

Heathrow protest

HEAVY HANDED

POLICING BACKFIRES

by Daphne Liddle

THE GOVERNMENT is planning to use its most draconian anti-terror legislation against a broad coalition of groups – under the umbrella organisation Camp for Climate Action – who are assembling at a campsite close to Heathrow Airport for a massive but peaceful demonstration this weekend.

Estimates of the number of protesters expected from all over Britain and Europe vary from 1,500 to 3,000 – a modest number for a national demonstration. But around 1,800 police will be deployed who have been told by the Government to use powers under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 against the demonstrators.

These powers include stop and search even if police have no reason to suspect a person.

“That’s unbelievably heavy handed,” said camp spokesperson Anna Jackson, “They’re using the most draconian legislation on the statute book, and I hope they can be embarrassed out of it.”

Protesters include members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, a variety of environmental groups and local villagers whose homes are threatened by plans to expand Heathrow and build a fifth runway.

The camp is supposed to be a model of eco-friendly communal living, with electricity supplied by solar and wind power.

Some papers claim to have infiltrated the campers and have published scaremongering leaks. In particular the London *Evening Standard* front page carried a banner headline claiming: “Militants will hit Heathrow”.

A Camp for Climate Change spokesperson responded saying: “This story did not contain a single source or even attempt at a source.

smear campaign

“We don’t know who is feeding them this stuff and the suspicion is that we are the subject of a smear campaign. We are challenging BAA [the airport operator] to come clean.”

BAA denied planting the scare story but expressed anger that the protesters’ plans might disrupt



• The camp being erected.

the airport at the height of the holiday season.

No one yet knows exactly what form the protest will take. The campers assume they are infiltrated and are therefore delaying finalising plans.

Anna Jackson said: “We really can’t say what the direct action will be – there are no leaders in this camp. It’s 100 per cent democratic, run through consensus.

“It will be down to individuals’ judgement as to what they think is the best way to take action.

“It’s inevitable that the authorities are going to be in these meetings, coming

into the camp and infiltrating – we can’t stop them coming in. But the camp is a lot more than just mass action.”

Clearly the intent of BAA, the police and the Government is to be as intimidating as possible to discourage people from taking part in the protest.

But this is proving counterproductive as the media – at the height of the silly season and little else to fill news bulletins – has been giving the protest a lot of coverage before it has even begun, ensuring that awareness of the issues involved is being raised all around.

The protesters point out that 20 million litres of fuel are consumed at Heathrow every day and 31.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide are generated there every year.

joining

One of those attending will be the chair of Bournemouth and Poole Greenpeace, Richard Hillyard. He says he will be joining the Heathrow campaigners on Friday.

“Heathrow and BAA are being targeted because it’s a major UK airport and campaigning there will get a lot of attention, but it is

really a statement against the expansion of many local UK airports, Bournemouth included,” he said.

“If aviation expands at the rate the Government wants, then every other industry would have to be zero carbon, which in reality has no chance of happening.

“Greenpeace is trying to mobilise the focus on binge flying, trying to get the message across that there’s no need to fly internally in this country just because it’s cheap.”

He says public transport needs to be drastically improved to give people a real alternative.

And they hope that this is the message that makes the news, rather than a battle with the police.

But at the same time the state is delivering another message – ordinary peaceful protesters are the real targets of anti-terror legislation.

FUND

Our New Worker fund this week has brought us £591.92, bringing our August total so far to £933.42 and leaving us with £2066.58 to raise to meet our £3,000 target by the end of the month.

We thank our London Scot for a total of £15, a Southall comrade has donated £79.92, a Manchester supporter has contributed £10 and a Croydon friend has sent £15.

All the rest has come from bankers’ orders and we thank all the comrades who contribute regularly in this way.

Stocks and shares around the world seem to be tumbling again – capitalism is in trouble again because it is coming to an end of the profits it can extract by pressing poor people into never ending debt.

Crises and gross exploitation are part and parcel of the capitalist system. It is greedy, aggressive, unstable and very cruel in its effects on workers’ lives.

Help us in our fight to bring this system to an end and replace it with peace and socialism by sending whatever you can to the New Worker Fund, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

The UN to expand operations in Iraq?

by our Arab Affairs Correspondent

ANOTHER bloody week in Iraq with sectarian bombings that killed hundreds of Yazidis, a mainly Kurdish religious cult in northern Iraq, and continuing sectarian strife in the capital, Baghdad. The Americans and their puppets routinely blame Al Qaeda’s supporters for these acts while the resistance believes many sectarian attacks are instigated by agents of imperialism.

But if, as the resistance maintain, the imperialists had encouraged sectarian violence to divide and rule Iraq to start with, it has now backfired with Sunni Muslim politicians walking out of the puppet regime and the Americans scrambling around to try to cobble together another quisling administration in readiness for the puppet regime’s collapse.

Throughout the occupied

Arab country partisans are striking deadly blows against the imperialists and their lackeys. Two more strategic bridges were blown up last week. A US helicopter gunship was downed in Al Anbar province. The US “Green Zone” military compound in the heart of the capital came under its usual barrage of mortar and rocket fire and all Swedish air traffic to Iraq has been cancelled until further notice following a rocket attack on a passenger aircraft in the north of the country.

Sweden has suspended all its commercial flights to and from Iraq following an attack on a Nordic Airways plane on take-off at Sulaymaniyah in the northern autonomous Kurdish area last week. Though the plane landed in Stockholm safely and no one was injured, the Swedish civil aviation authority has grounded all flights to Iraq until further notice. Two Swedish airlines, Viking Airlines and Nordic Airways ran regular commercial services

to the Kurdish region of northern Iraq.

While US troops impose curfews and fence in nationalist neighbourhoods in Baghdad, others are covering the building of a new mini “Green Zone” to provide a safe haven for quisling judges, prosecutors and their families. A number of puppet regime judges and their families have already moved into the compound dubbed the “Rule of Law” complex in the east of the city. Thirty one judges have been killed since the occupation began in 2003.

bridges cut

Meanwhile two more strategic bridges were cut by partisan action. Iraqi resistance fighters blew up a bridge linking the town of al-Rutbah and the Kilo 160 area in far western Iraq near the Jordanian border. A few days later, this Tuesday, the Thiraa Dijla bridge in Taji, a town near an American air base some 19

km north of the capital, was hit when a lorry packed with explosives was detonated by remote control in the middle of the bridge, sending cars plummeting into the canal which links the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. This was the second attack in three months on the bridge that carries the main road from Baghdad to the northern provinces.

Last week the UN Security Council agreed unanimously to enhance the role of its existing low-key mission in Iraq to promote national reconciliation, regional dialogue, humanitarian assistance and human rights.

This was not greeted with much enthusiasm by the UN’s own 25,000-strong staff association, which equally unanimously passed a resolution calling on Secretary General Ban Ki Moon not to deploy any additional staff members to Iraq and to remove those currently serving at the duty station in Baghdad in view of the “unacceptably

high level of risk to the safety and security of UN personnel currently serving in Iraq”.

US imperialism would like to use the UN once more as a fig-leaf to legitimize the occupation but this is being resisted by Russia, China and France on the Security Council and doubtless explains why the UN, unlike the Americans, will talk to the resistance movements.

The United Nations intends to include all parties and factions in the talks it is going to hold to bring about national reconciliation in the country, Iraq UN spokesman Saeed Arikat said. The talks will involve armed groups currently fighting US troops and the Iraqi government, he added, though he did not say whether this would include groups linked to Al Qaeda. “The UN is not concerned with what America wants from the resolution. We as an international organisation will work to fulfill Iraqi ambitions and cooperate with the government,” he said.

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THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

Brown's hundred days

AUGUST HAS COME round again and the bourgeois media try to fill their columns with silly season gossip now that Parliament is in recess. Devastating floods and a foot-and-mouth outbreak have at least spared us too many great white shark sightings and learned discussions about the weather have to now take global warming into account. But speculation on an early election is growing as Brown's star rises and the Tories slump in the opinion polls.

Though we can take some satisfaction at the fact that working people have seen through Cameron's spin, the fact that Labour has a 10 point lead over the Tories simply because it is no longer led by Tony Blair is a warning to all those campaigning to defeat the right-wing within the labour movement.

Whether Gordon Brown calls a snap election in the autumn after the conference season or, as seems more likely, waits till next spring is irrelevant. The key issue is what will appear on the Labour manifesto and whether there'll be any departure from the class-collaborationist policies of the last 10 years of "New Labour" government.

If the first weeks of the Brown government are anything to go by the answer is very little. The Government clearly intends to continue the privatisation of the health service and what's left of the public sector as a whole.

All the past Labour governments of the 20th century, and remember the first was in 1924, have been led by right-wing social democrats and they always sought to align themselves with the bourgeoisie. In the post-war period Attlee, Wilson and Callaghan introduced reforms beneficial to the working class that were also broadly acceptable to the ruling class as a whole. Blair, however allied himself only with the most venal and reactionary elements within the bourgeoisie who believe that British imperialism can only be protected in servile alliance with the United States and turned his back on those in favour of European integration.

