

US USES CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN IRAQ

by our Arab Affairs Correspondent

ANGLO-AMERICAN imperialism has admitted using chemical weapons against the Iraqi resistance this week as the partisans play cat and mouse with the invaders across western Iraq and launch more attacks against the heavily-fortified "green zone" United States military compound in the heart of Baghdad.

The leader of the underground Baathist resistance has died, according to a statement issued by the party last Friday.

And the Iraqi puppet regime has dashed all hopes of progress at the Arab League's national reconciliation conference in Cairo on 19th November by excluding the Baath on the grounds that they are continuing to support their jailed former leader, Saddam Hussein.

The US has now admitted using white phosphorus as a weapon in Fallujah last year, after earlier denying it, confirming resistance claims that chemical weapons were used during the battle for Fallujah last year. Though Washington claims these weapons are not illegal, their belated admission has fired demands for a United Nations inquiry into their use in Iraq. Defence Minister John Reid also admitted that British troops have used this weapon in Iraq but only to create smokescreens.

Meanwhile claims that two Iraqi businessmen were thrown into a lions' den by the American captors in 2003, together with reports that over 13,000 Iraqis are held in US concentration camps, has painted a grim picture of life in occupied Iraq. The number of suspected partisan supporters held in the US camps has doubled over the past year, as have the resistance attacks on the occupation forces.

held in camps

Some 35,000 Iraqis have been arrested since the invasion in 2003 and 13,514 are currently being held in camps throughout Iraq. Of those only 1,300 have been tried and only half of them were convicted, roughly two per cent of the prison population.

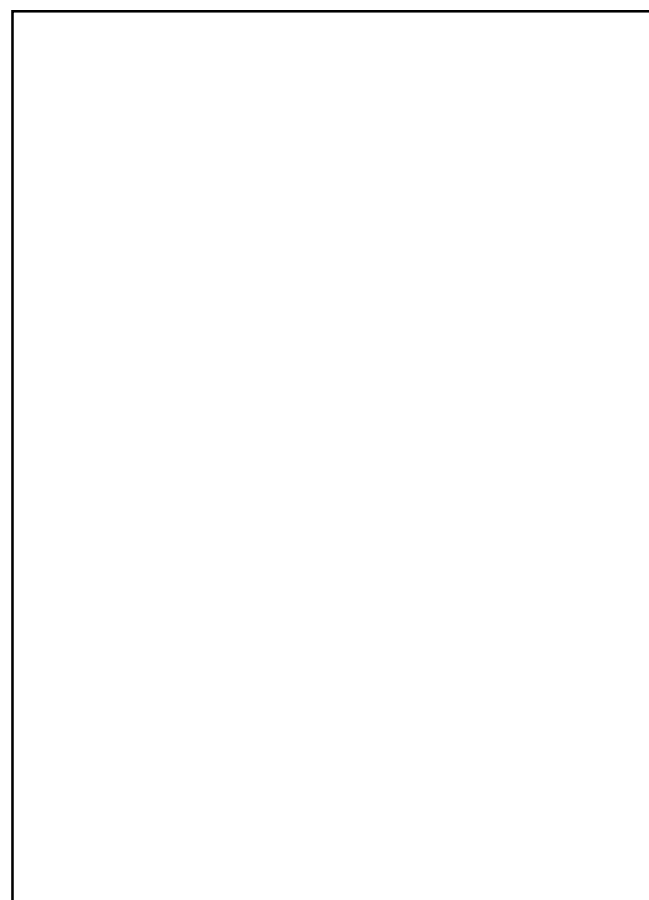
Two Iraqis, who say they were subjected to terrifying torture in 2003, are now in the United States pursuing a lawsuit against the US defence department

with the support of the American Civil Liberties Union and Human Right First. They said they were beaten and then thrown in and out of a cage full of lions by US interrogators demanding to know the whereabouts of the alleged "weapons of mass destruction" we know now did not exist.

Back in the Iraqi capital the kangaroo court set up by the Americans to try Saddam Hussein and other members of his government has been further challenged by the withdrawal of some 1,100 Iraqi lawyers from the 1,500-strong defence team following the assassination of two prominent defence lawyers by gunmen, believed to be linked to the puppet Interior Ministry.

The lawyers did not say whether Saddam's chief Iraqi attorney, Khalil al-Dulaimi, was among those who withdrew. But the statement said other members of the team in Baghdad were continuing their duties "under complex and dangerous circumstances".

The 1,100 lawyers repeated their call to cancel the trial in Iraq, which opened 19th October. They said they pulled out because "there was no response from the Iraqi Government, US forces and



• What ever dreadful weapons the occupiers use the Iraq people will resist.

international organisations to our demands for providing protection to the lawyers and their families".

Resistance forces have withdrawn in good order from the western border city of Al Qaim following weeks of fighting with the US Marines. Indiscriminate American attacks have devastated the city

and local health officials have declared it a disaster area.

A health department official told the resistance media that "the destruction wrought on Al Qaim requires us to declare it a disaster area, as disease and epidemic threaten the city and its children – particularly typhoid and bilharzias

– and the military operations brought the sewage systems to a halt and flooded the streets with filthy water, making an ideal environment for the spread of disease". He called on people to go to Al Qaim and see for themselves the extent of the "crime committed by the occupation".

Field Commander Izzat Ibrahim al Duri, Saddam Hussein's right-hand man and acting leader of the Iraqi Arab Socialist Renaissance Party [Baath] died last Friday from cancer.

Though believed to have been suffering from leukaemia for years, al Duri went underground when the imperialists invaded Iraq and directed the Baathist resistance from 2003. Though the Americans had put a \$10 million price on his head no-one turned him in and they never came within an ace of capturing the elusive Baathist leader.

FUND

Our fund this week has brought us £341.35, bringing our November total so far to £1087.15 and leaving £1,912.85 to raise in just two weeks to make our monthly target of £3,000.

We thank our veteran north London paper seller for £27.40, a south London pensioner comrade for £12.40, a Yorkshire reader sent £10 and an East Anglia supporter sent £15. A meeting of the London District Committee of the New Communist party raised £60 and the social to celebrate the Great October Revolution raised £206.55.

A friend from Greater Manchester sent £10, with a note: "Being interested in architecture I had a good laugh at your 'Rabbit Hutch' item in the Say No More column today – worth a tanner!"

And a comrade from East Anglia sent a note, along with their subscription: "Just a few words to say 'thanks' for all the hard work you and the other comrades do for the party. I'm sure people such as myself and others appreciate it."

Please keep sending all you can to the New Worker Fund, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

Hoon calls for Brown 'shoo-in'

by Daphne Liddle

LEADER of the House of Commons Geoff Hoon last Tuesday called on his parliamentary Labour colleagues to allow Gordon Brown to take over the premiership unopposed when Blair steps down.

This at least is a small indication that the diminishing band of loyal Blairites are now facing up to his departure, even though Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell still insists that Blair will serve "a full term".

Hoon also insists that Blair has "a great deal of work still to do in terms of delivering on the manifesto" – though his chances of succeeding are dwindling. Blair has some chal-

lenging hurdles ahead with backbench rebellions growing steadily stronger. But he hopes he can push many of the measures through with the backing of the Tories.

These include an attack on incapacity benefit – the Green paper is due in January – and legislation to give the private sector far more involvement and control in the NHS and in education.

There will be big backbench rebellions on these issues but with Tory support the Bills might get through. A lot will depend on whether the Tories really want to bring Blair down and risk the possibility of a snap general election. They definitely do not want this until they have sorted out their own party leadership. After that, who knows?

