

WORKERS

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HISTORIC NOTES



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TITUS BUILT

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WE CAN STOP THIS WAR!

JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY



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WORKERS

“ First thoughts

BRITISH IMPERIALISM has a legendary role in conquering and dividing nations overseas and Blair continues this tradition recklessly. While he wants the US to run our foreign policy and the European Central Bank to run our government, he also wants the dying embers of Britain's divisive interference in the affairs of Ireland to be fanned once more.

In a world in which national independence is being destroyed and petty chauvinisms and terrorism fostered, the move by Britain to suspend Stormont and thereby set back the process of peace and reconciliation in the north of Ireland is dangerous.

Ireland's business is Ireland's business. Britain should have no dominion there. Nor should the European Union. Ireland's proud national traditions are thwarted by unelected

bankers from the European Central Bank controlling the Dail and British Ministers dictating events in the six counties.

Ireland, like every other nation in the world, needs its own independent, secular government. Britain's aspirations for the same will be delayed for as long as it remains within the European Union and at the beck and call of the US and also for as long as it tries to meddle in the affairs of Ireland.

The concept of national independence as the basis for secular government remains the key for workers' progress in this period of history. The idea of national independence, so clearly expressed by the Irish in the first attempted revolution of the twentieth century, is central to the struggle for democracy across the globe at the start of the 21st.

Second opinion

PONTEFRAC, the last pit in West Yorkshire, closed in August. The Selby complex is earmarked for closure in 2004. This act of industrial sabotage sets the seal on the planned elimination of primary industry in the area.

Recently the Australian mining firm MIM placed a series of adverts in Yorkshire papers offering 'career' opportunities for managers,

supervisors and engineers at their huge operation in Queensland. The import of Australian coal has contributed to the demise of the British industry. And now MIM look to lure away those who have the ability to revitalise this still necessary source of wealth. Their skills are the envy of every employer and government in the world except their own.



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London dons to take action

LONDON UNIVERSITIES, struggling to recruit academic staff because of low salaries, could face industrial action by lecturers campaigning to improve London Weighting Allowances. The result of a ballot of 3,500 members will be known in early November and action will take place from 12 November, with plans being drawn up for a day of action on 14 November. A consultative ballot resulted in 75% rejecting the 3.5% pay offer.

NATFHE, as part of joint campaign with the other higher education unions (AUT and UNISON), seeks £4,000 per annum for all staff. The higher education unions are attempting to coordinate actions with other unions such as AMICUS for maximum effect.

London universities' difficulties in attracting staff are worsening against the background of a high proportion of teaching staff approaching retirement.

NATFHE's General Secretary, Paul Mackney, said, "Is it any wonder London Universities are struggling to tempt graduates into an academic career when their starting pay as researchers is only £6.92 an hour?"

"The Greater London Assembly recently published the first major review of London Weighting since 1974, recommending that the level of inner London Weighting should be 30% of basic salary."

Metropolitan Police have London payments of over £6000. Researchers' starting pay of £6.92 an hour is less than London postal workers (£7.52), security guards (£7.48) or secretaries (£7.34). The average pay of London academic staff is £28,808 — less than the average for London teachers or police officers.

London's higher education sector represents a major part of the London economy. In 1999 their income was £2.7 billion. Both further and higher education sectors together account for over 5% of London's gross domestic product. Nearly a third of all overseas student fee income in Britain comes to London. If lecturers and other staff are not attracted to London the quality of education will suffer, universities will decline and students will go elsewhere, damaging London's economy.

Mackney went on to say, "The capital must have a well educated and highly skilled workforce if it is to be the driving force of the UK economy."

SLOVAKIA**EU interference**

THE OUTCOME of the general election in Slovakia in September was dictated by the interference of both the EU and the USA, who refuse to allow "left wing" parties to come to power. It was made clear that if the Slovaks voted for their former Prime minister, Vladimir Meciar, then Slovakia could not join the EU or NATO.

Despite Meciar being the most popular politician in Slovakia and his party the HZDS winning the most votes, all the other parties announced in advance that they would not form a coalition with him.

Gunter Verheugen, the Commissioner responsible for the EU's expansion to the east, made it clear that Europe had the right to decide which parties could win the election, and told Slovaks not to vote for the HZDS. A Western diplomat in Bratislava has been quoted as saying, "Yes, we have interfered in the internal affairs of Slovakia. We have done so successfully."

BORDERS**Drugs hit eastern Europe**

DRUG ABUSE in Eastern Europe has risen dramatically due to the removal of border controls. France's Observatory of Drugs and Drug Addiction presented a report to the EU on 6 October which pointed out that heroin, ecstasy and cannabis are now widely sold in the former socialist countries. Drug use there is approaching Western levels, and that EU enlargement would only hasten the process. It said, "The free market, the free movement of people, goods and capital, is a paradise for drug users and traffickers."

If you have news from your industry, trade or profession we want to hear from you. Call us or fax on 020 8801 9543 or e-mail to rebuilding@workers.org.uk

NURSING

Making insurers rich

AN UNSEEMLY competition has broken out between the nursing unions. Instead of competing to see who can best organise this important section of the working class, UNISON and the Royal Colleges of Nursing and Midwifery have chosen to see who can offer the largest amount of indemnity insurance for nurses.

Some years ago the RCN and UNISON both pitched their levels of insurance for nurses at a cool £1 million. This means that members would be covered for damages awarded against them up to £1 million. Now the RCN have upped this to £3 million, leading UNISON to feel under pressure to respond in kind. There's only one problem, rather like the emperor's new clothes, no one seems to have asked whether there's any need for such a policy at all!

Employers are (to use the legal term) vicariously liable for action taken on behalf of their employees, so they, and not individual nurses would be liable if legal action was taken for any nurses' negligence.

Even worse, WORKERS can find no one in the NHS who can ever remember a nurse being prosecuted in this way before. (If any WORKERS reader can remember such a case please let us know.)

UNISON, RCN and RCM should stop shelling out £70,000 each to greedy insurance companies for policies which will never be used, and use the money instead to organise nurses.

EUROPEAN UNION

It's their oil now (they claim)

THE EU COMMISSIONER of Energy and Transport has called for an EU-wide oil and gas strategic reserve. The plan is for a reservoir capable of fuelling Europe for 120 days. It is proposed that this strategic reserve should be in place by 2007.

This suggestion is copied from the USA, which has been stockpiling oil for months. The proposal seems to have found ready support from European politicians — especially those without oil or gas fields. Each nation state no longer needs to worry about its own strategic supplies — the EU Commission will handle everything.

