

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

Anti-War Candidate Forum:

For An Anti-War Government!

South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition on Tuesday, March 2, hosted an Anti-War Candidate Forum with Roger Nettleship,

prospective candidate For an Anti-War Government, in South Shields. The discussion was held within the context that the fight for an anti-war

government has started, and that the electorate must make preparations to block the plans to elect another pro-war government.

As well as Roger Nettleship, Shirley Ford, the South Shields Green Party candidate, attended. The Chair introduced the

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NO TO BRITAIN'S PROVOCATIVE AND COLONIALIST ACTIONS IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC! NO TO A NEW MALVINAS WAR!



Anti-war demonstration outside the Labour Party conference in Manchester, September 20 2008

A Scottish-based oil company in February began drilling in the waters to the north of the Malvinas (Falklands) Islands to explore for expected large reserves of hydrocarbons.

Argentina has accused Britain of a "unilateral act of aggression and subjugation" in so doing.

Workers' Weekly vigorously condemns the provocative and colonialist action, carried out with

the fullest backing of the British government. It would be to add war crime to war crime if this action were to precipitate a further conflict in the South Atlantic, and Gordon Brown and Foreign

Secretary David Miliband added to the aggression in Afghanistan and Iraq by following in Margaret

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Commentary

Torture and the Rule of Law

LAST MONTH TWO OF THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S MOST SENIOR MINISTERS, Home Secretary Alan Johnson and Foreign Secretary David Miliband, wrote a joint letter in the press defending Britain's security services against the accusation of torture. They explained that they were concerned that coverage of the case of

Binyam Mohamed, formerly a captive of the US at Guantanamo Bay, would "leave a false impression about the work and ethics, not to mention the accountability, of our security and intelligence agencies. This is not just unfair on the staff concerned, but dangerous for the country." They added that "the Government's clear policy is not to participate in, solicit, encourage or condone the use of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment for any purpose". At the same time, in an equally unprecedented manner, Jonathan Evans, Director General of MI5,

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Anti-War Candidate Forum: For An Anti-War Government!

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discussion by saying the forum was not a hustings, but it was about the candidates against the war uniting. Roger Nettleship's full contribution is posted below. He stressed the importance of the intervention and development of an anti-war bloc in the political life of the country in the fight for an anti-war government. He spoke about the anti-war programme which has been developed in the region, and about the racism of the British state and how that operated.

Foreign Secretary David Miliband, parachuted into South Shields some time ago to fast-track him to government office, is one of the main players of the pro-war party system. This underlines the importance of electing worker politicians, and other alternative candidates in alliance with small parties, as the emergence of the new in opposition to the big party system.

Shirley Ford spoke more in answer to questions and said that it was important that the forces worked together. She said that it could be said that having two candidates might split the progressive vote, but in her view the crucial issue was that of working together to broaden the



opposition, since the small parties and other candidates are not at the point of winning the election in this appalling undemocratic situation. She explained some of the Green Party's policies against the war, on jobs, minimum and maximum wages, etc., and their tactics in the national and local elections.

Both contributions were received very warmly and actively commented on by those present.

In the general discussion, it was made clear that the South Tyneside Stop The War Coalition would support both candidates, as well as the Green Party candidate in Jarrow and any other genuine anti-war candidates that emerged, and that the campaigns of Roger Nettleship and Shirley Ford could complement each other in a practical way. A number of suggestions were discussed on how this might happen. The next step would be to work out how this could proceed with each discussing this with their campaign committees.

Website:

<http://www.northeaststopwar.org.uk/southtyne>

No to Britain's Provocative and Colonialist Actions in the South Atlantic! No to a New Malvinas War!

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Thatcher's footsteps in pursuit of "Making Britain Great Again".

Argentine president Cristina Fernandez signed a decree limiting maritime transit between the continental territory and the islands in the South Atlantic. According to the Argentinean Vice Foreign Minister Victorio Tacceti, the presidential decree was signed in response to Britain's unilateral actions. *Workers' Weekly* fully supports the stand of the Argentinean government in taking steps to prevent British encroachment off its shores. *Workers' Weekly* applauds the stand of the Latin American countries who have declared their support for Argentina in this matter.

It is patently obvious that Britain has no business unilaterally staking any claim seven and a half thousand miles from these shores. The dispute regarding the sovereignty of the Malvinas Islands should have been resolved by Britain long ago. The interests of the islanders could have been taken care of within the context of Argentinean sovereignty. The issue of "self-determination" has been fraudulently used, as also, for example, with Gibraltar, to block



the issue of peaceful negotiations. For the British government, there has been no issue of "self-determination" when it has come to the sovereignty of Iraq or Afghanistan. What is completely unacceptable is to act as though the matter is one for Britain to unilaterally determine, and to prepare for the use of force to clinch the issue.