But Blair is likely to lose future votes now on the current Terror Bill and on the Identity cards Bill. Many Labour MPs think that Blair will not survive another lost vote like that on the 90-days clause of the Terror Bill.

aloof

Meanwhile Gordon Brown is adopting an aloof posture, distancing himself for those who are calling for him to take over as soon as possible. But he has claimed that last week's successful backbench rebellion would have been much worse of he had not intervened and that Blair owes him a lot – including the last election that was won in spite of Blair's unpopularity. And outside Parliament

Sir Ian Blair, chief constable of the Metropolitan Police, is calling for a grand public debate on what sort of police force the public want in the "new era of terrorist threats".

When some high ranking public official like Ian Blair asks for "public debate" or consultation, they have usually already decided what they want the outcome to be – and short of a full properly conducted democratic referendum, they can usually conjure the "consensus" result they want.

Ian Blair and other senior police officials have already come in for a lot of criticism for interfering in the democratic process by heavy lobbying of MPs in favour of the rejected 90-days detention clause in the Terror Bill. The argument goes that

the police should be listened to because they are the experts and they know what they need. But if Parliament starts giving the police all the powers they want by just asking, we will indeed be in a police state.

All the rules of evidence would be out of the window – along with the recommendations of the McPherson inquiry. Why bother with evidence or trials at all? Why not let the "experts" lock up anyone they "know" is guilty?

Already, once the new Terror Bill is law, they will be able to lock people up for 28 days. So long as they say it is done under the prevention of terrorism laws, they will not have to give any reason or justification.

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THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

Audacity, audacity and more audacity!

THE EUROPEAN UNION is proposing to spend hundreds of thousands of Euros in a belated attempt to deal with the social deprivation, unemployment and alienation at the root of the last two weeks of rioting throughout France.

The right-wing French government itself is just waking up to the results of the long-term neglect of its immigrant communities. Interior Minister Sarkozy – who is himself from a Hungarian immigrant family who arrived in Paris in 1944 – has tried threats, curfews, racist insults and a state of emergency to no avail. The rioting continues. The anger of these exploited and shamefully neglected African-French workers has exploded and, like a liberated genie, is not easy to get back in the bottle.

Tackling the root causes of the anger will take time and money – but suddenly, as a result of the riots, the ruling class throughout France and Europe feels under pressure and money is being found. As Gary Younge, a political commentator in the *Guardian* pointed out, “The reality is that none of this would have happened without the riots. There was no petition these young people could have signed, no peaceful march they could have held and no letter they could have written to their MPs that would have produced these results.”

Younge made another very important point. These rioters have no political party to articulate their aspirations. The left parties in France have failed to prevent a division of the French working class along racist lines – and the whole working class could suffer if the right wing and racist parties in France are allowed to exploit the riots. In times of trouble the unity of the class is everything. The organised French working class must stand by its African-French members. And it must remember the words of Danton, echoed down the years by Frederick Engels and Lenin: “De l’audace, de l’audace, encore de l’audace!” (Audacity, audacity and more audacity). Or as Marx said: “The insurrectionary career once entered upon, act with the greatest determination, and *on the offensive*.”

Control freak losing his grip

BACK IN BRITAIN Tony Blair’s latest wheeze – voiced last Monday by Trade and Industry Secretary Alan Johnson – is to propose that the union vote at Labour Party conference should be cut from 50 per cent to 15 per cent.

New Labour lost five critical votes at its conference in September, including on housing, NHS privatisation, public sector pensions and trade union rights. Blair and his Cabinet of sycophants had no intention of paying any notice to these policy decisions of the party he claims to represent. But clearly losing these votes stung him all the same.

Now he has lost a parliamentary vote and his grip on the party is broken. The press has already written off his premiership as not so much a lame duck as a dead duck. But he knows that actually getting him out of office right now can only be done from within the Labour Party. And this is why he is trying to reassert his control over it.

The New Labour apparatus can still more or less control the constituency parties, making sure that only their chosen delegates get to conference. Blair has lost control of the Parliamentary Labour Party but will not admit it.

Now he is turning on the unions. He is afraid that the proposed merger between the TGWU, Amicus and the GMB will create a super union, which, with the support of the other giant public sector union Unison, will always be able to out-vote him at party conferences.

The Labour Party was created by the unions to give the organised working class in Britain a voice in Parliament to counter the dominance of the capitalist and landowning classes. The ruling class has recognised this and from its inception has waged a war both inside and outside the Labour Party, and the unions that founded it, for control of its leadership. That is the front line of the class struggle in Britain today and the ruling class is losing its grip. It is time for progressives inside the party and the unions to press home the advantage; to get rid of Blair and Blairism. Again, it is time for audacity, audacity and more audacity!

Definitions

George W Bush last week emphatically declared, “We do not torture”. This is because the United States justice department, after the 11th September attacks in 2001, redefined the meaning of torture. They excluded any kind of mental torture and the infliction of lesser physical pain and ended up defining it as “the infliction of pain comparable to ‘organ failure’, impairment of bodily function or even death”.

This led to the CIA’s inspector general having to warn Bush that the US could be in violation of the United Nations convention against torture. He expressed particular concern over a practice known as “waterboarding”, in which a detainee is strapped to a board and submerged until he believes he is drowning.

The CIA is also reported to be using secret detention cells in Eastern Europe to conduct interro-

Say no more

gations outside the jurisdiction of US law. Some CIA agents are said to be unhappy about blurred rules and the unreliability of information gathered in this way – where the victim will say anything to stop the pain.

Damned lies and statistics

The huge salaries at the top of the banking community have taken the average wage of workers at Canary Wharf to just over £100,000 a year. This is in stark contrast to the surrounding Poplar and Canning Town constituency – one of the poorest areas in the country.

The mean male salary for the area – where 50 per cent earn more and 50 per cent earn less – is a more modest £46,149, which hides the true numbers on minimum wage or less in the area.

And, according to the Office for National Statistics,

the rich are getting richer more quickly. The top ten per cent of the labour market last year had pay rises of 4.4 per cent while for the lowest 10 per cent it was only 2.3 per cent.

Waste

Newly qualified nurses are being forced out of the profession because NHS trusts are too deep in debt to pay them. The Royal College of Nursing has identified areas in Birmingham, Coventry, Sheffield, Surrey and Durham where nurses who qualified in September are having serious problems finding nursing jobs.

After three years of intensive training, including a high proportion of their time on the wards, these nurses are now lucky to get part-time work. Many are now working in shops or offices. Students half way through their courses are thinking of quitting.

Why are the NHS trusts in such dire financial straits? Because they are being forced to pay enormous debts to PFI companies – and the newest and shiniest hospitals are the worst hit.

New danger

Fountain pens are too dangerous to be handled by anyone under the age of 14, according to guidelines from the British Standards Institution. British Standard 7272 says there should be a small hole on every pen cap in case it is swallowed by a child.

Now pen manufacturers, like Waterman, have to insert a warning slip with each pen, saying: “This product is not intended for use by anyone under the age of 14 years.”

The company said the newly revised guideline has the effect of law; ignoring it could leave them open to being sued.

BA targets shop stewards

by Caroline Colebrook

BRITISH Airways new chief executive, Willie Walsh, is seeking to sack shop stewards from the Transport and General Workers’ Union involved in the spontaneous but illegal walkout by baggage handlers at Heathrow last August in solidarity with the Gate Gourmet workers.

Walsh claims that an internal disciplinary hearing has overwhelming evidence that union officials “incited the unlawful stoppage” which held up more than 100,000 passengers.

Many of the baggage handlers were family, friends and neighbours from the same community as the Gate Gourmet workers who had been cynically sacked so the catering company could replace them with lower paid temporary workers.

