or lack of thought, or madness, that cause them to pollute – although the capitalists have all of those traits in abundance. The capitalist mode of production insists that they pollute.

To mount a serious fight against global warming means to mount a serious fight against capitalism. The capitalists have shown by their inaction over the last 30 years that they are incapable of putting right the environmental damage they have caused. They have shown in fact that capitalism has reached its limits. To provide a safe and clean environment and a long-term future for humanity is beyond it.

Re-nationalised

In Britain we should demand of a Labour government that as a first step the transport, gas and electricity industries should be re-nationalised and placed under democratic control. An emergency program of research into energy alternatives and programs for energy efficiency should be initiated, funded by the

profit previously paid to the shareholders. The rail and bus system must be re-nationalised and a thorough-going program of investment be started immediately in order to provide a high quality alternative to car usage. Other major industries must be nationalised under democratic control in order to provide the resources, both financial and material, for investment in public transport and the implementation of new technology.

A socialist government in Britain could make these changes immediately and start the urgent job of replacing carbon-based fuels with clean and safe alternatives. The government can expect to face fierce opposition from the British capitalists and their supporters, plus sabotage and intervention from the capitalist class internationally. The British working class will need to join with their brothers and sisters in the other countries of the world to overcome the enormous damage that has been done by capitalism. The global scale of the problem requires a global solution. An integrated plan is needed throughout the world as a whole – a global socialist plan. Any other proposed solution ignores the reality of capitalism, and the enormous scale of the problem. Either a world socialist plan – or the reduction of humanity to barbarism, and possibly even extinction.

Notes

1. *The Financial Times* articles are available at <http://www.ft.com/indepth/carbontrading>

The profit cycle and economic recession

by Michael Roberts

AS I write, the world's stock markets are hitting all-time highs in their prices. This is not only in Europe and the US, but even more in markets like those of India and China, where there seems no end to the spiralling upward of the burgeoning capitalist economies and their accompanying stock markets.

Most economists are forecasting global economic growth of over 4% in 2007, led by China and India and supported by Europe and Japan. Only the US economy is slowing as its housing market collapses. Even so, hardly anyone is expecting the US economy to drop into a slump.

Are all these optimists right? Is capitalism going to go on growing without any volatile downturn or slump in the next few years?

The answer to these questions, in my mind, depends on the capitalist profit cycle. Profits drive investment under capitalism. And investment drives growth, employment and this consumer spending. The motion of capitalist production starts and ends with profit.

And when you analyse the movements of the various cycles under capitalism: the stock market, prices in the shops, construction and housing, or output and employment, it is the profit cycle that links them.

I have argued in this column before that the capitalist profit cycle spans about 36 years from trough to trough. The last trough in profitability was in 1982 and so the next one will be around 2015-18.

The stock market cycle almost matches the profit cycle in its timing, not surprisingly, as stock market investments depend so closely on the rise and fall of profits.

There are other cycles of boom and slump in the capitalist economy. There is a real estate/construction cycle. That cycle runs about 18 years from trough to trough, about half that of the profit cycle. There have been three post-war troughs in the construction cycle: 1954, 1973 and 1991. The next one is due in 2010. In other words, the current downturn in the UK and US housing markets, after its peak in the UK in 2004 and in the US in 2005, should reach a bottom in 2010.

Cycles

The output and employment cycle appears to be 9-10 years in length from trough to trough. The last trough in the post-war period was the very mild recession of 2001. So the next trough should be around 2010.

Within all these cycles, there is a much shorter trade cycle of about 4-5 years from trough to trough. The last trough was in 2002 and so we can expect a 'pause' in economic growth this year, with another trough in 2010. That pause seems to be hitting the US this year, but may not necessarily cause a full-blown recession.

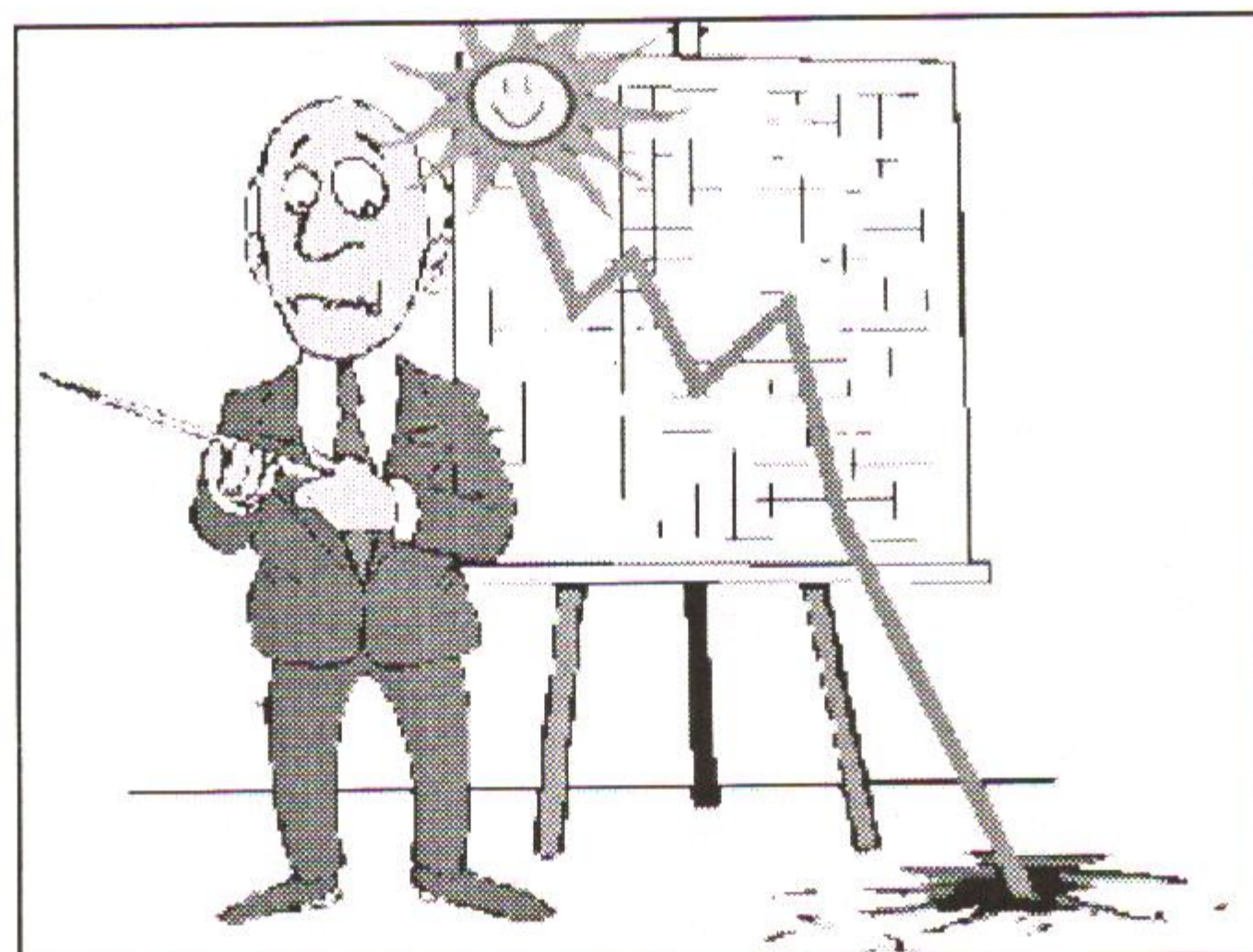
The profit cycle is key though.

Because the troughs in the employment and building cycles in the mid-1950s coincided with a rising profit cycle, it did not produce any very deep recessions or downturns in economic growth and employment.

From 1964-82, the rate of profit fell. So what we got was successively worse economic slumps (1970, 1974 and 1980-2) alongside rising prices - in other words stagflation. In 1974, the profit, employment and housing cycles all troughed together and world capitalism suffered its first post-war simultaneous economic slump. The 1980-2 recession was deep and long lasting because it was when profitability reached lows.

The next upwave of profitability (1982-97) coincided with the downwave in the prices cycle, which we are still in. Thus rising profitability was accompanied by falling inflation, from 15% in 1982 to just 2-3% by the late 1990s. Rising and high profitability (by 1997-00) also meant that the output and employment troughs of 1991 and 2001 were not nearly as deep or severe as 1974 and 1980-82. The construction cycle troughed again in 1991, making the 1991 recession much more severe than the 2001 recession when the housing market in the US and elsewhere was booming.

We are now in another profit downwave that should not bottom until around 2015. So output and employment slumps should be as severe and long lasting as they



were in 1974-5 and 1980-2.

This profit downwave now coincides with the downwave in the prices cycle that started in 1982 and won't reach its bottom until 2018. So it is likely that in future economic slumps, prices could fall absolutely as they did in the 1930s, the last time the profit downwave coincided with the downwave in prices, and as they did in Japan from 1989 for a decade.

The next troughs in the construction cycle, the growth cycle and the short-term trade cycle are due in 2010. There has not been such a coincidence since 1991. And this time (unlike 1991), it will be accompanied also by the downwave in profitability within the downwave in prices. It is all at the bottom of the hill in 2010!

Economic slump

That suggests around then, we can expect a very severe economic slump of a degree not seen since 1980-2 or more likely since 1929-32, the last time all these cycles troughed or were in downwaves.

Of course, as Marxists know, the war of 1939-45 was no coincidence, but was a product of the continued failure of capitalism to restore its health by an arms race, the physical destruction of capital and the whipping-up of nationalist fervour among the masses by the ruling classes of each capitalist state.

In my view, the fact that the largest capitalist economic powers of the 1930s (the US and the UK) were in

a period of prices and profitability downwaves explains why capitalism did not seem to be able to recover.

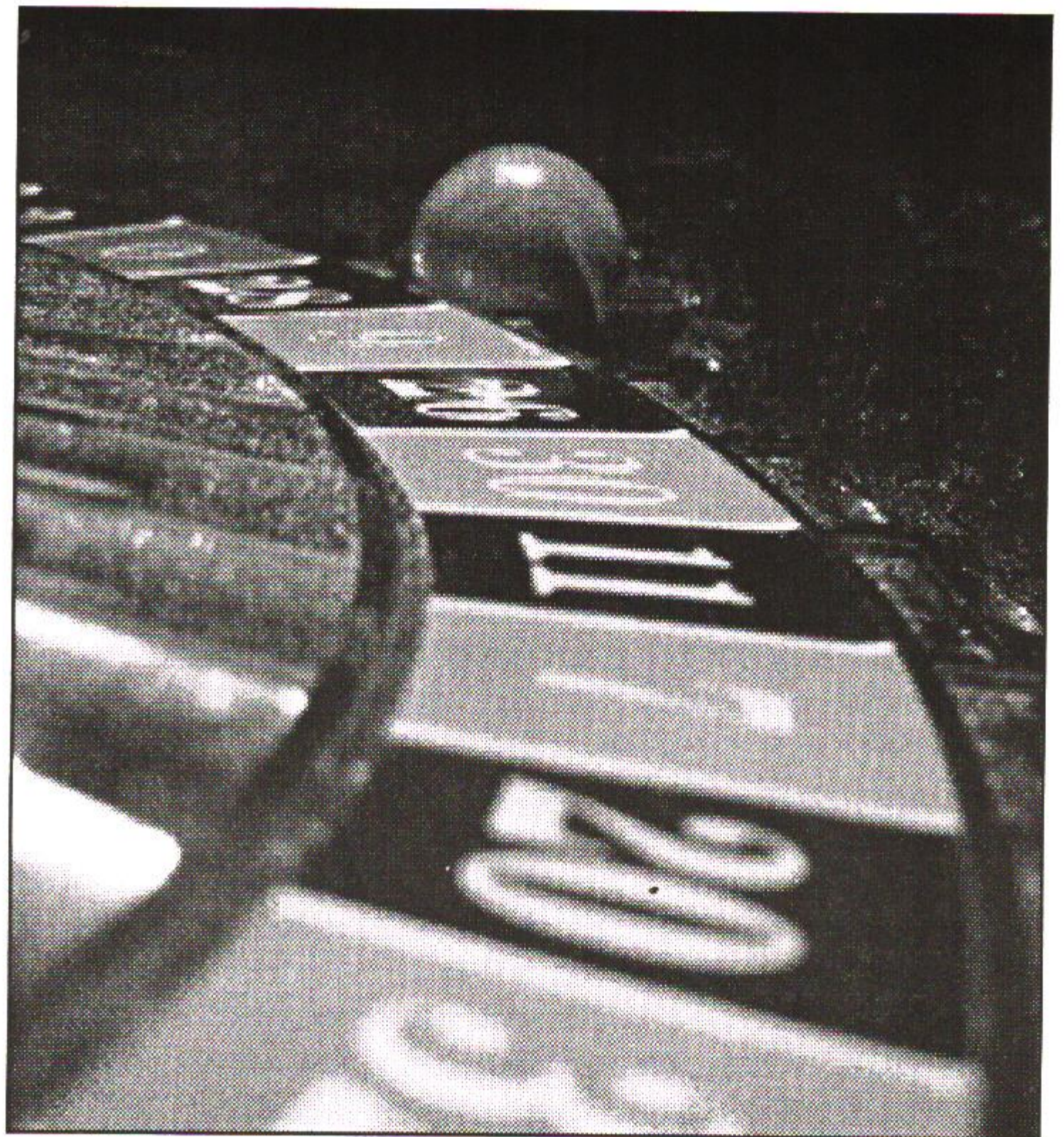
There is one other aspect of the capitalist economic cycle. There are four phases in the cycle of innovation that set the structure of the techniques of production in any era.