Oil and gas supplies to most of Europe are currently being supplied by Russia, the Middle East and North Africa. The only indigenous oil and gas supplies are beneath the North Sea. Britain and Norway have



Winning: housekeepers at Bury St. Edmunds celebrate victory in their six-year fight.

Ward staff beat the privateers

IN SEPTEMBER 1996, housekeepers (ward staff at Bury St. Edmunds Hospital), struck against privateers attempting to cut wages and change conditions. Their strike was against Trident, one of the first companies involved in NHS privatisation and a n outfit with a reputation for gung-ho aggressive management. In less than a week Trident was in full retreat. All plans to cut wages — up to £40 a week in certain cases — had been dropped as had all planned changes to working practices and terms and conditions.

The housekeepers, all members of UNISON, then began a further six-year battle against privatisation. Companies and contracts came and went with the seasons — Trident, Granada, Mediclean, Compass, eventually Medirest. All these companies were linked, the name changes mere cosmetics to hide the ugly mask of profiteering. Every tactic adopted by the companies, including bribes of up to £4,000 in brown envelopes to buy terms and conditions, threats, disciplinaries, division into a two-tier workforce and non-filling of vacancies were all seen off by the women.

On 26 September 2002, almost 6 years to the first strike day, the housekeepers' service was brought back into the NHS. This is a tremendous victory for their absolute confidence in the justice of their case, their will to win and good trade union organisation and leadership in the workplace.

exploited, explored and opened up many of these reserves. Like the fish around Britain's shores, overnight they have become European Union reserves. Ironically those clamouring for an "independent" Scotland within the Greater EU, will have lost their major off-shore bargaining chip.

EDUCATION

Paying the price

UNIONS REPRESENTING workers in Connexions, the new youth support service, have agreed the need to campaign for consistent national terms and conditions for all its employees. At a joint UNISON and Community and Youth Workers Union conference delegates heard how personal advisors within the service are being employed on a range of terms and conditions and pay scales, a postcode

lottery affecting many thousands of Connexions staff across England.

Ann Weinstock, Connexions National Unit Chief Executive, rebuffed delegates' demands for consistent terms and conditions, asserting her view that she was not the employer and had no powers to intervene on this issue with local Connexions companies. Delegates were clear in their view that Connexions was a public service funded by the DfES and as such the National Unit has every right if not an obligation to intervene, as it has done on a range of other issues.

The Connexions Service, now being phased in across England, is the government's response to the BRIDGING THE GAP report. Its aim is to provide advice, guidance and careers support to all 13 to 19-year-olds through a network of personal advisors. Its delivery is usually through "not for profit" partnerships and companies geographically aligned to the boundaries of the local learning and skills councils.

CLASSROOM SUPPORT**Teachers smell a rat**

THE GOVERNMENT has announced its intention to dramatically increase the number of teacher support staff, claiming it will free teachers from the burdens of administration to allow them to teach.

But teachers smell a rat. Estelle Morris has stated she wants something in return for this investment. She expects teachers to allow unqualified assistants to cover lessons for absent teachers and even teach lessons prepared by teachers — a far cry from the offer of improved admin assistance with photocopying, form filling and money collections.

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the NUT, put it bluntly when he said: "If every teacher had a personal assistant to help with admin, that would be great, but if this is just a way of getting classroom assistants to substitute for teachers, that

would be unacceptable."

But every scrap of evidence points to the government's intention to provide education on the cheap. Investment plans for the next few years include 50 000 classroom assistants but only 10 000 teachers, despite massive shortages. It has also rejected calls by the NUT and others for statutory working week of 35 hours — already won by Scottish teachers.

Whatever the benefits of expanding support, teachers must expect the worst. Much of the increase in workload of the past decade has come from government initiatives. This problem continues to worsen, and most initiatives require professional attention and cannot be tackled by classroom assistants.

Teachers' leaders have indicated that they will not relent from demanding significant improvements to pay and conditions, not tied to reforms imposed by government but reflecting the professionalism and complexity of the job.

Fire brigades start the strikes

BRITAIN'S 52,000 FIREFIGHTERS are preparing for a series of national strikes, for only the second time in their history. An 87.6% majority of Fire Brigades Union members voted in favour of action, on an 83.5% turnout. This includes control room staff and the majority of retained (part-time) firemen, too.

After the 1977 dispute, fire service pay was settled by a formula linked to manual wages, in return for a no-strike deal. The FBU feels that no longer represents a good deal. Their claim is for fully trained firefighters to earn £30,000 a year, compared with £21,531 currently.

Ministers insist that an interim 4% rise is enough, with the promise of a review to modernise the service. FBU members are angry that the government prevented local authority employers from offering 16% in September. They believe the review is no more than a means to reduce numbers, something that has sparked several local strikes in recent years. Firefighters are also convinced that the government had already decided what the outcome of the review would be.

Meanwhile, attempts to get the review going without FBU involvement have run into trouble. On 8 October, for example, Sir George Bain, who is leading the review went to two stations in East London — Shadwell and Bethnal Green — only to be comprehensively snubbed: not a single firefighter would talk to him.

PENSIONS**Creating dependency**

THE GOVERNMENT claims to be doing much to increase the living standards of pensioners, but that is not how pensioners see it. The real effect of government policy is that they are "working to create dependency", said Brian Sturtevant, General Secretary of the Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance, addressing the CSPA at Coventry recently.

Despite a huge surplus in the National Insurance Pension Fund, the contributory

pension will play a smaller and smaller part in older peoples' incomes if government policy continues. Instead it is relying on the means-tested Minimum Income Guarantee and Pension Credit so that gradually 50, 60 and then 70% of pensioners will be at least partly reliant on means-tested benefits, even those with small occupational pensions.

We need to re-establish the NI Retirement Pension as "the basic building block for a decent standard of life in retirement" said Sturtevant, urging delegates to support a major lobby of Parliament on 11 November.

WHAT'S ON**Coming soon****NOVEMBER**

Friday 1 November, 9.30 - 4

Congress for Democracy

Church House, Westminster, London SW1

For opponents of the European Union from across the political spectrum. See www.congressfordemocracy.org.uk/eighth.html

Saturday 23 November, 10.30 - 4

Conference: Organise 2002

Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1

How the next generation of workplace reps can be recruited, trained and supported — followed by a political comedy act! £10 waged, £5 unwaged. See www.tuc.org.uk for details.

Wednesday 27 November, 3-6

UN International Day of Solidarity with Palestine

Lobby of Parliament, House of Commons, London SW1

For more information, contact Palestine Solidarity campaign on 020 7700 6192.