Walsh is seeking to sack at least two or three TGWU stewards and seeking to bar TGWU air transport official Brendan Gold from his premises – even though Gold and the stewards played a vital role in negotiating a return to work by the baggage handlers.

Gold also played a pivotal role in the longer negotiations which finally led to a settlement in the Gate Gourmet dispute last month.

BA says it lost £45 million as a result of the spontaneous solidarity action and is threatening to sue the union for recovery of the loss and force the TGWU into bankruptcy.

After the baggage handlers walked out, BA set up a confidential phone line for employees to tell management how the strike was instigated. Walsh claims that from this he has “hundreds of pages of evidence” and the men “have a case to answer”.

Some believe there is an element of company posturing in these threats, because BA needs union co-operation

• Baggage handlers’ stewards to be victimised?

over a £1 billion shortfall in its pension funds.

He is also trying to introduce “new working practices”. This, along with the introduction of new technology at terminal five, is threatening the jobs of some 3,000 check-in staff.

He has said there will be no compulsory redundancies.

Meanwhile a group of Polish workers employed by EasyJet and the distribution company John Menzies at Luton Airport won an instant pay rise after the TGWU protested that they were being paid a lot less than their British counterparts.

Management claimed that the Poles were being paid only five pence an hour less than the £6.55 rate for ground handling work. But the workers had informed the union they were being paid just £5 an hour.

Big Orange handling – a subsidiary of John Menzies and EasyJet – said it was

“grateful” to the union for pointing out the discrepancy.

The company admitted there had been an “unacceptable error” and that the pay

rise would be back-dated.

This admission came after a threat of industrial action in protest at the exploitation of the Polish workers.

Shell hits forecourt self-employed

THE GIANT oil company Shell is forcing hundreds of self-employed businessmen and women who and run Shell’s 600 petrol stations around Britain to take on a huge new workload or quit.

for between 16 and 24 hours every day.

The prospect of the extra work and extra money involved is just too much for most and they are effectively being forced out of their jobs.

The managers have been told they must either take on the running of clusters of six petrol stations or quit.

These stations are open

The managers believe this is mainly a cost-cutting exercise. Shell claims it is already running its franchises on this basis in New Zealand where “it has led to improvements”.

Hutton agrees to benefit changes

JOHN Hutton, the new Work and Pensions Secretary appointed by Blair to replace the disgraced David Blunkett, last week announced his intention to proceed with Blair's plans to overhaul the benefits system.

Blunkett had disagreed with Blair about the extent of the changes shortly before his forced resignation.

Hutton said: "We should not shy away from considering any measure that better helps and supports those who can work to find a job, while giving better protection and security to those who genuinely cannot work."

But many Labour MPs fear the planned Green Paper on the changes will include means-testing and the payment of some benefits in the form of vouchers.

This means the measures could face defeat in the House of Commons, unless they are supported by the Tories.

PCS protest over job cuts

MORE THAN 250 people marched through the streets of Coventry last Saturday to protest at proposed civil service job cuts in the city.

The march was organised by a local branch of the civil service union PCS and it united union members across the public and private sectors along with pensioners and other local citizens.

The main purpose of the march was to protest at recent proposals to axe more than 500 jobs at the Coventry headquarters of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

Rally speakers pointed out the Government's hypocrisy and lack of justification for the cuts.

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka, who attended the event, said the cuts were already having a massive effect on members and to the services they are expected to deliver on behalf of the Government.

He added: "If the organisation charged with skilling the workforce cannot be bothered to up skill its own workforce, what message does that send out?"

Rail test track scrapped

KEITH Norman, general secretary of the train drivers' union Aslef, last week expressed astonishment and disappointment at the news that the Government is to close Britain's only railway test track.

"This step formally announces that we have abandoned any involvement in the evolution of new rail services and technology," he said.

"If it is abandoned, it demonstrates that the Government has no commitment to UK rail research. It is the loss of another major British sphere of achievement," said Norman.

Nurses welcome wider prescribing powers

THE ROYAL College of Nursing last week gave an enthusiastic welcome to an announcement from Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt to expand the right of experienced nurses to prescribe almost every kind of medicine.

But doctors are unhappy with the proposals. James Johnson, who chairs the British Medical Association, said: "It is difficult to see how healthcare professionals who are not trained to diagnose disease can safely prescribe an appropriate treatment."

"The BMA will be seeking assurances from the Government that patient safety will not be compromised by these changes."

And Hamish Meldrum, who chairs the BMA's general practitioner committee, said: "While we support the ability of suitably trained nurses and pharmacists to prescribe from a limited range of medicines for specific conditions, we believe only doctors have the necessary diagnostic prescribing and training that justifies access to the full range of medicines for all conditions."

"This announcement raises patient safety issues and we are extremely concerned that the training provided is not remotely equivalent to the five or six years every doctor has undertaken."

The changes that Hewitt announced mean that from early next year "extended formula" nurse prescribers and pharmacist independent prescribers will be allowed to prescribe any licensed medicine for any medical condition with the exception of controlled drugs.

These nurses and pharmacists will have to go through special training courses – lasting at least 38 days.

A spokeswoman for the Department of Health said: "The extension means specialist nurses running diabetes and coronary heart disease clinics will be able to prescribe independently for their patients."

"Pharmacists will be able to independently prescribe for the local community, for example, controlling high blood pressure and diabetes."

This would relieve pressure on GPs and make essential care more widely available. The DoH spokeswoman added: "This means that a young person wanting to control their asthma, or a terminally ill patient being cared for at home by a healthcare team, will soon find it easier and more convenient to get the medicines they need. This is another step towards a truly patient-led NHS."

In 2002 nurses were given the right to prescribe a limited range of drugs to treat minor injuries and this was extended to around 240 medicines last spring.

RCN general secretary Beverly Malone welcomed the new announcement, saying: "This is something we have been campaigning on for over 20 years and the Government must be applauded for taking this step."

"This is good news for nurses and most importantly

it is good news for patients.

"They will now get even better care and faster access to medicines and research shows that nurse prescribing is safe, cost effective and popular with patients."

Since before the NHS was founded, health service structures in Britain have reflected class structures, with a gulf a mile wide between the status of doctors and nurses.

Under the current system it is common on geriatric wards and in nursing homes to for long-term patients develop for example a small but painful eye infection, or constipation, or other non-life threatening but distressing complaint only to be told that although the nursing sister in charge knows exactly what medicine they need, she is not allowed to administer it without the sanction of a doctor – "and he won't be doing his round until next Tuesday". The patient has to remain in

unnecessary pain and discomfort until then.

This measure will indeed improve the lot of patients in these circumstances.

But the Government is not alas motivated so much by the prospect of patient comfort as by saving money. The measure smacks of doctoring on the cheap.

The big drug cartels will also welcome this move. They already bombard doctors with high pressure advertising, perks and bribes to prescribe more and more of their expensive drugs – even though they admit in most cases only a fraction of patients really benefit from the drugs prescribed.

Now these companies will be sending their reps to beguile the prescribing nurses

and pressuring them into over prescribing – possibly inappropriately.

What is really needed is a real break down of the gulf between the status of doctors and nurses, with a proper career structure that will allow those nurses who want to train continually while working until they achieve the full status of doctors – and the pay that goes with it.

Diagnosing and prescribing for patients are huge responsibilities. Thirty-eight days of training is not enough. Nurses should be promoted and allowed to prescribe but they should have the proper training, status and pay that go with such heavy responsibilities.

Lecturers angry at threat to funding

HUNDREDS of lecturers and students protested last Wednesday outside a conference hall in Birmingham where Education Secretary Ruth Kelly was announcing the details of a new funding system for further education colleges that threatens to close those that are deemed to be failing.