Brown wants to return to the traditional post-war bourgeois consensus to restore the trans-Atlantic "bridge" between American and Franco-German imperialism that was the pivot of British foreign policy under all past Tory and Labour governments since 1945 until Blair came along.

No worker benefits from this one way or the other. Billions will still be spent on replacing Trident with new weapons of mass destruction. British troops will still play the sepy for imperialism in Afghanistan and Iraq. Pensioners will continue to struggle to survive on their meagre pensions and millions of workers in Britain will fight to keep a roof over their heads, while rich parasites head off for their season in the sun.

The rich have their agenda and so have the working class. Most workers know what sort of world they want. Unfortunately many of them believe it's unattainable and that they are powerless to bring about change. That's what the ruling class think and that's what they want us to believe.

We have to prove them wrong by stepping up the mass anti-war campaign for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all British troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. We have to prove them wrong by building the fight-back in the unions and the Labour Party that the union's largely fund.

We have to prove them wrong by building a militant communist movement based on Marxism-Leninism that elevates the communist ideal and the socialist cause that will, sooner or later, end the exploitative and oppressive capitalist system once and for all.

Say no more

No protection

A New Worker reader discovered a whinge on a neo-nazi website from a small group of supporters who set out to stage a counter demonstration to Brighton's Gay Pride march on 4th of August with demands to "bring back Clause 28".

They complained the police had allotted them an unsuitable area to demonstrate "...but it got worse. With no barrier and only two very disinterested coppers, we were told to start our demo there and then.

"As soon as we put our first banner up we were attacked. We fought back ...until it got so out of hand that the police ordered us to leave... Hit by a plastic bottle that had not been opened, I was sporting a black eye and broken glasses... Considering homosexuals believe they have been the victims of discrimination and that

there (sic) freedoms have been denied for so long, one would have expected them to understand our peaceful protest...Not so, the evil venomous bastards bombarded us with missiles...."

Overworked

Workers in Britain have the lowest entitlement to holidays of any country in Europe, according to a study by the Incomes Data Services published last week. Workers here in theory are entitled to 20 days a year but many employers include the eight bank holidays in this, giving workers only 12 other days off.

This compares to 39 days in Germany, 38 in Austria, 36 in Sweden and 35 in Slovakia, Luxembourg and France.

A short life

The United States – the richest country in the world – is tumbling down the world

ratings list for life expectancy, falling from 11th place to 42nd in the last two decades. This is attributed to a combination of expensive health insurance and an increasing rate of obesity.

The fall represents a huge widening wealth gap – among the really rich life expectancy is soaring – while 45 million have no health insurance.

The life expectancy for African Americans is 73.3 compared to 77.9 for whites. Democrat Congressman Jim McDermott said: "If you aren't part of the richest one per cent, then you know you are living one phone call, accident or illness away from financial ruin because of a medical crisis."

Gone to pot

June Turnbull, aged 79, has been banned from tending a village flower bed unless she displays "men at work" signs, wears a fluores-

cent jacket and gets a look-out.

She spent eight years perfecting the small parish council plot in Urchfont, paying for plants from her own pension and helping the place Best Kept Village in Wiltshire.

But officials at Wiltshire County Council spotted her working and ruled it too risky because of a bend in the road.

Speedy gone crazy

The Metropolitan Police Force is having to pay automatic speeding fines of £900 a day for speeding, illegal parking and driving the wrong way up one-way streets.

Officers blame the increase of more than 33 per cent on the previous year on the increased use of unmarked vehicles in covert operations, which make it difficult to trace the circumstances of fixed penalty notices.

Answers demanded as Remploy uses union busting PR firm

GMB GENERAL Secretary Paul Kenny has written to Peter Hain MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, asking for an investigation as to why a public sector body, Remploy, run by his department, employed the lobby company Portland PR run by ex Downing Street press officer Tim Allen.

The employment of this company has come to light in the context of Remploy seeking to close 43 factories and make 2,500 disabled workers redundant.

In his letter Paul Kenny wrote as follows: "I would be grateful if you would call for a full investigation into why Portland PR were employed by Remploy, what they have been doing, how much they have been paid, and who they report to."

He went on to say: "Can you explain to me why Remploy, which is obviously under the complete and direct control of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and ultimately the Government, have employed Portland PR company, what their role and function is, how much they have been paid, and why the Government has engaged this particular company who have a proven track record of being engaged in anti-union activities as were exposed by

• Marching for Remploy jobs. the Employment Tribunal in the North East last year.

"Portland PR's activities with the particular company in the North East against the GMB and its right to represent and have collective bargaining arrangements for its members in a distribution depot in the North East, ultimately cost the company involved, which was Asda, £1 million at an Employment Tribunal.

"Portland's major partner is Tim Allen, who used to work

at Number 10 for the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and it is inconceivable that Remploy would need to hire a PR firm in order to gain access to Government Ministers or policy makers, when in fact Remploy is a wholly owned arm of Government, administered by a Board directly connected to the DWP, to you as the Secretary of State, to the Cabinet and to the Prime Minister.

"Why would the Depart-

ment for Work and Pensions pay money to such a lobbying PR firm?"

Before the redundancies were announced in May 2007 four charities – Leonard Cheshire, Radar, Mencap, Mind, the National Institute for Deaf People, and Scope wrote a letter to the *Guardian* supporting the closure of the factories.

The trade unions suspect that Portland PR was involved in this letter.

Glasgow strike resolved

STRIKING social care workers in Glasgow returned to work on Monday after voting to accept a new offer from the council.

The move puts an end to the long-running dispute over pay and grading, which has seen more than 550 social

care staff in the city on strike since 24th July.

They were angry about the results of a job evaluation that didn't reflect the responsibilities of the job they carry out.

The improved offer follows lengthy negotiations between the public sector union Unison and the council. It gives all but a handful

of workers the grading they were seeking.

Mike Kirby, the union's Glasgow convenor, said: "The new offer delivers the grade five that our members felt best reflected the responsibilities they carry out. The proposal also leaves open the details on how people will progress beyond the initial salary,

and this will be the subject of further negotiation."

He added: "The solidarity of the members on strike was instrumental in delivering the key objective that they sought. They have a right to be satisfied with the outcome of their action."

Pension strike at helicopter plant

NEARLY 2,000 workers at the Westland helicopter plant in Yeovil began the first of four 24 hour strikes on Monday in a dispute over proposed pension changes.

Workers are angry at company plans to close the final salary pension scheme to new employees and a proposed change to the way the company calculate pensionable pay.

Technical, clerical and shop floor workers at Augusta Westland's two divisions in Yeovil, Westland Helicopter Limited and Westland Transmission, are taking strike action.

ongoing

Unite members at the plant are also began an ongoing overtime ban from Monday.

The union has been in talks with the company on the pension situation since 2006 but has said Westland's had proved unmovable on the two fundamental issues for members.

Unite Regional Officer, Colin Rose, said: "Our member's are happy to make greater contributions to the scheme but we cannot accept a proposal to backdate the pensionable pay arrangements or to prevent new members from joining the scheme.

"If implemented, these changes would have the combined effect of reducing the value of contributions already made and creating a two-tier workforce at Augusta Westland.

"Strike action is an absolute last resort but we need to make clear to the company that our member's are determined to protect these two fundamental principles."

The Westland pension scheme has a deficit of £94 million. A further three 24 hour strikes are planned for the 29th August, 11th and 27th September.

NHS dental costs higher than private

THE PRICE of some NHS dental treatments is now higher than the going rate for private treatment after recent changes introduced in a new Government contract for dentistry.

The price of a filling on the NHS is now £43.60 while some surgeries charge £35 for the same treatment given on a private basis.

The Government changes were intended to simplify charging and patients pay a flat rate of £43.60 for fillings, whether there is just one to be done or six, while the private system charges for each filling.

Recent official figures show that 47,000 fewer patients have been treated since the new contract came into force in April 2006 and 500 dentists have left the NHS.

MPs warn of soaring PFI school building costs

THE COMMONS Education Select Committee last week warned that Government plans to rebuild and refurbish schools through private finance initiative (PFI) schemes will leave taxpayers with a multi-million pound tax bill.

Half of the Government's flagship £45 billion plans to modernise school buildings in England are to be paid for using PFI schemes.

The MPs warn that this will lock MPs into 30-year contracts with companies that charge huge mark-ups for basic maintenance. If a school closes before the end of the contract, the council would have to spend millions in compensation to the PFI firm.

Recently in Brighton a PFI school closed after just three years, leaving the local authority to pay £4.5 million to release itself from the contract with Jarvis.

In the north of Ireland education authorities are legally obliged to pay £7.4 million over the next 20 years to "maintain" a PFI school that closed this summer.

Councillors in Essex are preparing to meet a similar huge bill after a decision to close Bishops Park College only two years after the new

building was completed under a public-private deal.

