

Newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

Rammell's Plan to Incorporate the Trade Union Movement into Making Britain Competitive

On June 9, Bill Rammell, the minister for Higher Education, gave a speech at the East of England regional Unionlearn launch (see www.unionlearn.org.uk). Taking

the aims of society as given, the speech, tailored towards the trade unions, defined the tasks of society in terms of building a high technology, high skill society to compete with other countries.

"Raising the skill levels of all our people is at the heart of this government's agenda to build not only a more successful economy but a fairer and more equal society," said Mr Rammell. "The

union movement shares this agenda. You know that we won't be able to compete with other countries on the basis of low productivity and low talent. You

Continued on page 2

"Our Nation's Future"

THE OLD ARRANGEMENTS FAILING, TONY BLAIR PROPOSES SUMMARY JUSTICE



"Our nation's future" was the title given by Tony Blair to his speech on Friday, June 23, 2006, which was on the criminal justice

system. This presumably was to highlight the importance he attached to the issue, as the subject matter did not tally with the label. It suggests a life and death threat to a national

entity which was not made explicit in his speech, neither in terms of the threat nor in terms of a definition of the nation.

Continued on page 4

Day of the African Child

30th Anniversary of the Soweto Uprising

FRIDAY, JUNE 16, WAS THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD, CELEBRATED ALL AROUND AFRICA. It marked the 30th anniversary of the Soweto uprisings, when

thousands of children rose up to defy the South African apartheid state forces, and were brutally mowed down.

It is now well-recognised that the uprising of the youth, and the martyrdom of many of their number, was a watershed in the history of the struggle in South Africa and in the liberation struggles of the people of Africa. The children on that day in 1976 were not just taking to the streets to protest against the imposition of Afrikaans, the language of their oppressors, but represented the growing conscious-

Continued on page 2

[inside]

30th Anniversary of Soweto uprising 2

Book review: Noor Inayat Khan, anti-fascist heroine and Indian patriot 3

On the old arrangements failing 4

Published by RCPB(ML)
170 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 2LA
Registered as a newspaper
Printed by Millennium Press

30th Anniversary of the Soweto Uprising

Continued from page 1

ness that the African people themselves had to take matters into their own hands. The massacre that ensued and the detentions and imprisonment under the Terrorism Act and subsequent torture aroused the utmost outrage and condemnation from the world's democratic forces.

Theirs is the spirit that inspires the African peoples today in their present struggle against the relations of exploitation which the US and Britain, under the banner of the G8 and of a "humanitarian" and "civilising" mission, seek to impose and perpetuate on the con-

tinents of Africa. It cannot be forgotten that the British government backed to the hilt the South African white racist regime, and a principled stand of the British government today would be to denounce the crimes of racism, colonialism and slavery for which Britain was responsible and agree to pay reparations for these crimes against the African peoples.

The youth of today also are moved by and find inspiration in the fight for freedom of the June 16 youth and their martyrs. They too pledge to build a bright future for themselves and for all future generations.

Rammell's Plan to Incorporate the Trade Union Movement into Making Britain Competitive

Continued from page 1

know that we must compete through higher productivity, higher skills and cutting edge innovation and science." For the government, competition, or maximisation of profit for the monopolies, is the starting point.

"We have helped to make society more cohesive, fairer and more just," Mr Rammell claimed. For the trade union leaders, "cohesive society" can be read as meaning class compromise, but more fundamentally, it is about *de-classing the workers*. Hence, Mr Rammell spoke about a society where "everyone has the

opportunity to go as far as their efforts and talents will take them, regardless of ethnicity, disability, gender or *social class*" (our emphasis). This means the workers giving up their interests as a class, and even further, denying their very nature. It means the workers giving up their struggle for rights for some implied greater good, which is ultimately what is good for big business (competitiveness, productivity).

Indeed, the speech itself referred to rights – "the government has introduced rights at work and created work in which to exercise those rights" – and mentioned in passing the "basic right to an

education". The idea is that "rights" at work are based on the "social partnership" between workers and their employers to make Britain ("the nation", "us") a winner in the global marketplace. The "right" to an education is then based on the "opportunity" to work.

In other words, everybody should have the opportunity to work (the contradiction with an economic system that necessitates unemployment notwithstanding) and has the duty to work in cohesion with their employers, this duty providing the context in which their "rights at work" are defined. This is the basis of the government's notion of the right to an education, which is therefore twofold: to increase employability, education providing those skills necessary for big business; and to instil the correct work ethic that will create "cohesion". This is the basis, rather than education being in the service of society and everyone having the right to an education on that basis.

