

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

## Pseudo-theories of "British values"

New Labour ideologues have been developing the notion of defining national identity in terms of a set of supposed core "British values", and imposing these so-called "universal" values on the world, providing the

ideological content to the New Labour programme to "make Britain great again". This has been done to serve the aim of the ruling elite of building a "one nation" behind the neo-liberal values upheld and implemented by the Labour

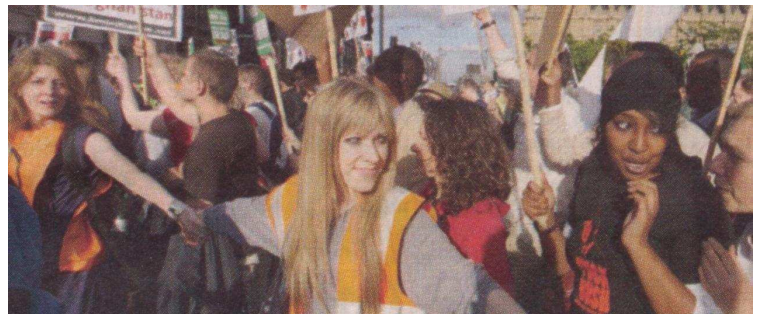
Party. It has been used to assert the superiority of the "British way of life" internationally and to criminalise all resistance to and dissent from Britain's attempts to impose these values.

Of course, the notion of

British values is not something new, but its promotion at this time has the most reactionary content. It reflects in the most backward fashion the rehashing of archaic definitions to serve retrogression and to launch an

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## NO TO THE CRIMINALISATION OF THE YOUTH! NO TO A POLICE STATE!



**Above:** Youth at the forefront in demonstrating against Bush's visit to Brown on June 15 this year **Below:** Youth demonstrate at European Social Forum on October 17 2004.

The government and monopoly media are renewing their attack on the youth with the hysteria promoted around "knife crime". The Prime Minister has announced that the government is publishing a "youth crime plan", to

contain more "enforcement measures" which will further criminalise the youth.

In effect, the victims of the anti-social offensive are to be made to shoulder the blame for the wrecking of the fabric of society.

Not only are the youth to be further criminalised, but Gordon Brown has threatened a "new approach to youth crime prevention", which is to include "tough new parenting programmes".

The Prime Minister gloried in

the punitive measures to be imposed on the youth, who are being denied a future, and who are alienated from the "British way of

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### Commentary

## The Economy of Zimbabwe and the British Government

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY, DAVID MILIBAND, was asked last week whether British monopoly companies should contin-

ue to invest in Zimbabwe, given the government's support for economic sanctions against that country. Asked specifically whether British monopolies such as Anglo American should be investing in Zimbabwe, the Foreign Secretary replied that the government was not asking for a complete economic boycott, not because this might damage the profits of the monopolies and their stranglehold on Zimbabwe's economy but rather because apparently, in his words, "the people of Zimbabwe have suffered enough". Earlier media reports had suggested that the Foreign Office had

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## Pseudo-theories of "British values"

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assault on everything enlightened. The concept of universal British values is at root racist. While British colonialism saw every people as inferior to "the British", the present conception is that there is something inherently special about "the British" in terms of belief and conscience. The so-called core British beliefs are supposed to hold the answer to curing the ills of the world, the problems of the lesser peoples.

Implicit in the notion of "British values" is the definition of being British: to be British means to conform to British values, and indeed "British nationality" is now awarded on the basis of tests and citizenship classes accordingly constructed. This is a misuse of the conception of nationality, besides anything else, deliberately mixing up citizenship and nationality.

In the context of the alleged universality of "British values", such ideas as eugenics are being pushed. The media is also peddling eugenics and related ideas. What has long been discredited and out-of-date is being developed in a sinister fashion in the context of a crisis of scientific theory.

"Eugenic" pseudo-theories are one part of the assault on everything progressive and of the entrenchment of retrogression, racism and barbarity, and must be opposed.

