

Five Years of Phantom Plots

Since September 11, 2001, Britain has seen a continuous stream of “phantom” terrorist plots: things which are widely publicised as serious plots which then “disappear” with little or no publicity.

They can be classified into 3 types: 1. “Plots” where no one is arrested or charged and no evidence is presented to back them up; 2. “Plots” where people are arrested but no trial takes place, so that any evidence, if it exists, can’t be examined; 3.

“Plots” which go to trial and then collapse after the evidence is presented to a jury; the collapse of the trial is given minimal or no publicity.

The “Terrorist Training Website Plot” – October 2001

One week after September 11, 2001, widespread publicity was given to the existence of a “terrorist training operation” in London.

A man was arrested and charged in connection with the

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HEALTH CARE IS A RIGHT!

Throughout the country, there is a growing awareness that the government’s policy of “investment with reform” is leading to the destruction of the National Health Service and the rejection of people’s right to publicly funded health care. As a result numerous campaigns of health workers, patients and concerned communities have arisen in opposition to the direction being imposed on the NHS by the government as it advances down the road of privatising health care as part of its overall strategy of opening up the state’s coffers as a source of profits for the rich, regardless of the destructive impact this has on the public good.

In order to facilitate the implementation of its programme, the

government and corporate media are creating hysteria about “budget deficits” in the NHS and using these as a justification for cutting staff, closing wards and hospitals, and wrecking the existing health care services. This hysteria is entirely fraudulent. It takes no account of the right to health care of the human beings in society, but seeks to impose legally-binding budget restraints on hospital trusts that the working class and people have had no say in deciding. The government is negating the human factor and imposing entirely inappropriate and callous budget criteria, treating the hospital trusts as though they were competing businesses.

The health service is funded by means of the application of a portion of the social wealth created



Health workers from Whipps Cross hospital demonstrated earlier this year against cuts in the NHS

by the working people as a whole. They have a right to this health service funded by their labour. It is an outrage that the government

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Safeguarding the Future of the NHS

The Demand to Outlaw the Involvement of the Private Sector in Public Services

WITH THE STEPPED UP ANTI-SOCIAL OFFENSIVE, SOCIAL PROGRAMMES SUCH AS HEALTH AND EDUCATION ARE UNDER ATTACK and their effective privatisation is accelerating. This is creating an unprecedented opposition both from workers in the public sector and from people from all walks of life who demand that these programmes serve the public well-being and not the profit of the rich. The days of the social welfare state, together with the social

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Details of Demonstration on Saturday 23 Sept 4

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

Health Care Is A Right!

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should deny them the exercise of this right through fraudulent and anachronistic constraints.

But, of course, this is not all. The government is further forcing the NHS to sign contracts with privately-owned treatment and diagnostic centres and diverting investment away from the NHS to pay the profits of these companies. The government is enabling the private sector to utilise public services as a source of huge profits. Meanwhile, hospitals are underfunded, the cuts are being stepped up, staff are overworked, and the whole blame for the crisis is being put on the shoulders of dedicated health staff. This situation must be brought to an end!

Workers' Weekly congratulates everyone who is resisting the cuts in funding and the privatisation of the health service. Together we are fighting for the future of our health service, hospitals and health care, in which health care is a right, and ill people are not consumers but human beings who have claims on society. Now is a critical time in this struggle. The watchword of our resistance is that *Health Care is a Right!* Everyone has a right to effective health care at the highest level that society can provide without discrimination on any grounds. Investing in the National Health Service and outlawing the involvement of the private sector is the way to safeguard the future of the NHS.

***Health Care Is A Right!
Safeguard the Future of the NHS!***

Safeguarding the Future of the NHS

The Demand to Outlaw the Involvement of the Private Sector in Public Services

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workers and the big employers, have become practically a thing of the past, and this has brought with it an undermining by the state and government of even the concept of a publicly funded health service and other social programmes.