The Commons Education Select Committee warns that a large number of new PFI deals present a serious threat to taxpayers. And it called on the newly formed Department for Children, Schools and Families to "make a clear public statement" on how many

PFI schools have closed prematurely and how much this has cost the public and how it monitors schools at risk of closure.

Labour MP for Blackpool South Gordon Marsden, a member of the committee, said: "We should think very hard about entering into these agreements which have major

implications for the local taxpayer if the school is shut.

"These deals are very expensive and highly variable – they need to be gone over with a fine toothcomb."

• Campaigning against PFI.

Memorial for Peterloo?

PROGRESSIVE campaigners in Manchester are banding together to demand a memorial for the infamous Peterloo massacre, where 11 people were killed in 1819, including a woman and child, and many more injured after the local militia mounted a full cavalry attack on a peaceful protest meeting to demand voting rights for all.

There are mugs and candlesnuffers in museums saying "Do not forget 1819" and school essay questions going back to the earliest days of exams, but the site of one of Britain's greatest social upheavals is still marked only by a modest – and only partially true – blue plaque.

The campaigners want "prominent, accurate and respectful" memorial to the brief

mayhem known to history as the Peterloo massacre.

"It's ridiculous that all we have is this euphemistic plaque. We intend to commission a sculpture in the end, but in the meanwhile, let's get people talking."

The project is backed by local trade unions, and Labour and Liberal Democrat politicians who say the occasion has for too long been treated "as a secret".

"Even people who know the history come to Manchester and fail to find out where Peterloo happened," said Derek Clarke, secretary of Greater Manchester Trade Union Councils. "I arrived from north Wales to work here, and it took me ages to pin down the actual site."

Strike to defend Crown Post Offices

STRIKE action closes Crown Post Offices in high streets around Britain last Monday and Wednesday afternoons in protest at plans to relocate 70 branches inside nearby branches of WH Smith.

The industrial action, by members of the Communication Workers' Union (CWU), was a different but linked dispute to the current fight for pay and against job cuts in the Royal Mail.

The CWU says that thousands of staff were involved in Monday's strike.

WH Smith announced in July that Post Office franchises would open in 70 of its high street stores, following a trial in six outlets.

The union has suspended its Royal Mail strike

programme pending the outcome of talks.

But the Post Office strike went ahead. The CWU negotiating team met with Post Office boss Alan Cook and his POL team on the 8th and 9th August to try and find a way forward that would allow meaningful negotiations to take place to resolve the dispute at POL.

Further talks were held on 10th August, however while some progress was made it was insufficient. Therefore, all scheduled strikes at POL Crown Offices went ahead as planned, on Monday 13th August from 2.30pm until completion of duties and on Wednesday 15th August from 3.30pm until completion of duties

Strike looms to defend nurse who spoke out

HEALTH staff in Manchester belonging to the public sector union Unison are to vote on strike action over the suspension of a union official.

Community mental health nurse Karen Reissmann was suspended from Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust last month after leading industrial action in protest at changes at the trust.

Now her colleagues could walk out again in support of her and to condemn their managers' actions.

Steve Stott, regional officer for Unison, said: "We have given formal notice to the employers that we will ballot on industrial action.

"We will be asking staff the straightforward question – do they want to strike in support of Karen. This has come from them and she has a groundswell of support among her colleagues.

"It is important that we protect Unison members and activists' rights to speak out and to express their opinions, otherwise there will never be

any meaningful consultation."

Reissmann, 48, from Hulme, led colleagues in a series of protests against changes at the trust over the last 12 months.

She was suspended on 15th June – the same day she was told she had won a promotion.

She was told she faces charges of seriously affecting the reputation of the care trust; behaviour undermining their confidence in her as an employee; and that she was suspected of misusing her time as a community psychiatric nurse.

She has been particularly critical of the transfer of NHS services to the voluntary sector and is facing legal action over her comments published in a social enterprise magazine in January.

The strike ballot will take place in two to three weeks and any action could not take place until the union had given the trust two weeks notice.

Poor hygiene in hospital kitchens

OFFICIAL inspections at 377 NHS and private hospitals showed that 173 – 46 per cent – were failing to meet basic standards of cleanliness. Eleven of these had experienced a vermin or pest problem and 57 employed catering staff who had inadequate personal hygiene and 18 stocked out of date food.

Sixty-eight did not meet the legal minimum standard for food storage and 66 were

storing food at the wrong temperature, which can encourage the growth of bacteria.

The 377 hospitals inspected included nine private hospitals, of which six had at least one area of concern.

The report came to light after a Freedom of Information request submitted to a quarter of all English local authorities requesting health inspection reports into food preparation in hospitals.

Student debt at record levels

STUDENTS are racking up record debts of £6,000 in their first year and face the prospect of graduating with debts bigger than £17,500 according to figures published on Push.co.uk – an organisation that provides a comprehensive guide for new students.

The report covers students who signed up for courses in the first year of the new, higher top-up fees of £3,000 a year. In fact on average they ended the year with debts of £5,586.

Estimates based on another survey predict that in three years' time one in 10 graduates will face bankruptcy and that all graduates will face an 11-year "debt sentence".

The figures, based on a survey of 2,000 students, came just as thousands of young people are assessing their A-level results and deciding whether to go to university.

unequivocally

National Union of Students president Gemma Tumelty said: "It shows unequivocally that graduate debt is increasing because of the introduction of top-up fees.

"Graduates are facing ever more difficult choices over whether to invest, start a family, get on the first rung of the mortgage ladder, start a pension and, of course, which career path to take."

The figures are likely to get worse as accommodation fees are expected to rise this year.

Total student debt has risen by 167 per cent from £1.2 billion to £3.2 billion in the past decade.

Another study revealed that young people who opt to go on vocational courses rather than to university will be £70,000 better off than their graduate contemporaries by the time they have completed their degrees at 21.

a real issue

A spokesperson for Universities UK, representing university vice-chancellors, said: "Fear of debt is a real issue that concerns universities," but added that "alarmist headlines do not help prospective students".

Currently 82 per cent of students preparing to start courses in September are also seeking paid employment while studying.

One graduate said he had had to defer a one-year post graduate teaching course in order to work in a supermarket and other places in order to pay off some of his debt. He has returned to live in his parents' home to cut costs.

Another graduate who got a 2:1 degree claims: "If I hadn't had to work, I think I could have done better and got a first. The debt was mainly down to student loan I had to take out to get through the course. I don't know how long it will take to pay it back.

"You have to start paying it back when you ear £15,000 a year."

Features

Iraq resistance: an inside view

Abduljabbar al Kubaysi, an influential political leader of the Iraqi resistance and secretary-general of the Iraqi Patriotic Alliance (IPA), was imprisoned by the US occupation forces from September 2004 to December 2005. He talked to Willi Langthaler of the Anti-Imperialist Camp in Paris last month about the current situation in Iraq.

Willi Langthaler: *The European media talk about a sectarian civil war in Iraq. What is really happening?*

Abduljabbar al Kubaysi: Actually the US occupiers, as well as the government imposed by them, are pushing for this sectarian civil war. Also the Iranians have an interest in this as they are looking for a federation in the South as well. They are attempting to make the Sunni, the Christians and the Mandeans [small Gnostic sect] leave to have a purely Shia zone. Under the conditions of war this sectarian drive has an immediate effect. The US uses this as an argument to stay in Iraq as they claim that they would be needed to settle this strife.

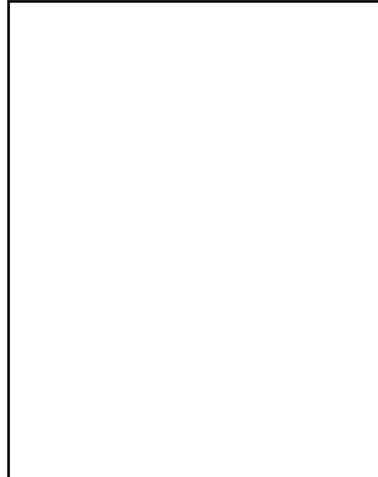
There is, however, so much evidence that the intelligence services of the United States and Iraq as well as of the Iranian government are the real source of the violence. They plant bombs or pack them into cars which are then detonated by remote control or by helicopter in both Shia and Sunni areas, deliberately killing civilians not involved in politics. Thus, they try to spark the sectarian conflict.

In the beginning the media used to check on the site of the blast and often eye-witnesses contradicted the official version that a person blew himself up. Now they cordon off the area and impede the questioning of locals. They want to have the news spread that militants did the massacre when it was the governing forces or the US who planted explosive loads. In most of the cases there is no suicide bomber. In these cases you can be sure that the ruling coalition is involved.

Another example: they changed the name of an important road in the Al Adhamiye district in Baghdad from a Sunni religious figure to a Shia one during the night. It was the Shia community of al Adhamiye itself who changed it back to its original name. Then they came again with their Hummers...

But actually they have not succeeded in creating a rift between Sunnis and Shias. Yes, in official politics there is the Sunni Islamic Party, which is with the Americans, and the Shia bloc, which is with Iran and the US, but they have not succeeded in pushing the ordinary people to go along with them. Here and there, there might be some minor conflicts but in substance the broad masses on both sides insist that they are Iraqis regardless of their religious beliefs.