On the same day thousands of lecturers throughout Britain staged a one-day strike to demonstrate their anger at the divisive proposals.

The lecturers' union Natfhe said that 26,000 lecturers in 220 colleges took part in the action.

Up to 10 per cent of further education colleges could face closure after having "relentlessly failed" to provide a decent education for their pupils.

This accusation came from a report on the future of further education compiled by Sir Andrew Foster, former head of the Audit Commission who attacked a "significant minority" of colleges delivering what he called an inadequate education.

The report warns that Britain is neglecting work-based and vocational training, leading to a skills shortage that will leave the country unable to compete.

Foster said: "Some of the tiger economies are investing in skills in a way that is well beyond what is happening in this country and well beyond any aspirations we have had in recent times."

Ruth Kelly welcomed the report and said there need to be tougher penalties for colleges that fail. This could mean being taken over by private or charitable organisations.

But Natfhe general secretary Paul Mackney responded, accusing the Government of starving struggling colleges of funding and resources.

• It will probably never be practical for train security measures to match airports.

Anti-terror systems to be extended

TRANSPORT Secretary Alistair Darling last Monday announced that various anti-terror measures – including image scanners, bomb scanners, "intelligent" CCTV and facial recognition cameras – are to be tested at some railway and Underground stations in the new year.

The trials will include a new "millimetre wave" scanner and "sniffer scanners" that can detect traces of explosives in the air.

"Intelligent" CCTV systems will automatically alert operators to potentially dangerous situations – including passengers behaving suspiciously or unattended baggage.

Facial recognition cameras will track known suspects. These are already used at some London Underground stations to track known pickpockets.

The new scanners will be tried out on the Heathrow Express train and at a number of stations.

The measures are similar to those already in place at airports but may be impracticable at stations where the volume of passengers is far greater. Around three million people use the London Underground every day.

Darling admitted that it is impossible to prevent attacks completely – short of closing the whole public transport system.

The RMT transport union said the money would be better spent increasing the number of staff at stations and on trains.

But the "intelligent" CCTV and face recognition cameras have civil liberties implications. There are many kinds of suspicious behaviour that have absolutely nothing to do with terrorism or any other crime.

When there is a threat of terrorism, these things must be investigated. But when the new Terror Bill becomes law it will be possible to be locked up for 28 days if a piece of machinery decides a passenger has been acting suspiciously. This prospect could cause almost as much anxiety among the travelling public as the terrorists.

At a time when soon we will all be required to carry identity cards and private cars will have to contain electronic boxes that allow them to be tracked for purposes of road toll charging, Darling's measures could be seen as yet another way of tracking the movements of the entire population.

The necessary costs will be enormous. Yet when the rail unions called for money to be spent on a failsafe braking system to prevent train crashes – the plans were turned down as too expensive.

Blair and Kelly seek compromise on schools policy

EDUCATION secretary Ruth Kelly and Prime Minister Tony Blair last week agreed to change their plans to reform schools to include strict new rules on admissions in an effort to placate the Labour backbenches and so get the measures through Parliament.

But Blair has threatened to resign if other parts of the controversial White Paper are defeated – which should encourage many backbenchers to stand their ground.

admitted

Blair admitted that the plans to allow schools to become self-governing trusts were unpopular with labour MPs. On Monday he said: "I've no doubt at all that we will persuade those people. This is a very different issue to the national security issue of last week. It's something that we will engage with in the normal way. But I'm actually very confident about it."

His confidence probably stems from the news that the Tories will almost certainly back his plans – which are virtually identical to their own policy for grant-maintained schools.

Nevertheless, the next day he announced a limit on the independence of the proposed "city academies" to stop selection by stealth.

Blair and Kelly said they were convinced of the need for stronger measures to prevent elite schools selecting only pupils from middle-class backgrounds – leaving other schools to struggle.

It seems that the backbenchers have made it clear that Blair will be "on his own" if he fails to crack down on backdoor selection.

question

But his commitment to such a crackdown is open to question after Ruth Kelly on Monday told the London Oratory School – where Blair sent his own children – that it could have a free hand in interviewing parents to decide which pupils it will select. On the same day she turned down a request from a Roman Catholic school to do the same.

The message given out is that Kelly and Blair are still confused about exactly what their policy is and what concessions they will make to the backbenchers to get the Bill passed.

The backbenchers have other major concerns about the White Paper, including the abolition of local education authorities and the increasing involvement and control that would be given to the private sector.

Features

Revolution and wealth

by Rob Gowland
The Guardian

Australian communist weekly

AS PART of the Revolution that began in Petrograd on 7th November 1917, the working people of Russia took over the palaces and other grand dwellings of the former ruling class.

They turned these great houses into museums, art galleries and other public buildings. The ordinary people, who had previously been chased away from the gates when they had the temerity to beg for kopeks from the high and mighty denizens of these mansions and palaces, were now the collective owners of those same fine estates.

There is a very different feel to viewing a publicly-owned palace and looking over a privately-owned one. I have previously written about the experience of visiting a crumbling but sprawling palace in Hyderabad, "one of the palaces" still owned by the former Maharajah of that State.

The palace was in the process of being refurbished to become a five-star hotel, despite being completely surrounded by the hovels of the local poor — who, of course, are very poor indeed. In revolutionary Russia, the Soviet people were concerned to preserve and conserve these great buildings as part of the people's collective assets. I do not know to what extent they have been returned to their former owners or to new private owners since the overthrow of socialism.

In the Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel's "Velvet Revolution", lauded with such extravagant praise by the bourgeois media, saw the return to their former owners of almost all buildings — whether mansions or factories — that had been nationalised by those awful Communists. Havel the great democrat was not going to leave mansions and palaces (let alone factories, mines and mills) in the hands of the common people. No sir! They were returned to whoever owned them in 1948, when the Communists came to power. This led to the spectacle of Jewish citizens' former property, that had been seized by the Nazis during the war, being "returned" to the Czech fascists who had obtained from the Nazis and who therefore "owned" it in 1948 when it was nationalised!

The construction of great mansions continues today unabated. In many countries, the filthy rich still display their wealth through extravagant and ostentatious — and usually excessively large — dwellings.

And not just dwellings: office buildings: yachts, parties, weddings even gambling at the casino — in fact, anything that can demonstrate conspicuous consumption — can be used by these "jet setting high flyers" to set them apart from common people. Earlier this year, Indian conglomerate head Subrata Roy flew 10,000 guests (yes, 10,000) to his

corporate estate, a meagre plot comprising (in *The Sydney Morning Herald's* words) "120 hectares of mod-cons, luxury amenities and grandiose statues".

The occasion was apparently his daughter's wedding, and the term conspicuous consumption does not even come close to describing this tasteless squandering of wealth other people worked for. According to the *Herald*, "the candles alone cost US\$250,000".

But that shindig was tasteful and modest compared to the obscenely expensive wedding extravaganza thrown by Indian super-rich steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal. His daughter's wedding bash cost US\$60 million.

When I was a kid, it was the custom to admonish children who did not want to eat their vegetables, "Eat up, there are children starving in India!" There still are, and it's easy to see why. In fact, the *Herald* article on the Mittal wedding pointed out that,

at the same time as these super-rich weddings were taking place, the number of calories the poor in India consume "tells a terrible tale". "Rural India, and the urban poor, are actually getting hungrier."