## The Economy of Zimbabwe and the British Government

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**told British monopolies to remain in Zimbabwe, while the Prime Minister and other government ministers made public statements to the effect that they should reconsider their positions.**

The Prime Minister's comments were made after it was revealed that Anglo American, the world's fourth largest mining monopoly, was investing £200m in order to construct a platinum mine in Zimbabwe, which has the world's second largest deposits of platinum. This amount is reported to be equivalent to the entire direct foreign investment the country received in 1998 before sanctions and other attacks were launched on its economy. It is worth noting that Anglo American also owns 45% of De Beers, the diamond monopoly founded by Cecil Rhodes, the imperialist who led the invasion and conquest of Rhodesia, the colony named after him, on behalf of the British monopolies and financiers at the end of the 19th century. Other big British monopolies in Zimbabwe

include Rio Tinto, British American Tobacco, Barclays Bank, Standard Chartered, Unilever, SABMiller, BP and Shell. Zimbabwe's mining, transport and manufacturing sectors are still largely foreign owned, as is the fuel retail sector. Indeed Zimbabwe's economy is still dominated by British and other foreign monopolies. It is in these circumstances that Robert Mugabe, the president of Zimbabwe, was reported to have welcomed the threat of an exit by British monopolies adding, "the sooner the better".

### Monopolies boom

Indeed in recent years the government of Zimbabwe has taken measures to transfer ownership of different sectors of the economy to citizens of Zimbabwe, the most recent example being the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act, which was passed by Zimbabwe's parliament last year and formally approved by President Mugabe in March this year. This Act requires that every company operating in the country must have 51% of its shares owned by Zimbabweans. Under this new law, which has not yet been implemented, foreign monopolies such as Anglo American and Rio Tinto would be forced to find local partners. The British government claimed that this law was a cynical act to



enable political patronage and corruption and that it would harm foreign investment in Zimbabwe. In fact, the government of Zimbabwe has not yet implemented it, while foreign investment appears to be thriving. Soon after the Act was passed it was reported that Lonrho, infamous for "sanctions-busting" in Rhodesia and subsequently the largest employer in Zimbabwe, was launching a new investment company LonZim Plc, which has announced that it is positioning itself for the imminent recovery and normalisation of Zimbabwe's economy. Several other foreign-owned businesses have taken a similar view, while at the same time expressing concern that any precipitous pull-out from Zimbabwe would harm investments and future profits and could lead to nationalisation by the government of Zimbabwe. In general, it is reported that there has been an investment boom this year in Zimbabwe, a country that is still seen as potentially one of Africa's most profitable economies.

The British government has already announced that once regime change has been accomplished in Zimbabwe, it too will assist the recovery of Zimbabwe's economy. Although it presents this as an act of philanthropy, for the good of the people of Zimbabwe, it is clear that the main beneficiaries will be the big foreign monopolies which still dominate large sectors of Zimbabwe's economy after nearly 30 years of formal independence and which are at present increasing their investments in the country, so as to strengthen their grip and maximise their profits in the future.



**Poet Benjamin Zephaniah refused an OBE in November 2003 saying 'I get angry when I hear that word "empire"; it reminds me of slavery, it reminds of thousands of years of brutality'.**

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## 124th Durham Miners Gala and Big Meeting:

# A Day to Celebrate the Achievements in Defending the Dignity of Labour

**O**n July 12, thousands thronged the streets of Durham once again to attend the 124th Durham miners Gala and Big Meeting. In near perfect weather in one of the largest manifestations of the British workers' movement people of all ages from communities, workplaces and colleges took part in the banner parade which featured 41 bands and 85 banners – 25 of them from other than the miners' union, such as RMT, Unison and UCATT. One striking feature was the Durham Miners Association (DMA) lodges with men, women and youth carrying their banners still fighting and standing up for their communities even though the mines have long closed. This organised character of the Durham Miners Association and the Durham Miners Gala is an inspiring example. A day to celebrate the achievements in defending the dignity of labour by taking up the work to build the workers' opposition.