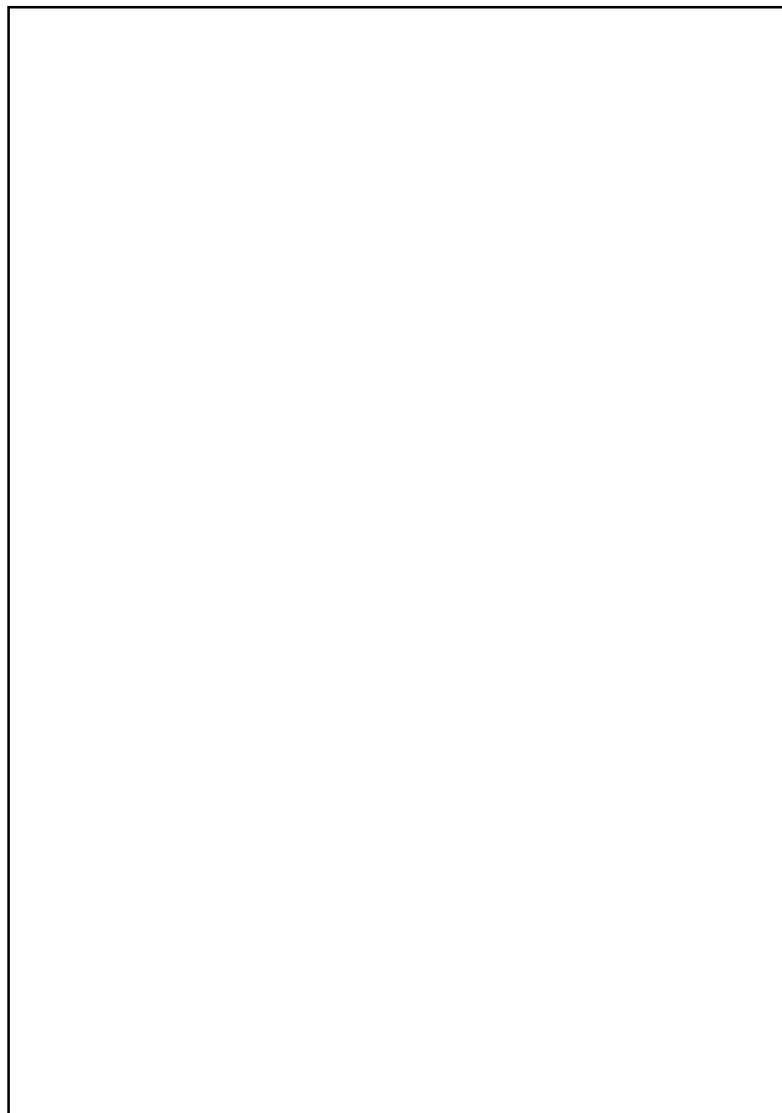
Look to Najaf and see the positions of the Arab Shia Ayatollahs who continue to advocate national unity and oppose the oc-



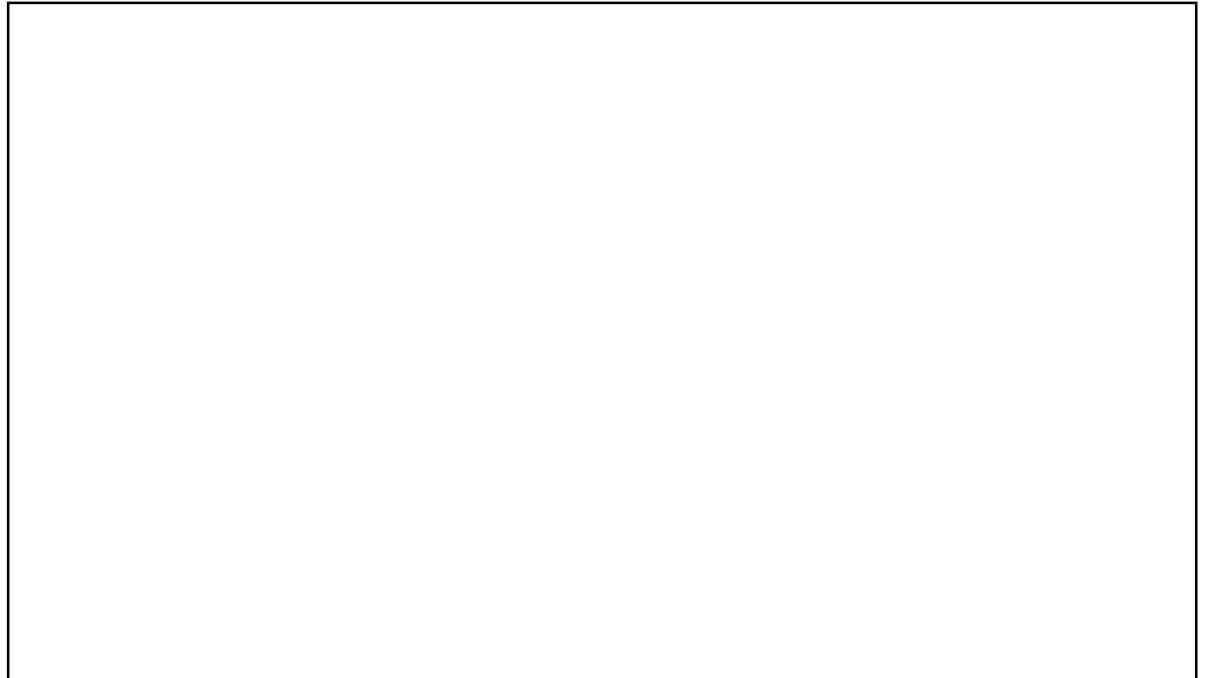
• Abduljabbar al Kubaysi.

cupation. Or look to Diyala province which is composed of 50 per cent Shia and 50 per cent Sunnis and at the same time is a strong base of the resistance. Two big Shia tribes, al Buhishma and the followers of Ayatollah Abdul Karim al Moudheris, are with the resistance and everybody knows it. The Ayatollah's son fell in combat. He was the leader of a big tribal contingent of the resistance.

In Baquba, the provincial capital, they cannot do the same cleansing as in Basra with the Sunnis or as in Amara with the Mandeans. In Baquba both Shia and Sunnis support the resistance. Certainly there are attacks by the different resistance groups on the Iraqi government agencies, the US army, Iranian forces and the Shia parties and militias like the



• Grinning US troops deal with prisoners.



• The resistance is winning.

Mahdi Army which are inside the political process, but you will not hear of sectarian killings.

Here is another example: Tal Afar in the north-west of Iraq near Mosul. Between 50 and 70 per cent of its population is Shia. Nevertheless it is one of the capitals of the resistance.

It lies in the interest of the West and Iran to make the conflict look like a sectarian one. Not only does the US want to justify its presence by saying it is seeking to impede a sectarian civil war, but so does Iran. The Iranians want not only to grab the South but they also want to have

Baghdad and therefore purge it from Sunnis. With their alliance with the Kurds in the North this would suffice to control the country.

But we do not believe that these plans will work out. There are very big tribes in the Arab world and in Iraq, which span the entire country from the North to the South like the Jibouri, whose people live from Nasseria to Mosul, the Shamari and the Azouwi. Most of them include both Shia and Sunnis. There are some smaller tribes that belong only to one sect but most of the bigger ones are mixed and the inter-confessional marriages continue unabated.

They did not succeed in implanting sectarian strife into the base of the society. It remains on the surface of the parties which co-operate with the US occupation. In the big towns they also find some ignorant lumpen elements who they can instigate. But they will not be able to build major political blocs based on sect affiliation – which is the declared US intention.

Willi Langthaler: *At the onset, the Americans set all their hopes on the Shia political parties but later they discovered that the situation ran out of their control. So they developed the strategy which was called redirection – trying to bring in Sunni forces and also sections of the resistance. Did these efforts yield any results?*

Abduljabbar al Kubaysi: As time went by, the US realised that their allies' loyalty goes only to Iran. Many of them are even Iranians. For example right now 13 MPs are officers in the Iranian army. Or, in the former "Governing Council", only six members out of 25 were Arabs, both Sunnis and Shia. Another eight were Iraqis belonging to minorities. So the majority were real foreigners. The al Hakim family are for example from Isfahan [the third biggest city in Iran]. Only some years

ago al Hakim [Shia cleric and supporter of the puppet regime] was still called Abdul Aziz al Isfahani.

It was the US neo-cons who introduced the model of religious and ethnic division. They deliberately wanted to create Shia rule as they wanted to have a minority in power, a minority with regard to the entire Arab world, which they thought to be able to better stir and control.

They originally planned to continue their campaign to Damascus and install the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood there. So Damascus would have supported the Iraqi Sunnis while Tehran would have done the same for the Iraqi Shia and the war would have carried on for decades – not on the base of anti-imperialism but on sectarian grounds. But the Iraqi resistance foiled these plans.