This attack on revenue being provided from the national social product appropriated from the productive sectors of the economy is being underpinned with an ideology which serves to trash the social economy and to entrench the idea of competing centres of monopoly capital. This ideology is being extended to try and justify the idea of "competition" within every sphere of life, including the provision of health care and education.

The prevailing ideology being pushed is to treat health care like a commodity, a product subject to the law of value, whose exchange value is determined by the social necessary labour time worked up into it. This treatment is also actually leading to the commodification of health care, e.g. the sale of drugs, the consumption of health care in hospitals, the using up of the value of capital equipment, and so on. But added to this is the funding actually funnelled through the health service into the pockets of the private sector, both directly, as a reward for sinking capital into the public sector, and through the exploitation of health workers, and forcing sick individ-

uals to pay for health care, which has already been funded from the accumulated national social product. Thus the ill are not treated as human beings who need treatment, but as consumers who exercise "choice" over health care, when what is required is that their claims be met for health care available at the highest level society is able to provide at present.

In this way, the private sector is utilising the health service to both rob funds directly from the state treasury and to exploit health workers and other workers connected with the health service to make profits through the provision of health care, guaranteed and underwritten by the state. PFI, the selling and reselling of PFI contracts for new hospitals, the mega-contracts, the payment to armies of business "consultants", all are netting big business and financial institutions billions of pounds in cash.

The demand of health workers and working people as a whole is that no new contracts must be signed with immediate effect. This will allow a public investigation to be launched into the privateers and the whole system of budgeting of the NHS, with a view to reclaiming back for the public purse the huge profits pocketed by the capitalists. This will also create the conditions for safeguarding the future by ensuring that all health care is placed under public control, and that health workers and professionals should be involved in setting the standards

of care and staffing in the health service, and themselves assessing their own worth. The health service must be regarded as an integral part of a modern economic system with a social economy geared to serving the needs of its citizens. In this respect, the working people, exercising their social responsibility, must demand and fight that the claims of all to health care must be adequately met, without quibble and without imposing entirely artificial budget restraints, out of the whole social product produced nationally by them. In other words, their right to health care must be guaranteed through the investment of their total social product in the health service. The same goes for their right to education at the highest possible standard and for other social programmes so that the wealth that is produced through their labour is applied for the public good, and not siphoned off to private capitalists or applied to the aggressive military programmes or otherwise taken out of the national economy.

The demand for a public investigation under the control of the people themselves would be an important step in bringing the finance capitalists to account for their parasitism, and in involving the working class and people in exercising their social responsibility, bringing the privateers to heel and setting the direction of the economy so that it benefits the public well-being and not the rich and powerful. Such a public investigation would also be an important step in bringing into being a pro-worker and pro-social government through the involvement of the working people themselves in informing and politicising themselves.

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Workers' Weekly

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

Website: www.rcpbml.org.uk

September 9, 2006 Volume 36, Number 14

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.

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operation on two counts of "instruction or training in the making or use of firearms, explosives, or chemical, biological or nuclear weapons" for terrorist purposes. These were said to be the first charges since September 11 to be brought against a Muslim in Britain under the Terrorism Act 2000.

At the lower court hearing, the prosecution reportedly claimed that there were 40 anti-terrorism officers working on the case 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week in 55 countries. Both the British and the United States authorities were said to have been monitoring the operation for at least 18 months. The accused was held for over 10 months in prison.

At the trial at the Central Criminal Court in August 2002, the prosecution claimed that the operation was "wholly for the purposes of assisting or preparing terrorism". The defendant said it was a failed commercial venture. The accused told the jury, "I have appeared before the highest court in the land and what evidence have they produced? It's a joke."

In "an extremely embarrassing outcome", after a five-day retirement the jury cleared him of all charges. The accused man died in December 2002, four months after being found "not guilty".

The "Plot to Assassinate Tony Blair" – June 2002

In September 2005 the former head of the Metropolitan Police, John Stevens, told readers of Britain's biggest-circulation Sunday newspaper that "terrorists linked to al-Qa'ida" were suspected of plotting to assassinate British Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2002. Blair was to be shot dead by snipers at a parade to mark the 50th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne.

