

Editorial

Fascizing the State in the Name of Combatting Terrorism

On August 5, British Prime Minister Tony Blair announced new “anti-terror” measures which will allow the British government to deport “foreigners who preach hatred”, close mosques suspected of preaching extremism and bar entry to Britain of suspected Muslim radicals. Blair also stated that new citizenship laws would be passed enabling Britain to strip foreign-born citizens of their British citizenship if they “preach hatred” or even “excuse” terrorist acts. “The rules of the game are changing” following the July 7 and July 21 bombings and attempted bombings of London’s transit system, Blair declared. The new measures will negate large sections of Britain’s human rights legislation, including sections which prohibit the deportation of

people to countries where they may face torture or death.

The official suspension of human rights laws follows on the heels of the police shooting of a young Brazilian suspected of being a terrorist because he was wearing a backpack and police mistook him for being of Middle Eastern descent. He was shot seven times in the head when he allegedly failed to obey a police command to halt. Despite the fact that the man was totally innocent, Blair announced that “shoot to kill” orders would remain in effect for anyone suspected of being a terrorist.

This kind of fascization of the state follows a pattern established during the 1930s in Germany.

See page 4: Fascizing the State

For Your Information

The Current Situation in Nepal

Nepal is a small country of about 28 million people situated in the Himalaya Mountains between India and China. It is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a semi-feudal, semi-colonial economy and where over 80 percent of its population live in rural areas. It has very little industrial production and a very small industrial working class. It has been dependency of India for much of its history. Today it is used by India as a source of resources and cheap labour. There is also considerable potential for hydro-electric generation, but this potential remains largely untapped. The king and royal family own or control most of the main corporations in the country.

Officially, Nepal has been ruled by a constitutional monarch since India achieved

independence from Britain in 1948, however the king has always treated the legislative institutions as advisory bodies rather than as independent governing bodies.

A popular movement forced King Birendra to accept constitutional reforms in 1989 and general elections were held for the first time in 1991. The Nepali Congress Party (NCP) and the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) received the most votes and the NCP formed the first government. During the early 1990s most of Nepal’s nine communist parties united to form the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) (CPN(UML)) and this party formed a minority government for a short time. However, the obvious contempt for parliament

See page 2: Nepal

Nepal...from page 1

displayed by King Birendra and the slow pace of the promised reforms led to a split in the CPN(UML) in 1995. A section, mainly from the former CPN, left to create the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN(M)), which initiated an armed insurrection, or People's War, in the countryside in 1996. Within a few years, the CPN(M) had taken control of the vast majority of the rural areas of Nepal.

The People's War led by the CPN(M) has thrown the monarchy and parliamentary parties into crisis. Both the NCP and CPN(UML) supported the use of the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) to suppress the insurgency, but the RNA has been completely unsuccessful despite military assistance from India and the U.S. This led to a coup in 2001, widely suspected to have CIA involvement, in which King Birendra and most of the royal family were killed. Birendra's brother, Gayanendra, was proclaimed king on June 4, 2001. King Gayanendra has installed and dismissed several governments in the past four years, all of which have failed to end the CPN(M) insurgency. Peace talks broke down last year when the king refused to accept the demand of the CPN(M) for an elected constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. In February of this year Gayanendra dissolved parliament and arrested many of the leading parliamentarians from both the NCP and the CPN(UML). Since then, the main parliamentary parties have been considering an offer by the CPN(M) to join forces to overthrow the monarchy.

Although Nepal has very little economic importance, it has come to have a certain amount of strategic importance because of its geographical location between India and China. The U.S. sees Nepal as a potential client state to use in its strategy of encircling China and containing China's influence in southwestern Asia. India, while exploring closer economic ties with China, would like to keep Nepal's potential energy resources for its own use, while preventing Nepal from becoming a gateway for a flood of Chinese goods into India. For its part, China would like to prevent Nepal from becoming a client state of the U.S. and gain access to Nepal's energy resources. Both India and China also have an interest in defusing the revolutionary movement in Nepal because Nepal borders on regions in both countries in which revolutionary and/or separatist groups are active. They fear that a successful revolution in Nepal

could further destabilize the situation in their own countries. Japan also has an interest in Nepal as part of its strategy to contain China's expanding influence in the region.

