

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

Britain and Palestine: A Criminal History of Intervention

(Continued from Workers' Weekly No.15)

By the end of World War I, the British government had already entered into a firm alliance with the representatives of international

Zionism. The 1917 Balfour Declaration by the British government was essentially a joint declaration drafted both by members of the government and the Zionist Organisation in

London. The US government was also consulted before this Declaration committing Britain to establishing a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine was issued, and it was

formally approved by the other big powers the following year. The Declaration broke the agreements that Britain had made with representatives of

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"Time to Go" Demonstration:

RESISTANCE IS NOT FUTILE!



Demonstration gathering in Manchester's Albert Square, estimated as being the biggest since the Peterloo Massacre of 1819.

A demonstration estimated at between 30,000 and 60,000 strong marched through Manchester on Saturday, September 23, 2006.

The spirit of the demonstration

transcended the occasion, namely a protest at the Labour Party Conference, and a message to Labour. Rather, it was a manifestation of how broad and deep is the opposition to the warmonger-

ing course of Britain, a course that is summed up and concentrated in the person of Tony Blair, who has carried out the bidding and been the champion of the vested

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Report:

The Facts Are Clear

An account of the demonstration compiled from the report of the Stop the War Coalition and other sources

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PROTESTERS FLOODED INTO MANCHESTER for the Time to Go demonstration. After an open-

ing rally in Albert Square, they headed off on a circular route around the Labour conference's city centre venue.

Speakers before and after the march encircling the G-Mex conference centre demanded an end to the occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan, an end to the government's slavish devotion to US foreign policy, and for Blair to leave Downing Street.

Lindsey German, national convenor of the Stop the War Coalition, praised the huge turnout saying: "We have written a page in Manchester's history ... I

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Britain and Palestine: A Criminal History of Intervention

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the Arab peoples during World War I and ignored the rights of the Palestinian people, at that time 92% of the population of Palestine and the owners of 97% of its land. What is more, at the time it was issued Britain had no legal authority over Palestine and claimed to be fighting during the World War I for the rights of nations to self-determination.

By 1918, however, Britain had occupied Palestine and other parts of the Middle East by military means and immediately facilitated the entry of a Zionist Commission into Palestine, which encouraged settler immigration and acted as if it were government in waiting. The so-called "peace treaties" concluded by the victorious powers at the end of the war established both the League of Nations and the system of mandates, by which the major colonial powers were given "trusteeship" over those colonial territories formerly held by the powers that had been defeated during the war.

The Zionists, heavily supported by the British government, also took part in the post-war conference in Paris that led to the division of Arab territory between Britain and France, and once again demanded Palestine as a "Jewish national home". Britain subsequently gained formal control of Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq and France control of Syria and Lebanon. The only Arab representative at the Paris conference, Faisal, son of Sherif

Hussain of Mecca, was entirely dependent on the British government. He advocated trusteeship over Palestine, although he had no authority to speak for the people of Palestine, and was rewarded with a new title, King of Transjordan.

The mandates system and the League of Nations recognised the right to self-determination in words but also maintained that certain territories required "tutelage" before being granted political independence. It was also required that the wishes of the people should be taken into account. But in 1919, when Palestinian and other Arab representatives demanded independence for Palestine and other parts of the region and strongly opposed the plans of the Zionists, their demands were ignored. The British government fully recognised the hypocrisy of this policy and Arthur Balfour, the Foreign Secretary, simply argued that in Palestine, Zionism was "of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land". Subsequently the Balfour Declaration formed the legal basis for the British Mandate and was approved by the League of Nations. The Zionist Organisation was also recognised as the body that would work with the British government to encourage Jewish settlers and establish in Palestine a "Jewish national home".

Zionism had become not only the official policy of the British government but with its support also the policy of the League of Nations, the forerunner of the UN.

(to be continued)

Resisting NHS Privatisation

On September 26, workers at NHS Logistics launched their second one-day strike to coincide with the debate on the NHS at the Labour Party conference. The two one-day strikes called by Unison were staged to mobilise opposition to the government's decision to privatise the services provided by NHS Logistics by handing them over to the parcel monopoly DHL. These include supplying hospitals, GP surgeries and patients with over 43,000 products from surgical supplies to bedpans and have been valued as being worth some £3.7 billion over 10 years, the length of the proposed contract between the government and DHL. Speaking at the TUC Congress, Dave Prentis, general secretary of Unison, stated that the Labour government's policy was threatening the future of the NHS "as never before". Congress adopted a motion calling for "a major campaign to change government thinking on the NHS including local activity, a lobby of Parliament and a demonstration in

Spring 2007".