Both Blair and his wife had refused offers of bullet-proof vests on the day and were surrounded by "covertly-armed" officers during the celebrations.

Stevens has said that eight terrorist attacks were thwarted during his five years as Metropolitan Police Commissioner. But he has failed to identify the "plots" and to provide evidence.

The "Gas on the Tube Plot" – November 2002

In November 2002, three men were arrested on terrorism charges in London amid press reports of a plot to target the city's underground railway ("the tube") in an attack using cyanide gas. The Deputy Prime Minister played down the story, but an earlier government warning of a possible chemical or nuclear terrorist attack on the UK using a "dirty bomb" or poison gas had been issued and then withdrawn to be replaced with more general advice. The newspaper stood by the story, saying it had come from a reliable source. Terrorism charges against the men were later withdrawn.

The "Al-Qa'ida Scottish Plot" – December 2002

In December 2002, in a £1.5m operation, eight Algerians were arrested in London, Oxford and Edinburgh. They were charged in Edinburgh with terrorism offences. A ninth man was arrested in February 2003 as part of the "plot".

The nine were held in prison for up to four months before being released on bail in March 2003. In December 2003, one year after they were first arrested, the Crown Office announced that the charges against them were to be dropped.

The "Ricin Plot" – January 2003

On January 5, 2003, police raided a flat in north London. Two days later the discovery of the "London Ricin Plot" was broadcast around the world.

In the "hunt for the ricin plotters", British police visited 26 countries. 103 people were arrested in Britain in connection with the "plot". Of these, 12 were initially charged as actual

"plotters". The "ricin trial" began in September 2004. The original list of 12 accused had been reduced to nine. They were to be tried in two "batches" – the first five followed by the remaining four.

After a seven-month trial, of the first five defendants four were found "not guilty" on all charges. One man was convicted of "conspiracy to cause a public nuisance" – something which hadn't been on the charge-sheet when the trial began. The prosecution then abandoned the trial of the remaining four.

On the same day that the "discovery of the ricin plot" was first broadcast to the world, a first test in a government laboratory confirmed that there was no ricin involved. As the highly-publicised "hunt for the ricin plotters" continued over the following weeks, a series of further tests repeatedly confirmed that there was no ricin present.

One month after the exposure of the "no-ricin" plot, and the massive publicity which followed, the United States' Secretary of State – Colin Powell – went to the United Nations to make his case for war on Iraq. Weapons inspectors had spent two months checking out US and British claims of Iraq's possession and hiding of weapons of mass destruction and had come up empty.

Powell told a story about "Iraq's involvement in terrorism" which "linked" Osama bin Laden, Afghanistan, Saddam Hussein, Abu Musab al Zarqawi, Iraq and a "terrorist poisons" threat from there through the Middle East to Europe. The "London ricin plot" was key to his tale. Ignoring the jury's verdict, top British officials have since used the "ricin plot" to justify detention for three months without charge and the use of information obtained under torture, among other things.

The "Tanks at Heathrow Plot" – February 2003

On Tuesday, February 11, 2003, it was announced that there



was a serious terrorist threat to Britain, and to London's Heathrow airport in particular.

In a very "high-visibility" operation, 450 troops with tanks and about 1,700 extra police officers were sent Heathrow. They were also used to stop vehicles under flight paths within about eight miles of the airport. The government and police said the operation was linked to fears that "al-Qa'ida" could use the end of the Muslim festival of Eid on Saturday, February 15, as a trigger for an attack on London. But the "tanks at Heathrow" operation came in the run-up to the London demonstration on Saturday February 15, 2003, against war on Iraq. Up to 2 million people marched in the biggest protest in British history on the biggest day of protest in world history.

The government was accused of staging the "tanks at Heathrow" operation to justify the "war on terror", of which the Iraq war was said to be a part. No evidence was produced to back up the government claims of a threat at Heathrow.