Let me explain. From 1946-64, was the phase of take-off for the mass production of autos, electrical goods and other household consume items that had started to grow in the 1930s. These innovations, based on transistors etc, now became the dominant sectors for profit and growth, while the older heavy industries of steel, shipbuilding, mining began to decline.

From 1964-82 the mass production of electrical goods and autos entered a mature phase. They dominated as economic sectors, but no longer grew very fast and in this period of profits downwave increasingly did not produce the huge profits of the earlier phase. Alongside these dominant technological sectors were new, small, but now growing industries around computers (big macroframes) and hi-tech innovations that had been in just a discovery, inventor stage before.

From 1982-00, profitability recovered, but the mass production sectors were saturated: on the whole consumers in the advanced capitalist economies did not need or could afford more than two cars, five TVs or microwaves etc.

Manufacturers of these items faced fierce competition on price as consumers



increasingly decided only on price for these commodities. Alongside, the new hi-tech sector began to take off and in the profits upwave, the returns on these new products (PCs, the internet, Microsoft, e commerce) were spectacular.

Downwaves

From 1997 onwards, the old mass production sectors have been in serious decline - at least in the top capitalist economies. And the new hi-tech sectors are now also entering a period of maturity (and dominance), where profits will be large but profit growth will be low (especially as this coincides with the profit downwave).

Sure, beneath the surface, the innovations of the period 1982-97 (as yet unclear, but probably nano technology, genetic technology etc) will begin to grow into commercial sectors. But this will be in a downwave period, unlike any other previous period since the second world war. And in the 1930s, the downwave delayed the real growth of

the mass production sectors until afterwards. The new technologies could be similarly stunted.

The conclusion from analysing the profit cycle is that the world capitalist economy may not enter a major slump just yet. But capitalism (at least the G7 economies) is now heading for a combination of troughs in all its economic cycles (the motion of capitalism) that will coincide about 2010. The profits cycle is in a downwave alongside the prices and construction cycles. Capitalism is in its 'winter' period - making it very vulnerable to crisis.

So the stock markets may have some time to run. And the world's capitalist economies may continue to motor a while longer (in the case of China, perhaps until the 2008 Beijing Olympics is over).

But the boom, extended as it is, by huge dollops of credit and speculation (what Marx called 'fictitious capital') is just propagating the conditions for a global slump not seen since the early 1930s. □

Tax - what's going on?

by Mick Brooks

LAST MONTH'S article pointed to two tax trends under the Tories and continued under Labour:

"A switch from taxes on big business such as corporation tax to taxes on people.

"Within taxes on people, a switch from direct taxes such as income tax that can be made progressive (so the rich pay more) to indirect taxes on spending that always hit the poor hardest.

So, under Labour, the poor pay more!

We showed how corporation tax rates have been pared away. But does big business actually pay what it's supposed to? The organisation Tax Justice reckons that big firms have only paid about 24.5% on profits tax, which was supposed to be 30% till the 2007 budget. So they've dodged about £20 billion tax on their profits since the year 2000. How do they get away with it? Tax avoidance is another mechanism by which the whole tax burden is slewed towards the working class. And what is Brown's attitude towards tax avoidance?

The Treasury has been sitting on a decision about the 'non-domicile' rule for the past five years. Rich people like Roman Abramovich have houses in Moscow and London. He tells the Russians he's living in London and liable for tax there, and tells the British tax man the opposite. Result - one of the richest men in the world doesn't pay tax. It's high time this loophole was closed. Accountants Grant Thornton show that we have 54 billionaires living here full or part time. Yet they only pay £14.7 million tax on combined fortunes of £126 billion.

Britain is the only country in the advanced world where all company borrowing is counted as 'investment' and therefore subject to a tiny 10% rate of tax. As a result the rest of us are effectively subsidising the private equity firms stalking companies such as Boots and Sainsbury's with a view to stripping their assets.

Livelihoods

If they take over a firm, what 'investment' actually takes place? The same high street shops are just owned by different capitalists, that's all. Trade union leaders are quite right to complain about financially helping out capitalists who threaten their members' livelihoods. The Treasury may as well give handouts to the rich for 'investing' in wine, women and song!

And, because the tax concession is unique to Britain, according to Tax Justice the top 50 firms use the loophole to fix it so they make 63% of their profits in Britain, but only declare 42% of their tax here. Brown is seen as a soft touch.

It gets worse. Of the seventy tax havens dotted around the world, thirty are British overseas territories or crown dependencies. Jersey is a good place not

to pay tax. So are Grand Cayman, the British Virgin Islands, the Isle of Man, Gibraltar and Bermuda. Brown could end the status of these fiddle factories at the stroke of a pen. But he is known as the 'tax dodger's Chancellor'.

Tax havens are sunny places full of shady people. We are probably losing £60 billion a year in tax through people with bank accounts located in these places. So what is Brown going to do? He has announced an amnesty for people up to no good with overseas bank accounts. Instead of paying back tax in full, they can get away with only paying 10%. Nice for some!

This tax revenue loss is peanuts besides the international trade in money laundering. Obviously difficult to assess, Prem Sikka (Guardian, 2007) estimated that about \$2,500 billion in unmarked cash sloshes around the world, moving from haven to haven. Half of this trade is from the USA. But we're second, with \$300 billion of the trade. Britain apparently can't manufacture anything any more. But it's good to know we lead the world in white-collar crime.

The Chilean torturer and dictator Pinochet was described as an Anglophile. No wonder. He was using British banks to salt away his ill-gotten gains, and the authorities just let him. Nigerian General Abacha used the UK financial system to loot billions from his country. The Treasury seems to think all this is good for business.

Capitalism these days has lost all concept of the difference between productive activity and theft, and the Treasury are following right behind in their footsteps. Gordon Brown can back the crooks and torturers who take advantage of our joke of a tax system. Or he can do a job for working class people. He cannot do both. □



Harlow Education Crisis

by Bob Edwards

IN THE last month, Harlow's Further Education College has been thrown into turmoil. Out of the "blue skies" publicity of good results, good reports and relative harmony, newly appointed principal, Mr Hindmarch has created a 'storm' by sacking all the college teaching staff. Suddenly he claims, most of the college courses are unsatisfactory and everyone will have to reapply for their jobs, on new contracts!

Over 75% of University & College Union (UCU) members have backed a strike call, 85% of Union members are boycotting reapplying for their jobs.

There will be a strike on 24/25 May. UCU leader Barry Lovejoy told a crowded protest meeting in Harlow on Saturday 19 May. "The Union sees the dispute as a key battle ground". Hence the Union is not only guaranteeing strike pay, but is mobilising national support and backing for the teaching staff at Harlow College.

All over the country colleges have been in dispute over reorganisation. More and more school leavers and older workers are being encouraged to improve their minds and qualifications at further education establishments. Obviously, though, without extra funding to fully staff courses with qualified teachers, Harlow is seen as a test case.

It is the first college where all those involved in teaching have been sacked. Other colleges have had relatively smaller changes, closing this or that department, shedding or reorganising this or that course. Also, the new contract being offered in Harlow means possibly longer hours, shorter holi-

days and the prospect of less pay as well as axing some well established courses!

It is a worrying time in Harlow's education system. One secondary school is being closed, one sixth of the provision in the town. Another school faces being moved to the former's site, further disruption.

The last major reorganisation was when the college was set up in the 1980s. It was from the merger of the Technical College and all but one of the secondary sectors' sixth forms. Two out of eight of the original Harlow comprehensives were closed then! As a result Harlow education had a setback. Many experienced qualified staff moved elsewhere, while increasing numbers of Harlow's pupils were bussed out of Harlow to nearby schools with supposedly better academic records and prospects of sixth form education.

Falling rolls have led to the latest closure. Now the college is being reorganised with doubts being raised on whether its standards will suffer.

Harlow is not isolated. Education nationally is under the "hammer". United campaigns by all unions in education are required! Each cutback, each reorganisation, each closure is a further blow! Capitalism is ailing, it cannot afford to maintain standards in education a modern world must demand! Teacher Unions must unite and oppose the crude attempts to cheapen unit costs of education where it matters most, in the classroom. □



Student Nurses Demand Answers

by Joe Conboy

ON WEDNESDAY the 24th of May there was a meeting of Nursing Students at the University of East Anglia in Norwich. The meeting, which was arranged by the normally reactionary Student Union, was the result of sustained pressure by the increasingly militant trainee nurses. It came as a result of the compulsory redundancy (a.k.a. sacking) of 18 members of staff.

At the meeting Vice Chancellor Bill Macmillan attempted to justify the cuts, saying they were "necessary in an increasingly dynamic environment". He stated that "every year less and less people want to do nursing" but he did not draw the glaringly obvious conclusion that the scandalously low pay of nurses had something to do with this.

After the academics had made their points the meeting was opened to the floor. Nurses from the annex in Kings Lynn asked if it would close and that they would therefore have to drive nearly 50 miles to Norwich each day. When they were told that Kings Lynn was going to close, a mood of anger filled the room. When the academics said that it was OK because they were going to lay on a free bus service a particularly militant nurse

heckled "what good is that if your trying to raise three kids". Astonishingly the University is misleading this year's intake of students due to arrive in September by not telling them anything about the imminent closure.

What saddened me most about the meeting was the fact that most of the academics seemed to think these cuts were inevitable. I intervened and stated that far from being inevitable these cuts were a result of the attempt of the government to slowly relinquish responsibility for health care and pass it to the private sector. I pointed out that in nations such as Holland and Sweden where they tax the rich more, there are much better health systems. My intervention seemed to really annoy the academics who accused me of making political points, with the absurd implication that their decision to fire 18 members of staff was somehow apolitical.

After the meeting we set up a stall to sell 'Socialist Appeal'. The £200,000 per annum Vice Chancellor walked past and in an act of insane optimism we attempted to sell him a copy of the Appeal. Unsurprisingly we were greeted with a big fat 'No'. □

Israeli strikes against Gaza

feature by Yossi Schwartz

AN UGLY dance of death is being played out in a narrow coastal strip of land along the Mediterranean, where 1.4 million residents, all Palestinians, live in a ghetto of 360 square km. Once again Israel has launched a series of air strikes on Gaza.

Contrary to the Zionist propaganda, according to which "Israel left Gaza" in September 2005 and the Palestinian Authority is under control, in reality Israel controls the Gaza strip's airspace and offshore maritime access. Since June 2006 the land crossing has been closed most of the time by the Israeli state that is literally starving the population to death.

Crocodile tears

The World Bank and the other imperialist institutions may publicly issue warnings about the collapse of Palestinian society and shed crocodile tears, but they have full responsibility for the harsh conditions the Palestinians are having to suffer. They stand behind the Israeli state's brutal attempts to dispose of the elected government and at the same time they demand that Hamas should recognize the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state. In addition they back the Israeli government providing arms and money to Abu Mazen and encourage him to remove by force the elected government of Hamas, thus fomenting civil war among the Palestinians.

As the Haaretz correspondent Aluf Benn wrote on May 20, "The Americans believe that strengthening Fatah loyalists and deploying them in friction points along the

north of the strip and Philadelphi route in Rafah will eventually improve the security situation."

Prior to the Israeli attack, a bloody civil war between Fatah and Hamas had broken out once again. In these battles nearly 50 people, mostly Fatah members, have been killed since the fighting erupted at time of writing. In other words Fatah is the losing side in this civil war and by extension so are the rulers of the US and Israel who stand behind Abu Mazen - but they cannot accept reality.

This brings back memories of how the last war of Israel in Lebanon ended and also Bush's claim that Israel had won that war. Once the ruling class starts believing in fantasies it is a sure sign that they are detached from reality like any declining ruling class in history. The defeat of the US in Iraq, of Israel in Lebanon and now their failure in Gaza which strengthens Hamas, is causing the Arab reactionary rulers, the puppets of the imperialists, to tremble.