Central to the government's programme is "investment with reform". This includes the neo-liberal conceptions of patients being "customers", "choice" being dependent on competition, market mechanisms leading to improvement in the quality of service, and so forth. Privatisation is an essential feature of "investment with reform".

Resistance

However, patients are not customers but human beings in need of care, and profit making from the health care needs of individuals should be outlawed. The working class and people must deepen the discussion as to how to further their resistance to NHS privatisation, and strengthen their vision for the future of the NHS. It cannot be left to anyone else!

The "NHS Together" lobby of Parliament is taking place on November 1, 2006. NHS Together is the new alliance of all the unions and staff associations representing people working in the NHS, together with the TUC.



Thousands march in Eastbourne on September 16 in the campaign to save the District General Hospital from cuts and closures, one of innumerable similar campaigns up and down the country focusing on residents and health workers joining forces to themselves ensure the future of the health service. Hands Off Our NHS!

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Workers' Weekly

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

Website: www.rcpbml.org.uk

October 7, 2006 Volume 36, Number 16

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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don't think this is a message Labour can ignore."

Tony Blair's sister-in-law, journalist Lauren Booth, was scathing about him, claiming that as a family member, she didn't want just to embarrass Blair. She wanted to make him feel ashamed. She explained: "I am here in solidarity with 50,000 people to call for the troops to come home from Afghanistan and Iraq and for Tony Blair to stand down as Prime Minister for his calamitous foreign policy. This is absolutely not

a personal thing. It is a political judgement that I share with about 80 per cent of the population of this country."

Respect MP George Galloway warned that the fight would still continue if Gordon Brown took over, and there was a warm reception for Tony Benn, President of Stop the War Coalition.

Bianca Jagger said that most of the British people were against the war in Iraq. "You cannot export democracy at the barrel of the gun," she declared.

There was massive applause for the courageous bereaved fami-



lies who had staged a peace camp in the peace gardens in St Peter's Square. Rose Gentle vowed not just to haunt Tony Blair for the murder of so many people, including her son Gordon in Iraq, but also to continue to fight for justice and an end to the illegal wars.

Andrew Murray of the Stop the War Coalition and Kate Hudson of CND chaired the closing rally. The opening speaker was Michael Meacher MP, who pulled no punches in his condemnation of the Labour government. Other speakers included Craig Murray, former British ambassador to Uzbekistan, Tony Woodley from the Transport and General Workers Union, Bectu's Anna Murray, Unison deputy general secretary Keith Sonnet, Cllr. Salma Yaqoob from Respect, and Eamonn McCann, currently facing charges for his part in the occupation of arms company Raytheon's plant in Derry. MPs Alan Simpson and Jeremy Corbyn also spoke, as well as Tommy Sheridan MSP.

Gemma Tumelty, president of the National Union of Students, said that the money the government was wasting on war should be spent on education. "The NUS is built on a foundation of internationalism," she said. "We want to send a message of solidarity to students, trade unionists and the

people of Iraq."

Several speakers underlined how the anti-war movement had a different vision of the world from that of Bush and Blair. "We stand for justice and liberation, while they stand for tyranny and oppression," said Soumaya Ghannoushi of the British Muslim Initiative. "But the future belongs to us, not them."



Muslim Association of Britain speaker Sondes Malik condemned the government's complicity with Israel's aggression against Lebanon. She emphasised, "Britain is led by war criminals and we want justice now!"

Former RAF surgeon Malcolm Kendall-Smith declared, "The facts are clear. US and Britain are the aggressors and responsible for countless deaths. The war is illegal and criminal."



Thousands marched in Hastings on September 20 to save the local "Conquest" hospital.

"Time to Go" Demonstration: RESISTANCE IS NOT FUTILE!

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interests of the rich and economically and politically powerful.

It could also be said that, being staged at the Labour Party Conference, the demonstration was both a manifestation of the organised workers who participated, including the trade unions who sponsored and supported it, and addressed to the broad section of the workers that the necessity is to break with everything that is old, put forward under the banner of "modernisation", that is again represented and epitomised by Tony Blair and his "Third Way".