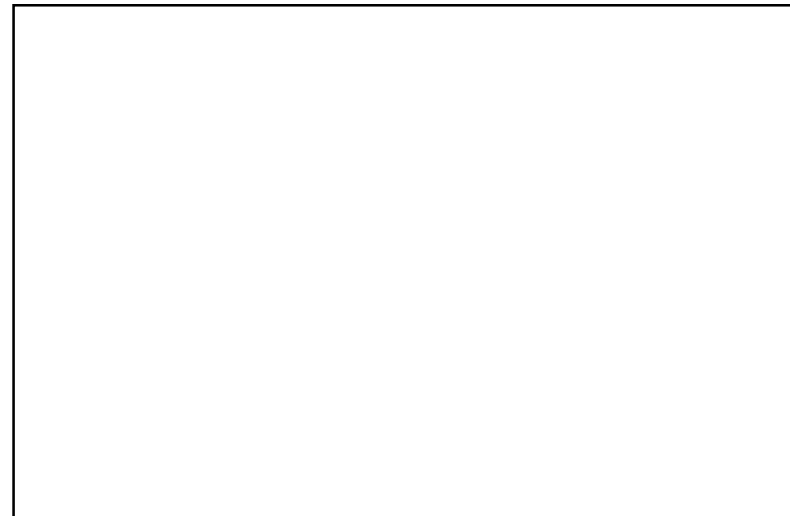
The article quotes an Indian economic commentator, P Sainath, who points out that "with well over 400 million hungry people, India alone has more undernourished human beings than all of sub-Saharan Africa combined".

The *Herald* article had some backhanded compliments for China: in discussing the plight of the Indian rural poor, it notes "India is not China, where low-cost manufacturing has sucked hundreds of millions of once destitute farmers and labourers off the land."

In India, by contrast, "the past five years have seen the most violent increase in urban-rural income inequalities since independence" (Booker Prize-winning author Arundhati Roy). As the editor of India's *Financial Express* puts it: "You can live behind a wall in a luxury high rise, you can afford servants to wipe your shoes, but you still have to drive through the beggars sleeping on cardboard at your gate to get out."



• Above: the incredible Taj Mahal was not even built for a living person but in memory of the dead wife of a Mogul emperor, while poverty was all around — as it is today (below).



Lies and hypocrisy at the heart of modern capitalism

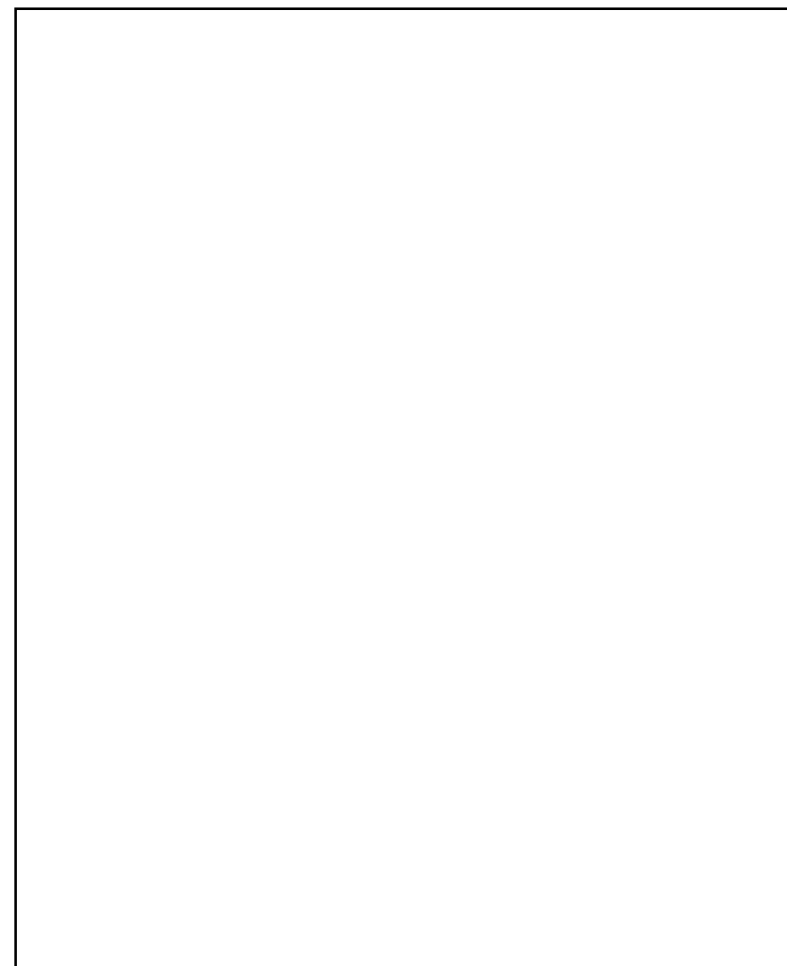
by Timothy Bancroft-Hinchey

THE capitalist-monetarist model is imperfect. To cloak its imperfections, its exponents try to cover up the imbalances it creates through lies and hypocrisy, while at the same time continuing to perpetuate the failed model at the expense of developing nations.

One of the basic precepts of the capitalist-monetarist model is that the equation begins with a constant factor of endemic unemployment, which in turn creates grave social problems, as exclusion turns into marginalisation. The other constant factor is that the wealth and means of production will necessarily be controlled by a tiny elite.

In the case of the United States, this restricted elite gravitates around the White House, dictating foreign policy and asking for wars so that the Pentagon can give out contracts for equipment tried and tested on the battlefield, destroying infrastructure so that billionaire contracts can be handed out without public tenders. The Bush regime is perhaps the epitome of the capitalist-monetarist model's failures, as we can see in our world today.

However it is not only in official foreign policy, which substantiates the system, where this model has serious failings. It is in the composition of the basic formula itself. While the countries which expound this model preach free trading practices in the World



• Above: the Hermitage in Russia was only one of the Tsar's homes. The revolution changed it into a museum which it remains but the poverty of pensioners ended under socialism has returned — below: elderly women reduced to selling cigarettes on the streets.

Fair trade and social justice!

by Pham Diem Quynh

WE ALL KNOW that a country with a closed economy cannot develop in our era of globalisation.

But that truism does not address the following question: how does a country ensure it has an economy open for business while simultaneously containing the risk that free trade brings?

Opening a market too quickly can destroy domestic industry, social safety nets and labour protection.

Poor countries must consider the consequences for their people's quality of life when they enter trade negotiations.

Economic integration is their best hope to alleviate poverty but it is not a panacea.

To build an independent economy, poor countries have to find a way to protect their domestic industries from the domination of transnational corporations.

Opening markets and free trade must be held in check from the heights of the macro-economic system.

Economics and politics are intertwined and only an independent economy ensures a country's independence, sovereignty and integrity.

It is undeniable that trade liberalisation has brought a rise in global income but it has been accompanied by a simultaneous widening of the gap between the rich and the poor countries.

This unequal distribution of prosperity is a worry. As a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report says: "Rich country trade policies continue to deny poor countries and poor people a fair share of global prosperity."

Negotiations to liberalise trade should have the improving of living standards in the developing countries at their heart.

Although President George

Bush tried to convince Latin American countries that free trade areas created jobs and improved the quality of life, the Americas Summit closed last weekend without firm agreement about when and how to resume stalled talks aimed at achieving a hemisphere-wide free trade agreement.

Many Latin American countries – including those with the biggest economies – believe that trade agreements do not offer even the barest of life support.

For them, the free trade, open markets, privatisation and fiscal austerity advocated by the debt-ridden US are a model for a vast increase of social inequality in Latin America.

This has left many governments with little appetite for opening their markets. Some also fear that an extension of free trade will become an extension of US political domination of their region.

Trade liberalisation is not a zero sum game but a game that denies a level field for all the players. It is not like a party where everyone can eat their fill. Instead, the world is divided into the G33, the G20, the G10 with all trying to get a bigger slice of the cake.