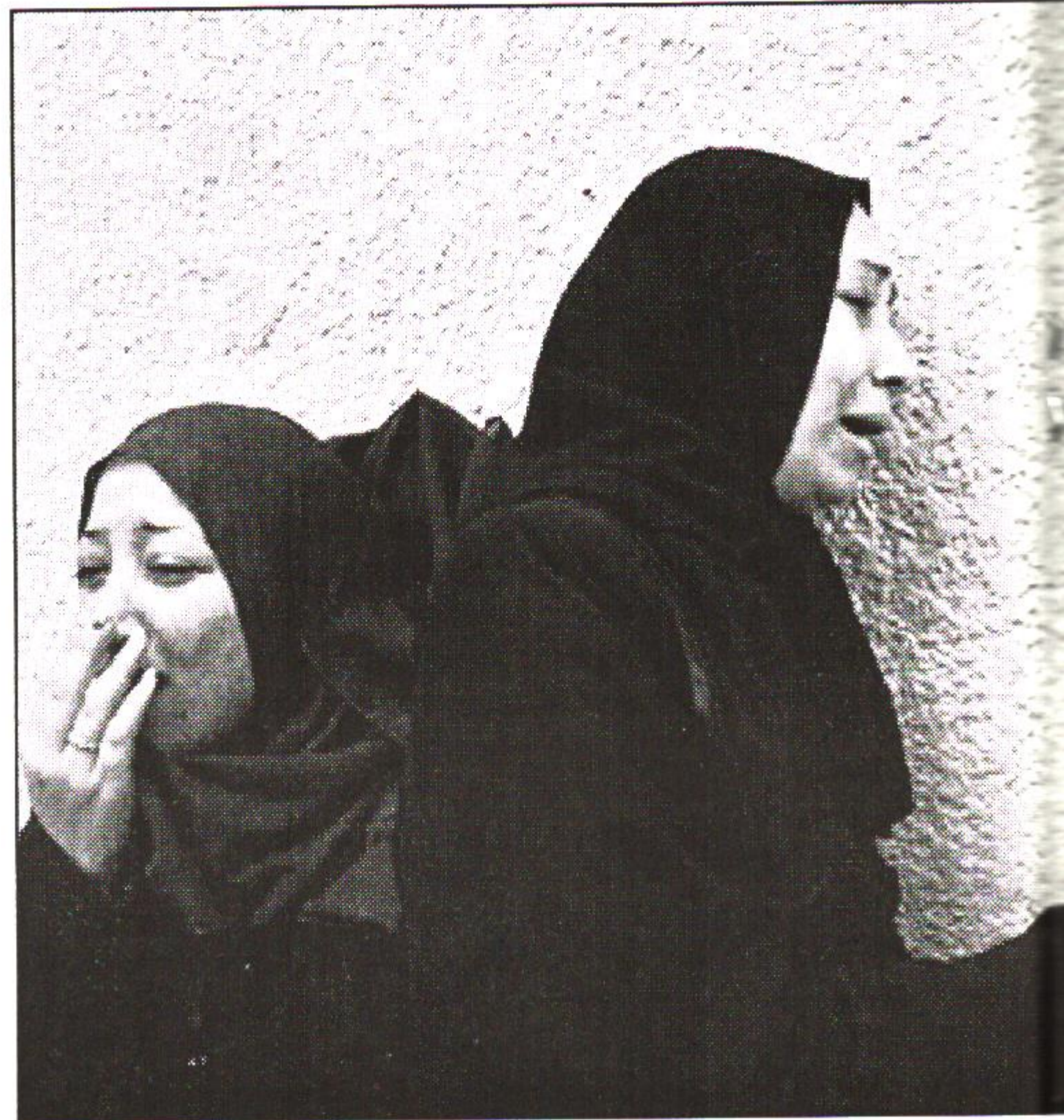
On April 24 of this year, Hamas militants declared an end to the cease-fire with Israel, and for the first time since it committed itself to a cease-fire in November, the military wing of Hamas fired a barrage of Kassam rockets and mortar shells from Gaza into Sderot in Israel. No one was hurt.

At that time a spokesman for the Hamas movement in Gaza, Ismail Radwan, declared that the firing of rockets was "a natural response to Israeli aggression and violations of the truce in the West Bank and Gaza Strip." This followed the previous weekend, when

Israeli forces killed up to nine Palestinians, mostly militants in the West Bank..

Hamas has largely adhered to self-imposed cease-fires since February 2005, but small groups like the Islamic Jihad have continued firing rockets at Israel

continuation of the war in Lebanon. Like the war on Iraq. They reflect the US imperialist drive to impose their interests on the region. In July 2006 the Israeli generals attacked Hezbollah to assist the Seniora puppet government in Lebanon, and



almost every day, and the Israeli propaganda has demagogically blamed Hamas for it.

On May 17, following the firing of Kassam missiles on Sderot, the Israeli army once again attacked Gaza claiming that this attack was an attempt to end the firing of the Kassam missiles. This however, is not the reason but the excuse. In exactly the same manner as the three kidnapped soldiers in July 2006 were not the reason for the Israeli attack on Lebanon but only the excuse.

The war on Gaza is the

in May 2007 Israel attacks Gaza to assist the darling of the imperialists, Abu Mazen.

The reason Abu Mazen and his imperialist backers are losing is because like in Lebanon the masses understand that behind the attack on Hamas is the attempt to make them give up on any hope of being free of imperialist oppression.

Unfortunately Hamas is not a revolutionary leadership that can lead the Palestinians to a victory. Instead of uniting the masses and calling on the working class in Israel and in the Arab states to topple the rot-

ten regimes, it attacks the poor people of Sderot, who find themselves in a horrible trap. On the one hand they are used as living shields to cover the criminal policy of the Israeli government and on the other hand they suffer from the Kassams located one kilometre away. If they could they would flee Sderot, but they do not have the money to escape this town.

What the people of Sderot

and Gaza need is a revolutionary leadership of the working class struggling for a real future in the form of a Socialist Federation of the Middle East that would replace the power of the capitalists - who use and abuse them and who have led them into a dead end - with the power of the working class Arabs and Jews, Iranians and Turks and of all the other nations in the region. Within

such a Federation we would build a socialist federated state of the Palestinians and the Israelis. Only such a state would be capable of solving the national question created by the imperialists and their servants who have closed us in a bloody death trap.

Monday, 21 May 2007

Is Lebanon on the eve of a military coup?

Thousands of Palestinians have been fleeing Nahr al-Bared (Cold River), the refugee camp in northern Lebanon, after several days of fighting between Fatah al-Islam and the Lebanese army that has heavily bombarded the besieged camp. The clashes erupted when security forces tried to arrest suspects in a bank robbery. Militants from Fatah al-Islam then attacked army posts at the entrances to the camp.

The camp, situated 16 km north of Tripoli near the coastal road, was established by the League of Red Cross Societies in 1949 to accommodate Palestinian refugees from the Lake Huleh area. Now, according to UNRWA, the agency that cares for Palestinian refugees, the 40,000 Palestinians living in the one square kilometre Nahr al-Bared camp are running out of supplies. Water is a major issue, and food and medical supplies will be a major issue very soon.

A UN relief convoy was hit in northern Lebanon as it tried to enter Nahr el-Bared. UN officials in the Beddawi camp about 10km away said they expected 10,000 refugees to arrive through the night. This human river made of Palestinian refugees expelled by Israel back in 1948 are afraid that the Lebanese army will bulldoze the camp.

Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary-general, the new servant of US imperialism who has not opened his mouth while Israel has been bombing Gaza, has demanded an end to Fatah al-Islam's attacks on the Lebanese army. And what about the civilians and the attack on the UN convey? Not a single word.

Similarly, the Arab League, that only last week had spoken of the need to maintain the stability of the region, has condemned the

"criminal and terrorist acts" committed by the so-called terrorist group Fatah Islam against the Lebanese security forces.

Javier Solana, the European Union foreign policy chief has also defended the actions of Lebanon's military in the refugee camp, saying Lebanon was fighting a "terrorist group". The US State Department has also declared that it is considering providing financial help to the Lebanese army.

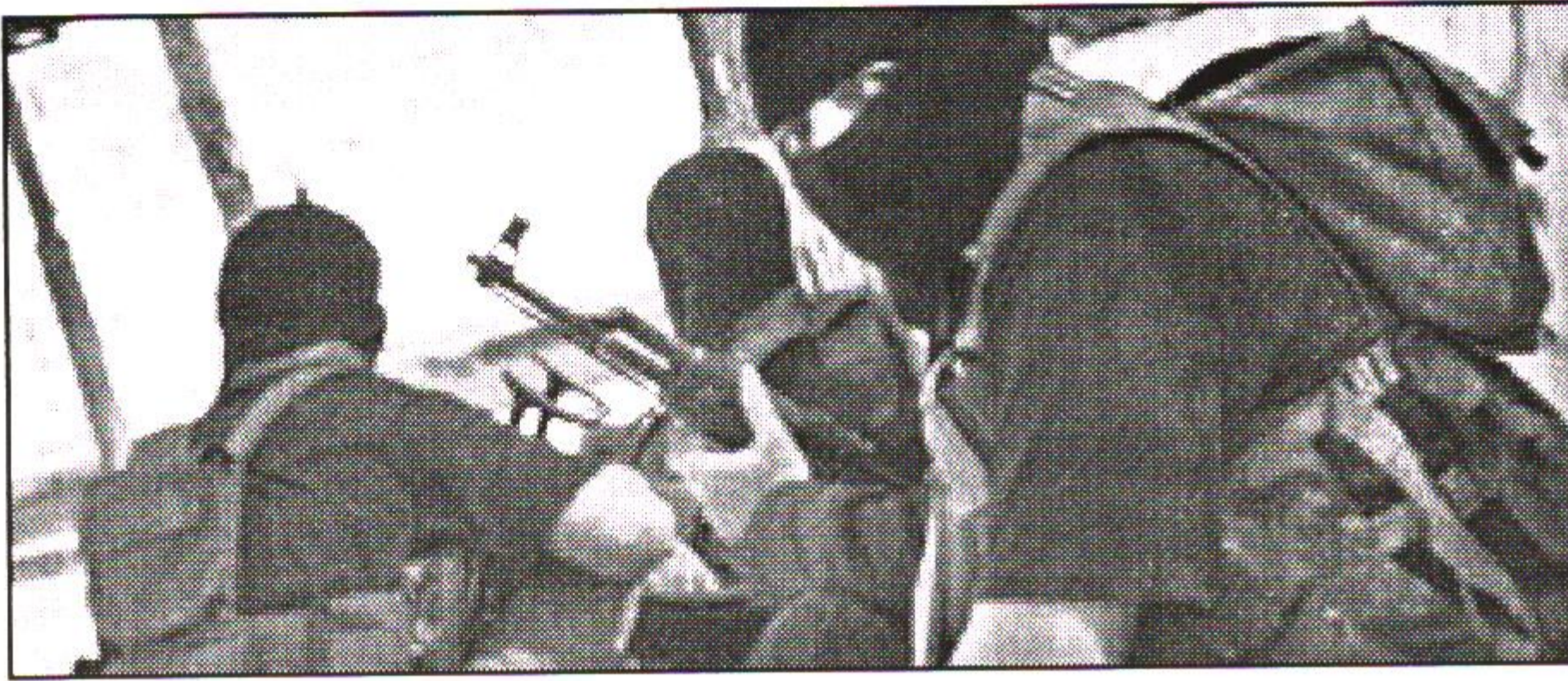
Why are all the imperialists and their puppets so eager to destroy this refugee camp, where a small group of at most 200 Islamic militants are based? Security sources said already on Monday that 25 militants had been killed and that 40 were in custody. The army said 30 soldiers had been killed so far in the battle, and released photographs of 19 of them. By now many more members of Fatah al-Islam are already dead.

Very little is known about this Sunni group led by Shaker Abssi, a Palestinian wanted by both Syria and Jordan. Abssi was jailed for three years by Syria in 2003. Damascus has issued a new arrest warrant against him. This group is opposed by the major Palestinian political groups and has nothing to do with Hezbollah. Abssi is suspected of having links to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the late Jordanian leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq. In 2004 a Jordanian military court sentenced Abssi to death in absentia for his alleged involvement in the murder of Laurence Foley, an American diplomat, in Amman in 2002. Fatah al-Islam statements have appeared on Islamist websites known to publish al-Qaeda statements. However, many people suspect that al-Qaeda is merely being used as an excuse here.

Fatah al-Islam has made clear that its



Middle East crises



main interest is not the return of Palestinian refugees and their descendants to Israel. Instead it aims to introduce a Taliban-style interpretation of Islam into Lebanon, where Shi'ites, Christians, Druze and even moderate Sunnis have been labelled "infidels" and thus could legitimately be killed. In other words it aims at fomenting ethnic religious clashes like in Iraq which only serve the interests of the US imperialism. They act more as agent provocateurs pushing for a civil war than simply a legitimate Palestinian militant group.

The Lebanese government of course attempts to link Fatah al-Islam to Syrian intelligence. Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Moualem said in a lecture at Damascus University. "We reject this organization. It does not serve the Palestinian cause and it is not after liberating Palestine"

While of course we have no knowledge of whether this group is indeed connected to Al-Qaeda, it is clear that the imperialists and their puppets in the region are using the actions of this group as a pretext for attacking the Palestinian refugee camp.

The fact that the ruling elites in the pro-imperialist camp are trembling as a result of the growing instability of the entire region that flows from the defeat of the US in Iraq and Israel in Lebanon is very clear. However, this does not explain the ferocious attack on the refugee camp.

It could be to do with possible preparation for a war on Syria, which can be blamed for backing this group. Last month, four Syrian members of Fatah Islam were arrested by Lebanese authorities over the February bombing of a commuter bus that killed three people and injured 20.

Fatah Islam was formed, according to some Western sources, as an offshoot of the Damascus-based Palestinian Fatah Uprising. However, a deadly shoot-out between Fatah Islam and Fatah Uprising in Nahr al-Bared on March 19 not only made it clear that the two are enemies but it also led the Lebanese army to surround the camp at the time.

It could be to do with a preparation of a massive attack on the Palestinians refugees in Lebanon among whom many support Hamas.

Since Hamas came to power in the Palestinian Territories in January 2006, the refugee camps in Lebanon have suffered their worst financial crisis for many years. All 12 official refugee camps in the region known as the Lebanon Field are suffering from serious problems and the government fears an uprising.

Already the anger among Palestinians is spreading. Enraged by the assault on the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp in northern Lebanon they have set fire to car tyres in three other camps. The main Palestinian factions, including Fatah and Hamas, have distanced themselves from Fatah al-Islam and denounced the fighting, warning that it endangers Palestinian civilians. However, the situation in Beddawi camp may force them to oppose the army, which may lead to a new civil war. 400,000 Palestinians refugees live in Lebanon, more than 215,000 in the 12 refugee camps. Altogether they constitute 10 percent of the population.

Lebanon is in deep economic and political crisis. The government has very little control or legitimacy in the eyes of most Lebanese. Hezbollah, the winner of the war against Israel and still the most popular political power in Lebanon, refused to bring down the government last January at the time of the biggest mobilization of the masses in the history of Lebanon. This is a classical moment for the army to stage a military coup in a desperate attempt to stabilize the situation in the interests of the imperialist masters.