CONSIGNIA**Privatisation strike ballot**

FOLLOWING PLANS to sell Consignia's Cash Handling and Distribution division (CHD), the Communication Workers Union is balloting its 3,000 members for industrial action. The ballot should be completed by mid-November. If necessary there might be a ballot of the wider membership with the possibility of strike action over the busy Christmas period.

Consignia has issued a joint statement with the union agreeing that it will not make a final decision until the end of November, when discussions on the plan are completed. The union will be presenting a report on alternatives to the sell-off.

The CWU is worried that if the business is sold off, members will end up with worsening conditions of service as well as losing their Consignia pensions.

Securicor has estimated that the purchase of CHD could generate a turnover of £1 billion during the 10 year contract, which it had expected to sign in December. "For a business which is losing money to sell such an asset makes no sense," said Andy Furey, the union's Clerical and Cash Handling assistant secretary. "It's a classic case of flogging the family silver for short-term gain."

Textiles matter

THE TGWU has highlighted the importance of regenerating our workplaces and our industry with its statement **MANUFACTURING MATTERS**. The union demonstrates how manufacture is the core of a healthy economy for this country and why it is vital for a working class that needs good education, health and other public services.

It also shows that new manufacturing employment created between 1993 and 1998 (240,000 jobs) has now been more than wiped out. The British economy as a whole has grown faster than that of other G7 members. But our performance in manufacturing has fared relatively poorly in relation to the USA and Germany. In those countries manufacturing growth in both is at least 6 times better than ours.

The British government seems to adopt contradictory positions on the importance of manufacture. However, pressure from trades unions and other organisations does at least seem to have struck some kind of chord within the Department of Trade and Industry, which has backed some manufacturing projects.

This has become clear, for example, in the sponsorship and encouragement of link-ups between universities and industrial companies in the textile sector. British textiles cannot stem the flow of cheap, imported textiles; whether it is clothing, household or fabrics. Many British firms have fled to cheap labour countries and deserted our shores to maximise profits. So, we're back to adapt or die for those remaining and this is now, belatedly, beginning to happen.

Partnerships

Through the TechniTex partnership, Heriot-Watt University, Leeds University and UMIST in Manchester have established research projects with industrial partners into a range of high tech, high skill textile products. Their stated aim is to "re-invigorate the British textile industry by producing innovative products". They also intend to develop a new generation of textile technologists through the training programme.

In a different aspect of textile production, the London College of Fashion is busy developing new fashion uses for fabrics previously used in utilitarian clothing, workwear for example, and in designing new computer-generated fabric printing.

In Manchester, the university has opened the New Knitwear Centre, which provides business support and design assistance to 135 local knitwear companies.

There are other examples, too, where university and college textile departments have responded to improve the position of the British textile industry by introducing leading edge research and technology so that the industry can change and develop. This follows the blueprint laid out by the unions in the trade 3 years ago.

Creating a new type of textile industry will not save the jobs that exist now. What it will do is create the possibility of sustaining new sorts of jobs and help us to retain the capacity to design and make our own textiles in the future.

We are losing manufacturing jobs recession. And the problem is not

Privatisation doesn't wo



UNDER BLAIR, Britain has lost 500,000 manufacturing jobs, 7,700 every month since May 1997. This is worse than under Thatcher, when 5,000 manufacturing jobs went every month after she liberalised capital markets in 1979. Unemployment, even on official ILO figures, is still unacceptably high, at 1.5 million. The real figure is more like four million.

Our manufacturing decline is not due to 'a worldwide trend towards a services economy'. When, between 1973 and 1992 manufacturing output in Britain rose by just 1%, it rose by 25% in Germany, 27% in France, 85% in Italy and 119% in Japan. The cause of this continuing disaster is the dominance of finance capital, which always wants an overvalued currency to encourage capital flows. The solution to manufacturing's problems is not to change the currency, but to change its value. This would cut interest rates, boosting investment.

Recession

The British economy is now technically in recession. Real GDP did not grow at all from October 2001 to April 2002, and gross value added, at constant prices, has fallen by 0.1% in each of the last two quarters. In the first quarter of this year, services exports were 4.3% down in value on a year earlier; exports of finished manufactures were 8.4% down. The engineering industry's export sales were down by 27.9% on a year earlier. Exports of electrical and optical equipment fell by 33.6% from the same period last year. Our trade deficits are unsustainably huge: in 1998, £34.4 billion, in 1999 £28 billion, in 2000 £32 billion, in 2001 £34 billion, and in the first half of this year

at a rate 50% faster than that at the height of the Thatcher that private enterprise is being held back. Far from it...

ork (except for the capitalists)



Left: Templeborough Steelworks, Yorkshire — shut down in 1993, and now a tourist attraction.

the long-term decline of gross non-residential investment, down from 14.6% a year in 1960-73, to 13.8% in 1980-89, to 13.2% in 1990-95.

We must back industry as single-mindedly as Blair and Brown back the financiers of the City of London. We need a high-skills, high-investment, high-R&D, high-productivity, high-growth, high-wages economy.

Privatisation

Thatcher and Blair, the IMF and the European Central Bank (ECB), have all claimed that our problems have been caused by an excessive state sector, stifling private enterprise's animal spirits. Their remedy? Privatisation. Has it worked?

The most thorough recent survey concluded that there was "little evidence that privatisation has caused a significant improvement in performance". But privatisation did succeed in one key respect — it cut wages: "the share of income going to labour ... has declined in all cases". (THE IMPACT OF PRIVATISATION, by Stephen Martin and David Parker, Routledge, 1997.)

Its effect on our basic energy industries has been disastrous: "In sum, the legacy of the privatisation of the electricity supply industry has been to derail the government's own programme for a major expansion of nuclear power, to precipitate a large-scale contraction in the indigenous coal industry, to fail to address the problem of carbon emissions in power generation (except by the substitution of gas for coal) and to provide no support for the development of renewable technologies." Further, "The privatisation process...has had extremely detrimental impacts upon certain sectors of UK industry, notably the manufacturing of buses, trains and mining equipment." (David Coates, editor, INDUSTRIAL POLICY IN BRITAIN, Macmillan, 1996.)

There is no need for privatisation: between 1980 and 1988, NHS hospitals increased in-patient treatment by 16%, emergency treatment by 19% and day surgery by 73%, without significant cost increases. And privatisation doesn't work: the Tube PPP promises only 12 new trains, in six years' time; the West Coast line upgrade will cost three times as much as than BR's upgrades; and the first 14 PFI hospitals will cost twice the original estimates.

Increasingly, workers see that privatisation doesn't work. So why do our rulers press on with privatisation? Because of its politics: its aim is to keep capitalism afloat by giving it more opportunities to make profits. Which is why the IMF and the ECB have stepped in to try to impose it.