Trade ministers from around the world were racing against time this week to reach a deal that would end their agricultural impasse.

But some predict that little agreement is likely to be made when the ministers meet in Hong Kong next month because the world's trading nations remain deeply divided over the issue.

As a result, there is a real danger that this meeting could go the way of Cancun 2003 if the industrialised North does not provide serious proposals to settle the dispute.

Trade liberalisation is supposed to make the world better for all and this makes it crucial to create a stable social and political environment that enables economies to develop.

Double standards could cause social unrest in both developing and developed countries. If the gap between the rich and the poor in any society, or in the world, continues unabated, social stability is likely to evaporate.

The value of a society is not measured by wealth alone but by freedom, equality and fraternity. For these reasons, governments at the free-trade table should think about the interests of their working people and not just the elite of their countries.

Vietnam news

Trade Organisation, do they actually practice what they preach?

Or do they levy import duties on goods entering their economic space and dole out subsidies to make their own products cheaper, then use these situations as leverage during negotiations with developing countries, forcing them to open up their markets, allowing cheaper goods produced under more efficient production systems (with the aid of tariffs and subsidies) to flood local markets?

Such is the case today, for example, faced by Kenya, which stands to see a drop in its GDP of two per cent because cheaper European Union goods are about to flood local markets after 2008, rendering large swathes of the population in a number of economic sectors redundant. The hypocrisy in the model creates the need for unfair trading practices which go against every grain of the philosophy of free trade and market oriented economies. In fact, from what we see today, we can conclude that such a notion does not exist, because the countries which claim to adopt this model cannot make it work.

What happens next? Desperate for jobs, the recently unemployed are forced to turn elsewhere for a work market in developed countries where, as long as there are jobs available which will pay more money than a person from a less-developed country can make at home, will provide a job market.

What do these countries do? After centuries of colonising other lands, they slap on restrictive immigration policies, which make desperate situations even more desperate, because if there is a work market (and there always will be given the ageing populations of the developed nations), the immigrants will continue to flow in, either legally or illegally. Restrictive practices force the situation underground, making the traffickers richer and more powerful.

These criminal elements are able to corrupt the societies in which they live by buying favours, while they turn their activities to other areas which corrupt their societies even further. High society in most western countries is rotten to the core. Compare for example the situation in Eastern Europe regarding drugs, crime and pornography before and after 1989.

Given that the capitalist-monetary model is based on an obsession with the bottom line, not only has everything to reduce costs, it also has to show a profit, because those who control the means of production are looking at the margins.

This has serious consequences, eventually, for the healthcare systems, which degenerate into a payment-first type of treatment and in the education systems, so strapped for cash that they are wholly inflexible and cannot cope with the strains caused by sociological needs.

Let us take, for example, the situation among the children of immigrants – not immigrants – in Europe today, where the education systems of a number of countries have failed in their duty to integrate these children. The silent majority do not react but the handful of those who explode into violence are a reflection of the desperation felt by these young people, living half-way between two cultures and without any hope of ever integrating into either.

Finally, an example of the con-

tinuation of the mentality rife in the capitalist-monetary countries which created and practised slavery and colonialism, in 2005. The Wildlife Conservation Society, based in New York, has just decided to impose a blanket ban (together with the government of the Republic of the Congo) on hunting all species of game in concession areas for the country's largest timber company.

This means that the nomadic forest-dwelling Baka people are starving to death, while a few kilometres away game meat is easy to find in restaurants. This is the epitaph of the capitalist-monetary model, which started with slavery, has continued throughout its existence perpetrating acts of mass murder, invasion of foreign lands to steal their resources, and a lying and hypocritical method of keeping the lie on the road.

This system is flawed from the start. The Marxist-Leninist model tried in the USSR proved that an alternative is possible, although certain elements need to be introduced into the model to ensure its functioning at all levels of society. Yet the Soviet Union is a shining example that such a model could indeed be the future of humanity.

Pravda.ru

• Left top: street theatre in Seattle suggesting the horrors caused by the WTO.

Left bottom: demonstrators in the Far East show they understand the connections very well.

Home News

NCP celebrates October Revolution

NEW COMMUNIST Party members and supporters gathered at part centre last Saturday evening to mark the 1917 Great October Revolution; an event that changed the world when for the first time workers took over the reins of power and started to build a socialist state.

Explo Nani Kofi of the African Liberation Support Campaign, Michael Chant of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) and NCP general secretary Andy Brooks all gave tribute to the impact of the Soviet revolution on world history and the inspiration it gave to workers in every corner of the world.

Also present was journalist Qin Chun, who manages the London headquarters of the Chinese news agency Xinghua. She brought with her a gift for the NCP – a silk embroidered picture of Chinese workers.

A collection at the event raised over £200 for the *New Worker*.

• Andy Brooks, Qin Chun, Dolly Shear, national treasurer, and Alex Kempshall, national chairperson, at the celebration.

Diary

FRIDAY 18 November Occupation is not Liberation. 7.30pm, St Andrew's Church, Brockley Rd, London SE4. £5/£3. Lewisham Stop the War.

SATURDAY 19 November London Socialist Historians Group. History of the Red International of Labour Unions. 1pm, Pollard Room, Inst. of Historical Research, Senate House, Malet St, London WC1.

SATURDAY 19 November Construction Safety Campaign. National meeting & AGM. 11am, Birmingham Irish Centre, 14-20 High St, Deriend, Birmingham. £6 inc lunch.

SATURDAY 19 November Stamp out poverty. Conference. 10am-4.30pm, Council Chamber, Camden Town Hall, Judd St, London WC1.

TUESDAY 22 November Concert for peace. Deborah Fink. 8pm, St Mark's Church, St Mark's Place, London SW19. £5/£3.50. Wimbledon Disarmament Coalition/CND. 020 8543 0362.

WEDNESDAY 23 November Pensioners' Charter Campaign Rally. 2-4pm, Ruskin House, 23 Combe Road, Croydon.

THURSDAY 24 November Keep our NHS public! public meeting. 7.30pm, Balham Public Library, Ramsden Rd, London.

THURSDAY 24 November Eyewitness from Iraq. 7.30pm, Malcolm X Centre, 141 City Rd, Bristol BS2.

FRIDAY 25 November International Day to End Violence to Women. Women only. Assemble 6pm Soho Sq, London.

FRIDAY 25 November Remember Fallujah. 7.30pm, Friends Hse, 173 Euston Rd, London.

SATURDAY 26 November After Gaza what next? 6pm, st Andrew's Church Hall, Whitmore Reans, Wolverhampton.

SATURDAY 26 November Voices from Iraq - teach in. 10am-5pm. University of London Union, Malet St, WC1. £7/£3. Iraq Occupation Focus.

SATURDAY 26 November National demo to defend fire-safety rules. Remember Kings Cross! 11.30 Kings Cross Station, London. FBU.

Monday 28 November London Socialist Historians Group. A mass demo unearthed - Newcastle October 1819. John Charlton. 5.30pm, Pollard Room, Inst. of Historical Research, Senate House, Malet St, WC1.

MONDAY 28 November Remember Fallujah. 7.30pm, Brighthelm Centre, North Rd, Brighton

TUESDAY 29 November Free Palestine. Lobby of Parliament 3-6pm. Public meeting 7pm, Boothroyd room, Portcullis House, London.

WEDNESDAY 30 November Propping up Israel's occupation - the scandle of international aid. 6.30pm, Wilson Room, Portcullis House, Westminster, London. PSC.

SATURDAY 3 December Cuba Solidarity public rally. 5.30pm, Hamilton Hse, Mableton Place, London WC1.