The US State Department has reported that the Lebanese government has asked for \$280m in military. Why is so much aid being sent to the government and the army fighting a group of 200 people half of them already dead or captured? What lies behind this request is clearly something else. It is the real danger of a military coup and a new civil war.

This is a serious warning to the working class and the revolutionary youth of Lebanon. Unless the working class and the masses are mobilized and a revolutionary leadership is built, Lebanon is in danger of military rule and a new civil war.

The few who see themselves as Marxists should turn to the ranks of the Communist Party, the largest workers' formation in Lebanon, and struggle there to offer a genuinely socialist revolutionary perspective and to transform it into a revolutionary party based on the ideas, methods and programme of Lenin and Trotsky. "Socialism or barbarism" is not an abstract distant perspective in Lebanon. They are the two options the working masses of Lebanon are facing.

Wednesday, 23 May 2007

Iran on the Brink

Rob Walsh reviews new book by Andreas Malm and Shora Esmailian
(Published by Pluto Press)

THIS CLEAR and informative book tells the story of the struggles that have shaped Iran since 1906 and analyses the tense and complicated situation which exists today. It shows how workers' independent organisations have formed an important component of every struggle for democracy and against the imperialist domination of Iran, including the revolution that overthrew the dictatorship of the Shah in 1979.

The Shah was the son of Reza Khan, a warlord who was helped to power by the British in 1921 and who tolerated no opposition. Reza Khan supported the Nazis, helping them attack the Soviet Union, and was deposed by allied forces when they entered Iran in 1941.

Wave of strikes

There followed a period of growth in the power and confidence of the working class, especially in the oilfields. A pro-Moscow party called *Tudeh* was formed which helped to facilitate the unionisation of workers. Mossadeq, a radical nationalist, was elected Prime Minister. Backed by a massive wave of strikes and demonstrations, he nationalised the British-owned oil industry in 1951.

The response of British big business was – impotence. However the CIA moved in and staged a coup-d'état which installed the absolute dictatorship of the Shah. Astonishingly, *Tudeh* did not mobilise their considerable forces to oppose the coup, and the working class was left disoriented. Backed up by the power of the USA, the Shah ruthlessly crushed all opposition, whilst being portrayed in the western media as a "moderniser".

Under this regime the workers were forced to endure the most brutal exploitation, with workplaces like military barracks and spies everywhere. The only institutions which escaped the attentions of SAVAK, the Shah's security force, were the mosques. This was one reason why the opposition to the Shah among the petit-bourgeois layers

took an "Islamic" form. Another reason was the exile of Ayatollah Khomeini, who criticized the Shah stridently from abroad and became a figurehead for the opposition which emerged from the mosques in the form of demonstrations in 1978. These demonstrations continued intermittently for months, despite the violence of the state. Workers began striking, first for wage increases, then for political demands. Finally a revolutionary general strike forced the Shah from power in February 1979.

1979 revolution

The main force of the 1979 revolution was the working class, but it was politically leaderless. The other forces, the ulama (Islamic religious establishment) and the bazaar (craftsman-merchants), acted together to oppose the working class, as rival contenders for power, soon after the Shah was deposed.

The invasion of Iran by the Iraqi army in 1980, encouraged and supported by the US government (in the period before their puppet dictator Saddam Hussein cut his strings), gave reaction the necessary lever to crush the movement of workers' councils which had

formed during the struggle against the Shah. These same workers' councils had saved the country from economic catastrophe by ensuring that production continued throughout the chaotic period following the Shah's overthrow.

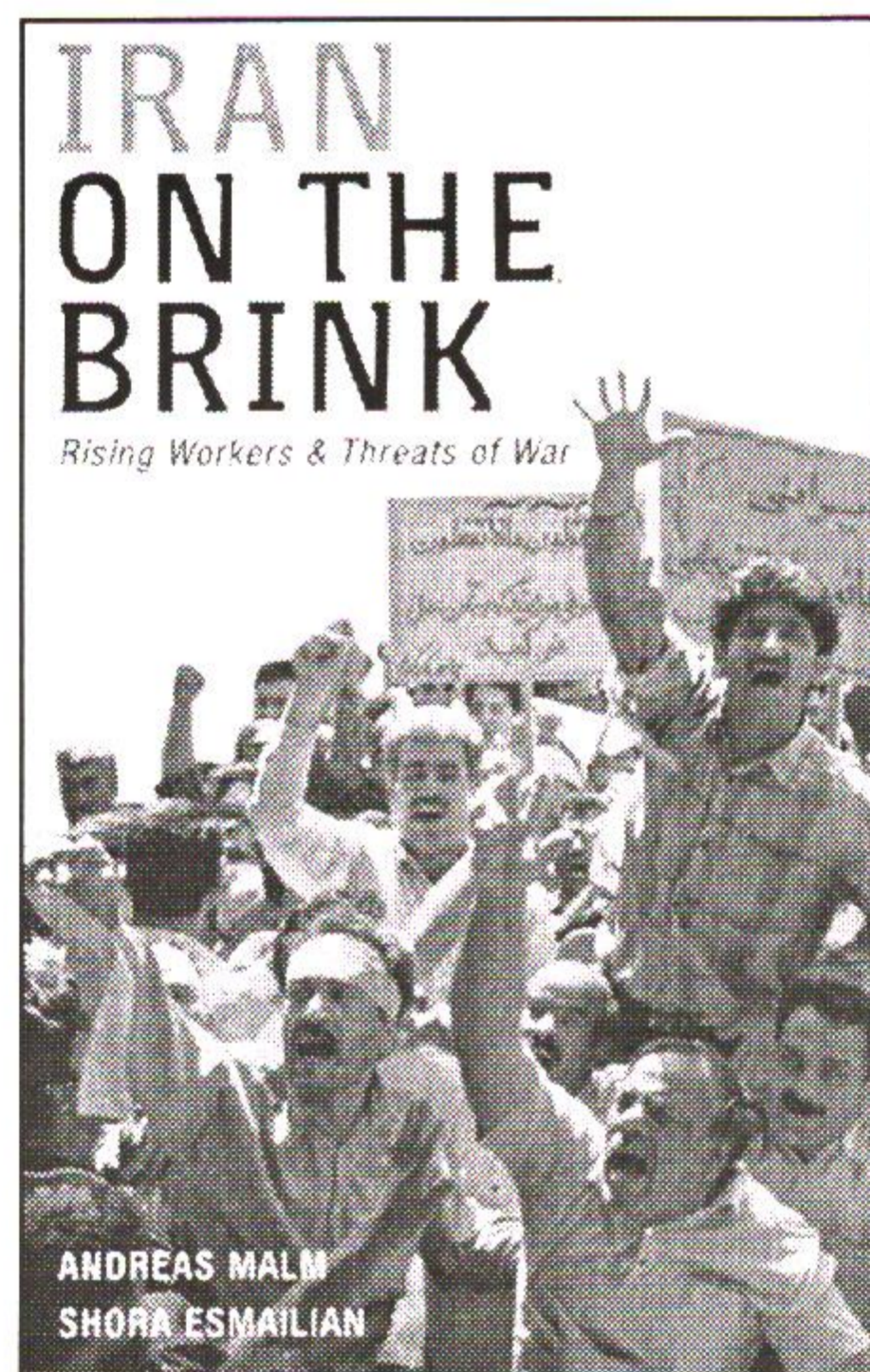
The new Islamist state mobilized unemployed urban shanty-dwellers (called by Khomeini *mostafazin* or "the deprived") into an armed force called the Pasdaran which abducted and killed militant workers in the name of enforcing Islamic values and defending the country against sabotage. Thus the workers' councils (shoras) were either disbanded or converted into "Islamic" factory committees subjugated to the management. Strikes were outlawed.

Once again the workers face harsh conditions and repression, only now their exploiters are 'revolutionary', 'anti-imperialist', millionaire mullahs. Since 2004 the Labour Movement has resurfaced as workers have been forced by their desperate hardships to organise to defend themselves. The many first-hand accounts of workers' experiences in the book help to make it a gripping read.

Iran and the West

The second half of the book provides a useful analysis of the antagonisms between Iran and the West. It demonstrates how Prime Minister Ahmedinejad uses and encourages the tensions over Iran's developing nuclear capability to justify continuing repression. For example the striking bus drivers of the Vahed company were rounded up by the Pasdaran and thrown into Evin prison while the state media accused them of acting on the orders of the US state department!

It also shows the real interests of imperialism in the region. Arguing that the need for Iran to export its oil for profit means that there is indeed a compelling reason to have a nuclear power programme, it exposes the hypocrisy of Bush and Co on the nuclear question, on regime change and on "democracy". □



What do nationalisations mean?

by Alan Woods

THE ANNOUNCEMENT of sweeping measures of nationalisation in Venezuela will be greeted with enthusiasm by workers in all countries. It represents a big step forward for the Venezuelan revolution and a serious blow against capitalism and imperialism.

On Tuesday, 15 May, James Ingham, the BBC News correspondent in Caracas, published an article entitled *Nationalisation sweeps Venezuela*, which begins:

"Private investors and the political opposition hate it, President Hugo Chávez's supporters love it. A whirlwind of nationalisations and threats to private companies is changing Venezuela's economic climate and threatens to widen a tense social divide.

"Mr Chávez is stepping up his campaign to turn Venezuela into a socialist state.

"He is taking more control of the country's assets and warning companies that do not agree with his vision that he will take them over."

Immediately after taking office, the President announced a far-reaching nationalisation programme: "Everything that was privatised will be nationalised," he stated. So far he's keeping to his word.

Nationalisation of oil

On 1 May, Labour Day, the last remaining private oil companies in the country were taken over. President Chávez told cheering workers during a ceremony at the José Oil processing plant: "This is the true nationalisation of our natural

resources.... Today we are closing a perverse cycle."

The Orinoco Belt Project, intended to develop one of the world's largest reserves, was previously controlled by six foreign companies: US-based ConocoPhillips, Chevron and Exxon Mobil, along with the UK's BP, Norway's Statoil and France's Total. These giant foreign monopolies were preparing to reap huge profits from the venture. Now the state oil company PDVSA will control at least 60% of the projects, the profits from which will return to Venezuela. Negotiations are continuing about continuing shareholdings and the possibility of compensation for the refineries.

Is it permissible from a socialist point of view to enter into agreements with foreign capitalists or to pay compensation for nationalized companies? That depends on a number of factors. The question of compensation also is not a question of principle. Marx raised the possibility of buying out the capitalists in England. Trotsky also said that in the USA it would be possible to pay compensation to the capitalists in return for peacefully handing over the factories and minimise the possibility of violence. But what is not permissible is the reformist idea of buying the industries at market value, which would render the whole idea of nationalization impossible. A possible slogan would be: nationalization with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need. This would pay a certain amount to small shareholders but nothing at all to the "fat cats".

Venezuela has only considered agreements based on the book value of the projects rather than their much larger current net worth. In principle, this would be acceptable, since Venezuela has considerable resources and is able to pay – on condition that the industries are handed over without delay and with no sabotage. But it is extremely doubtful that these terms would be acceptable to the imperialists and the big foreign companies. In any case, government sources have said that there may not be compensation at all in some cases.

Same old song

The BBC correspondent comments acidly: "While Mr Chávez proclaimed at the handover ceremony that he had brought oil back to the people, and freed Venezuela of North American imperialism, sceptics were watching with concern. Analysts predict PDVSA will struggle to manage these difficult oil fields. They say that without the experience and expertise of the private firms, production will fall."

It is the same old song we have heard so often! The bourgeois can never accept that it is possible to run an economy without the kind assistance of private bankers and capitalists. But history shows otherwise. The experience of the first Five Year Plans in the USSR proves not only that it is possible to run a vast country without private capitalists, but that a nationalised planned economy, even one run on bureaucratic lines, can give excellent results.

A simple historical example will immediately disprove the central thesis of the pro-marketeters. In the Second World War, when Hitler's armies were sweeping through Europe, and Britain found itself alone and with its back against the wall, what did the British bourgeois do? Did they say: we must leave everything to private enterprise and the "invisible hand of the market"? No! They centralized the economy, introduced elements of planning, rationing, the direction of labour, and even nationalized sections of industry necessary to war production. Why did they do this? Because it gave better results.

The application of market economics in Latin America has been an unmitigated disaster for the masses, who did not benefit from the economic growth of the past decade, which has only served to increase the huge profits of the bankers, capitalists and, above all, giant foreign monopolies like Exxon. The concern of these gentlemen is not that the Venezuelans lack expertise to exploit difficult oil fields, but that the owners of Exxon will be deprived of their fat profits.

Even the BBC correspondent is forced to admit that these measures will help the poorest sections of the population, the people who voted for Chávez and desire a fundamental change in society:

"The poor could benefit as profits will be spent on social projects." But then he immediately adds a poisonous note: "but there is concern that this will be at the expense of long-term invest-

ment in the business. The multinationals can of course stay as minority partners, but if they don't get a good deal from compensation negotiations, they will leave."

This is really scandalous! These foreign monopolies have been plundering the oil wealth of Venezuela for generations. They have extracted a vast amount of loot at the expense of the people of Venezuela. For most of the time they did not even pay taxes.

The big foreign companies are using the compensation issue to blackmail Venezuela. They basically say: "you must not stop us from robbing you. It is our right and we insist on continuing. If you refuse, we will use our considerable muscle to sabotage you. We will pull out of Venezuela, cancel all contracts and cut off all external investments. We will organize an international boycott of Venezuela. We will ruin you. We will starve you into submission!"

Next on the nationalisation list is Venezuela's main telecoms company, CANTV, which was privatised in 1991. Since then it has made handsome profits for its owners, but its coverage has never spread to the very poorest in the country. Most poor Venezuelans rely on the network of shops run by phone companies that are filled with calling booths, or they make calls from stalls run on the streets, where mobile phones are tied to a table and users pay to borrow phones.