This betrays the old colonialist and empire building mentality and modus operandi of the British.

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There is every reason to suppose that the British government is acting in the interests of the British

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UN Report Denounces US over Rendition and Secret Detention Camps

**Demonstration
outside the
Labour party
conference held
in Manchester,
September 23
2006**



monopolies and multinationals, and has its eyes not only on the hydrocarbons in the South Atlantic as North Sea oil and gas reserves dwindle and become more difficult to access, but also on the subterranean wealth of the vast Antarctic continent. Britain has been militarising the Islands since 1982. Sir Mark Stanhope, the First Sea Lord, said: "Since 1982 we have built a massive runway. We have emplaced forces on the ground, we have sophisticated early warning systems. It is a completely different package, so to compare the way we dealt with the issues in 1982 with today is nonsense," he added. In other words, British governments have been preparing for conflict, no matter that the outcome is likely to be a fiasco for Britain given the sea-change in Latin American governments since the days when these states were regarded as the backyard of US imperialism.

We call on the working class and people of Britain to oppose the chauvinism and imperialist outlook of the British government and the ruling circles, and their associated warmongering. The way out of the crisis is not to be found through further warmongering, nor lining up behind the interests of the monopolies. It is to be found in organising the working class into an effective political force that can block Britain's imperialist adventures, rebuild the economy in favour of the majority of the people, and take a proletarian internationalist stand in favour of the sovereignty of nations everywhere and the struggle of the working class the world over to build a new world.

The United Nations Human Rights Council released a report documenting and denouncing secret detention and extraordinary rendition on January 26. The report denounced the US in particular for its broad use of secret detention facilities and rendition, where people are kidnapped or captured in other countries by the US, then sent to secret camps to be detained and often tortured. Many people were held incommunicado for years, with no charges, no trial, no lawyers, not even Red Cross visits. The report provides information concerning how US secret facilities were set up and run, including the various countries the US utilised for such purposes.

The report spoke to current concerns that while the CIA may have closed some detention facilities, it still operated what are now termed "short-term facilities" serving the same purpose. As well, concern was raised that the military's Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and its secret facilities did not come under executive orders by President Obama to close the CIA's secret facilities. JSOC is notorious for its secret and illegal operations, especially in Pakistan and Afghanistan. General Stanley McChrystal, who headed it, is now in charge of the war against Afghanistan. Given this, concerns raised about the continuation of renditions and secret facilities where people are tortured are well founded.

As head of JSOC, McChrystal is the general who has been in charge of the torture and other secret and illegal military operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan known as "black ops". It is also the case that as part of Guantánamo court cases, Obama was ordered to

release photos of prisoner torture. After first saying he would release them, Obama then refused, invoking "national security". Interestingly, he made this decision two days after appointing McChrystal to head the US war against Afghanistan. Appointing McChrystal – the very embodiment of torture, assassinations, kidnappings, and drone attacks massacring civilians – while also invoking state secrets to justify further concentration of power in the hands of the president, are contributing to distrust in government and with Obama.

No to torture!

The report also said, "Secret detention as such may constitute torture or ill-treatment for the direct victims as well as their families. But as many of the interviews and cases included in the present study have illustrated, the very purpose of secret detention was to facilitate and, ultimately cover up torture and inhuman and degrading treatment used either to obtain information or to silence people. While in some cases, elaborate rules were put in place authorising 'enhanced' techniques that violate international standards of human rights and humanitarian law, most of the time secret detention was used as a kind of defence shield to avoid any scrutiny and control – and make it impossible to learn about treatment and conditions during detention."

The UN report concluded, "International law clearly prohibits secret detention, which violates a number of human rights and humanitarian law norms that may not be derogated from under any circumstances. If secret detention constitutes enforced disappearances and is widely or systematically practiced, it may even amount to a crime against humanity." It emphasised, "In spite

of these unequivocal norms, secret detention continues to be used in the name of countering terrorism around the world." The report stressed that establishment of secret detention could not be justified under any circumstances, including during states of emergency or armed conflict. They specifically examined and condemned its use as part of the US organised "war on terror". They brought out that the "CIA appears to generally have been involved in the capture and transfer of prisoners, as well as in providing questions for those held in foreign prisons". Other countries such as Britain were also condemned for their complicity in the renditions and turning people over to torture.