The "Manchester United Plot" – April 2004

In an operation involving 400 police officers led by Special Branch and MI5, 10 people – eight men, one woman and a boy of 16 – were arrested on terrorism charges in raids across the north and Midlands of England. The arrests reportedly followed months of surveillance and monitoring of mobile phone calls.

It was widely reported that the suspects planned to set off bombs during a match between Manchester United and Liverpool football teams that weekend – one of the biggest games in the English season. Within 10 days terrorism charges against all the suspects had been dropped.

Police had seized items

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NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION

TROOPS OUT OF IRAQ! DON'T ATTACK IRAN! NO TRIDENT REPLACEMENT!

Saturday 23 September 1pm Manchester

Organised by Stop the War Coalition and CND. For more information:

Website: www.stopwar.org.uk or Email: office@stopwar.org.uk or Phone: 020 7278 6694.

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relating to Manchester United as evidence in the homes of two of the suspects. But the men told police that was because they were fans. One had been a professional footballer in Iraq and had kept some photos he had taken outside Manchester United's ground and a ticket stub from a game two or three years before.

The "Canary Wharf Plot" – November 2004

In November 2004, British media headlined stories about the "foiling of an Al-Qa'ida attack on Canary Wharf".

Canary Wharf is a group of three skyscrapers in east London and is one of the key financial centres in London. The buildings are the tallest in Britain. The plot supposedly involved flying aircraft into the buildings to create a "British September 11th". It was also claimed that Heathrow Airport had been "another high-profile target for a possible simultaneous strike".

The plot was "among four or five ... that security chiefs believe they have stopped". The information came from a "senior authoritative source" but no details were given of when, where or how the "plot" was uncovered

or disrupted.

The story came shortly after the Home Secretary had claimed that "al-Qa'ida is on our doorstep and threatening our lives". It also came after the head of the Metropolitan Police had spoken about "his frustration at not being able to talk about anti-terror successes" and the head of MI5 (the "Security Service") had spoken publicly about "Britain's success in thwarting fanatics".

The story also came immediately before the "Queen's Speech" – the announcement of the government's programme for the year ahead – which was to include new anti-terrorism legislation.

The "Red Mercury Plot" – September 2004

Three men were arrested at a hotel in north-west London which was surrounded by police marksmen and surveillance teams. A fourth man was arrested at his home. All were detained on suspicion of involvement in terrorism.

The News of the World newspaper claimed its undercover reporter, posing as a Muslim extremist, had exposed the alleged plot after a tip-off that a "Mr Big in Saudi Arabia" who was sympathetic to "the Muslim

cause" would pay £300,000 for a kilogram of "radioactive red mercury".

Three of the four were charged with conspiring to possess a "radioactive mercury-based substance" for terrorist purposes and of "conspiracy to enter into a funding arrangement for purposes of terrorism". Two of the accused faced additional charges of possessing documents useful to terrorists. There is no proof that "Red Mercury" exists. It was said to have been developed in the Soviet Union to be used in "briefcase nuclear bombs" in the 1980s, but no evidence of this has been produced.

The trial began in April 2006. It lasted three months and is estimated to have cost more than £1m. Before it began, the defence team urged the judge to throw out the case, arguing it would be an abuse to let it go ahead. After deliberating for two weeks, the jury found the three accused not guilty on all charges.

The News of the World defended its role saying that its

"involvement in this investigation and subsequent trial was conducted under the direction of senior anti-terrorist police officers ... The methods used in the investigation were ... both authorised and, from an early stage, continued in close liaison with the police."

The "Forest Gate Plot" – June 2006

At 3.58am on Friday, June 2, 250 police officers, MI5 agents and chemical weapons experts raided two houses in Forest Gate, east London.

They were said to be acting on "specific intelligence" following "months of intense surveillance" and were said to be looking for a bomb factory.

Police in the raid shot one man and two other people were also hospitalised.

Two men were arrested on suspicion of involvement in terrorism but were released a week later without charge.

By Jim Brann, Treasurer of the Stop the War Coalition

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

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