Immediately, this is about the issue of who decides: the right to participate in deciding the direction of the economy, and to have a say in terms of aims, is not recognised, and the workers should not demand such rights. Generally, it is to ensure that the workers on no account go for socialism: instead of the values of the collective and throwing off exploitation, there is substituted "lifelong learning" and the kind of education for uniting around the Labour Party and competing in the global market that Mr Rammell spoke about.

And so Mr Rammell finished by saying, "I firmly believe that unionlearn will help trade unions to raise their game to another level. It will place learning and skills at the heart of trade unionism and it will put trade unions at the very centre of the nation's skills strategy – right where they belong." Instead, the working class must put itself right where it belongs: at the centre of the nation's political life.

Save Our NHS! Join the Demonstration Saturday 1 July

Assemble 11.00am

**Whipps Cross Hospital near main gate,
Whipps Cross Road.**

Bring your friends, family, workmates and your banners! Come to hear what is happening in London, the NHS nationally, Waltham Forest community health services. Join with your colleagues and the community on the demo – add your voice!



Called by health workers unions at Whipps Cross Hospital Trust and Waltham Forest PCT, Waltham Forest Save Our NHS, Keep our NHS Public Campaigns, Waltham Forest Trades Council.

John Buckle Books

Centre for communism and communist and progressive literature from Britain and around the world



Opening Hours: Monday-Saturday,
10am-6pm

E-mail: jbbooks@btconnect.com

170 WANDSWORTH ROAD, LONDON SW8 2LA

Tel: 020 7627 0599 or 0845 644 1979 (local Rate)

Workers' Weekly

Newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

Website: www.rcpbml.org.uk

July 1, 2006 Volume 36, Number 10

Subscription rates within Britain (including p&p): 4 issues - £2.95, 6 months - £18.95, Yearly - £33.95. For any subscription applications from abroad or for bulk subscriptions, please contact *Workers' Weekly* directly. Cheques should be made payable to 'RCPB(ML)' and sent to 170 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 2LA.

Book review: *The Spy Princess* by Shrabani Basu

Noor Inayat Khan: Anti-Fascist Heroine and Indian Patriot

Noor Inayat Khan, a fluent French speaker, was sent in June 1943 by the British SOE (Special Operations Executive) into occupied France as an underground radio operator, the first woman to do so, to aid the French Resistance. Within the space of ten days her network was decimated, largely due to betrayal by double agents. Soon she was the only radio operator left in the whole of Paris and in great danger. But she refused the opportunity to return to London, saying that she was determined to keep open the radio link for the Resistance and rebuild the group. For three months she evaded capture, constantly on the move, contacting London daily from different locations in Paris, achieving important successes in her work. Eventually, only days short of being replaced, she was betrayed and captured by the Gestapo. Held in the Gestapo headquarters in Paris, she made two daring attempts to escape. Refusing to give up these attempts, she was transferred to Germany. For ten months she was held in Pforzheim Prison in solitary confinement, shackled hand and foot, half-starved, repeatedly tortured. She gave no information at all. On the night of September 13, 1944, having been moved to Dachau concentration camp, she was abused and kicked near to death hour after hour by her SS captors, then in the early hours shot through the head. She uttered one word only during that long brutal night. As the fatal shot rang out, she cried the one word: "*liberté!*" She was thirty years old. In France she is remembered by her codename *Madeleine dans la Resistance* and was hon-

oured with the *Croix de Guerre*. In Britain she was awarded the highest civilian honour, the George Cross.

The Spy Princess, Shrabani Basu's story of Noor Inayat Khan's life and heroic sacrifice, has been painstakingly researched, making extensive use of recently released SOE files and the reminiscences of family and friends, and is told with great compassion and deep respect. It is a story of supreme courage worth reading again and again and repeating.

Noor Inayat Khan was the daughter of an American mother and an Indian father, Inayat Khan, a leading teacher and musician of the progressive Sufi philosophy. Noor grew up and was educated in Paris, where her father had set up a Sufi centre, and had become an accomplished musician and writer and broadcaster of children's stories by her mid twenties, having studied music with the famous Nadia Boulanger and child psychology at the Sorbonne. From an early age, though always quiet and thoughtful, she had shown a fierce independence of spirit and determination to make up her own mind.