SATURDAY 3 December Hands off Venezuela, national conference. NATFE HQ, 27 Britannia St, London WC1. Delegates £10.

SATURDAY 3 December Latin America 2005, Making another world possible. 9.30am-5pm, Hamilton Hse, Mableton Place, London WC1. £8/£6.

SATURDAY 3 December Campaign Against Climate Change. March to US embassy. Assemble 12 noon, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

SATURDAY 10 December Reunion for striking miners. 7pm-11pm, Hucknall Leisure Centre, Notts. Tickets & details: Mike Fletcher via NCP Centre, 020 7223 4052.

SATURDAY 10 December Make Poverty History march and vigil. 4.30pm outside Lewisham Library, Lewisham High St, London. Lewisham CND.

SUNDAY 11 December London Socialist Film Co-op. The Take (2004). 10.30am, Renoir Cinema, Brunswick Sq, WC1. £6/£4.

New Worker Supporters' Groups...

New Worker supporters groups exist to support the weekly newspaper of the New Communist Party of Britain by working to increase sales, organise fund-raising events and hold regular discussion meetings. NWSG news will appear in the New Worker or in the NCP Internal Bulletin.

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NCP-PCS – www.geocities.ncppcs/pcs1.html

Please contact us if you have an item to place in the diary. We advertise meetings for free. Ensure that you let us know before Tuesday, so we can place it in the next issue of the paper.



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France: racism and poverty fuel rebellion

by Fred Goldstein

THE REACTIONARY capitalist rulers of France have decreed a state of emergency in an attempt to suppress the wholly justified and righteous rebellion of African immigrants against decades of racism, poverty, unemployment and national oppression—imposed upon them under the hypocritical slogan of the “social republic” of “liberty, fraternity and equality.”

The rebellion, which has spread to 300 cities, is led by youth and is an expression of the anger and frustration of the millions of immigrants and their children who come from former colonies of France, mostly in North and sub-Saharan Africa.

This rebellion is basically against internal colonialism—as evidenced by official youth unemployment at close to 40 per cent, run-down housing built in the 1950s and 1960s, a continual campaign of police harassment and brutality, and exclusion and racist discrimination in housing and employment.

France has 750 areas classified as Sensitive Urban Zones (ZUS) where unemployment hovers at 20 per cent—twice the national average—and incomes are no more than 60 per cent of the national average, according to government statistics. Official unemployment there in the age group 15 to 25 is 36 per cent and reaches higher if only young Muslim men are counted.

The epicenter of the rebellion was in Saint-Denis, Department 93, 10 miles outside Paris. Paris rents have been going through the roof. Last year more than 100,000 people competed for 12,000 available substandard housing units in Paris. “Among the hardest hit without housing are immigrants.... The three back-to-back Paris fires over the spring and summer, which killed many children, occurred in such rundown buildings.” (ABC News)

The law under which the state of emergency was decreed is particularly hated because it was first imposed in 1955 as part of the bloody colonial war by the French imperialists to hold on to Algeria. It permits governors and mayors “to forbid the movement of people and vehicles,” to ban meetings, to “search homes at any time of night or day,” to control “press and publications of all kinds,” and to impose a two-month jail sentence for violation of the curfew, among other things. Over 1,500 people have already been detained and hundreds more arrests are expected.

Several years after imposing this law in Algeria, the government extended it to France itself, to suppress support for the Algerian liberation movement. It created such a climate of repression that, on 17th October 1961, a demonstration in Paris in support of

the Algerian war of liberation was attacked by police. Over 300 people were killed; their bodies were thrown into the Seine and some were hanged.

From external to internal colonialism

Just as the original law was meant to maintain colonialism in Algeria, so the present decree is meant to maintain internal colonialism.

The French ruling class has proclaimed that in the “social republic” everyone is equal and that the government pursues a policy of “integration”. But in interview after interview with people of all ages, reporters for the capitalist networks and print media get the same story. “We are told we are French, but we are not French”. “We have the papers that say ‘French’ but we are not the real ‘French’.”

If your name sounds African or Middle Eastern, your application for a job or for decent housing goes to the bottom of the pile or gets tossed altogether. Unemployment among African college graduates is close to 50 per cent. “Janitor is our profession” is a common view.

In keeping with the political fiction of “equality,” the French government does not keep statistics on discrimination. Affirmative action in France is forbidden; it clashes with the assertions of equality. The reactionary application of this concept was demonstrated when head scarves for female students were forbidden on the false ground of the secular separation of church and state.

But just as Katrina exposed the naked racism and national oppression that exists in the United States, the great rebellion in France has exploded all political fictions of equality and social justice. President Jacques Chirac, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin and Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy are now jockeying with each other in the crisis.

Sarkozy is hated by the oppressed and all progressives throughout France for his openly hardline, “law and order” policy and his racist insults. The government has no one it can talk to with any influence among the youth. And the entire regime is now moving towards increased repression.

At the same time, de Villepin has resorted to the carrot along with the stick, talking about 20,000 state jobs, money for neighbourhoods, and tax breaks for businesses and development.

It took a rebellion in 300 cities, that as of 9th November has lasted almost two weeks and has virtually overwhelmed the police, to get the ruling class to even talk about reforms. This rebellion is earthshaking and the ruling class will soon find out that Band-aids will not fix the problem.

Bosses wanted immigrants after the war

The crisis has its origins in the inexorable developing crisis of world capitalism.

French imperialism has dealt with this crisis by launching a vicious, racist campaign of divide and conquer directed against the entire French working class. The key element

in their strategy has been a slanderous campaign against immigrants. The rebellion is the fruit of this strategy.

After the Second World War French capitalism was in ruins from the Nazi occupation and the Allied invasion. The population and the working class had declined. The ruling class decided that to get back on its feet quickly it needed an influx of immigrants—wage slaves who could be exploited at the least cost to the bosses in order to strengthen French capitalism in the world struggle for markets.

The result was an opening up of immigration, especially from North Africa—Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. This policy continued throughout the period of imperialist expansion up to the 1970s. French imperialism had been driven out of Vietnam, then out of Algeria, and suffered from economic contraction more severely than its rivals. But the organised working class was powerful. It rebelled in 1968 and forced drastic changes in the government and some progressive concessions.

As the 1970s developed, the ruling class reversed its attitude toward immigration. It

began to impose restrictions and in the 1980s even threatened to deport hundreds of thousands of legal immigrants by revoking their status retroactively. This measure was defeated, but just raising it was a divisive measure.

The crisis of immigrants was aggravated by the scientific-technological revolution and the capitalist de-industrialisation that hit the suburbs and left little rust belts and shuttered factories around all the cities.

In the 1990s, the fascist French National Front, led by Jean-Marie Le Pen, picked up on the campaign started by the mainstream ruling class and took it even further. Le Pen made progress on his racist anti-immigrant campaign and in 2002 actually got into a run-off for the presidency with Jacques Chirac.

The working class leadership in France has been weak on this question and downright reactionary at times. Right now they need to stop retreating. They must not confine themselves to mere protests against reactionary measures of repression. They need to demand that all the cops be withdrawn, that the emergency decrees be revoked. They need to come out for the justified rebellion.

The rebellious youth must be embraced as part of the working class. They may be unemployed, underemployed and/or unorganised, but right now they are potentially the greatest allies of the organised workers. They have overwhelmed a part of the state. They are mobilised and if they were to be joined by a solidarity strike against racism, poverty and oppression, the entire working class could push the ruling class offensive back.

It would be a mirror, but on a grander scale, of when the French workers in 1968 followed the students with a general strike and shook the ground under French capitalism. It is the lack of understanding of the national question, of the colonial question, of the importance of coming out against national oppression, that now stands in the way of a united struggle against capitalist exploitation itself. This must be overcome.