Globalisation

Internationally, too, the IMF and the ECB act as agents of big capital, not as defences against it, as we can see by looking at the IMF's impact on the world.

Half the world's people, more than 2.8 billion people, live on less than \$2 a day; 100 million more people were poor in 2000 than in 1990. Developing countries' external debts rose from \$90 billion in 1970 to \$2000 billion in 1998. Current international trade agreements reduce the prices that the poorer countries receive for the goods they produce compared to what they pay for imports: various agreements have cut food and raw materials prices by 50% in real terms between 1982 and 2002.

The IMF has worsened this poverty by its policy of capital market liberalisation, which it continues to impose despite all the evidence that it does not bring growth, investment or stability (witness the 87 currency crises since 1975). Thatcher's favourite monetarist Milton Friedman had predicted that floating exchange rates would stabilise currencies.

Why does the IMF do this? Joseph Stiglitz, formerly of the World Bank, explains in his new book, GLOBALIZATION

'We are in depression. Real GDP did not grow at all from October 2001 to April 2002...'

£15 billion.

Last year, output from business services and finance, after five years of growing at 5.3% a year, dropped by 0.2%. Similarly, transport, storage and communications, after five years of 7.1% growth, rose by just 1.1%. The earlier growth had helped to mask the bust — absolute decline — in agriculture, mining and manufacturing under Labour. Boom and bust — capitalism as usual then, Gordon?

Investment is down too. Gross fixed investment fell to just 16.2% of GDP in the first quarter, down from 16.9% in 2001 and 17.6% in 1998. This is on top of

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Come off it, Gordon!

GORDON BROWN likes to let it be thought that he is the most euro-sceptic Cabinet minister, but this is just one of his attempts to position himself as a 'left' alternative Prime Minister. The record shows his true colours.

After the 1997 election, Brown boasted: "We are the first British government to declare for the principle of monetary union, the first to state that there is no overriding constitutional bar to membership."

Straight after the election, the EU's Council of Ministers secretly demanded that the new government: "strictly implements its budgetary policy" by "maintaining a vigorous control of public expenditure." (By Article 104c(7) of the Treaty, the Council's 'recommendations' to member governments "shall not be made public".) Brown obeyed, keeping the Tories' tight limits on public spending for three years. The new government immediately gave control over interest rate policy to the Bank of England and to a new, supposedly independent, Monetary Policy Committee. Brown instructed the Committee to achieve low inflation, in line with the European Central Bank's single remit. The EU enthused over the government's decision. Alexandre Lamfalussy, President of the European Monetary Institute, called it 'music to my ears', saying that it was an important step towards meeting the Maastricht convergence criteria.

The Bank has continued to keep interest rates far too high, severely damaging our industry. As the TUC noted: "The short term consequences have been a stronger pound, putting more pressure on the manufacturing sector and worsening the growing trade deficit." Being inside the euro would only add to the slaughter. We need to change interest rates, not the currency.

A single currency would be followed by a single taxation system and a single economic policy for all member countries, both dictated by the EU. Brown misled Parliament when he said that there was "no question of giving up our ability to make decisions on tax and spending". In fact, he admitted that within the EU the British government could not repeal VAT on fuel, saying: "I would prefer it to be removed altogether, but it can't be done."

Ciphers

In February 2001, the EU's finance ministers, including Brown, scolded the Irish government for daring to have its own economic policy. James Buchan commented in *THE GUARDIAN*: "Meanwhile, the European reprimand to Ireland last week revealed, for the first time, the vast political scope of the single currency. European finance ministers (including, I regret to say, the British) told the Irish government that it should not cut taxes and raise spending in its 2001 budget because that might lead to inflation and destabilise the euro... Last week's events suggest that the proponents of European federation in Germany and the Benelux countries may get what they always wanted: the euro will slowly reduce national governments, at least in their economic activities, to ciphers."

The Labour government was committed in principle to privatisation, whatever its results. Brown said: "The wealth-creating agenda and support for public-private partnerships, the encouragement of small business is central to everything we as a government will do." He also said: "The Labour Party is more pro-business, pro-wealth creation, pro-competition than ever before." He proved this by cutting capital gains tax rates from 40p to 10p in the pound, a tax break worth more than £1 billion a year!

As for his famous five tests, we did not meet them. Yet it is still possible that sometime in the future he will sensationally announce that we have met them, because as his adviser Gus O'Donnell said: "Ultimately, it will be a political decision."

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AND ITS DISCONTENTS, an insider's account to rival Bernard Connolly's scathing study of the ECB's origins. Stiglitz writes that the IMF has changed "from serving global economic interests to serving the interests of global finance. Capital market liberalisation may not have contributed to global economic stability, but it did open up vast new markets for Wall Street." As a result, the "IMF keeps speculators in business". For instance, in 1998 it 'spent' \$50 billion maintaining Brazil's exchange rate: the money went straight to the speculators.

Deflationary

The IMF, like the ECB, pursues deflationary policies. Neither is responsible to national governments, and both are mandated to focus on inflation, not on wages, job creation or growth. The IMF policy package, like the ECB's, is balanced budgets, tight money, deregulation, privatisation and anti-trade union laws. As Stiglitz notes, the ECB is worsening Europe's 2001-02 slump by keeping interest rates high.

The East Asian 'tigers' thrived in the 1970s and 1980s because they disobeyed the IMF by investing in education, supporting their industries and controlling capital. So in 1993, President Clinton set up the Economic Security Council to open up these economies to US trade and finance.

The IMF imposed capital market liberalisation in 1997-98. Consequently these countries suffered their worst-ever slumps, forcing them to sell their assets to US firms at knockdown prices. These firms spent \$8 billion buying them up in the first half of 1998 alone! India and China escaped the crisis because they still had capital controls.

The freer capital is, the more enslaved and exploited is the working class. Until we have total control, we have to work to restrict the scope of capital by resisting privatisation and imposing democratic controls on it.

Britain is still a leading force in the world of science — but it's little thanks to the government...

Are we committed to a scientific future?