From June, the state will take control of the firm, turning it, in the words of Chávez, from a "capitalist private company to a state run socialist enterprise". The long lines of people waiting to phone home will be a thing of the past. He plans to install more than a million new lines and cut the cost of calls. "By 2011, every area

with more than 500 residents will have access to landlines," he said.

Other companies to be nationalized include the country's main electricity provider, Electricidad de Caracas. Cement and steel manufacturers that export the majority of their goods have been told they will be expropriated if they do not start selling more to Venezuelans. Most important of all, the banks, which

short of nationalisation, the government is said to be contemplating other reforms to the sector, which might include a cap on bank profits (with the excess going to social development projects), and further direct control over the setting of interest rates and the allocation of credit."

Even if Chávez delays nationalisation of the banks and introduced such controls, this will make the run-

and his financial help, they will be content that money appears to be moving from the rich to the poor." These words of an enemy of the Bolivarian revolution and socialism adequately express the reality of the class conflict that has been developing in Venezuela over more than a decade and has now reached a critical turning point. The question of nationalization lies at the heart of this critical stage, and upon the resolution of this issue the future of the revolution depends.

The news was received with jubilation by the workers, peasants and poor people of Venezuela, who are looking to Hugo Chávez to carry out his promise to make the Venezuelan revolution irreversible. This can only be done by directly challenging the so-called sacred right of private property. Unless economic power is taken out of the hands of the counterrevolutionary oligarchy, the Bolivarian revolution could never be victorious and the gains of the revolution would never be safe.

Equally predictable was the response of the imperialists of every country. There has been a howl of protest from all sides. The media is full of hair-raising scare stories about the threat of the "communist dictatorship" in Venezuela. They overlook the small detail that President Hugo Chávez in the last decade has won more elections, referenda and other popular consultations than any other political leader in the world. In the presidential elections of last December he won the biggest electoral landslide in Venezuelan history.

What really worries them is the fact that, in order to carry the Bolivarian Revolution forward, Hugo Chávez is beginning to take bold measures against pri-



thought themselves immune until now, are also faced with nationalization:

"Private banking must give priority to financing the industrial sectors of Venezuela at low cost," Mr Chávez said recently. "If banks don't agree with this, it's better that they go, that they turn over the banks to me, that we nationalise them and get all the banks to work for the development of the country, and not to speculate and produce huge profits."

The banks in Venezuela have made huge profits in the last period. The Economist (8 May) commented: "It may be difficult for banks to protest or resist, especially since they have registered strong profit growth – up 33% in 2006 – thanks to booming domestic credit demand amid fast-paced economic expansion (averaging more than 12% in the last three years). Even

ning of the banks on a capitalist basis impossible and therefore it will end in nationalisation. The nationalisation of the banks is absolutely essential if Venezuela is to finally break with capitalism. The banks are an essential instrument of economic policy and a powerful lever. The control of credit is an essential element in a socialist planned economy and must be in the hands of the state. This will enable the state to allocate resources and investment according to the general needs of society, not the profits of a few wealthy parasites.

A class question

Mr. Ingham sums up the reaction to the nationalisation announcements: "It's a nervous time for investors and private companies. But for the millions of people who rely on the president

Venezuela

vate property, nationalising companies and land belonging to the Venezuelan oligarchy and big foreign transnationals. They are terrified that this example will be followed in other countries (this is already happening) and that the workers of Europe and the United States will begin to demand similar measures against big companies that exploit their workers to extract huge profits, damage the environment with oil spills and other forms of contamination and close factories as if they were matchboxes in order to earn bigger profits by plundering poor countries.

"Appetite comes with eating"

There is an old proverb: "appetite comes with eating." An increasing number of workers in Venezuela are pressing for workers' control and nationalisation. This is the case with Inveval, where the workers have already taken over the plant and are running it successfully under workers' control. The same is true of Sanitarios Maracay, as we have reported in previous articles. These and other factories have organized Freteco, the front of occupied factories, which is expanding its influence and stepping up the campaign for nationalisation. The President's declarations will give a new impulse to this movement.

SIDOR is the largest steel plant in the Andean region with a capacity of 4.2 million tons annually. SIDOR produces wire and pipes, including the kind of pipe that the Venezuelan national industry needs, and according to company reports, 63 percent of the production is directed to the Venezuelan market and 37 percent to exports. The company was state property since its formation in 1962 until 1998 when it



was privatized.

Chris Carlson reported in *Venezuelanalysis.com* that on May 9 workers in Mérida held protests outside the SIDOR steel plant in Puerto Ordaz, demanding that the government nationalize the company. Workers of the SIDOR union gathered outside the plant yesterday, blocking the traffic, preventing entry to the plant starting in the early morning hours.

Chávez has warned that he would nationalize the company if they didn't meet the needs of domestic industry instead of exporting to foreign customers, although it seems that for the present the company will remain in private hands.

"As workers we are demanding a definitive answer to the situation," said

Ulmaro Ramos, secretary of the union, on a local radio station. A spokesperson for the union stated that the workers are in favor of the president's intention to nationalise the company.

"We are supporting the president's announcement about the possibility to liberate the company which has been subjected to slavery of neo-liberal capitalism for the last 8 years," said José Meléndez, member of the union organization Alianza Sindical de Sidor. Meléndez said that when the plant was privatized there were 11,600 employees and that now there are only 5,700 workers who are "exploited and without any kind of benefits."

"We are not divided and we completely agree that the president should acquire the control of this company

so that it can eventually be passed on to the control of the workers," said Meléndez.

What now?

Chávez has shown that it is possible for revolutionaries to make use of the institutions of bourgeois formal democracy to mobilize the masses for the transformation. These victories have demoralised and demobilised the counterrevolutionary forces. The opposition, which made a serious effort to mobilize its forces to oust Chávez in December, is now hopelessly split and disoriented. The mood of the right wing is depressed and defeatist. The opposition now has no representation in the National Assembly as a result of their decision to boycott the elections in 2005. Chávez's sweeping victory (which even the bourgeois international observers did not dare to question) gives him a very strong hand to press forward with a socialist programme. He is doing just that, and he should be given credit for it.

However, the Revolution has still not passed the critical point where quantity becomes quality. Powerful forces are at work trying to halt the Revolution and weaken and sabotage it from within. The bourgeois counterrevolutionary forces are too weak to accomplish this task. It is being carried out by the Bolivarian bureaucracy - the right wing that represents a Fifth Column of the counterrevolution inside the Movement, and consistently works to isolate the President and sabotage his decrees.

Venezuela has not yet broken with capitalism but stands in an uneasy halfway position. There are great dangers in this. It is impossible to make half a revolution. The danger is that, by introducing some measures

of nationalization and other progressive reforms, Chávez will make the operation of capitalism impossible, without having put in place the necessary mechanisms of planning and control that are the prior conditions for a socialist planned economy.

We welcome wholeheartedly the measures of nationalization. At the same time however, we must insist that nationalisation must go hand in hand with genuine democratic workers' control and management. The economy must be run by the workers for the workers and measures must be taken to stop the bureaucrats taking control.

We must also point out that at this stage the process remains unfinished. It is entirely false to argue, as the bureaucrats and reformists do, that we must proceed slowly and gradually in order not to upset the bourgeois and provoke imperialism. The bourgeois are already sufficiently upset and the imperialists are more than sufficiently provoked.

By delaying the inevitable showdown between the classes, we can only give time for the counterrevolutionary forces to regroup and organize new plots against the revolution. More seriously, by allowing the capitalists to continue their sabotage, creating artificial scarcities and disorganizing production, there is a danger that the masses will become tired of so many privations and fall into apathy and indifference. That is precisely what the reactionaries want. Once the balance of forces begins to move against the revolution, the counterrevolutionaries will strike again. And they have plenty of hidden allies in the leadership of the Bolivarian Movement who wish to halt the revolution and are waiting for the opportunity to turn against the President. The danger is

still present. We therefore must act with urgency to tackle the problem at its roots.

The struggle against bureaucracy

The final destiny of the Bolivarian Revolution will be decided by an internal struggle to purge the movement of alien class elements and transform it into an instrument fit to change society. The launching of the Unified Socialist Party (PSUV) provides the revolutionary workers, peasants and youth with a possibility to do this. They must strengthen the party and win over new layers of revolutionaries drawn from the masses and completely dedicated to the cause of socialism. They must expose and drive out the corrupt elements, careerists and bureaucrats who have joined the movement only to further their own interests and will betray it as soon as the opportunity presents itself.

The new party can become a genuine revolutionary workers' party only if it is scrupulously democratic. The rank and file must decide all questions and the leadership must be elected, revocable and composed of elements of proven honesty and dedication to the cause of socialism and the working class.

The trade unions are the other key element in the equation. The Marxists fight for trade union unity, while at the same time fighting for a democratic and militant trade union movement. The unions must give support to the progressive measures of the government, especially nationalizations, and fight to extend all measures to improve the living standards of the masses and strike blows against the oligarchy. But the unions must retain total independence from the state. Only free and inde-

pendent unions can defend the interests of the workers, while simultaneously defending the revolutionary government against its enemies.

The twin enemies are opportunism and sectarianism. The fight against opportunism consists on the one hand in the fight against corruption, careerism and bureaucratism, on the other hand, the fight against alien ideas that have penetrated the movement, and especially sections of the leadership, who have succumbed to the influence of reformism and abandoned the revolutionary line.

What does this mean?

From the standpoint of the world working class the importance of these developments is self-evident. Ever since the fall of the Soviet Union, the bourgeois have been organizing a furious campaign against the ideas of socialism and Marxism. They solemnly pronounced the end of communism and socialism. They were so self-assured that they even pronounced the end of history. But history has not ended. It has scarcely begun

After a decade and a half, the workers of the world can see the crude reality of capitalist domination. They promised a world of peace, prosperity and democracy. Now all the illusions of the bourgeoisie are in ruins. More and more people are becoming aware that capitalism offers no future for humanity.

There are the beginnings of an awakening everywhere: workers, peasants, young people, are on the march. The idea that revolution and socialism are off the agenda has been disproved

in practice. The revolution has begun in Venezuela, and is spreading throughout Latin America, as when a heavy rock is thrown into a pond. The waves from the revolution are beginning to be felt in the USA and Europe. In Pakistan and India, in Russia and the Ukraine, people are asking: what is happening in Venezuela and what does it mean?

It is not necessary to be one hundred percent in agreement with Hugo Chávez, or to idealize the Bolivarian Revolution to understand the colossal significance of these events. Here for the first time in decades, an important world leader has proclaimed the need for world socialism and condemned capitalism as slavery. He has spoken publicly before millions of people about the need to read Marx, Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky.

Above all, Chávez has mobilized millions of workers, peasants and youth under the banner of socialist revolution. And he is attempting to carry out a programme of nationalization which, if it is carried to its conclusion, will signify the victory of the socialist revolution in a key country in Latin America and the spread of the revolution to the entire continent and beyond.

The significance of all this is not lost on the imperialists, who are doing all in their power to destroy the revolution in its cradle. They are mobilizing powerful forces to crush the Venezuelan Revolution. The workers of the world must mobilize the might of the international labour movement to stop them. □

- **Defend the Venezuelan Revolution!**
- **Long live socialism!**
- **Hands off Venezuela!**

Workers take on 'their Cameron'

by Niklas Albin Svensson

ELECTIONS in September last year turned out a right-wing government in Sweden. Under the slogan of "the new workers party", the Swedish Conservative party managed to woo a small section of the middle class to its ranks and gain a tiny majority. Now Swedish workers have a tough fight ahead of them to defend the remnants of the Swedish welfare state. Should the next general election return a Conservative government, British workers would do well to study the Swedish experience.

Sweden has since 1994 had a minority government of Social Democrats supported by Greens and the Left Party. The government started off by carrying out attacks against the working class in its first four years, using entry to the European Union and the crisis of 1991-2 as an excuse. The boom of the economy combined with some reforms in the period 1998-2002 managed to keep the government in power.

However, after the failure of the Euro referendum in 2003 the capitalists had enough of the left government. Like in the cash-for-peerage-scandal, the press suddenly revealed a number of "shocking news" stories. Most of these were not news at all, like the fact that the leader of the Left Party called himself a Communist or that the Social Democrat youth organization cheated with state funding. Neither could the government have done anything to prevent the death of a few hundred Swedes in the Tsunami of 2004, something the right-wing press refused to acknowledge.

At the same time, the right-wing parties launched a new united front against the left, using the colour orange (from

Ukraine) to attempt to soften their image. The Conservative party styled themselves "the New Moderates", claiming to be "the new workers' party". Their political programme, however, did not change in any significant way, something which became obvious once they were elected.

The honey moon for the new right-wing government lasted only a few weeks and their small majority in the election turned into a small lead for the left. This did not cause the government to slow the pace of attacks, quite the contrary. The conservative government's cuts in unemployment benefits in December led to the largest demonstrations since the beginning of the Iraq war and, in several cities, local trade union leaders called for political a strike. Half a year later, there has been a 10% swing to the left. The reason is simple: disillusion with Social Democrat reformism led a small layer of white collar workers to shift sides. After the election they quickly regretted their choice.

In this situation, the trade union and Social Democratic party leaderships are urging patience. "Wait till the next election!" is the message. In the demonstrations in December they travelled far and wide to put a halt to the movement. In the wage-negotiations this spring, employers attempted to enforce pitiful wage increases. After the workers showed their willingness to fight, they backed down.