The French working class has a glorious history of class struggle and uprisings, going back to the revolution of 1848, the Paris Commune of 1871, the mutinies after World War I, and the general strikes of 1934 and 1968. This is the moment for the leaders to grasp their historic role and their responsibility to turn the situation around and fight back.

Workers World (US)

• From the top : in response to the rebellion the people of Toulouse march against discrimination; President Chirac addresses the nation; riot police in readiness; hundreds of cars have been burnt.

International News

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George Bush tours Asia

US PRESIDENT George W Bush began an eight-day tour of Asia on Monday with state visits to Japan, south Korea, China and Mongolia on the agenda, in hopes of counter-acting the distancing of that region from the United States.

White House sources said that while the tour agenda is full, no definite results are expected. Instead, Bush will give "pro-democracy" type speeches, beginning Tuesday in Kyoto, Japan and concluding in Mongolia.

The reason for the Asian visit is the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in Busan, South Korea, but reports are that the president's speeches will have China always in mind.

Washington sees Beijing as a potential world power rival due to its growing trade and industry, its military power, and its expansion globally in all areas.

Avian flu, both early warning and information sharing from the region, will also figure in the president's meetings.

This month's tours have been seen both at home and abroad as an attempted diversion from domestic turmoil and Bush's increasing unpopularity. But so far legislators seem to be staying focused on the Cheney aide's involvement in the CIA leak case and the invasion of Iraq based on false information.

The Asian tour was preceded by Bush's trip to South America where he was greeted by huge protests everywhere, but particularly at the debacle of the fourth Summit of the Americas in Argentina, where his hoped-for revival of the Free Trade Area of the Americas bit the dust.

South Korean workers and students are also warming up for the US president's visit with massive protests arranged by more than 50 local and foreign anti-globalisation organisations.

Prensa Latina

New threat to Lenin's tomb

THE RUSSIAN Orthodox Church is calling for the removal of the body of Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin from the Red Square mausoleum for burial.

With the 15th anniversary of the death of the Soviet Union nearing, a debate has been brewing on whether to bury Lenin's body, which has been on display in a mausoleum just outside the Kremlin since 1924.

"Lenin should be buried, because the idea of mummification is outside any cultural and religious context in Russia," Russian Orthodox Church's Metropolitan Kirill said on Tuesday.

artificial

Kirill, who heads the church's external relations department, called the public display of the body "an artificial phenomenon with some sort of very strange mysticism". In an apparent Kremlin attempt to gauge public reaction on the body's removal, a regional envoy of President Vladimir Putin said in September that Lenin's body should be taken from the mausoleum and buried.



• Lenin's tomb in Red Square.

Several senior members of the Kremlin-controlled parliament then proposed he be buried.

Russian Communist Party chief Gennady Zyuganov warned his party would stage a massive civil disobedience

action if authorities tried to remove the body of the founder of the Soviet state and demolish the mausoleum.

The Communist Party of the Russian Federation has launched a petition drive against such a move. "We will

hold actions of civic disobedience and will not let such things happen," Zyuganov warned. His party has issued a protest petition that has already gathered 4.5 million signatures.

Zyuganov said that 26 public organisations back the Communists' statement against any eventual burial of Lenin's body. "We have enough wisdom and will to defend our history and sanctuaries," Zyuganov said.

Children at risk in EU

by Timothy Bancroft-Hinchey

THE WINNERS will always be the traffickers while there is not a serious and meaningful law on immigration and integration.

The innocent are always the victims who pay the highest price, whether it be as a result of acts of terrorism, fiscal policies or inadequate legislation. In this case, Europe's xenophobic stance against immigrants (which it needs anyway to

shore up its ailing social security systems), gives a huge operating space to traffickers - because immigrants will come in, if not legally then illegally. This is all too visible in France where interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy referred to immigrants as "scum".

While there is a market, there will be professionals. With human trafficking come more sinister practices such as the trafficking of children for sexual exploitation. A report generated by the United Nations at Geneva has warned that Greece may be a porous eastern frontier, over which children are pouring into Europe to become victims of sexual slavery.

Juan Miguel Petit, UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography visited Greece recently and concluded: "The huge and dispersed coastline makes Greece an attractive destination or a gateway to the European Union," adding: "This big flow of people on the move brought along challenges that the country was not prepared to face."

Neither Greece, nor any country in the European Union, where there are first-class, second-class and third-class citizens, who are labelled because of an accident of birthplace. They are denied equal rights, many of

them living a nightmare of semi-legal status in which the demands to pay are high and the right to payment nil.

This, from a Europe which spent centuries enslaving populations, holding them down, refusing to educate them while they stole the natural resources, drew lines on maps and slaughtered those who rose up in protest.

While Europe does not accept that immigration is both necessary and inevitable, does not integrate its immigrant population and guarantee full rights to the families of immigrants, receiving them as full citizens - a parallel system will flourish under which the trafficking of human beings will continue.

These days a European sexual pervert need not pay thousands of dollars to get on a plane and perpetrate his warped and deviant acts overseas where a child has been rented out by the day by alcoholic or depraved parents. These days it is easier to go to the nearest public square and speak to the man hanging around on the street corner.

This perversion of society and violation of human rights (especially against innocent children) is the direct result of the Fortress Europa policy.

Pravda.ru

New German government will not shift over Iraq

GERMANY will not change its Iraq policy under future Chancellor Angela Merkel, designated Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier has declared.

"I believe there won't be any fundamental changes," Steinmeier, a leading Social Democrat, said in a televised interview on Wednesday.

The grand coalition government of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Christian Democratic Union /Christian Social Union bloc (CDU/CSU) has agreed there would be no major changes on the Iraq policy, the future foreign minister said.

Outgoing Chancellor Gerhard Schröder refused to send any troops to join the US force to Iraq before and after the Iraq war broke out in early 2003.

Merkel, who is to be elected chancellor by parliament on 22nd November, has indicated she would

Italy has 36 million illiterates

A SURVEY by Castelo San Angelo University and the Union for the Struggle against Illiteracy reported nearly 66 per cent of Italy's 58 million population are illiterate.

The inadequate elementary education that is producing six million illiterates and 30 million functional illiterates was strongly criticised by *La Stampa*, daily of Turin, when reporting the survey results.

The paper quoted former Education Minister Tullio De Mauro, who said that one-quarter of Italian students do not know how to read and write properly and this prevents them from leading normal lives.

Rome daily *La Repubblica* said those students are the children of the 66 per cent illiterates and functional illiterates, and blamed society for doing nothing to improve education of adults.

National Institute of Statistics 2001 figures indicated that 28.85 per cent of the population finished high school or obtained an equivalent diploma, and only 7.51 per cent got a college degree.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), grouping the 30 wealthiest countries, rated Italy 28th in general education, just above Mexico and Portugal. Nine of the 20 Italian regions, most in the centre and south of the peninsula, are over the OECD red line of eight per cent illiteracy. *Prensa Latina*

repair the special partnership with the United States, which had been impaired in recent years over Iraq and other issues and Steinmeier said that he would make some efforts to improve relations with the United States.

"To do nothing would surely not be good advice," he said. But Steinmeier ruled out any major changes in transatlantic ties.

"People are intelligent enough and know enough on the other side of the Atlantic to see that we are pulling our weight in global engagement and responsibilities," he said.

The future foreign minister noted that the transatlantic partnership and European integration are the two pillars of German foreign policy under the new government.

Steinmeier, Schröder's close partner in the SPD, will also be sworn in on 22nd November.

Xinhua news agency