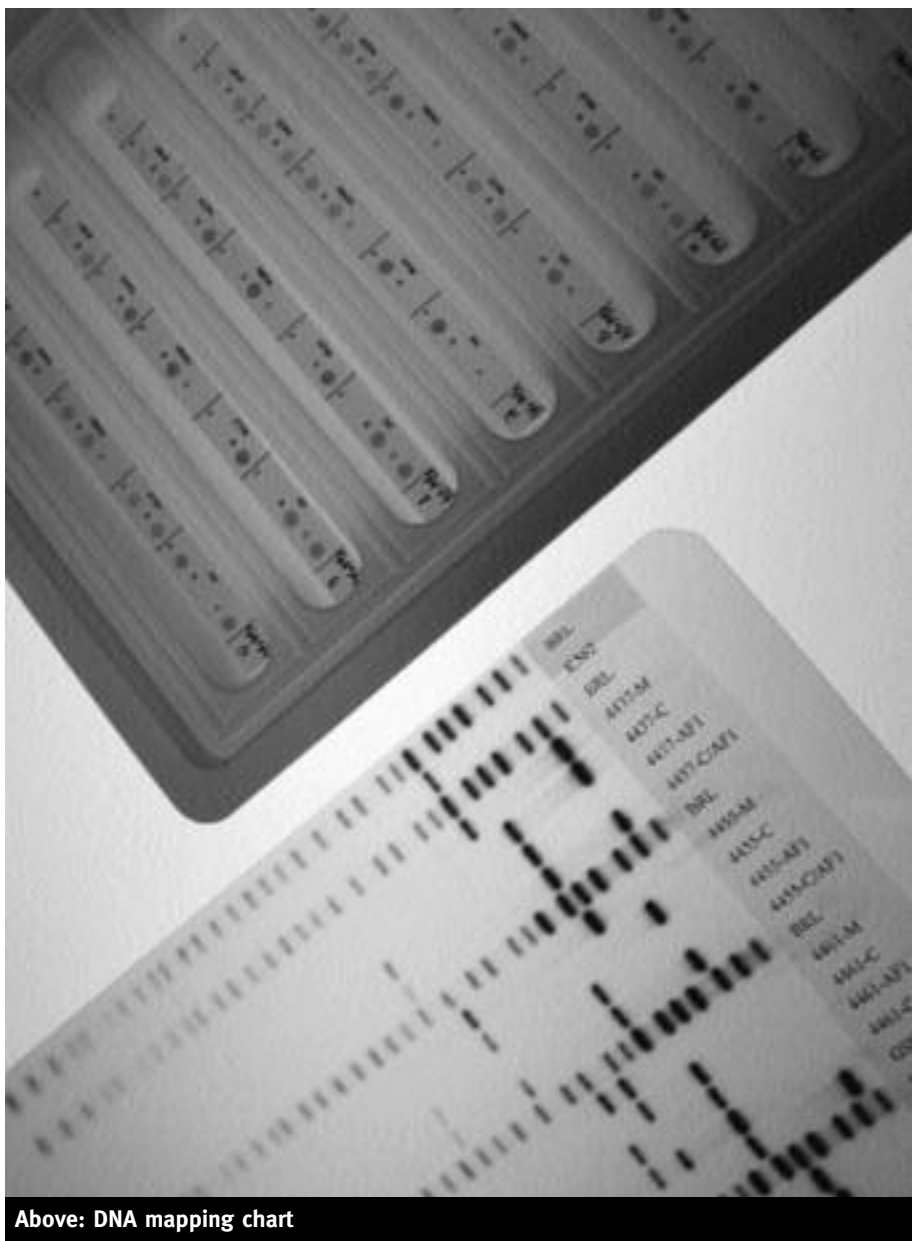
BACK IN FEBRUARY last year, the sequence of the human genome was unveiled, with massive publicity and headlines around the world. But something slightly odd happened at the press conference in London where British scientists outlined the project and their (enormous) contribution to it. After the initial presentations, journalists were invited to put their questions. But the first question was not about the science, it was about planning permission in South Cambridgeshire.

In 1992, Britain's largest medical research charity, the Wellcome Trust, set up what it called a Genome Campus at Hinxton Hall, a few miles outside Cambridge. They ploughed well over £100 million into the Sanger Centre there, with the aim of building a centre of excellence that would help sequence the human and other genomes and establish Britain as a world leader in the new genetic technologies.

Achievements

Five years later, with a string of scientific achievements already behind them (its first Director, John Sulston, has just won the Nobel Prize for Medicine), the Trust put in planning permission for 40,000 square feet of space on the Hinxton site — they wanted to invest another £100 million in a commercial development to ensure that the fruits of the research were carried across into industry. But planning permission was refused by the local council, supported by the government. It was still being refused in February 2001. In April this year the Trust put in a revised application for markedly less space, with no manufacture. This, it seems, stands a good chance of getting through.

So ten years on, nothing has yet been built. When you think that in Massachusetts alone more than 300,000 people are employed in companies spun off just from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), you get some idea of the potential of research to create jobs and industry — and of the wasted opportunities for Britain.



Above: DNA mapping chart

The whole saga typifies the problems facing science in Britain. No country is more productive in scientific research, but an anti-manufacturing culture is hampering our ability to transform this research into employment and wealth (that's real wealth, based on production).

As a nation we are intensely interested in science. You can see it in the sales figures for books about

science, with publishers competing to find new authors. You can see it in viewing figures for television, where *WALKING WITH DINOSAURS* was the only series consistently to outrank soap operas in recent years. You can read about it in opinion surveys, which show that around 80% of people say they are

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Where will the next generation come from?

THE MOST WORRYING trend in British science has got to be the state of the scientific workforce. Industry itself says it is hard to recruit staff with sufficient skills.

But the complaints are not limited to industry. The situation is even worse in education, where qualified science teachers have left the profession in droves, helping to create a cycle whereby fewer and fewer children are encouraged to take up science. According to the Institute of Physics, 66% of all physics lessons taught to pre-GCSE students are taught by non-physicists. And a study by King's College, London, in 2000 concluded that 43% of teachers who teach science to 10 and 11-year olds say they do not have "a lot of confidence" in their ability to do so.

Recent evidence now suggests that 35% of mathematics teaching vacancies remain unfilled, 39% of technology vacancies and 26% of science vacancies.

Over the past 15 years, the number of undergraduates starting physics courses at university has remained steady, while the overall number of undergraduates has soared. This relative decline of student numbers has seen what the Institute of Physics call "chronic underfunding" in physics departments at universities, and the complete closure of physics departments in 10 universities. By 2000, the number of physics graduates in Britain going on to teacher training in physics had fallen to just 224, down by over 50% from 1993.

While biology is seeing some increase, official figures show that between 1996 and 2000, there was a decrease in chemistry first degree entrants of 20%, civil engineering 23%, physics 10%, mechanical engineering 12%, general engineering 14%, and electronic engineering 8%. This cannot be laying the basis for a prosperous Britain in the future.

In May this year, 29 of the country's leading scientists and engineers wrote to the **DAILY TELEGRAPH** calling on the government to take urgent action to ensure that schools and universities can recruit and retain science teachers.