The Iraqi resistance sprang up rapidly and gained strength so the Americans recognised that they could not cope with them only by military means. This is the main reason for their strategic shift. They designed the political process and brought in the Sunni Islamic Party. They intended to dry the lake where the resistance fishes swim. But soon the influence of the Islamic Party evaporated and their leaders have fled to the Green Zone or abroad.

At the same time they realised that the Iranians had deeply penetrated into the state apparatus beyond the confines of the game. So they moved to also curb this process.

Willi Langthaler: *What is the situation of the resistance both in a political and a military sense?*

Abduljabbar al Kubaysi: The resistance is still gaining strength. Judging by numbers alone they rose from a few thousand to where they now exceed over 100,000 fighters. Their combat capabilities increased as well. But they could also develop intelligence structures penetrating

Features

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the Iraqi army and police but also sometimes the environment of the US army. So altogether the system of resistance includes some 400,000 people.

The US army and its allies are really demoralised. While the resistance fights to liberate its country they only fight for money. Thus they are becoming more and more savage. They increased the numbers not only of direct US troops, but also of mercenary forces, which are even more barbarian. Taken altogether they consist maybe of some one million troops.

Look to the US losses released by the Pentagon itself which are obviously sugar-coated. If you disregard the months of special military operations, like against Fallujah or Tal Afar, you can see a clear tendency. At the beginning you had some 50 US soldiers killed by the month, then later it was up to 80 and now some 100 get killed each month.

The resistance is now a real popular movement; it is a culture among the people. Everybody contributes their share. And the fact that no government helps us also has its good side. If they would pay then you have always corruption. The typical Arab façade would have been erected. Now, instead, there is no excuse. Every section is responsible for itself, to organise its people, to train them, to plan the attacks, to raise money and so forth.

Politically the resistance has also taken some steps forward. At the beginning there were hundreds of groups but people understand the necessity of unity. Now we can say that there are eight main groups. What has so far not been achieved is a unified political command, which remains one of the main tasks ahead.

Willi Langthaler: *There are reports of armed clashes between resistance groups and forces related to al Qaeda...*

Abduljabbar al Kubaysi:

Let us remember that the West started by insulting the resistance, calling it "foreigners" and followers of the old regime. They wanted to imply that the resistance had no connection to the Iraqi people. Actually the resistance sprang up at the grass-roots level to defend its identity against the enormous provocations of US neo-colonialism. They were former soldiers, tribesmen, nationally and religiously inspired people who acted in their immediate environment. It was neither foreigners nor Baathists who were the driving force in the beginning although the Baathists were participating in the resistance.

The way the US deposed Saddam was seen as an attack against all Iraqis including those who opposed him. To be honest eventually Saddam personally played an important role in leading his people into resistance. He did not try to save himself by hiding as was being reported. No, he went from city to city, from Tikrit to Samarra, Anbar and also Baghdad. He contacted sheikhs, officers and so on. He said that they should resist – not for him as a president, but for the nation and for Islam. He asked them even to stop using his portrait as a rallying symbol. Only in the following months Baath were able

to reorganise as a party and join the resistance as such. From the point of view of the resistance it was great luck that he eluded capture for a long time.

Regarding al Qaeda, in the first two years no such thing existed under this name, and even the Americans mainly spoke of foreigners infiltrating from outside and especially from Syria. They tried to create a pretext to attack Syria, although Damascus did absolutely nothing to help the resistance. On the contrary they did 200 per cent what Washington dictated to them to avert an aggression against them – at least in the first months.

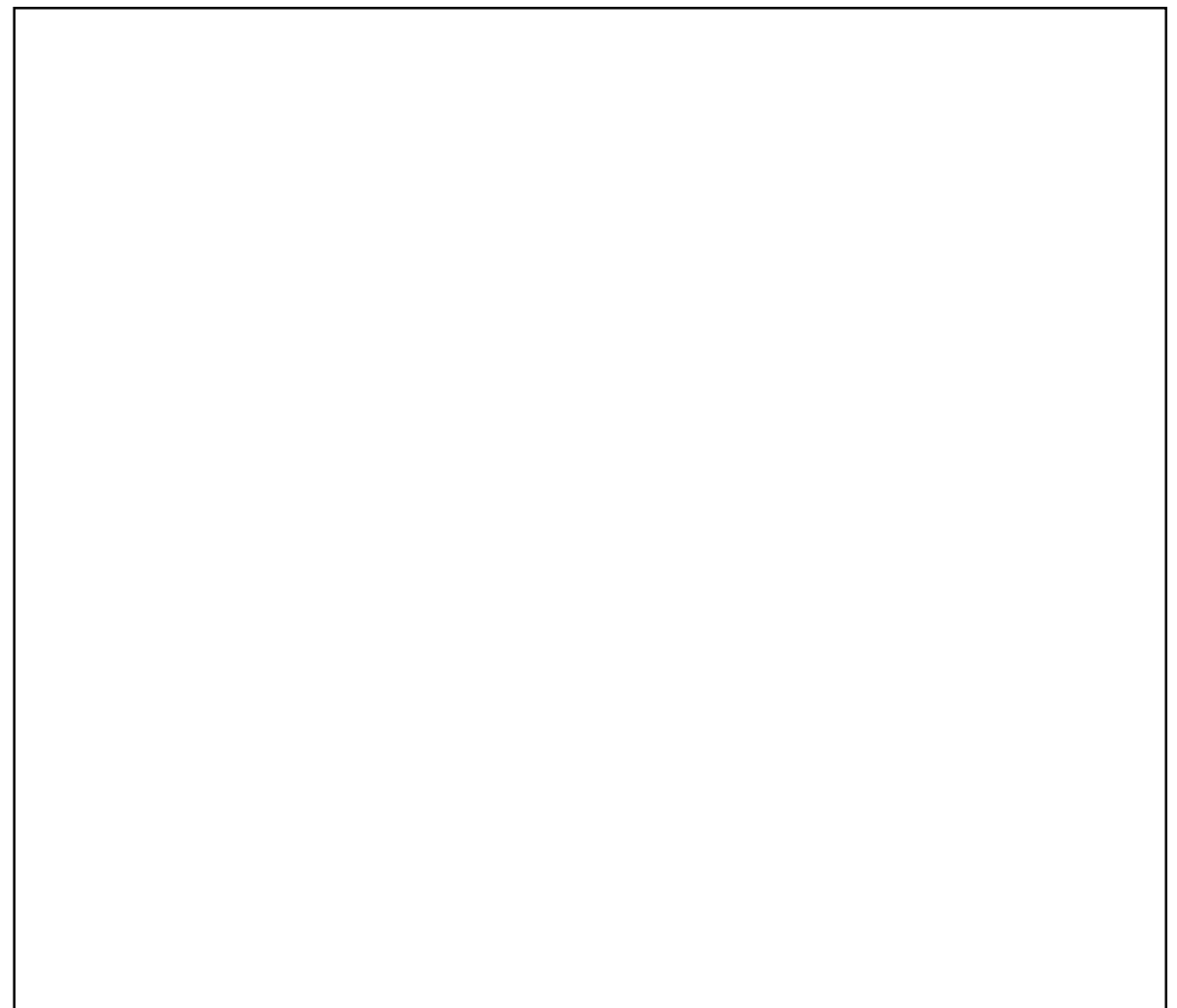
In the first two years they were a very limited force with maybe 1,000 to 1,500 fighters coming from inside and outside. Also the level of military activity was not very high. In a time frame of two years they themselves claimed a total of some 800 attacks while the resistance was carrying out 800 attacks a week.

Later they steadily gained ground and they still keep growing. They have a lot of money but they do not spend it on a luxury life, but live a very decent life on minimum needs dedicating everything to the struggle, which shows very serious and attractive behaviour. They spend the money on the struggle. Most of the youths join them not for their ideology but because they offer a place to resist.

In the East you do not need to write books to convince people. If your personal life style is congruent with your mission you will convince people.

When America started the "political process" it eventually came to the benefit of al Qaeda. Those joining the political process argued that unless they did so the Iranians would take over and in this way they would only cooperate for a short period and then they would kick the Americans out as well. Of course they failed. Al Qaeda argued in a very principled way that only protracted armed struggle will advance their cause and reality confirmed their way of thinking, their trend.

They offered also money to some resisting tribes with a strong Muslim identity which needed these resources for their struggle. Thus they created a coalition of six groups, one al Qaeda and five local groups. That gave them a big push. They were not big forces like the Islamic Army but



• US vetrans demand an end to the war.



• Saddam was defiant to the end.

They still had roots in Ramadi, Falluja, Haditha and so forth. They call their coalition the Mujahideen Shura Council. They continue to use this label rather than al Qaeda.

They have a lot of resources and a steady supply from the outside while the other groups get next to nothing from outside. To-

day maybe we can say that al Qaeda is the first organisation of the resistance. They go separately from the others but nevertheless in each city there is a kind of council to co-ordinate military action, to chalk out a plan of defence.