With the outbreak of war and the German advance on Paris, Noor and her brother Vilayat decided they must move to England and take an active stand against fascism in whatever way they could. Noor was an Indian patriot. She was the great-great-granddaughter of Tipu Sultan, the legendary Tiger of Mysore, scourge of British rule, who was killed in battle in 1793. Her father had told her many times of his great courage in the fight for

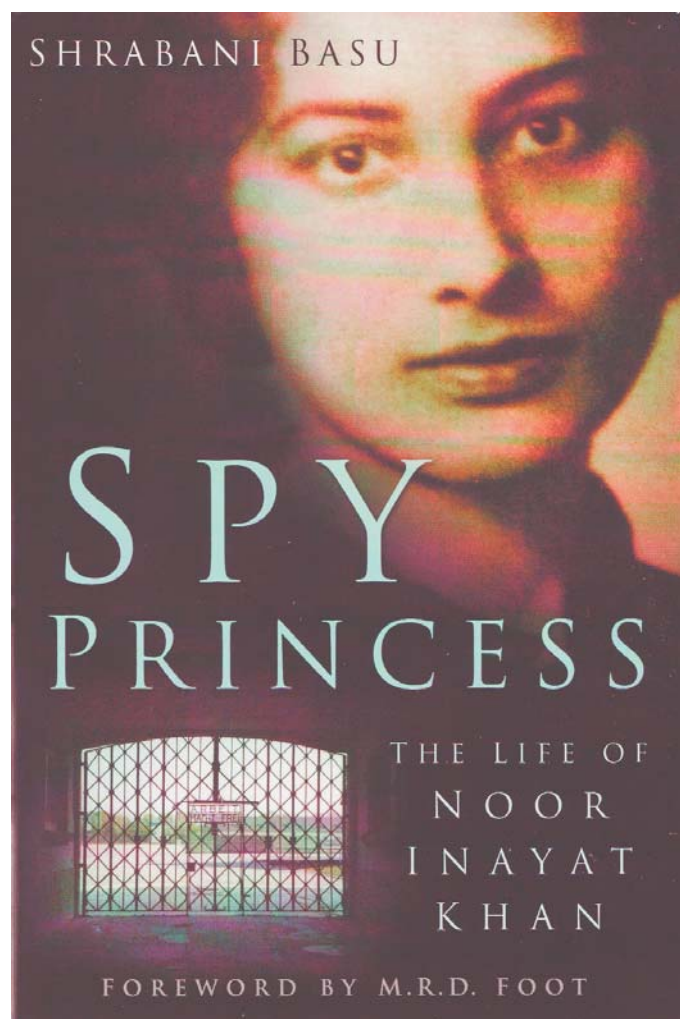
Indian freedom against colonial oppression. Having joined first the Red Cross and then the WAAF (Women's Auxiliary Air Force) on reaching Britain, she was later to surprise her interviewers when applying for a commission by speaking thus: She told the board that as long as the war with Germany was on, she would be loyal to the British government and the Crown. But after the war she may reconsider her position and might find that she had to support India against Britain in the fight for independence. Born and brought up in Europe, a lover of the great heritage of European culture as well as that of India, like her father an advocate of the unity of the peoples of East and West, face to face with Nazi tyranny Noor had no doubt where her internationalist duty lay. Having become a radio operator in the WAAF, on account of her fluent French and her personal qualities Noor was asked to train as a secret agent for work in occupied France, a task she had no hesitation in accepting and which was to lead, as she knew well it might, to

the ultimate sacrifice.

Today, when self-aggrandising leaders in the service of the great corporations once again threaten to drag humanity into catastrophic world war – when bestiality akin to that of the Nazis once again shows its face in the Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo Bays, the Hadithas and Fallujas of the world – the unbreakable courage and selfless sacrifice of Noor Inayat Khan serve as a reminder and inspiration that the plans of the Hitlers of today too will inevitably meet an inglorious fate. Her example shows that the cherished *liberté* of all peoples, fought for so heroically by Noor as by her illustrious forebear, their shared goals on the high road of culture and civilisation, will surely be won.

Chris Coleman

The Spy Princess by Shrabani Basu is published by Sutton Publishing and is available via John Buckle Books at £18.99. Cheques payable to *Workers Publications Centre* and sent to 170 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 2LA.



"Our Nation's Future": The Old Arrangements Failing, Tony Blair Proposes Summary Justice

Continued from page 1

Rather the subject matter was framed in terms of a personal journey, thus emphasising that policy making to Tony Blair is a matter of the conviction of the leader. In this respect, what is also implicit is that the "nation" in question is one which is defined through its rallying round the values of the leader. Tony Blair, of course, presents this presumption in an upside-down way: he is the one who is in touch and responding to mass of "ordinary, decent law-abiding folk" (his own description, one redolent of the nazi conception of "volk" and a self-serving phrase of fascist organisations). It is a medievalist conception of everyone showing the proper degree of respect for authority, as against the modern conception of everyone having rights by virtue of being human.