"You know you're right when the President of the British Psychological Society and the former Conservative Science Minister agree with the President of the Royal College of Physicians and the Labour Chair of the Commons Science Committee," said Peter Cotgreave from the pressure group Save British Science.

Those scientists who do make it through to graduation face massive disincentives to continuing in science. Salaries for researchers in industry are well below those paid in the US, Germany or France. And research in universities is now one of the most insecure occupations in the country. In 1997, the Dearing Committee found that 50% of all research staff in universities were on short-term contracts — back in the mid 1970s the figure was only 20%.

Continued from page 9

amazed by science and two-thirds believe that science makes our lives happier and healthier.

Writing five years ago, the government's Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Robert May, now President of the Royal Society, showed that British scientists produce more research papers per £ invested than anyone else in the world. The continuing fertility of British science remains a mystery. In relative terms, it is starved of funds.

Analysis by the Institute of Scientific Research (ISI) in Philadelphia shows scientific papers with at least one author based in Britain (to be more accurate, the survey was of research from England) accounted for 7.99% of all the world's science in the period 1996 to 2000. With 1% of the world's population, we carry out 5% of the world's science — and, in general, even more of the best science. In every field of science, papers with English authors had more impact than the average for the world — with plant and animal sciences (52% more impact), pharmacology (50% more), agricultural sciences (44% more), space science (33% more) and mathematics (29% more) taking the lead. If nations are ranked by how many times their scientific papers are referenced, Britain is in the top five for all 20 broad fields of science defined by the ISI.

Pharmaceuticals

The pharmaceutical industry is one of the lynchpins of the British economy. It employs 60,000 people directly and a further 250,000 indirectly. It is Britain's third largest exporter (after the oil industry and manufacturers of power-generating equipment). And it accounts for almost a fifth of all industrial research and development.

But even in this area of industrial success there are warning signs. An apparently endless series of mergers has seen the creation of giants such as GlaxoSmithKline from what only recently were well-known large companies in their

own right (Glaxo, The Wellcome Foundation, Smith Kline, Beecham, etc), accompanied by closures of research establishments. The industry as a whole is seeing mergers with companies based elsewhere (the US, Sweden, Netherlands), so that increasingly the key decisions are likely to be taken outside of Britain.

But Britain's strength in pharmaceuticals research, and the basic

'With 1% of the world's population, we carry out 5% of the world's science — and, in general, even more of the best science...'

sciences underpinning it, is only one side of the coin. Analysis last year by the Department of Trade and Industry showed that British companies' commitment to R&D is overwhelmingly dependent on the pharmaceuticals and aerospace industries. Between them, they account for almost half of British industrial R&D, with pharmaceuticals taking the lion's share at 37.7% of the total.

The other side of the coin is the low investment in the rest of research. Measured by the ratio of R&D to sales, investment in IT hardware and software R&D is less than half of the international average. The electronics, electrical and engineering areas manage only a half of the world average, with telecomms not much better. Investment in the chemical industry is only a third of the international average.

In the US, the White House is asking Congress for an increase of 16.7% in the budget of its medical research arm, the National Institutes of Health, taking it up \$3.7 billion to over \$27 billion. This

rather puts in perspective the British government's funding for our equivalent body, the Medical Research Council — £343 million. Put another way, for every \$1 of government money going into medical research in Britain, more than \$40 is spent by the US government. In fact, the increase alone in the NIH budget is equivalent to total funding for science and engineering for the UK Research Councils and research carried out with government departments (2000 figure, £1.957 billion).

It might look like a miracle that British science is doing as well as it is. In fact, it is due more to happy accident than to miracle. Alongside the funding to the Medical Research Council, Britain benefits from the Wellcome Trust's enormous wealth. Founded by a drug company boss, Henry Wellcome, this used to own his company, the Wellcome Foundation, until it was taken over by Glaxo in the early 1990s — so that by 2000 the Trust's assets were worth £15 billion. It now gives more to medical research than the government does.

Run by scientists

The Trust can be a strange and bureaucratic body, but one of its strengths is that essentially it is run by scientists, and it owes nothing to anybody. It is, truly, independent. And in recent years it has used that independence to force money out of the government. Its most noticeable success came in 1998, when it told the government it would give £300 million between April 1999 and March 2002 — provided that the government came up with matching funds. This, a delightful reversal of the stock government approach that it will give money provided private sources can provide matching funds, levered hundreds of millions out of the Treasury and into universities.

This shows what can be done when scientists themselves plan for the future and decide to impose their ideas on the government. Of course, it helps to have the money, but the principle remains.

In US and British campaign against Iraq, any excuse will do — even a lie...

We can stop this war!

Photo: Stop the War campaign



Marching in London against the war

WHATEVER THE WORDING of the final UN Security Council resolution on Iraq, the US and British governments have made their intentions clear. They intend to attack, and any excuse will do, even a lie.

Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told the Labour Party Conference on 30 September that Iraq expelled the UN weapons inspectors in December 1998. This is not so. On 15 December, the US Ambassador to the UN advised Richard Butler, the head of the Unscm team, to withdraw them to save them from the US-British bombing operation Desert Fox (16-19 December). Butler replied, "I told him that I would act on this advice and remove my staff from Iraq." It was the US government that ended the weapons inspections — because the inspections

were succeeding.

For, according to Butler, Unscm was within a few weeks of completing its work when the US government pulled it out. The programme was 90-95% complete: Unscm had already destroyed all Iraq's missiles and chemical weapons, and the International Atomic Energy Authority had destroyed all Iraq's nuclear weapons and nuclear facilities.

Why not finish the inspections?

Only some biological weapons remained to be inspected and destroyed. Why didn't the US government want the inspections to be completed? Because it didn't want Iraq peacefully disarmed, it wanted Iraq defeated in war. Why? Because only by occupying Iraq can the

US government get what it really wants — control of Iraq's oil. It's the oil, stupid!

The Bush government continues vehemently to oppose inspections. The Washington Post recently noted the "concern by Wolfowitz and his civilian colleagues in the Pentagon that new inspections could torpedo their plans for military action to remove Hussein from power." So Bush is determined to find ways to thwart the UN weapons inspectors from returning to Iraq under the new agreements achieved on 1 October. Bush is not, as Tony Blair pretends, backing inspections to prevent war; he is trying to prevent inspections so that he can start a war.

Bush keeps trying to link Iraq with al-Qa'ida, seeking to justify an unjustifiable

attack on Iraq by claiming that it is part of the justified war of self-defence against terrorist attacks. But as Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder pointed out, "The Middle East needs peace, not a new war. Any attack on Iraq would destroy the coalition in the war on terror." (BILD-ZEITUNG, 7 August.) The strongest alleged link is an alleged meeting in Prague in April 2001 between Mohamed Atta, the alleged ringleader of the suicide hijackers, and an Iraqi intelligence officer, Ahmad al-Ani.