Islam is a weapon to make the people rise up. The Islamic his-

tory, the Islamic figures, the Islamic culture is used to push the people to fight because the people consider Islam as their identity. National and religious symbols are being mixed. The Koran says that if Islamic land is attacked by foreigners, armed resistance is obligatory. This is undeniably common sense. Jihad [holy war] becomes a Muslim duty for the people being occupied by foreign invaders as much as fasting and praying.

So all the resistance groups, whether Islamic or not, use this spirit as a tool to mobilise and raise the people. Take for example the statements of the Baath Party and of Izzat al Duri personally. Judging by his language you would believe him to be an extreme Islamist. But this does not mean that all of them are really Islamists.

The entire environment is Islamic. You will not attract young people with Marxist or nationalist calls. Wherever young people go you will find Islamic sentiment and spirit dominating. This indirectly favours al Qaeda. People who join them do not feel they are doing something unusual as the general conditions are Islamic. On the contrary they believe they are acting consistently.

Willi Langthaler: *But what about the sectarian attacks? Doesn't al Qaeda bear at least partial responsibility for them?*

Abduljabbar al Kubaysi: The responsibility lies with the [puppet] government, both with its Shia and Sunni components, the US, Israel and Iran. As far as the attacks attributed to al Qaeda by the West are concerned, one has to subtract 95 per cent. And for the remaining five per cent you hear only a part of the truth. Sometimes al Qaeda responds to governmental or militia attacks on Sunni areas by attacking Shia areas.

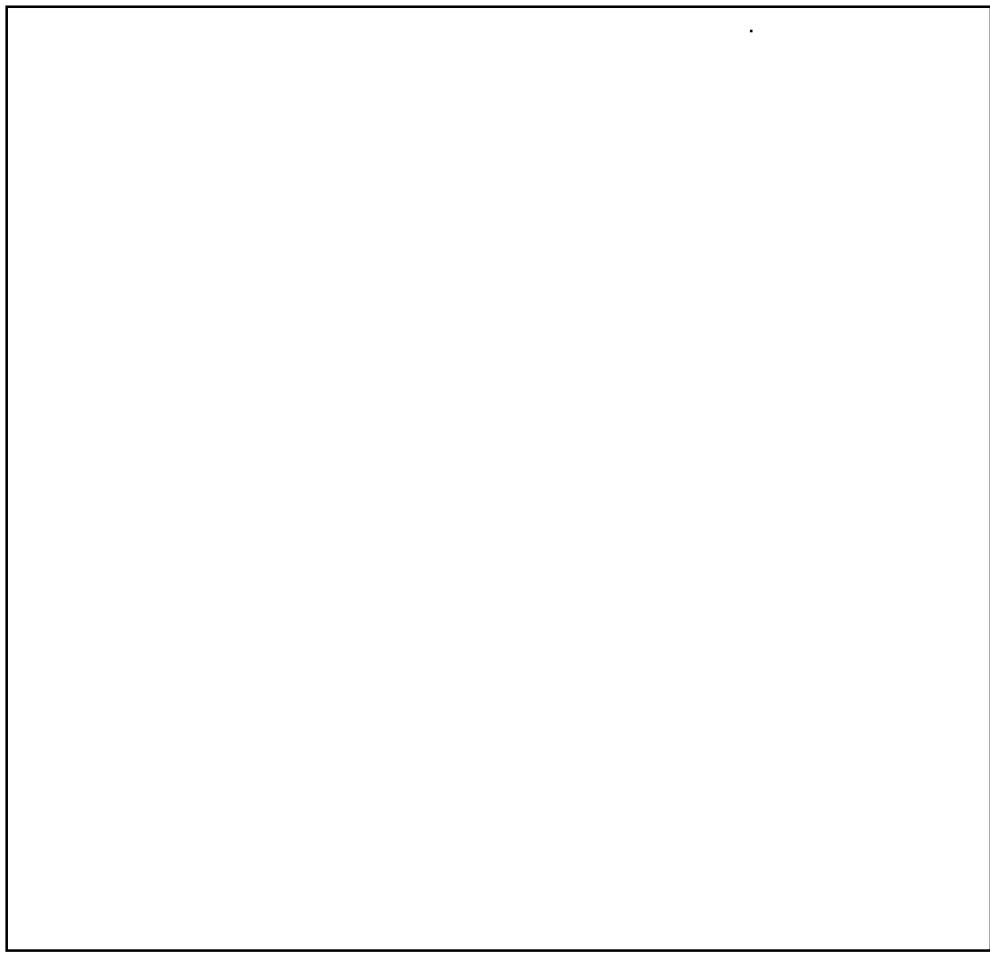
• Inside the 'safe' Green Zone US troops carry away the remains of their comrades.

continued on page 7

Home News

FRIENDS and comrades gathered in London last Saturday to celebrate the 91st birthday of veteran communist Jack Shapiro at Southall's Saklatvala Hall. Guests included members from the Democratic Korean and Chinese embassies and the Xinhua news agency.

Organised by the CPGB (ML), tributes were given by Harpal Brar and Keith Bennett, who is a friend of the Shapiro family, and others who spoke of Jack's life-long commitment to socialism and solidarity with the Chinese and Korean people.



• Jack Shapiro, Harpal Brar and Keith Bennett.

Diary

Until 3 September Exhibition: Artists, art & culture of north Korea. La Galleria, 5b Pall Mall, Royal Opera Arcade, London SW1Y 4UY.
TUESDAY 21 August Slavery Remembrance Day. Memorial lecture: Dr Molefi Asante - Origins of Chattel Slavery. 5.30pm, Liverpool Town Hall.
THURSDAY 23 August Slavery Remembrance Day. 12-3pm, African food & family activities, Otterspool Promenade, Liverpool. 1pm liberation on the waterfront, 1.30pm music and drama. 10am-7pm, opening of the International Slavery Museum, Albert Dock, Liverpool.
FRIDAY 31 August Nablusi children's orchestra charity concert of Palestinian music. 6pm, Manchester
University Students Union Council Chambers. £5/£3.
SATURDAY 1 September CND conference: US missile defence - towards a new cold war? 10-5pm, SOAS, Thornhaugh St, London WC1. 020 7700 2393.
SUNDAY 2 September Burston Strike School Rally. 11-4.30pm, Church Green, Burston near Dis, Norfolk. Unite, Sertuc.
MONDAY 3 September Brent Stop the War public meeting. 7.30pm, Brent Trades & Labour Hall, 375 High Rd, Willesden NW10 2JR.
THURSDAY 20 September New Worker public meeting: Peoples Struggles in South Asia. 7pm, Marchmont Street Community Centre, London WC1 (near Russell Square tube).

LETTERS

Dear Comrades

It is an absolute disgrace that the new coalition of Plaid and Labour want to turn Wales into the world's university of war.

Earlier this year Rhodri Morgan and Plaid Cymru raised champagne glasses to celebrate a defence contract worth £14 billion to create a "training academy" based at RAF St. Athans, South Wales.

This innocent sounding military academy will be jointly run by the RAF and Matrix Consortium - a company that includes Raytheon, one of the world's largest missile producers.

Its weapons of depleted uranium have caused hundreds of thousands of deaths with cancers and other diseases. The cluster bombs which dropped on Lebanon last year are still killing many children who are attracted by its toy-like appearance. Another use for Raytheon's new heat ray weapons is in interrogation and torture.

The new military academy will train people from all over the world in all forms of warfare, including

nuclear weapons.

The Assembly promised last year that lucrative private financial initiatives would be kept to the minimum.

Believe you me; this private finance initiative project will be the daddy of them all. But the 5,000 new jobs promised for Wales will never materialise. Wales will provide the cleaners and low paid jobs; most of the rest will be brought in from outside the area.

The plans for St Athans will make Wales a target for terrorism, and will stretch its resources and public services to the limit.

In the early 80's I and many other peace campaigners rejoiced when all of Wales joined the nuclear free forum of local authorities.

Who speaks for us down at the Assembly now? Not Labour, not Plaid Cymru, not the Tories and most certainly not the Lib Dems who unashamedly did their very best to jump into bed with the Tories in order to form their "rainbow coalition".

The fight back for peace and justice will be left to CND Cymru and other peace groups, and the Wales Local Government Nuclear Free Forum of which

Caerphilly County Borough Council is a member.

Yours faithfully, Ray Davies, Vice Chair CND Cymru.

Dear Comrades

I note (NW1448, Say no more) that the religious are out recruiting in cyber space sites

such as "Second Life".

Come on comrades! Let's not be out done! The Communist Party of the Second Life sounds quite good - The Socialist Republic of the Second Life sounds even better!

Workers on the World Wide Web, unite!

Comradely, Kevin Bell, central London.

FROM THE NEW COMMUNIST PARTY

New technology and the need for socialism

£2 plus 50p P&P.

The case for communism £2 plus 50p P&P.

All in the family by Daphne Liddle, £1 plus 50p P&P (New Worker reprint).

Arab nationalism and the communist movement by Andy Brooks, £1 plus 50p P&P (New Worker reprint).