Future of justice system

In fact, Blair's speech given at Bristol university was the first of a series of "lectures" on domestic policy to be given under the slogan "Our Nation's Future". Tony Blair has said that his aim is to provoke a national debate on the future of the criminal justice system, which he said was a public service, to be reformed in the same fashion as the National Health Service or the education system. It is, according to Blair, a dispenser of justice, to be the subject of "best practice", utilising "different and new providers". This logic and analogy suggests that before long the "victims" of crime will be described as consumers of justice and given a choice between the different providers who will compete in dispensing the justice, not that fits the crime but is tailored to suit the demands of the consumer. Put in this fashion, the very principle of equality before the law is jettisoned, along with the principle of being tried by a jury of one's peers. Tony Blair tells us in this connection that the "blunt reality" is that for the foreseeable future, the measures that John Reid is to propose at the end of July "will mean an increase in prison places".

Blair's answer is merely to pass more laws, set more central targets. At the same time, he invokes the "voluntary sector" in the "management of offenders".

Rights are inalienable

In his speech, Tony Blair traced the history of criminal and social behaviour over the last century, with the decline of fixed employment and settled families and the corresponding increase in crime, an increase with which courts and government could not always cope. That is Tony Blair's argument. One would be forgiven for thinking that he had no knowledge of the struggle for prison reform and was invoking a golden age when the people had stable lives and were content with the social system. Or of the 1930s of the depression and the preparation of the financial oligarchy for fascism and war, when, according to Blair, "millions of people ... suffered ... without resorting to crime".

The reality is that the old arrangements of governance have broken down and political and democratic renewal is required. In the period after the second world war, the people's aspirations were demanding a social system in which a sovereign economy could prosper, the workers would be in control of the wealth which they produce and the people would be the decision-makers. When New Labour came to power in 1997, the people's aspirations were defeated the anti-social offensive and again go on to achieving the implementation of the public good. But the world had changed, in the sense that the crisis had deepened, reaction was seizing the initiative, the big powers and especially Anglo-US imperialism were preparing for war and the dictate of the corporate state domestically.

In these circumstances, after nine years in power, the domestic and international crisis has become increasingly dangerous for the people. Instead of the old arrangements, Tony Blair is proposing summary "justice". Rights are inalienable. It is not and cannot be that the penal

Forthcoming Event

Anniversary of the Victory of the Fatherland Liberation War Saturday 29 July 2006

**Saklatvala Hall, Dominion Road,
Southall, UB2 5AA: 3.00pm- 5.00pm**

**Marking the anniversary of the victory of the progressive forces of the Korean people in the just struggle to liberate the country against US-led aggression, July 27, 1953.
Meeting followed by barbecue**

Organised by the Preparatory Committee for Celebrating the Victory of the Fatherland Liberation War

reformers, the judiciary and so on, have "tilted the balance" in favour of the "criminal" and against "those who keep the law". Rather it is that the ruling elite is criminalising dissent, is criminalising behaviour as "anti-social", precisely as the fabric of society is unravelling. The monopoly press is part of this equation, and it is not simply that the government is taking its lead from the tabloids. At the same time, the government has passed more than 40 crime bills and created 700 new offences since it came to power, according to reports from those who have counted them, and wants to pass more to "plug the gaps".

Summary justice

Tony Blair is flying in the face of the people's social consciousness which is derived from the society in which they live and the aspirations they have for a different world, and the need for a change in the relations of production. He is also in severe contradiction not only with this consciousness and the public will, but with the judiciary and legal profession, whom he is admonishing time and again that the rules of the game have changed, but who time and

again are emphasising that human rights are inviolable and cannot be based on these changing rules.

Tony Blair is facing a crisis in moulding public opinion: he insists that "it is the culture of political and legal decision-making that has to change, to take account of the way the world has changed. ... It is a complete change of mindset." He wants to put in place laws that reflect "the reality of the street and community in which real people live real lives". This is the politics of hysteria, obscurantism and reaction. The society in which people live is part of the world in which the British government has committed aggression against Iraq with the US, in which it is determined to impose its will by force. The "war on terror" domestically is taking society down the path of a police state. This is the reality which has its reflection on the "street and community in which real people live real lives".

The "radical change in political and legal culture" which Tony Blair advocates in these circumstances is summary justice, that is impunity of the state and its forces not accountable to the rule of law. It must not and will not go unopposed.

Workers' Daily Internet Edition

**Daily On Line Newspaper of the Revolutionary
Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)**

Web site: www.rcpbml.org.uk

e-mail: office@rcpbml.org.uk

WDIE sent by e-mail daily (Text e-mail): 1 issue free, 6 months £5, Yearly £10
Address: 170 Wandsworth Road, London, SW8 2LA

**Phone: 0845 644 1979 (Local rate from outside London)
or 020 7627 0599**