Currently, India and the U.S., which both suspended military aid to Nepal when King Gayanendra dissolved parliament, are offering to restore military assistance if the king restores parliament and the illusion of parliamentary democracy. During the same period, Japan has been providing food and development assistance to replace the withdrawn U.S. and Indian aid. Meanwhile, China has been providing political support to the king, hailing "50 years of friendship" between the two countries at a time when the royal police were attacking people protesting the king's February coup. At present, the inter-imperialist rivalries between the U.S., India, China and Japan are preventing any of Nepal's neighbours from intervening militarily. However, if the Maoist insurgency becomes powerful enough to overwhelm the monarchist forces, it is expected that China will accept an Indian invasion of Nepal in exchange for certain concessions from India, such as the settlement of the long-standing border dispute between the two countries.

Despite the pressure and enticements being offered by the U.S., India and Japan, there is no sign at this time that Gayanendra is willing to make concessions to either the parliamentary parties or to the Maoist insurgents. This is, in turn, leading to a hardening of the positions of the NCP and the CPN(UML). The former has always advocated a republican form of government, while the latter has repeatedly vacillated on the issue, generally coming down on the side of a constitutional monarchy. However, many members and regional leaders of both parties have thrown their support behind a united front with the Maoists to overthrow the monarchy.

For its part, the CPN(M) denies that it is waging a socialist revolution at this time. Its main leader, Chairman Prachndra stated in a recent article entitled: "A Brief Introduction to the Policies of the C.P.N. (Maoist)" that: "Hence, the basic political strategy of the Party is to free the Nepalese society from feudalism and imperialism through the bourgeois democratic revolution. The military strategy of People's War (PW) is objectively based on the goal

See page 4: Nepal

New Latin American Television Network to Counter Distortions of U.S. Monopoly Media

A new public broadcaster for Latin America was launched on July 24, the birth date of the Venezuelan-born Latin American patriot Simon Bolivar, who fought for continental independence from colonial oppression. The television channel, Telesur, is aimed at showing the region through the eyes of Latin Americans and will be funded by the governments of Venezuela, Argentina, Cuba and Uruguay. Programming will include regional and international news, documentaries, sports, movies produced by Latin American filmmakers and other cultural programs.

Venezuela is providing the largest share of funding for the channel (51 percent). In making the announcement of its creation, Venezuelan Communication and Information Minister Andres Izzara (who resigned his position two days after the launch of Telesur to take up the post of president of the channel) told reporters it “is an initiative against cultural imperialism and against imperialism in any of its expressions.”

Uruguayan journalist Aram Aharonian, a well-known Latin American political commentator told a Panamanian interviewer that the new channel provides a much needed counterbalance to the coverage of Latin America that is currently delivered by American or European Spanish-language networks, produced by the monopoly media in countries which have oppressed the people of the region for centuries.

“For 513 years in Latin America we have been trained to see ourselves through the eyes of others,” Aharonian said. “Many times, to impose their policies and their interests, they have invaded us or imposed military governments upon us. Today it seems that the media dictatorship has been substituted for those military dictatorships, permanently bombarding us with the same messages in the news, in advertising and in popular culture.

“For this reason, we say that Telesur is a strategic project: it’s the first to assume a massive commitment to present a Latin American vision of Latin America. We’ve begun to see ourselves through our own eyes, we’ve begun to tear down the fences of these media

estates. We have just begun.”

Aharonian said Telesur is already working on being able to offer Portuguese-language programming for Brazilian viewers as soon as possible and will then begin exploring programming in other Latin American languages, including some of the indigenous languages which different governments in the region have long tried to extinguish.

The board of directors of the new channel includes prominent personalities from the region as well as media activists from around the world, including the Nicaraguan poet and activist Ernesto Cardenal, the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano, Chilean journalist Manuel Cabieses, Venezuelan writer Luis Britto, Mexican journalist Carmen Lira, Venezuelan filmmaker Román Chalbaud, the editor of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Ignacio Ramonet, the founder of the Free Software Foundation, Richard Stallman, the U.S. journalist Saul Landau, the actor Danny Glover, the singer Harry Belafonte, the Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel and the British writer Tariq Ali.