Worldwide coverage

This allegation got worldwide coverage. But, as the BBC reported on 1 May, "investigations indicate that at the time of the alleged meeting with the Iraqi agent, Ahmed Chalil Ibrahim Samir Ani, in April 2001, he [Atta] was in Virginia Beach and Florida." TIME magazine reported on 13 May, "the best hope for Iraqi ties to the attack — a report that lead hijacker Mohamed Atta met with an Iraqi intelligence officer in the Czech Republic — was discredited last week." Yet THE INDEPENDENT reported (26 September) that US officials are still using this story to try to prove a link between Iraq and al-Qa'ida; its reporter wrongly described the story as "disputed", not as refuted.

Without missiles or nuclear weapons, Iraq is not a threat to us. Additionally, the danger of Iraq using any possibly remaining weapons of mass destruction is obviously greatest if it is fighting for its survival. An attack would provoke the actions that it is supposed to prevent! Iraq has made no threats to use these weapons, but the US, British and Israeli governments have all threatened to use nuclear weapons against Iraq, threats which themselves are breaches of international law.

Bush's threats — which Blair has consistently backed — to attack Iraq even without UN warrant are lynch law. By contrast, the rest of the world, including the French, Russian and Chinese governments, has rightly rejected the idea of a war to overthrow Saddam without UN backing. Further, even if the

'The US, British and Israeli governments have all threatened to use nuclear weapons against Iraq...'

lynch mob bribes the sheriff into signing a warrant, or into looking the other way, it is still lynch law: the Security Council has no authority to tear up the UN Charter, which permits the use of force against a sovereign state only when it is unambiguously self-defence against an actual, armed attack.

Existing UN resolutions provide no legal justification for the use of force against Iraq now. Resolution 687 empowered the Security Council only "to secure peace and security in the area". It guaranteed the inviolability of the Iraq-Kuwait border and authorised "all necessary measures to that end in accordance with the Charter". It "does not talk about getting rid of leadership", as UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan observed. 687 ends by saying the Security Council "decides to remain seized of the matter and to take such further steps as may be required for the implementation of the present resolution and to secure peace and security in the area".

No unilateral right

So it is for the Security Council as a whole to decide what needs to be done: 687 did not give any one member the right to use force. Finally, there is at present no war in that part of the Middle East; the only way to secure peace cannot be to start a war.

Nor did Resolution 688 authorise military action: the US and British governments tried to add to the draft Resolution the "authority to use force", but China and India stopped this.

Bush claims that the USA has a right

of "pre-emptive self-defence", but there is no right of "pre-emptive self-defence" in international law. Bush's rationale would open the door to any government claiming that it too was justified in attacking any other state that, allegedly, had any weapons that could pose a threat sometime in the future!

Wrecked

In a tried and tested routine for creating a war, Bush has denounced every Iraqi concession as inadequate. He wrecked Kofi Annan's negotiations by leaking on 5 July the US's plans to "topple President Saddam Hussein" by war, and Hans Blix's negotiations by bombing Basra on 29 September. He ups the ante by making increasingly unacceptable demands, just as Austria did to Serbia in 1914, and as NATO did to Serbia more recently. He is demanding that Iraq accept invasion and occupation, the establishment of "regional bases and operating bases throughout Iraq...accompanied...by sufficient US security forces to protect them", of exclusion zones, no-fly zones and "ground and air transit corridors".

Now the Attorney-General has told Blair that Bush's proposed war to oust Saddam is illegal. In September, Blair told the House of Commons that Britain "will always act in accordance with international law". So if Blair really wanted peace, and really wanted to uphold international law, all he would do is inform the President that a war to oust Saddam would be a breach of international law.

Stopping Blair from backing Bush would stop Bush, who depends on Blair to give him diplomatic cover. Only a minority of Americans would support a unilateral US attack on Iraq; 60% are opposed. Bush and Blair cannot launch a war without public support.

Last month Blair paraded under the banner of Peace and Prosperity to demand that the IRA disband — while simultaneously threatening to start a war on Iraq. He cannot be allowed to get away with it. We can stop this war.

Practical christian or just wily capitalist? A few miles outside Bradford disused mill and the former houses of the people who worked in

The village that Titus built

IF YOU'RE EVER anywhere near Bradford, there's a village about 4 miles outside the town which is well worth a visit.

Just like something out of a novel by Dickens, it was created by a man called Titus Salt and built on the river Aire — hence its name, Saltaire.

It was built between 1851 and 1872 and comprised a congregational church, a works dining room, almshouses, washrooms, a park, schools, community centre, workers' accommodation and, most important of all, a mill. The mill produced wool fabrics and was the largest of its kind in Europe.

Saltaire was the most famous of the Victorian 'model' villages, but why was it built? Was Titus Salt simply the benevolent philanthropist that some say he was?

Life in Bradford, as in many other towns at the time of the industrial revolution, was not a pleasant place for workers. Robert Baker, a factory inspec-

tor, saw the conditions that workers lived in and described what he had seen:

"In many cellars, not four yards square...fifteen, sixteen and twenty people preparing to pass the night, persons of both sexes, strangers to each other in the same room, in the same bed, on the same floor...one fourth of the population of Bradford consume life in this unsanitary state and carry into the factory and workshop the seeds of diseases generated in such dwellings and locations."

Magnet

While Bradford was becoming the world's wool textile capital, the town became a magnet for people seeking work. The population rose from 16,012 in 1811 to 103,771 in 1851. By the 1840s the pressure on the town's limited communal resources was unbearable. The alienation of the working class was expressed in its political stance: industrial alienation did

not pass without bitter class conflict.

In the Chartist movement of the late 1830s and 1840s workers demanded the right to vote and effective parliamentary representation. Often, when serious economic disruptions inflamed the situation, workers' protests reached near-revolutionary proportions.

In the summer of 1845 Bradford Chartists threatened to take over the town. Chartist contingents drilled openly in the streets and for several days they controlled part of the town, "the police not daring to go there". By the end of 1848 Chartism seemed to be defeated, with most of its leaders in prison. Of course, there was always the chance of it re-establishing itself, and that had to be headed off by the employers if they were to retain power.

Salt realised this and in 1849, using the new railway, he took his 3,000 workers for a day out at Malham and Gordale Scar. Brass bands turned out to greet the expedition along the route and the BRADFORD OBSERVER praised this example of "practical christianity".