This must be the strategy also for confrontation with the government. Showing weakness provokes aggression. A wait-till-election-strategy is giving the government a blank cheque to do whatever they want in the coming three years. Should a Cameron-led government show its ugly face in the U.K. in 2010 or even earlier, workers of Britain would do well to learn that lesson. □

New Pilger film - War on Democracy

by Hamish McLaren

JOHN PILGER'S new docu/film War on Democracy previewed last week in London. The film was introduced by John Pilger talking about his two years spent in Latin America. It was a heartfelt description of his time spent with the ordinary men and women of Venezuela, Bolivia, Chile, of whom he said: They had no formal qualifications, or education, but displayed a better understanding of politics than most educated Brits (or words to that effect).

The film itself was a catalogue of the crimes committed against the working class peoples of Latin America by Imperialism. It was shocking, awe inspiring, and would have left any viewer with a clear understanding of the nature of US foreign policy and the malevolence of the US Empire, or indeed of any Empire. In fact, Pilger

himself stated in the film and in his summing up speech that "any Empire is evil".

The first 3rd of the film focused on Venezuela and the progress of the Bolivarian movement. Powerful imagery of street demonstrations mixed with an interview with Chavez, followed by an insight into the class divisions, and the related political struggle. Pilger provides an insight into the history of the Bolivarian struggle, covering the coup d'etat conducted by the military and the clear, undeniable US support for that crime. The measure of progress under Chavez was quite breathtaking when shown in practice - from the programmes to abolish illiteracy, to the nationalisation of utilities, investment in healthcare and the self determination of the Venezuelan people.

The rest of the film covered other such US crimes in Latin America...The

installing of the fascist dictator Pinochet in Chile, and indeed the meddling or direct overthrow of every government in practically every Latin American state at some point. Interviews with CIA operatives who had worked in Latin America would have confirmed the worst suspicions of many, but would have been of little surprise to any Marxist.

The film ended with a powerful monologue about the working class movement which has begun in Latin America, which Pilger describes as "growing all the time, even now, and is unstoppable" □



70 years since Guernica

"What do you think an artist is? An imbecile who, if he is a painter, has only eyes, if he's a musician has only ears, if he's a poet has a lyre in each chamber of his heart, or even if he's a boxer, just muscles? On the contrary, he is at the same time a political being, constantly alert to the heart-rending stirring or unpleasant events of the world, taking his own complexion from them. How would it be possible to dissociate yourself from other men; by virtue of what ivory nonchalance should you distance yourself from the life which they so abundantly bring before you? No, painting is not made to decorate apartments. It is an instrument for offensive and defensive war against the enemy."

Pablo Picasso *Les Lettres Francaises* March 1945

by David Sullivan

ON April 26th 1937 General Franco commissioned from the German High Command, against Republican Spain, the aerial bombardment of the small and defenceless Basque town of Guernica. The prototype of all future bombing raids, the Junker and Heinkel bombers of the Legion Condor visited a hell on earth in the form of bombs weighing up to 1000lbs across the town of 10,000 people. Heinkel fighters, according to press reports, machine gunned the fleeing crowds as they sought escape into the surrounding fields.

Some two months later, seventy years ago this month, as the result of an already existing contract between himself and the Spanish Republican Government, Pablo Picasso, the most famous artist of the 20th century, was to deliver a large painting to be installed at the Spanish Pavilion at the Paris World Fair. To great controversy, *Guernica* was unveiled. Despite his enormous prestige the establishment rarely tell us that Picasso was a man of the left.

About six months ago I enjoyed the privilege of standing before this painting, housed now in the Reina Sofia, Madrid's Museum of Modern Art. Against my expectations and even to my surprise I found it an undoubtedly moving experience. Like many paintings in their reproduction, we become desensitised to the expression of force revealed only in the act of painting.

I was aware this work was large, but I was not prepared for its actual scale, and was made aware once again of the gulf between knowing something, and actually experiencing it.

There is no colour in this painting.

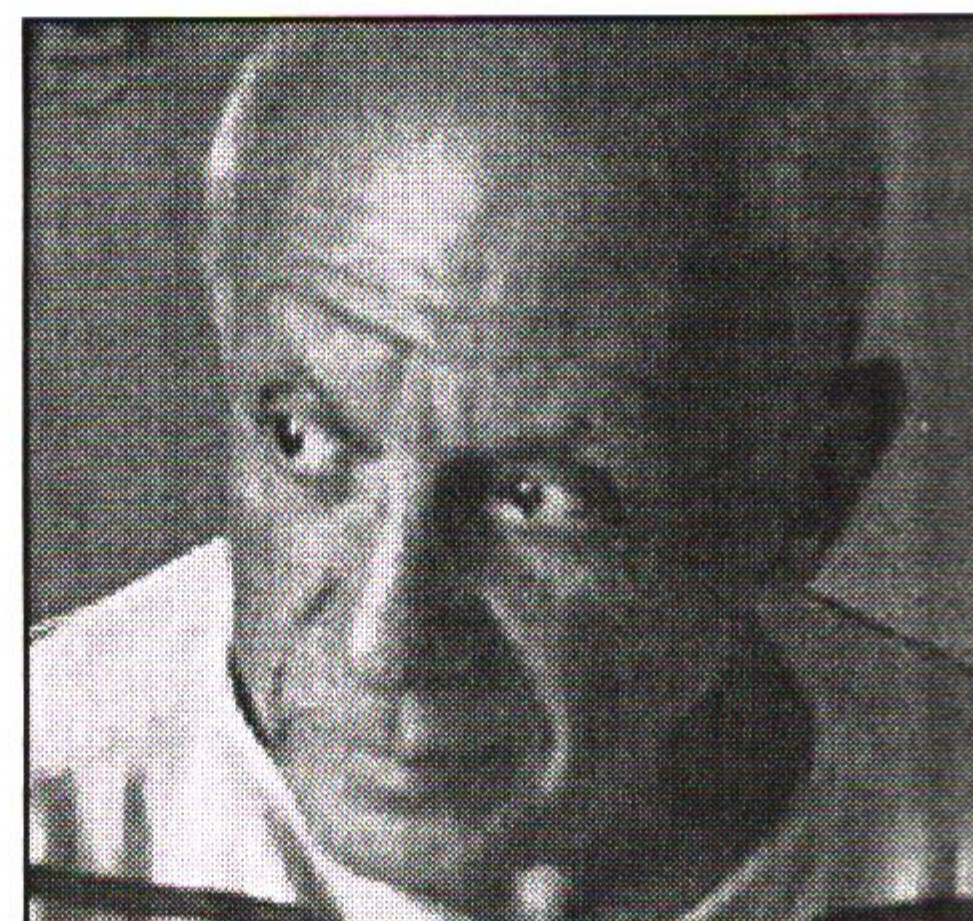
Both colour and life have seemingly been drained from its surface, with only extremes of grey, and silence. But the silence shouts!

Playing upon the allegory of the bullfight, the courageous 'fighter of the bull' is pitted against the cruel and violent beast. But here the primitive urgings of the beast emerge as the victor. The bull, perhaps a clue for Spain itself, stands either indifferent to the scene of raging despair, or on the cusp of comprehension. The human carnage, the torn bodies, are perhaps symbolic in Picasso's own words, of 'a suffering humanity', engaged in acts not of their own agency, but writhing from terror in the immediate aftermath of the raid.

Against Reaction

During its execution, Picasso wrote the following in order to combat accusations of political indifference to the plight of Spain: "The Spanish struggle is the fight of reaction against the people, against freedom. My whole life as an artist has been nothing more than a continuous struggle against reaction and the death of art. How could anybody think for a moment that I could be in agreement with reaction and death? ... In the panel on which I am working, which I shall call *Guernica*, and in all my recent works of art, I clearly express my abhorrence of the military caste which has sunk Spain in an ocean of pain and death."

Almost unexpectedly, this ocean of agony is contained within an interior, restrained twice, once by the painting's frame, and then also by the 'inside of life'. The mother on the left cradles her broken infant as she screams heaven-



ward. Below her, on the ground the horse thrown bull fighter, his sword and himself snapped and defeated. The horse, apocalyptic, terrified, punctured, its neck outstretched in an equine scream. Two women rush toward the horse and the centre, one arm outstretched overhead holding a candle illuminating the bedlam, while yet another woman collapses, arms outstretched to the sky, forlornly pleading with the absent bringers of death.

Interestingly, the electric light transformed itself at the close of the paintings execution from an eye, but still reads as such, acting as both witness, and as a commandment to look, and to see: – to act 'in the light of the eye'.

Picasso refused to allow the painting to be exhibited in Spain under the Franco regime, and not until 1981 did it move to Madrid from the Museum of Modern Art in New York. More than any other painting of the 'modern' era this work undoubtedly spoke its relevance, and its necessity, to a wide audience.

The triumph of all great art is the dialectical convergence of form becoming content, and content becoming form. Fighters for socialism are only too aware of the 'horror without end' that Capitalism maintains as a future.

But there is another future, one that is lit from above with both hope and with life. In this space we must have art. The prophetic description of anonymous warfare, the blankets of darkness and death dropped over civilian populations still resonate. To the degree we realise the truth expressed in this work, *Guernica* stands as possibly the greatest painting of the 20th Century. □

The crime of partition

by Jamil Iqbal

"Leave India to God. If that is too much, then leave her to anarchy." —Gandhi, May 1942

AFTER WORLD War II the British imperialists were in a hurry to leave India. The Partition of British India in 1947, which created the two independent states of India and Pakistan, was followed by one of the cruellest and bloodiest migrations and ethnic cleansings in history. The religious fury and violence that it unleashed caused the deaths of some 2 million Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.

An estimated 12 to 15 million people were forcibly transferred between the two countries. At least 75,000 women were raped. Pakistan was made up of two regions: West Pakistan on the Indus River plain, and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), more than 1,100 miles away. Important parts of what was once considered India were now part of other nations. The Indus River, for which the subcontinent is named, became part of Pakistan after the partition.

To solve the minority question the British imperialists, implementing their policy of divide and rule, separated the continent into a Hindu and a Muslim state. This was done with the aid of the political competition between the two main political parties—The Indian Congress and The Muslim League.

The Indian National Congress, the premier organization and still the leading organization of the Indian national movement, was founded in 1885. Actually the National Congress, established through the activity of the Indian middle class, was brought into

existence as an organization through the initiative and under the guidance of an Englishman. More than that – and what is less universally known – The National Congress was in fact brought into being through the initiative and under the guidance of direct British imperialist policy, on a plan secretly pre-arranged with the Viceroy, as an intended weapon for safeguarding British rule against the rising forces of popular unrest and anti-British feeling in India.

Divide and rule

The British had followed a divide and rule policy in India. In order to win the Muslims over to their side, the British helped establish the M.A.O. College at Aligarh and supported the All-India Muslim Conference, both of which were institutions from which leaders of the Muslim League and the ideology of Pakistan emerged. As soon as the League was formed, Muslims were placed on a separate electorate. Thus the idea of the separateness of Muslims in India was built into the electoral

process of India.

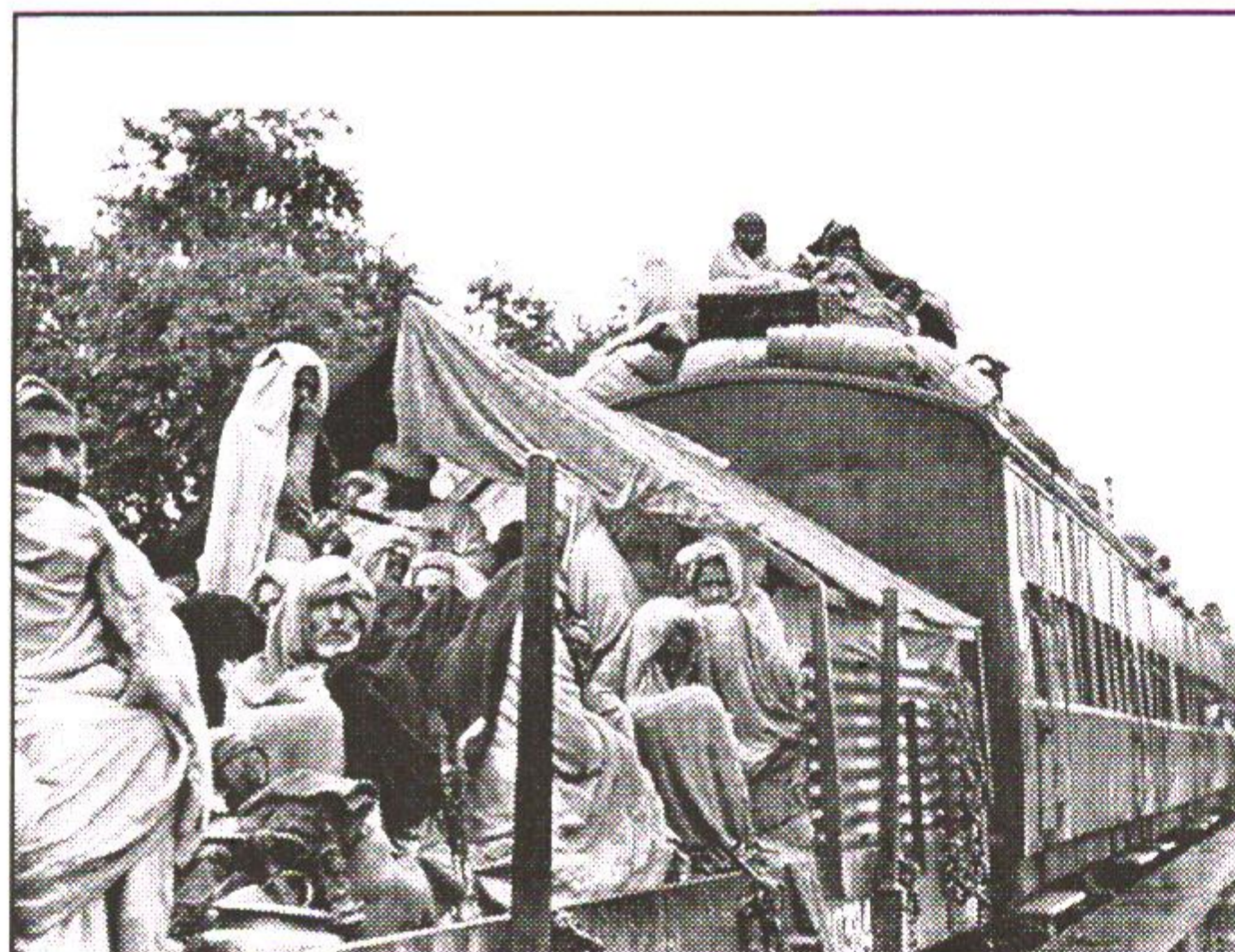
The Muslim League gained power also due to the Congress. The Congress banned any support for the British during the Second World War. However the Muslim League pledged its full support, which found favour with the British, who also needed the help of the largely Muslim army. The Civil Disobedience Movement and the consequent withdrawal of the Congress Party from politics also helped the League gain power. This gave the Muslim League the opportunity to form strong ministries in provinces that had large Muslim populations.