NCP Lit. PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ. (cheques to New Worker)

30th Anniversary Fighting Fund Appeal

The New Worker has always been in the forefront in the struggle for peace and socialism. Down the years we have spotlighted the struggles within the international communist and national liberation movements. We have opposed fascism and racism at home and abroad and defended working class rights and interests. We fight for working class unity and work to build a bolshevik British communist party that can prepare the class for the struggles to come. We need to raise £30,000 for the fighting fund. We want a £1,000 for every year of our existence but we don't want to take 30 years to do it! We are appealing to all our supporters to make that extra contribution to the struggle to hit this target by the end of the year.

I wish to make a donation to the New Worker 30th Anniversary appeal and enclose a cheque/postal order for: £.....

Name:..... Address:.....

Post to New Worker, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

On the Web...

New Worker National - www.newworker.org
NCP Central - www.geocities.com/ncpcentral
London District NCP - http://londoncommunists.blogspot.com/
Brighton NCP - http://brightoncommunists.blogspot.com/
NCP-PCS - www.geocities.ncppcs/pcs1.html

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Please pay to the New Worker account No. 50492464, 08-90-34, Co-operative Bank plc, 17 High St, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT1 1LP,

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each month starting on.....

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Iraq resistance: an inside view

continued from page 5

They want to show the Sunni population that they can defend them and convince them not to flee. They thus want to foil the plan to drive the Sunnis out of Baghdad which is intended to be part of the Southern Shia federal entity. This is what the Shia parties, Iran and in the beginning also by the US want.

But this is not [al Qaeda's] strategy and it has happened only few times in the last year in response to big attacks. And for every attack they take the full responsibility. They direct a call to the wise people among the Shias: stop the crimes which are being committed in your name, otherwise you will have to bear the responsibility as well. We are able to strike back with ten times the force.

I do not want to defend this approach, but we need to restore the facts from the distortions by the West.

There is another striking example. Al Qaeda started in Fallujah as the entire resistance started there. While it is a 100 per cent Sunni town, right after the beginning of the occupation about 12,000 Shiite families from the South took refuge in Fallujah and Ramadi because they were accused of being Baathist. I was not only an eyewitness, but also involved in organising the relief for them.

They were helped by the ordinary population because they regarded them as being with the resistance. Even today about 20,000 Shia refugees remain in Fallujah and not a single sectarian hostile act – not even by al Qaeda – has been observed.

There certainly are quarrels between the resistance groups over domination, which is normal, but not on the basis of religion.

Willi Langthaler: *Two years ago you founded the Patriotic Islamic National Front comprising the Baath Party, the Iraqi Communist Party (Central Command) and the Iraqi Patriotic Alliance. There are several religious figures both Sunni and Shia who support you, but until now the big military formations of the resistance do not appear to be represented by your front. Is the time still not ripe for such a front?*

Abduljabbar al Kubaysi: It is an exclusively political front and not a military one. That does not mean that there are no relations but we confine ourselves strictly to the political level. Regarding the Islamic military forces you must understand that they were built as military resistance groups and did not have any political representation. We are not interested to recruit this group or that leader.

No, we are in a comprehensive dialogue with all of them with the proposal to form a unified political command of the resistance set against the so-called political process. Maybe it will go the other way round that a co-ordination is formed and we will join them. Our aim is not to show our



• Demanding the release of detainees.

role, but to create this political unification.

Whenever we seem to be very close to accomplishing this, something happens which impedes its advancement. We also know what is behind it. It is the influence and the meddling of the adjacent Arab regimes. And as far as al Qaeda is concerned, they always want to remain separate and they are not included in this process.

Willi Langthaler: *During all these years of the resistance, there has been the problem of the ambiguous behaviour of the movement of Muqtada al Sadr, who on the one hand became the main pillar of the government and a driving force of the sectarian killing, but on the other hand speaks against the occupation, against the American imposed federative constitution and even against the sectarian strife. As he leads the most important section of the poor people how do you believe it possible to bring at least sections of his followers to join the resistance?*

Abduljabbar al Kubaysi: Contrary to the opinion of most of our friends, at the beginning I always stressed that his movement is very broad and that many Baathists, Marxists and nationalists joined it to protect themselves against the Iranian militias. Maybe half of his movement comes from other political environments and were not followers of his cleric family. So whatever mistakes he made I thought we could count on these people to rectify them or at least some of them.

Secondly, most of his followers are very poor but at the same time they are also uneducated. This is, of course, a double-edged sword. Unlike the other Shia parties the social background of al Sadr's base is not wealthy merchants who might speak one day against the occupation and the next day sign profitable contracts with the United States. Their opposition to the occupation is real.

I believe that finally he has been pushed and cheated by his allies in Iran, mainly Ayatollah Kazem Haeri, who is the successor of his uncle, and in Lebanon by Hezbollah.

Hezbollah visited him three times advocating that he should follow the line applied in Lebanon of participating in the political process, running for parliament, seizing positions in the state apparatus and especially in the army, thus enabling the construction of a strong party. Otherwise al Hakim would take over and dominate by the use of those resources. This is why he ran on the [election] list of his arch enemy al Hakim

Everybody knows that his father was assassinated on the order of Hakim, although officially Saddam is being blamed. Muqtada originally also heavily attacked them including Ayatollah al Sistani for co-operating with the US, declaring them even unbelievers. This is why they conspired with the pro-consul Bremer [first American occupation governor] to kill him. Actually the US really attacked him heavily. Under this pressure he backed down fearing to be extinguished.

His claim that he is op-

posed to the constitution [of the puppet regime] is simply not true. He is fully involved in the political process. He has 32 MPs and six ministers in the government, which is all to the benefit of the occupation.

Then they pushed him to attack the Sunnis with the promise of creating a Shia Mahdi state. At this point many of his followers left him while other people joined him causing a deep transformation of his movement. By now also the Iranians have been infiltrating the Mahdi Army to the point that half of its personnel is composed of members of the [Iranian] Revolutionary Guards.

Up to 2004 Muqtada was on the right side. For example, he came to Fallujah. But after the blows he suffered in 2005 he moved to the other side. Now it is highly improbable that he will rectify his line. Sometimes he says some words against the sectarian killings, admitting however that his people are involved.

He even dismissed three of his leaders. But they continue. He has even partially lost control over his militia. If you give weapons and money to very poor and ignorant people, if you make them strong, they often believe that they are able to take the reins in their own hands. They become mafia leaders and work on their own account.

All this was also possible because he is young, inexperienced and immature so he can be easily influenced by his advisers and his environment, including Iran.

Willi Langthaler: *There are more and more reports that Shia tribes are fighting against the government forces. Can you explain this phenomenon?*

Abduljabbar al Kubaysi: When the occupation began the pro-Iranian militia in the South and East went to kill officers of the former Iraqi army, accusing all its enemies of being Baathists. So many people were assassinated.

Although they all belonged to tribes their tribes were afraid to defend them. But with the evaporation of the state structures the tribes are becoming more and more important and powerful. Now their leaders cannot accept any more that their tribesmen are being killed by foreigners, whether Iranians or Iraqis not belonging to their tribe.

If they come now to arrest or kill somebody the tribes mount growing resistance. There are many examples of this new environment, a sentiment which is directed against the pro-Iranian militias and governmental forces.

Recently a two-day battle erupted near Shuk al Shuyuk in the south when they tried to seize a former officer. Hundreds took up arms to defend him. The former officer fell but not without changing the cli-

mate. He belonged to a very combative tribe known for its bravery. They subsequently formed a kind of mutual assistance pact with other tribes against the pro-Iranian militias, including the Mahdi Army, the army and police, indicating a general tendency which, however, remains local and has not yet reached the general political level.

There is another important cultural factor. The militias brought alien habits which cannot be accepted by the tribes. Under the guise of the Mutha marriage [temporary marriage] they import prostitution. And they spread the use of hashish.

Willi Langthaler: *What about the foreign support for your cause?*

Abduljabbar al Kubaysi: We are being used by Arab politicians to reproduce themselves without offering any real support. They speak of the Iraqi resistance and about the American crimes in five-star hotels and on the satellite TV channels.

That is all. They could, however, do a lot, for example raise money or take to the streets against their governments in order to close the Iraqi embassies.

But they understand that this would mean passing the red line of "supporting terrorism" as the US puts it. We know from the past about the importance of material support to the Algerian revolution or to the Palestinian struggle.

Huge sums were raised and even today the ordinary people are ready to pay. But nobody dares to collect this money for the Iraqi resistance.

These leaders are actually cheating their followers just like those who suggest that they would offer help in secret. I can assure you we do not get any serious help from outside.

Arctic military bases signal new Cold War?

CANADA FIRED a warning shot in a new Cold War over the vast resources of the far North by announcing last night that it will build two new military bases in the Arctic wilderness.