The UN experts recommended that all such facilities be eliminated and specifically prohibited. The rights of all detainees are to be respected, including their right to challenge detention and not to be subjected to torture and degrading treatment of any kind. It said names should be handed over to the ICRC so that families can be notified and actions taken to assist and defend those imprisoned. The report also calls for reparations to be paid to all those imprisoned in such secret facilities and their families. It emphasised, "The status of all pending investigations into allegations of ill-treatment and torture of detainees and detainee deaths in custody must be made public. No evidence or information that has been obtained by torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment may be used in any proceedings."

The year-long study was conducted by the Special Rapporteur on Torture, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. (Source: *Voice of Revolution*)

NATO: Afghan Civilians not Killed by Accident

A British commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan insists that the strike that killed a dozen civilians last weekend, in fact, hit its intended target.

Major General Nick Carter said on Tuesday that the launched rockets did not veer off course, as previously claimed, but had struck the intended mark.

"We know now that the missile arrived at the target it was supposed to arrive at. It wasn't a rogue missile. There was no technical fault in it," Reuters quoted Carter as saying.

The commander reiterated that such missiles were now being redeployed after their use was temporarily suspended to

probe the civilian fatalities.

The deaths were announced on Sunday. On the same day, NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) claimed that two rockets had landed three-hundred metres off target.

The British military has rejected the ISAF report, saying the rockets accurately targeted Taliban militants that often operate from civilian areas.

About 15,000 US-led forces have launched an offensive intended to impose Afghan government rule in one of the major Taliban strongholds in Helmand.

The incident has reportedly harmed efforts to win the hearts and minds of the local population.

(source: Press TV, 2010-02-17)



Unity Summit of Latin American and Caribbean Nations in Cancun, Mexico, on February 22, which denounced Britain's actions in the South Atlantic

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Torture and the Rule of Law

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also wrote an open letter in the press in which, amongst other things, he claimed, "We did not practise mistreatment or torture... nor do we collude in torture or encourage others to torture on our behalf."

A visitor from another planet having read both letters would have concluded that not only did the government and its security services not practise or condone torture, but also that both were the most transparent and accountable of institutions that had recently been slandered by a malicious press, evidently in league with the enemies of freedom and democracy. But in fact what the world was witnessing was an attempt by the government and MI5 to turn truth on its head. Having spent months attempting to prevent details of MI5's complicity in the torture of Binyam Mohamed becoming public, the government acted last week when three of the county's most senior judges not only made the details of his torture public but one of them, Lord Neuberger, the master of the rolls, condemned MI5 for not renouncing "coercive interrogation" techniques, failing to respect human rights and deliberately misleading Parliament.

There will no doubt be further attempts to muddy the waters in this particular case, since further details of the government's complicity in Binyam Mohamed's detention and torture have yet to emerge. But it is far from being an isolated case. Only last month a UN report claimed that the government was involved in the torture of its own citizens during the so-called "war on terror", including the use of "proxy detentions" overseas, which the report asserted could be considered a crime against humanity. The US-based Human Rights Watch at the close of 2009 issued a similar report. Then there have been numerous reports of the torture of civilians by British troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Before that, torture was used against many patriotic individuals in Ireland, as Gerry Adams and other have testified. At

this very moment, the British government is facing another court case relating to the torture and breaches of human rights that its predecessor carried out in colonial Kenya during the 1950s, in its attempts to suppress the Kenyan people's struggle for independence. In this case, the government has gone even further in its denials, because it presents the astonishing defence that the present Kenyan government, not the government of Britain, is legally responsible for any crimes committed by British troops and officials during British colonial rule.

These and many other cases demonstrate that torture and other repressive methods, many of them illegal under international and even British law, are and have been commonplace under successive governments and are employed when the state finds it necessary both at home and abroad. As in the present case concerning Binyam Mohammed, the state always denies that it carries out such illegal and barbaric acts, preferring instead to claim that these are the deeds of its enemies and that it is acting to safeguard democracy and the rule of law and save British citizens from such barbarism, which is indeed a characteristic of medievalism. Now once again the government stands exposed before the world, as does US imperialism, of whom Britain is still an ally and accomplice. In these circumstances it appears that the government believes that the only course open to it is denial and the more overwhelming the evidence, the more brazenly does it deny its involvement, in this case claiming that it has been the greatest supporter of Binyam Mohamed and the most zealous campaigner for his release from the US concentration camp.

It is the responsibility of the working class and all democratic people to take measures to bring the criminal acts of the government and its repressive state apparatus to an end once and for all and to end the impunity of those who carry out and are responsible for all crimes of torture, whether they be committed at home or abroad.