The partition of India, Bengal and the Punjab in 1947 instead of solving the religious minority problem, which was its ostensible objective, in fact consolidated much more firmly the rule of religious majorities in what previously constituted British India.

There was nothing surprising in this, because the 1940 Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League proposed to create separate states in the Muslim majority areas of east and west India. Thus, in real terms, there was no question of solving the religious minority problems in India either for the Muslims or for the Hindus

and other people in the declared objectives of either the Congress or the Muslim League.

What became quite clear during the Indian independence movement in the 1940s, was that both Congress and the League were trying to consolidate the interests of the Indian feudal-bourgeois classes belonging to the Hindu and Muslim majority communities respectively, the former under the garb of a united



Indian independence

India in the name of Indian nationalism, and the latter in the form of a separate state for the Muslim minorities of India, who actually constituted majorities in the eastern and western parts of northern India.

What was apparently quite amazing during the struggle for independence in the 40s was that the Muslims of the clearly Hindu majority areas in India like Bihar, Assam and southern provinces joined the ranks of the Muslim League in large numbers in demanding Pakistan - which, according to the Lahore Resolution itself, did not include their areas. It was a tragic historical example of how emotionally-charged powerful political propaganda can sweep away minimal common sense, judgment and even consideration of thoughtful interest, and create political blindness not only among the illiterate masses, but also among the literate and even highly educated sections of the people

The pretension of the Congress to Indian nationalism, which was supposed to safeguard the interests of all sections of the people, irrespective of their religion, caste and language, broke down when the question of preserving the unity of the Punjab, and especially Bengal, cropped up as a matter of high importance at the time of independence. The Congress made a radical and formal departure from its long-standing position of secular nationalism when it demanded the partition of Bengal in the same language and for the same ostensible considerations as formed the core principle of Pakistan demanded by the Muslim League.

After receiving a copy of the agreement on United Bengal signed by Sarat Bose and Abul Hashim (two Congress leaders), Gandhi



wrote to Sarat Bose, "There is nothing in the draft stipulating that nothing will be done by mere majority. Every act of government must carry with it the cooperation of at least two-thirds of Hindu members in the Executive and Legislative" ⁱ This was a comparatively mild communal approach compared to what followed.

Angry telegrams

Gandhi and Sarat Bose both subsequently exchanged angry telegrams when Gandhi, writing about the above-mentioned agreement, said in a letter to Sarat Bose dated June 8, 1947, "I have gone through your draft. I have discussed the scheme roughly with Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel. Both of them are dead against the proposal and they are of the opinion that it is merely a trick for dividing Hindus and scheduled caste leaders. With them it is not a suspicion but a conviction. They feel also that money is being lavishly expended in order to secure scheduled caste votes. If such is the case you should give up the struggle at least at present. For, the unity purchased by corrupt practices would be worse than frank partition, it being recognition of the established division of hearts and the unfortunate experience of the Hindus" ⁱⁱ

The scheduled caste are often called 'untouchables' in the British press. Gandhi is expressing the fear that the Muslim League were forming a bloc with them against the higher caste Hindus. The point is that all the leaders of the nationalist movement were dabbling in reactionary attempts to stir up religious and caste divisions within the movement.

Sarat Bose vehemently protested against Gandhi's accusation of corrupt practices etc. and finally wrote a short letter to him summing up the attitude of Gandhi and the Indian National Congress as a whole at the time of partition. In the letter Sarat Bose wrote to Gandhi, "It grieves me to find that the Congress which was a great National Organisation is fast becoming an organization of Hindus only." ⁱⁱⁱ No stronger words could be used for the essential communal character of the Indian National Congress led by Gandhi, Nehru and Patel and their likes in 1947.

The question of the partition of Muslim Majority Bengal and the very clear stand of the Congress leaders on the question demonstrated that in spite of raising the bogey of Indian nationalism, the Congress throughout was actually trying to consolidate the interests of big Hindu capitalists and landlords in the whole

of India as a religious majority. The Muslim League in the interest of Muslim feudal lords was trying to make the best out of it by separating the Muslim majority areas in the east and west of India, leaving the interest of the minority Muslims to the 'good will' of the majority Hindus.

The people of British India, particularly the various minorities, were thus used both by the Congress and The Muslim League in the interests of the capitalist and landlord classes of their own religious communities with tragic consequences not only for the religious and other minorities, but for the entire people of what is called South Asia.

End Notes:

ⁱ Umar, Badruddin (2000), "Language Movement in East Bengal" JG publisher, Dhaka, p.12

ⁱⁱ ibid p12.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid p12

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The June days

In his article (The significance of Lenin's April Theses 1917) **Darrall Cozens** explained how Lenin rearmed the Bolshevik Party in 1917. Continuing our series on the Russian Revolution, he tells how the revolutionaries developed from being a small group when the February Revolution broke out to become the main alternative to the new establishment by June of that year.

THE FEBRUARY Revolution was a spontaneous eruption (not led by any one party) that destroyed the three hundred year power of Tsarism in a few days. The old order was wrecked, the Tsar resigned - what was to take its place?

Many revolutionaries thought their main task was over. They had overthrown a system that had defied change for generations. All they had to do was set up the 'normal, civilised' institutions that existed in the rest of Europe - democracy and a Parliament accountable to the people.

But capitalism was far from being in a 'normal, civilised' phase. It was in the throes of World War. Tsarism had been overthrown because of social problems - the devastating massacres of the First World War, the associated famine among the civilian population and the age-old injustices to the peasantry who still had no land to call their own. All the social issues were inflamed by War. They had not gone away. In the April Theses, Lenin reoriented the Bolsheviks towards socialist revolution as the only solution for the mass of the population.

Who was actually running the show after the Tsar had fled? The February Revolution was essentially the act of the Petrograd working class and the peasants, now soldiers in Petrograd barracks. They set up Soviets, organs of workers' and peasants' power. They were the real power in the land.

But these Soviets were dominated in the first days by reformists of different stripes. They believed the tasks of the revolution had basically been accomplished. All that was needed was consolidation. So they handed back power to a totally unelected Provisional Government, composed of various politicians who had historically opposed Tsarism. Russia after February was in a situation of dual power.

At this time the Bolsheviks were a tiny minority. They had 8,000 members; Trotsky estimates they had 3% support in the Soviets in the beginning of the revolution. How were they to



make headway in a situation where Russia was on a knife-edge and could move forward towards revolution or back to counter-revolution in months?

They had two things going for them. First Lenin had rearmed the Party and pointed to the need for socialist revolution. And secondly the Provisional Government was totally incapable of solving the problems of working people.

- They wanted peace - but the allies in the west were demanding an offensive. Anglo-French imperialism wanted Russian soldiers to lay down their lives so they could gain a respite on the Western Front.

- They wanted bread - but the chaos of war meant the bread ration in the big cities was cut and cut.

- The peasants wanted land - but the old Tsarist state apparatus still ruled in the villages.

So the Bolsheviks formulated transitional demands:

- Peace
- Bread
- Land

to express the needs of the masses and point the way to a new and better society. The Bolsheviks did not just abstractly argue that socialism was necessary. They used these demands to skilfully intervene in the movement and to show that simple, basic needs were

incompatible with the continued existence of capitalism.

After April the Provisional Government consisted of ministers from openly capitalist parties and ministers from the reformist, nominally socialist, parties that dominated the Soviets.

The Bolsheviks did not just denounce the reformists as frauds. Instead they put them on the spot. They launched the demand, 'Down with the cabinet ministers,' a demand upon the reformists to break the coalition between capitalists and the representatives of the workers and peasants and to run the country in the interests of those the reformists purported to represent.

They also first raised the slogan, 'All power to the Soviets.' At this stage the Soviets were firmly under the control of the reformists. The Bolsheviks were demanding that the reformists push the capitalist politicians to one side and govern in the interest of the workers and peasants. The Bolsheviks were going with the grain of what the masses thought needed doing and directing them towards the socialist goal.

In June the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets met. The Bolsheviks had the support of about one fifth of the delegates. The Bolshevik supporters, specially among the soldiers, wanted to demonstrate against the futile offensive demanded by Britain and France. The Soviet Congress demanded the demonstration be cancelled.

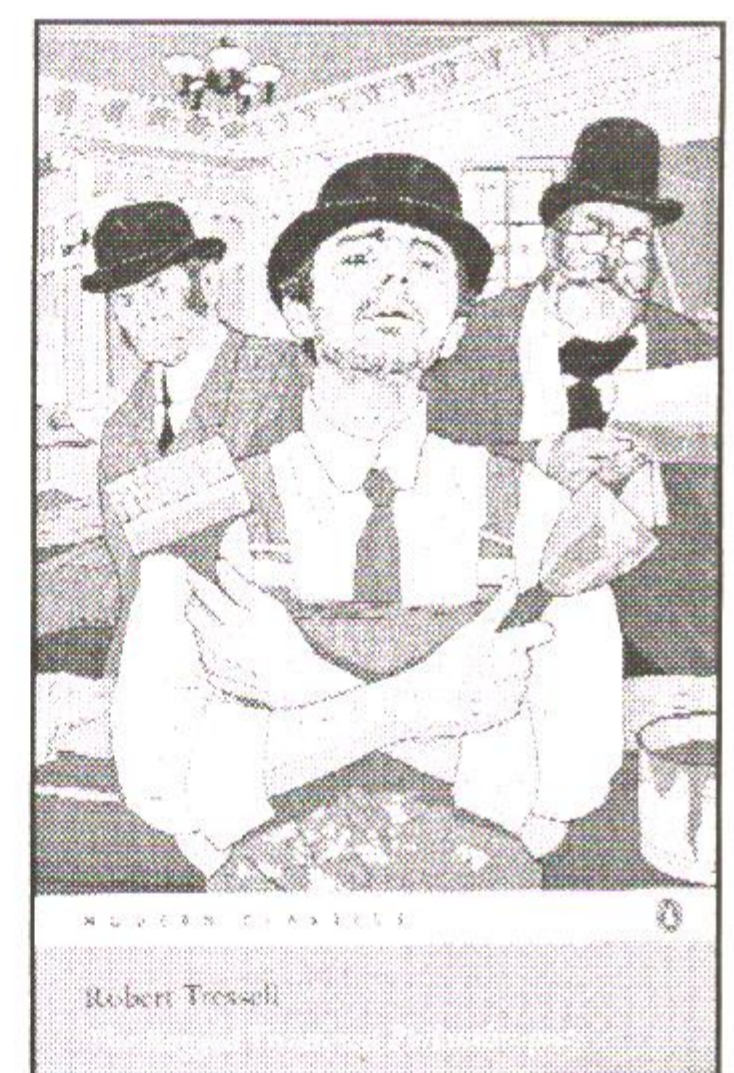
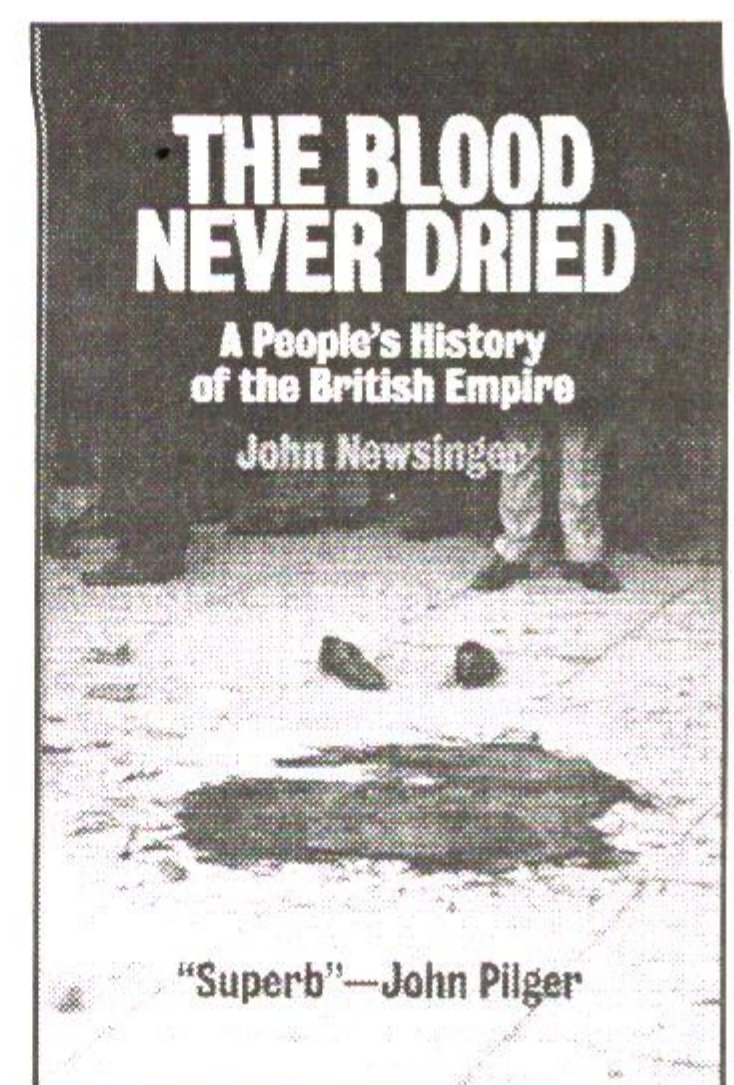
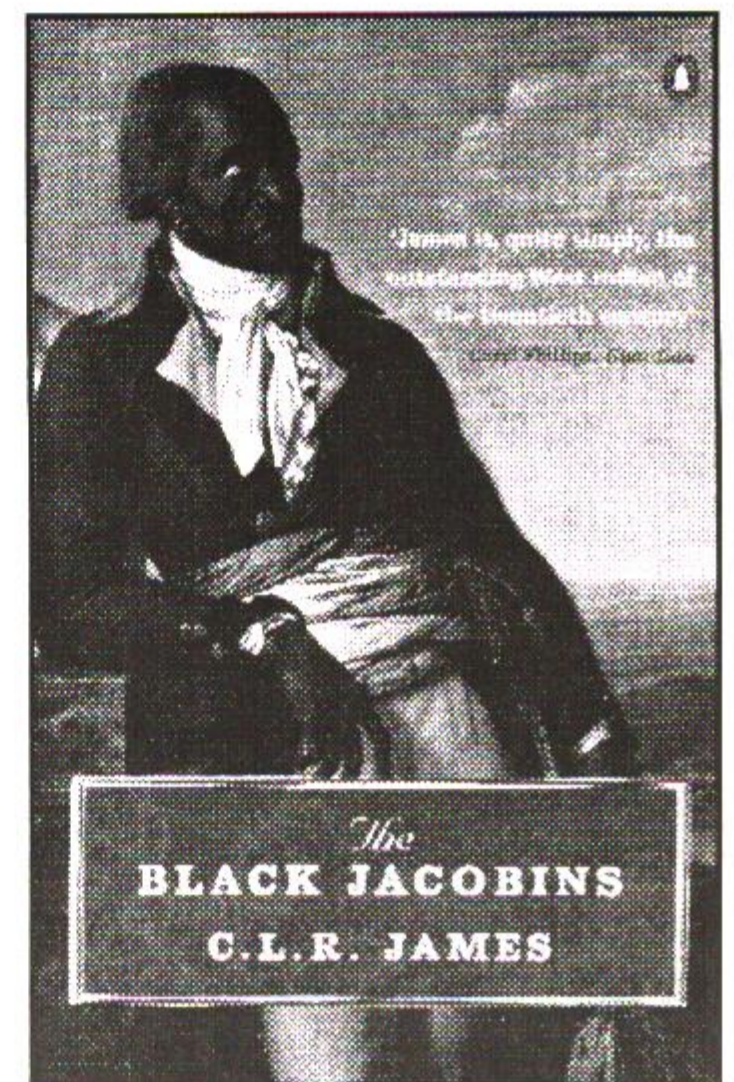
Then the reformists pushed their luck too far. They called for a demonstration on June 18th to show the strength of 'democracy'. 400,000 people turned up. The vast majority were carrying banners with Bolshevik slogans.