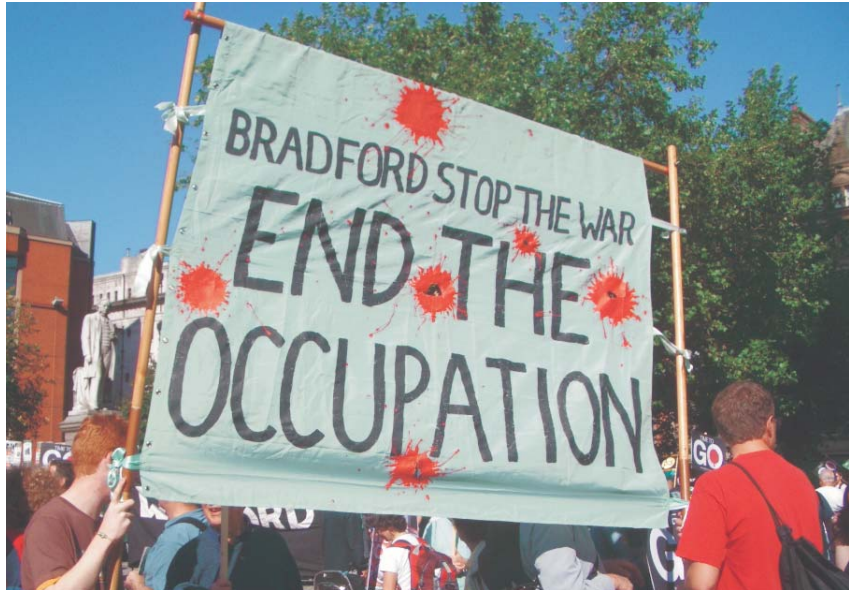
The demonstration opposed and condemned all that the war-mongering course of the govern-

ment represents: its aggression against and occupation of the former sovereign Iraq and Afghanistan; its threats against and interference in sovereign states such as Iran; its attempts to wipe out the heroic resistance to the strategic plans of Anglo-US imperialism in Palestine, Lebanon and elsewhere; its militarisation of the economy in Britain including in particular the plans to replace the Trident nuclear missiles; its alliance with and subservience to US imperialism.

Above all, the sentiment of the demonstration and rally was to condemn strictly as war criminals the Tony Blair coterie, and to sweep away this rottenness, chauvinism and hypocrisy from British political life. In this respect, the message of the demonstration was summed up as much as anything by the call of the court-marshalled Flight Lieutenant Malcolm Kendall-Smith, who has upheld that the Nuremberg principles must be followed that it is a duty to disobey illegal orders: "Resistance Is Not Futile!"

This spirit of resistance and the determination to oppose what is unjust and criminal was also manifested in the Peace Camp of the military families. This is simply the spirit that not a single soldier must be sent to die in an unjust war, that all troops must be removed from foreign soil, and that the government must be held

Speakers at the demonstration in Manchester included Rose Gentle, whose son died fighting in Iraq, and the court-marshalled Flight Lieutenant Malcolm Kendall-Smith, who has upheld that the Nuremberg principles must be followed that it is a duty to disobey illegal orders. He summed up the spirit of the demonstration by saying, "Resistance Is Not Futile!"



accountable for the deaths of its military personnel as well as the innocent victims of aggression and occupation.

The unity of the broad sections of the working class and people was also a hallmark of the demonstration. At its best, it reflected that the political groupings and the Muslim organisations which took part did not do so as representing ghettoised communities or to fur-

ther some narrow interests, but as part of a broad and powerful movement nationally and internationally to end war, to resist oppression and to establish a society based on what is best in human beings. It is this consciousness which is making the anti-war movement so powerful, and is developing its momentum along the line of march of bringing into being an anti-war government.



Standing As One with the DPRK against Imperialism

All are welcome to this meeting of friendship and solidarity with the Korean people, marking the anniversaries of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) on October 10, 1945, and the Down with Imperialism Union (DIU) on October 17, 1926. Focusing on promoting understanding on the stand of the DPRK in defence of its sovereignty, the meeting will be addressed by representatives of the Embassy of the DPRK in London and of the British Co-ordinating Committee of Friends of Korea, with opportunity for questions and discussion.

**Saklatvala Hall, Southall, UB2 5AA
Saturday, October 7, 2006, 3.00 pm**

Organised by the Preparatory Committee for
Celebrating the Anniversaries of the WPK and the DIU

Workers' Daily Internet Edition

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

Web site: www.rcpbml.org.uk

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WDIE sent by e-mail daily (Text e-mail): 1 issue free, 6 months £5, Yearly £10
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