During the Big Meeting, thousands gathered to listen to the invited speakers. There is a class consciousness among the workers

and their communities, but the implications of this for making a break with the old outlook, and adopting a renewal of the traditions of the miners and other workers in organising themselves and developing their own self-motion has yet to take root. This was the conclusion that could be drawn from some of the speeches from the platform. The theme of the strength of the working class and the importance of their fight to uphold the dignity of labour is, however, inescapable and one which no speaker can ignore.

One of the most telling speeches came from Geoff Shears of Thompsons Solicitors, who paid tribute to the DMA saying he did not know how it had managed to survive the final pit closure programme. Vibration white finger, chronic bronchitis and emphysema arose at that time when the union was on its knees and there was a massive financial risk in fighting test cases and the government refused to meet its responsibilities to negotiate a compensation scheme. He pointed out that it was the DMA that backed test cases and risked everything it had so that its solicitors could prove

British Coal was to blame for the miners' injuries and diseases over decades. He said that as a result of the DMA's decision and looking at



**Band in Durham on July 12**

the government's own figures Durham miners and mechanics have the highest success rate and the highest level of compensation in the country but that success had helped all workers.

He said many have supported the union financially and as a result the DMA consolidates and will expand its services. He said that it has sustained and is developing the infrastructure of the lodges which keep people together and because of that the Gala will continue in their hands. He said speaking of the future of the mining communities that it was not insurance companies, not claims' farmers, not legal aid funds who were prepared to fight but it was the DMA and other areas of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). As ever, he said you have to rely on yourselves and you have to rely on your union. He concluded praising the DMA leadership for the support for the Cuba solidarity campaign, the launch of the *Cuba 50* to celebrate the success of the Cuban revolution next year and he remarked on the great solidarity of the DMA and other trade unions in their opposition to the US sanctions against Cuba and the campaign to free the Cuban Miami 5.

During the day, hundreds of copies of *Workers' Weekly* were distributed to those that gathered on the racecourse field. The paper carried a statement from the Northern Regional Committee of RCPB(ML) that called on the workers to take the lead in building the nation anew and defeating the stranglehold of finance capital and the monopolies who are wrecking society and then taking society down the road of fascism and war. Dealing with the issue that this Gala comes on the eve of the

25th anniversary of the 1984-85 miners strike, its lessons and the situation where the ruling circles are manoeuvring to once again try and line workers up behind the Labour Party to "counter the threat of the Tories" the party gave its powerful position that reflects the reality faced by the working class movement in its Durham miners Gala celebrations. Strengthening their unions, workers must also look to building their own modern political party so that the working class can put its stamp on the running of society, and empower the people to be the decision-makers not handing over responsibility and initiative to any other force, organisation or party that excludes them from decision-making. Only the working class organised as an independent force that resolves the political crisis of representative democracy in its favour can save the day.

The message of the day was that workers must take forward this successful defence of their interests and traditions to work to build a workers' opposition that has its own motion and self-consciousness to strengthen their political and economic organisation. To bring forward new worker politicians that can intervene in the political process and fight for the programme of the working class and strengthen the work to take up responsibility for the fate of society. Such a programme fights to accomplish crucial tasks at this juncture of history: to guarantee the rights of all, for an economy that stops paying the rich and increases investments in social programmes, and the establishment of an anti-war government.



**Durham Miners Association banner bearing the slogan "Emancipation of Labour"**

# NO TO THE CRIMINALISATION OF THE YOUTH! NO TO A POLICE STATE!

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life" that the government is seeking to dragoon the youth into. Brown said in a statement: "People prosecuted for carrying a knife are now almost three times as likely to go to prison as in 1997. Those prosecuted for carrying or using knives get far tougher sentences. Just in the last month, we have announced and put into immediate effect an end to cautions for knife possession, replacing it with an expectation to prosecute. We are also giving more money and equipment for police forces in key areas to do more stop and search."

## Assault on youth

Such is the hysteria and incoherence that surrounds this campaign that newspapers are announcing that statistics which demonstrate that the level of crime in Britain is falling are allegedly "masking" the "fear" of knife crime. It should also be remembered that some time back, the "fear" was of gun crime or "drive-by shootings", and that this was the evil that demanded the government increase the criminalisation of the youth and has led to a dra-

matic increase in stop and search by the police. In particular, statistics show that black male youth have borne the brunt of this increased police repression.