Salt, in his capacity as mayor and magistrate of Bradford, also initiated studies into the effects of pollution on workers. The results were conclusive, but the council took no action on the grounds of expense, which Salt considered to be trivial.

In 1850, disillusioned with life in Bradford and seeing the benefits of removing his workforce out of the city in taxation terms alone, Salt decided to build his 'model' village.

Comprehensive

Saltaire was a comprehensive economic and social unit, offering all that a Victorian employer could regard as necessary for a useful life — work, health, education, moral instruction and good housing. In keeping with Salt's congregational background, there was no pub. The guiding value in the village's



The old Salts mill at Saltaire, near Bradford.

Bradford lies a
n it...

design was old-fashioned paternalism.

The benefits to workers of decent housing, social facilities, education and healthcare are obvious, but those to the employer deserve a mention, too. Salt had his workforce contained within walking distance of their workplace — the mill.

By giving them a decent standard of living he hoped to engender loyalty to the firm, or at least an awareness of what they had to lose through striking or general disobedience. And of course a certain amount of the wages he paid to his workforce was returned to him through the rent workers paid for housing and money they spent in his shops.

Most of the time workers in Saltaire conformed with the lifestyle set out for them by Salt. But the village was always more than a rather complex managerial device.

Strikes

Every now and then workers will bite the hand of one who says he's feeding them, and there were two strikes in the village in Salt's lifetime.

One, in 1868, was wisely supported by the national press but lasted only four days. Salt dealt with the strikers' representatives in a dictatorial fashion.

The second strike took place in 1876, after Titus had passed managerial responsibility to his sons. It was a strike of badly paid spinners and weavers and managed to secure some of its demands.

What of Saltaire now? Since Salt's death, there have been a number of owners of the village, but in 1933 the houses were sold to the Bradford property trust company and Saltaire ceased to be a company village.

The mill, however, remained open and in full production until Thatcher's attack on industry in the 1980s closed it down — the self-styled supporter of Victorian values playing her part in destroying them.

WHAT'S THE PARTY?

We in the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), and others who want to see a change in the social system we live under, aspire to a society run in such a way as to provide for the needs, and the desires, of working people, not the needs and desires of those who live by the work of others. These latter people we call capitalists and the system they have created we call capitalism. We don't just aspire to change it, we work to achieve that change.

We object to capitalism not because it is unfair and unkind, although it has taken those vices and made virtues out of them. We object because it does not work. It cannot feed everyone, or house them, or provide work for them. We need, and will work to create a system that can.

We object to capitalism not because it is opposed to terrorism; in fact it helped create it. We object because it cannot, or will not, get rid of it. To destroy terrorism you'd have to destroy capitalism, the supporter of the anti-progress forces which lean on terror to survive. We'd have to wait a long time for that.

We object to capitalism not because it says it opposes division in society; it creates both. We object because it has assiduously created immigration to divide workers here, and now wants to take that a dangerous step further, by institutionalising religious difference into division via 'faith' schools (actually a contradiction in terms).

Capitalism may be all the nasty things well-meaning citizens say it is. But that's not why we workers must destroy it. We must destroy it because it cannot provide for our futures, our children's futures. We must build our own future, and stop complaining about the mess created in our name.

Time will pass, and just as certainly, change will come. The only constant thing in life is change. Just as new growth replaces decay in the natural world, this foreign body in our lives, the foreign body we call capitalism, will have to be replaced by the new, by the forces of the future, building for themselves and theirs, and not for the few. We can work together to make the time for that oh-so-overdue change come all the closer, all the quicker.

Step aside capital. It's our turn now.

How to get in touch

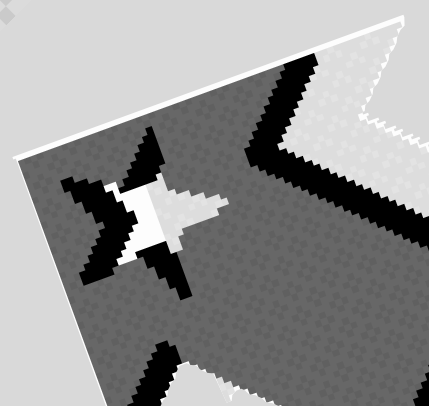
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Back to Front – Living dangerously

‘The road to Kuta began around Jakarta in 1965 with the sound of machine guns mowing down lines of Communists with their hands tied behind their backs...’

MORE COMMUNISTS were killed in Indonesia in 1965 than anywhere else at any other time in history outside of the Soviet Union in World War Two. More than half-a-million men and women (plus uncounted children) were slaughtered by the friend of north American and British governments, General Suharto.

This was done supposedly to prevent the spread of terrorism, to end anarchy and to bring stability to the fifth most populous country in the world, which, in the 1960s, was showing dangerous signs of not any longer being the plaything of western capitalism — showing signs of being independent, in other words.

Now we’ve seen the greatest single slaughter anywhere in Indonesia proper (not East Timor, in other words) since Britain’s friend Suharto tortured and murdered those who would have led their country away from anarchy and onto the road of independence. In Kuta on 12 October a massacre of the young took away two hundred lives, some of those lives not yet started in earnest.

The relatives of the dead are entitled to ask, “What happened to the war on terror?” Six months after al-Qa’ida were “routed” from their “only safe haven” in Afghanistan they’ve allegedly popped up again thousands of miles away. Were all those thousands of Afghan deaths for nothing?

Or for that matter those thousands killed in New York, Washington and over the skies of Pennsylvania?

Those relatives might conclude that perhaps there hasn’t been a war on terror.

That perhaps Bush and Blair don’t want to destroy terror. That really they want to destroy nation states which are likely to stray from the course laid down by the World Trade Organisation; nation states which want to be independent, in other words. That it is more concerned with Saddam than with Osama. That the first of these two Arabs wants his country to be independent of others, while the second wants others to be dependent upon him.

They might conclude that that, after all, is one possible definition of a terrorist: someone who wants others to be dependent on him. Someone who wants others to be spiritually dependent, economically dependent, militarily dependent. Because they know that a dependent person can be a frightened person; a dependent country can be frightened, terrorised.

They might then wonder who else in the world fits that description of a terrorist. They might also realise that in fact it was the direct forerunners of Bush and Blair who actually created Osama bin Laden to stamp out Soviet influence in Afghanistan.

Blair and Bush cry crocodile tears. The road to Kuta began around Jakarta in 1965 with the sound of machine guns mowing down lines of Communists with their hands tied behind their backs. It has reached paradise, Bali, with hundreds of youngsters on holiday from work being ripped apart.

Where will that road end? And where will it take us in the meantime?

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