Through correct perspectives and skilful tactics the Bolsheviks had made the breakthrough from sect to the only serious opposition Party to the Provisional Government and the reformists in the Soviet, and to the chaos of capitalism. □

New from Wellred

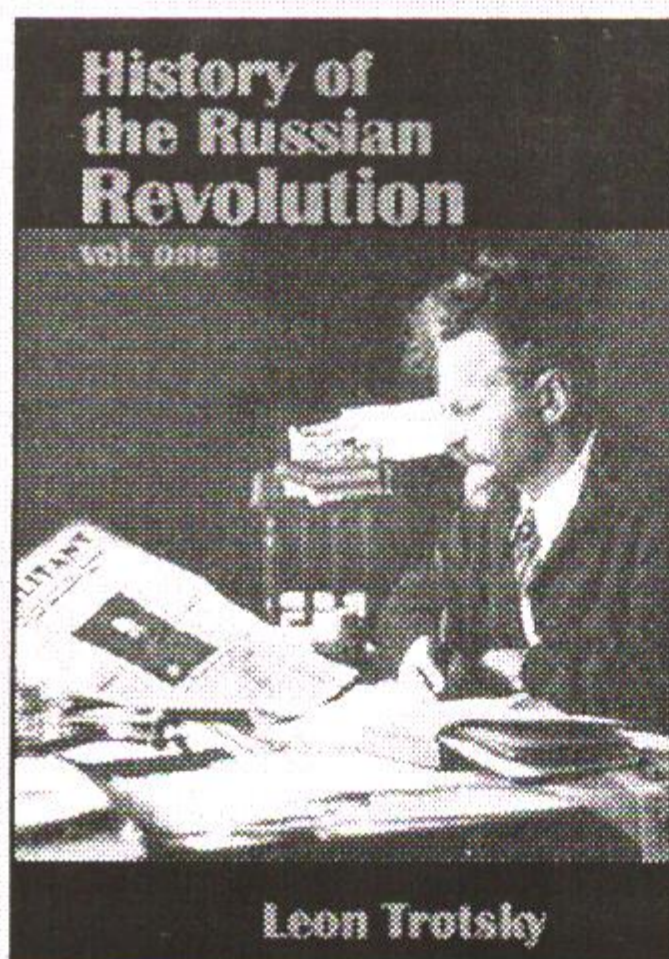
As we approach the summer - well thanks to global warming it is evidently already here - now is the time to stock up on your political reading. So here are some suggestions. The announcement that Venezuela is to put up the funding for a film to be directed by Danny Glover about the life of Toussaint L'Ouverture should send readers of this journal back to that great masterpiece of political history writing, 'The Black Jacobins' by C.L.R. James (Penguin, £12.99). First published in 1938, this classic study of the great slave revolt of 1791 in San Domingo, lead by L'Ouverture, remains a truly relevant analysis of why imperialism and colonialism must - and can be - opposed and defeated. Also recommended is John Newsinger's history of the British Empire, 'The Blood Never Dried' (Bookmarks, £11.99) which acts as a welcome antidote to all those modern historians who are trying to prove how beneficial the British Empire supposedly was. Read this book to get the real, terrible, truth.

A new selection of Karl Marx's writings is also now out - 'Dispatches for the New York Tribune: selected journalism of Karl Marx' (Penguin, 12.99). Marx's journalism has never been given the respect it merits. Here is a chance to sample some brilliant writings on a variety of subjects from the state of British politics to the ongoing reality of the slave trade. Also now out is 'United We Stand: A History of Britain's Trade Unions' (Penguin £14.99) by A.J. Reid which stands as a useful companion to Wellred's own book on trade union history 'In The Cause of Labour'(Wellred £10) by Rob Sewell. Two other recommendations are John Reed's historic study of the Russian Revolution '10 Days That Shook The World' (Penguin £9.99) and H. N. Brailsford's great history of Britain's first socialists 'The Levellers and the English Revolution' (Spokesman £18), which uncovers much that has been deliberately hidden. Finally for those who like novels, do not forget Robert Tressell's masterwork 'The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists' (Penguin £9.99) which has inspired many generations of British socialists since it was first published back in 1914. Everything you ever wanted to know about why you should be a socialist and what it means can be found in these inspirational pages. All these books are available from Wellred at www.wellred.marxist.com - you can also order them by phone if you have a credit card by phone 0207 515 7675 and asking to speak to Steve. Post order can also be placed by writing to Wellred Books at PO Box 50525, London, E14 6WG enclosing details of what you want together with a cheque for the cost of the books plus 20% for postage etc. made payable to Wellred.



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Now of course the amazing thing is that there are a whole load of MPs and the like who think that the above paragraph is fact not fantasy! If anyone needs any further encouragement to make a donation to help *Socialist Appeal* keep up the fight against capitalism and its supporters in our movement then simply look at how we've all been carved up by these so-called defenders of democracy. Brown's (non) election campaign was financed by big business, our struggle is financed by ordinary men and women - that means you. So please consider what you can send to support the fight for a better future.

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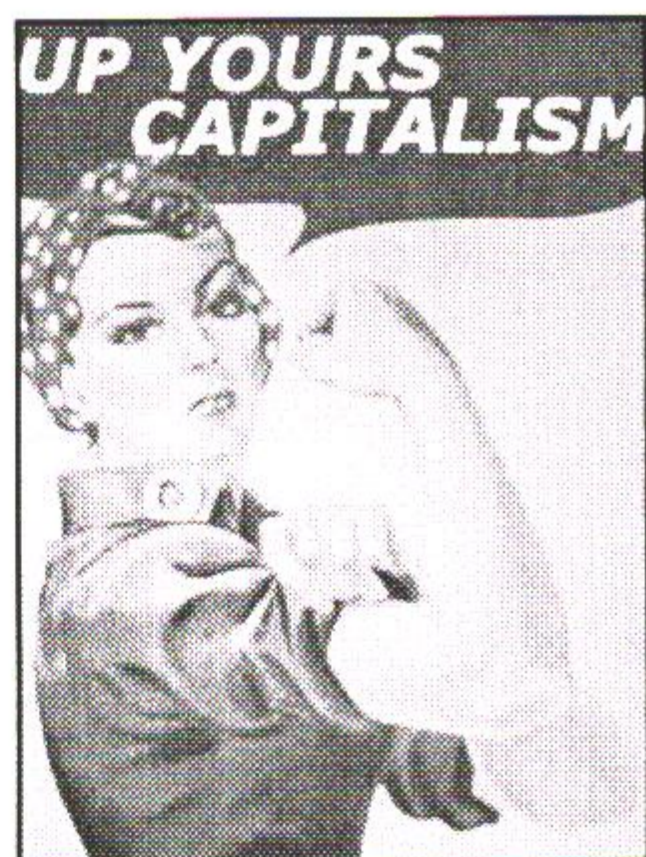
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Steve Jones



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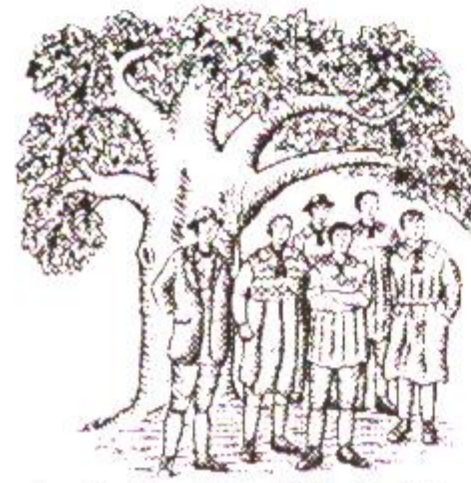
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✚ **No to sectarianism.** For a Socialist United Ireland linked by a voluntary federation to a Socialist Britain.

✚ **Break with the anarchy of the capitalist free market.** Labour to immediately take over the "commanding heights of the economy." Nationalise the big monopolies, banks and financial institutions that dominate our lives. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of need. All nationalised enterprises to be run under workers control and management and integrated through a democratic socialist plan of production.

✚ **Socialist internationalism.** No to the bosses European Union. Yes to a socialist united states of Europe, as part of a world socialist federation.



Socialist Appeal

The Marxist voice for labour and youth



"Don't Mourn, Organise!", says McDonnell

FOLLOWING THE carve-up to prevent John McDonnell getting on the ballot paper for Labour leader, John has issued the following statement urging supporters to carry on the struggle and build the Left:

I know that many of you will be disappointed that we didn't make it to the ballot paper. It's not just supporters of our campaign who are upset. Above all, Labour party members and trade unionists wanted the right to vote for the leader of our party.

However, I don't want people to lose hope. Our campaign has achieved a huge amount. We've mobilised thousands of people right across the country. Thousands of socialists have joined or rejoined the Labour party. We've linked together activists right across the labour movement. We've recruited a whole new generation of young socialists, and won back those who had long since given up hope. We're now in a stronger position to fight for socialist policies than we have been for years.

We've built a real movement out there. I don't want us to lose momentum after the events of the past few days. I know how angry many of you are, but I would ask you to stay in the party and fight.

Many of you will know that I am the Chair of the Labour Representation Committee, which brings together Labour party members and trade unionists right across the country. I would ask you all to join the LRC so that we can all unite and build on this campaign. Together, we will continue to fight for progressive policies: for public services, not private profit; for peace, not war; for direct investment in council housing; a real living minimum wage; support for free, universal education; and the restoration of trade union rights and civil liberties.

The LRC will have a conference in October to discuss where the left goes from here. I'll be in touch with details about this. If you haven't given us your contact details, please email us at info@john4leader.org.uk.

Above all, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate all of you. You all put a huge amount of work into this campaign. I am proud to have been involved in this campaign with you. You represent the best activists and best traditions that our movement has.

Let's all recall the words of Joe Hill, the IWW organiser:

"Don't mourn, organise."

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