This latest hysteria regarding the "rising tide of knife crime" has also been accompanied by calls for powers for teachers to be able to search pupils. The police themselves have been stopping and detaining young schoolchildren, to the outrage of parents and the community.

This assault on and criminalisation of the youth is totally unacceptable. It is the government itself which is showing criminal responsibility to society, and encouraging the police to act with impunity, and targeting the most vulnerable. It is unacceptable that the problems of society and the response of the youth to the block that society is placing to their future be made the pretext for law and order measures by the government.

## Society is not fine

The government promotes a culture of fending for oneself in society, and has no hesitation in advocating the use of force internationally to impose its will. Yet the attempts of the youth to escape

from these models and find ways of taking control of their own future are being blocked and instead of mobilising the youth to take responsibility for changing society, the government declares that society is fine, and that the problem lies among the youth and bad parenting.

## What is unacceptable

These latest measures mooted by the government will be added to the existing oppressive imposition of ASBOs and the programme of citizenship lessons in schools, which go hand in hand with the sensationalist propaganda about the alleged inherent criminality of the youth. Gordon Brown and the government are demonstrating their contempt for the attempts of the youth to find a way out of the crisis, marginalising them and manoeuvring so that the pride and dignity of the youth is being channelled into situations which only harm themselves. The latest measures would include "up to 300 hours of unpaid work, with tasks set by communities, such as cleaning graffiti and tending parks on Friday and Saturday nights," according to Gordon Brown, and "tough sanctions" on the families of children "disrupting the classrooms and roaming the streets committing crime".

It is the government which is going beyond the "boundaries of acceptable behaviour" when it marginalises the youth, and responds to this marginalisation by laying the blame on the youth and punishing them, and attempting to humiliate and criminalise them. It is beyond the "boundaries of acceptable behaviour" to threaten

20,000 families with eviction if they "fail to respond positively".

In related news, the Prison Reform Trust has pointed out that it is unacceptable that more than 3,000 under-18s were in custody while nearly 100,000 young people entered the youth justice system for the first time last year. In a report to mark the 10th anniversary of the Youth Justice Board, the trust said that the number of children sent into custody had trebled between 1991 and 2006. The trust expressed alarm that 37 children under 14 were currently locked up, according to figures for this year, and called for the age of criminal responsibility to be raised from 10 to 14.

## Protest and resistance

All serious commentators have pointed out that rather than youth failing society, it is society which is failing the youth. They are pointing out that the statistics do not even warrant the assertion that knife crime is shooting up. And that furthermore that evidence shows that the measures proposed by the government are in fact more likely to lead to an increase in violence and disaffected youth. Is that what the government is aiming for?

The youth themselves are protesting against these oppressive measures and discussing the ways forward. They are indignant that they are being scapegoated for the serious problems of society, and their dissent is being criminalised. Furthermore, the resistance against police impunity is being stepped up amongst the people.

***No to the Criminalisation of the Youth! No to a Police State!***



## Public Meeting and Social

# CELEBRATE THE HISTORIC VICTORY OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE!

June 25 - July 27 is the month of solidarity with the Korean people. On June 25, 1950, US and south Korean troops invaded the north signalling the start of the Korean War. On July 27, 1953, the victory of the Korean people was marked by the signing of the Armistice Agreement. The US presence in the south and its hostility to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) remains the obstacle to the peaceful reunification of the Korean nation. You are warmly invited to participate in this meeting to express solidarity with the Korean people's struggle to win complete freedom and independence.

**SAKLATVALA HALL, Dominion Road, Southall, UB2 5AA**  
**Saturday, July 26, 2008, 3.00 pm**

Speakers from Friends of Korea. Guest: Jang Song Chol, 3rd Secretary, DPRK Embassy, London. Plus contributions and discussion, followed by a cultural programme and barbecue.

*Organised by Friends of Korea*

## Workers' Daily Internet Edition

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