A week after Russia laid claim to the North Pole in what is rapidly becoming a global scramble for the region's vast oil and gas reserves, Stephen Harper, the Canadian Prime Minister, said that Canada would open a new army training centre for cold-weather fighting at Resolute Bay, and a deep-water port at Nanisivik, on the northern tip of Baffin Island. The

country is also beefing up its military presence in the far North with 900 Rangers.

"Canada's Government understands that the first principle of Arctic sovereignty is use it or lose it," Harper said. The move comes a week after Russia planted a rustproof titanium flag on the seabed beneath the North Pole in a blatant attempt to stake a claim to the billions of tons of untapped energy resources believed to be under the Arctic Ocean.

Under international law, each of five Arctic countries – Canada, Russia, the United States, Norway and Denmark – controls an economic zone within 200 miles of its continental

shelf. But the limits of that shelf are in dispute, and as Russia seeks to expand its gas and oil reserves, the region is at the centre of a battle for energy rights and ownership.

Last week's Russian expedition, when two mini-submarines reached the seabed (4,261m) beneath the North Pole, was part of a push by Moscow to find evidence for its claim that the Arctic seabed and Siberia are linked by a single continental shelf, thus making the polar region a geological extension of Russia.

The vessels recovered samples from the seabed in an attempt to demonstrate that the Lomonosov Ridge, an underwater shelf that

runs through the Arctic, is an extension of Russian territory. The United Nations rejected that claim in 2002, citing lack of proof, but Moscow is expected to make its case again in 2009. Denmark and Canada also argue that the Lomonosov Ridge is connected to their territories. Norway is also conducting a survey to strengthen its case. All five Arctic nations are competing to secure subsurface rights to the seabed.

One study by the US Geological Survey estimates that the Arctic has as much as 25 per cent of the world's undiscovered oil and gas.

Radio Havana Cuba

Special Branch allowed loyalist killers free rein

SPECIAL BRANCH officers gave their agents free reign to murder a former Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) officer, Laurence Templeton told the media last week. Templeton, who had spent 30 years as an officer, including three within Special Branch, said he felt compelled to speak out to help relatives of collusion victims.

According to Templeton high-level agents were known as a protected species and their handlers sat on intelligence about certain murders. Templeton believes Special Branch officers protected their agents' reputations as a means of furthering their own career prospects within the RUC.

"I was fully aware of a mass of intelligence on a wide range of individuals but couldn't understand why this information was never acted upon", said Templeton.

"There were officers who were only concerned about which agent was perceived as the best. Their careers were more important to them than arresting people for murder. Promotion was paramount," he said.

Templeton believes fellow officers in the RUC were amongst those sacrificed to protect Special Branch spies.

"I firmly believe policemen were allowed to die to protect certain informants. The public are not shocked at terrorists killing people but they should be appalled when the state colludes with those very same people. I would like to know why certain murders were not selected for investigation and who made these decisions. I personally knew one senior officer who knew he wouldn't get a result over the McCord murder because Haddock was untouchable," said Templeton.

The former RUC officer said senior officers in the CID and Special Branch became little more than nodding dogs under the control of MI5.

Templeton said the Ombudsman's investigation into the McCord killing could have gone further.

"I was appalled by the number of high ranking officers who refused to assist O'Loan. I can't understand how certain people are still in denial about what went on. I realise it may be difficult to come forward but it's never too late," he said.

Raymond McCord, who brought the case of his son's murder to the Ombudsman, praised Laurence Templeton for breaking ranks over the issue of collusion. It further vindicated his decision to pursue the Special Branch officers who protected his son's killers," said McCord.

An Phoblacht

Troika open new talks on Kosovo

THE INTERNATIONAL troika of US, EU and Russian mediators said on Saturday that they had opened new talks on the future status of the Serbian breakaway Kosovo province to seek consensus between Serbia and ethnic Albanian-dominated Kosovo.

"The visits to Pristina and Belgrade mark the opening of a new round of talks on the status of Kosovo," the US representative of the troika, Frank Wisner, said.

"We have used the meetings (in Pristina) to hear the views of the Kosovo president and their negotiating team which are important and to whom we have explained our mission," Wisner told reporters in Pristina, following talks with representatives of Nato-led Kosovo peacekeepers, UN mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo negotiating team.

The international troika of Wisner, EU envoy Wolfgang Ischinger and Russian representative Alexander Botsan-Kharchenko, met Serbian President Boris Tadic and Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica in Belgrade on Friday, before heading to Kosovo on Saturday for talks with top officials there.

The troika mediators, who are entrusted by the international Contact Group of six major powers to lead new talks, are to report back to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon by 10th December on the progress of the talks.



• Foreign troops are still on the streets of Kosovo.

New talks were agreed after Russia's veto threat forced the West to step back from a UN Security Council vote in July on a US-EU draft resolution on Kosovo and try to resolve the issue in a fresh round of talks over the next 120 days led by the Contact Group of US, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Russia.

Kosovo, which legally remains a Serbian province, has been under UN administration since 1999 under the UN Security Council Resolution 1244. The predominantly Albanians of the two million population demand outright independence instead of maxi-

mum autonomy offered by Serbia.

Following UN-led 13-month fruitless talks between Serbia and Kosovo, UN envoy on Kosovo talks Martti Ahtisaari presented in March a proposal recommending internationally supervised independence for Kosovo. The proposal received strong support from the United States, most EU countries as well as Kosovo's authorities, but was rejected by Serbia and its traditional ally Russia.

"We are here as a troika to build bridges and to try to find ways to reach a consensus. We will agree to everything

that the participants agree. We are not here to come out with suggestions, rather to obtain a consensus with our ideas," Wisner said.

Russia's representative Botsan-Kharchenko said that the troika's mission will be exceptionally difficult, but that it is very important that both sides have pledged to cooperate.

The troika operates under the mandate of the UN secretary general, meaning that the process of defining the status of Kosovo remains within the UN Security Council, Botsan-Kharchenko said.

EU's envoy Ischinger said

that the future of Kosovo is of the greatest importance for all members of the European Union.

"We take seriously the process that was initiated in Belgrade and which continues in Pristina. We appreciate the good will of the Kosovo president and the Pristina negotiating team to work with us and we are pleased that we received similar assurances in Belgrade from their leaders. This is a good start for something that is not an easy mission for the troika," Ischinger said.

Kosovan President Fatmir Sejdiu said he expects constructive and serious talks, but reiterated that Pristina's position is that the independence and territorial integrity of Kosovo is non-negotiable.

Kosovan Prime Minister Agim Ceku said before the meeting that he would request the troika to have the issue of people who went missing during the war in Kosovo be one of the main topics at upcoming talks on Kosovo's status.

"We will not negotiate about independence. I am assuring you that one of the first and main topics will be shedding light of the fate of the missing," said Ceku.

On Sunday, the troika is scheduled to meet in Pristina with representatives of the Kosovo Serbs who number only 130,000 of Kosovo's nearly two million population.

Xinhua news agency

Bush: another bogus 'peace' drive

by M Agha

Those who believe US President George W Bush is serious in his call for an international conference on the Middle East next autumn are mistaken. Bush has only got a year-and-a-half to go before making "this great achievement". But what has Bush done for Middle East peace over past seven years?

Bush thinks the way is now open for him but he has wasted many opportunities over the past few years. All previous calls for reactivating the peace process were based on lies and illusions to fool the Arabs and world public opinion and make them believe that he was a as "a peace advocate". Meanwhile he continued to offer all possible moral and material assistance to slaughter more Palestinians and to bury the Palestinian people's cause, which is the central cause of the Arab nation, once and for all.

The fact is that Bush is

searching for any way to compensate for his failures in Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine. So, the current move by the American administration aims to divert the peace process from its right course which leads to a just and comprehensive solution based on the UN resolutions 242, 338 and the "land for peace" principle.

Washington wants to divide the Arabs between moderates and extremists with the objective of dominating the whole state of affairs in the region.

The recent statements given by Israeli war minister Ehud Barak on peace were sufficient to make things clearer than ever before. Barak told the Israeli *Yediot Aharonot* [Latest News] newspaper that Israel had no intention of withdrawing from the West Bank in the next five years. This period, Barak added, was needed to develop anti-missile weapons to repel the Palestinian attacks on Jewish settlements! p

Barak's statements re-

fect the very essence of the Israeli government's policy. Taking the above statements into consideration, nobody believes that Israel wants to make peace with Arabs in general or the Palestinian people in particular. Thus, the Bush administration knows well that the call for holding an international conference on the Middle East means nothing as Israel continues to ignore UN resolutions and refuses to withdraw to the 4th June 1967 lines.

The American allegation that Barak's statements don't reflect the Israeli government's attitude is just another lie to fool world public opinion. This doesn't make any change in the overall political scene in Israel. Barak, a former premier, is a skillful player and he repeatedly refused to withdraw from the occupied territories, including the Golan Heights and Jerusalem, for peace when he was in office.

The call voiced by Bush is just a political manoeuvre

to waste time and to compensate for his political failures in Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine. Bush should call on Israel to withdraw from

all Arab lands occupied in 1967. This is the move which all peace-loving nations want him to make.

Syria Times