Reaction from the monopoly U.S. media to the creation of Telesur was swift and ranged from openly hostile to condescending. An article in *Newsweek* dubbed the network the Al Jazeera of Latin America, while positing that the involvement of “leftist” governments in the region in its creation and funding means its journalistic objectivity will suffer. A columnist with the *Chicago Tribune* was more openly hostile, writing that “the station could become a propaganda tool for the region’s re-emerging left” in a column titled “Will Truth go south on Telesur News?”

It is worth noting that both *Newsweek* and the *Chicago Tribune*, along with every privately-owned television or radio station or mass circulation newspaper in the U.S. failed totally to provide any objective coverage of the lead-up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Instead they either reiterated or presented as accepted fact the Bush administration’s lies about Iraq’s alleged arsenal of weapons of mass destruction or the involvement of Saddam Hussein and his government in the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Fascizing the State...from page 1

There, the Nazis carried out numerous terrorist attacks which they then blamed on the communists and Jews in order to institute a police state in Germany. Eventually any semblance of human or civil rights was extinguished and the summary execution of individuals opposed to Nazism became routine.

Similarly, in the aftermath of the terrorist attack on New York, the Bush administration introduced the Patriot Act which strips Americans of human and civil rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Since then arrest without charges or trial, denial of the right to an attorney, secret trials and torture have also become routine in the United States. Thousands of “suspected terrorists”, mainly of Middle Eastern descent, were rounded up and imprisoned for months without access to family or lawyers and almost 1,000 are still in custody four years later. To date only one of these detainees has been convicted of charges relating to terrorism; the vast majority of the rest have been released without charge or have been charged only with minor immigration infractions.

In Britain during its war with the Irish Republican Army (IRA), numerous people suspected of sympathies with the IRA were framed and imprisoned for terrorist acts that they did not commit. It was later revealed that some of these terrorist acts were actually organized and carried out by the British “anti-terror” forces to justify the use of draconian measures against the British and Irish people. In fact, it has been well documented that the use of sectarian violence and terrorism was one of the preferred methods of the British state to divert and suppress the revolutionary movements in both Ireland and Britain during the 1970s and 1980s. Much of Britain’s current human rights legislation was drafted in response to the outrage of Britons to the human rights violations carried out by the British state. Blair’s suspension of those protections will once again give the British state *carte blanche* to violate rights with impunity.

Who inspired and/or organized the London bombings remains to be seen. However, what is clear is that it is the British state which stands to gain the most from those attacks. It has taken advantage of the hysteria over the bombings to give itself draconian powers which it can use against anyone who opposes the interests and agenda of British imperialism.

Nepal...from page 2

of achieving this political strategy.” Another of the Maoists’ main leaders, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai stated in a 2002 commentary: “This should clarify once and for ever that the current fight in Nepal is an historical fight between feudal monarchy and progressive bourgeois democracy as witnessed in 1648 Britain and 1789 France. And nothing more, or nothing less!” In another document elaborating the thesis of the CPN(M) on two distinct stages of revolution – the People’s Democratic stage and the socialist stage - Bhattarai goes on to explain that the current struggle is not yet even at the level of a struggle for People’s Democracy. He states: “Keeping in view such specificities like the stage of strategic equilibrium of the PW, the triangular contention among revolutionary democratic, parliamentary and monarchist forces in the country, sensitive geo-strategic positioning of the country sandwiched between two gigantic neighbours, etc., the Party has advanced a further proposal of minimum forward-looking political solution of completing the bourgeois democratic revolution through peaceful means. An outline of a transitional state which is a step below the New Democratic/People’s Democratic state has been provided in the “An Executive Summary of the Proposal Put Forward by CPN (Maoist) for the Negotiations” [See CPN (Maoist) 2004] proposed by the Party during the latest round of negotiations on April 27, 2003. The Party believes that the concept of such a transitional state rising above the bourgeois parliamentarism but not yet reaching the level of New Democracy is appropriate theoretically and practically in the concrete conditions of Nepal.”

Modern Communism

**Bulletin of the Manitoba Regional Committee
of the Communist Party of Canada
(Marxist-Leninist)**

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