



To **make** poverty **history**:

- No to G8 world domination
- No to imperialism and capitalism
- Make socialism our future

**committee for a workers international
comité pour une internationale ouvrière
komitee für eine arbeiter internationale**

We are here today, in our hundreds of thousands, to demand that 'poverty is made history'. It is an enormous plus-point, an indication of international solidarity, that so many people are prepared to march against world poverty. But the key question for today's demonstration is 'how' we can make poverty history?

For us, in the CWI, it is absolutely clear that asking Bush, Blair and the rest of the G8 to make poverty history is like asking vampires to give up bloodsucking. These people are representatives of a system – capitalism – for which poverty and inequality is a fundamental prerequisite.

**Cancel the debts,
public and private, totally
and unconditionally**

The 'deal' on debt is being touted as a major breakthrough, an act of compassion, by Bush, Blair and company. We welcome any 'deal' which genuinely helps the poor mass of people in Africa and relieves the horrific debt burden. After all at the moment, for every \$2 in aid Africa receives, \$1 is paid back in debt interest payments. In sub-Saharan Africa the figure is worse, with debt repayments swallowing 100% of the aid it receives each year.

But this deal, like so many before, is a con, designed to placate the millions globally who want to see something done. It doesn't cancel the \$300 billion debt 'owed' by

Africa. It merely does a deal on \$40 billion of it. Yet the majority of the debt was borrowed over a decade ago, and almost all of the capital has long since been paid back.

What is worse is that this paltry 'relief' comes with strings. It does not loosen, but further tightens, the noose that the G8 countries hold around the necks of the world's poor. To qualify for debt relief, developing countries must "tackle corruption, boost private sector development" and eliminate "impediments to private investment, both domestic and foreign". What this actually means is that only those countries that follow the political and economic diktats of the G8 will get any debt relief. These diktats – privatisation, deregulation and wage cuts – are responsible for dramatically increasing poverty. Any country that refuses to toe the G8 line will continue to be bled dry in interest payments on debts, the original amount of which have often been repaid ten times over.

Uganda – an example of World Bank extortion

This is only a stepping up of what already takes place. For example, as George Monbiot explained in the The Guardian, London (14/06/05), in the late 1980s, the IMF and World Bank forced the government of Uganda to introduce fees for healthcare and primary education. As a result school attendance plummeted and disease and ill health grew. When the government

responded to massive pressure from the Ugandan population and reversed the policy, it was declared 'a bad investment' by a furious IMF. Uganda was then told it could only receive World Bank funding if it privatised most of its state-owned companies with the minimum of regulation. To qualify for the debt relief package – now extended by the G8 – the World Bank insists that the Ugandan government sells off its water supplies, agricultural services and commercial banks.

Multinational companies like Suez, Thames and Biwater, have negotiated contracts in Uganda which give them monopolies for up to 30 years and guaranteed profits of up to 30 - 40%. Strangulation of private debt continues

The large majority, \$220 billion, of poor countries' debt is to private companies, not to the World Bank and the IMF. Not one penny of relief is being offered on this debt. Without doubt, part of the reason for the new G8 debt



relief proposals is the fear that, if the paymasters don't give a bit of slack, countries will choose to default on their debt entirely. Big business fears that this would trigger an economic crisis in what is already a fragile world economic situation. Lying behind the crocodile tears is a desire to protect, not the lives of the poor, but the profits of the multinational corporations.

Aid and corruption...

Last year the US spent ten times more on the occupation of Iraq than it did on aid. But the US and other countries are using corruption as an excuse for the paucity of aid to Africa. Of course it is an issue: for every £1,000 of African debt and debt interest, Africa's elites have exported £1,450 of capital into overseas banks and investments. But cronyism and corruption is not only an issue in Africa but throughout the world. Look at Bush – who has given 20% of the 'pioneers' who funded his election campaign presidential appointments. Or at Iraq – where in the first months of the occupation \$8.5 billion vanished into the pockets of contractors and cronies!

The G8 do not decide who should receive aid on the basis of the levels of corruption, but on the government's willingness to toe the IMF's line and the potential economic interests for the G8 in that country. In reality, whether in or out of favour with the G8, most of the rulers of Africa have been involved in corruption. Even those who have not directly pocketed aid and resources for themselves and their families have nonetheless been instrumental in facilitating the looting of the continents resources by multinational firms.

The poor countries of the world are not poor primarily because of 'bad governance'. They are poor because of a legacy of colonial occupation

in the past and because today - despite having successfully risen up against direct colonial rule - they are suffering a blood-sucking indirect 'neo-colonial' rule by the multinationals and their international institutions and representatives – the IMF, World Bank and G8.

Trade, neither free nor fair

21st Century capitalism means the concentration of ever-increasing amounts of wealth in the hands of a falling number of super-rich. There are 691 billionaires in the world whose combined wealth amounts to \$2.2 trillion. These individuals have never had it so good: in the last two years alone their income has gone up 57%. At the same time as the giant multinational corporations are announcing record profits, the gap between rich and poor keeps growing, in the so-called 'developing' and the developed world.

We live in a world where 500 multinational companies dominate the globe, controlling 70% of world production and employing 46 million people. They are driven, purely and simply, by their bottom line – the need to maximise their profits.

These huge corporations are increasing their profits by driving down the living conditions of working people worldwide. In every country of the world we are facing longer working hours, worse pay and conditions and cuts in public services, as big business restores its profits by cutting back working peoples' share. At the same time, they are forcing down the price of raw materials, leaving the poorest farmers in the world in absolute poverty.

For example, the price of raw coffee beans has halved in the last five years. Under arcane rules, African and Latin American coffee growers are not allowed to roast their own beans, or do

anything which will add value to them. It is the multinationals, such as Nestlé, which have the rights to do this – and to sell the finished product on at a huge profit.

It is utopian to imagine that these giant corporations can be convinced to 'behave better'. In fact, if one or two were to do so they would quickly be driven out of business as their profitability decreased as a result of higher costs for raw materials and higher wage bills. Even those small companies which are founded with the genuine intention of implementing 'fair trade' policies have to adapt or die to become 'successful'. For example, Green and Black's, the organic fair trade chocolate company have just been taken over by Cadbury's, the massive multinational.

Capitalism = poverty in a world of riches

It is the nature of the system that we live under – capitalism – that leads to massive poverty and inequality. In the 21st Century, capitalism means unrelenting poverty for billions of people. According to the United Nations, every single day 30,000 children are dying as a result of extreme poverty.

Meanwhile, the US and Europe produce 'too much' food: that is, too much to sell at a profit! Instead, it is piled up or even tipped into the sea. When it is sold to neo-colonial countries, the result is to drive local farmers to the wall, resulting in higher food prices and greater starvation.

Make capitalism history!

If we are to make poverty history we must make this profit-hungry capitalist system history. Capitalism has created unimaginable

wealth. In the 300 years or so of its existence, capitalism has transformed the planet over and over again. Rail, electricity, the internal combustion engine, flight, space travel, telephones and electronic computers, the list is endless. The world economy is 17 times the size it was a century ago. Today the smallest laptop can process more data than the most powerful computers in the world 50 years ago.

Despite this, all the technology developed by capitalism has not provided clean water for 1.2 billion people or food for the 841 million who are seriously malnourished. Nor has it prevented the HIV/Aids epidemic rampaging through Africa. Upwards of 28 million Africans have HIV and only 30,000 of them can get treatment.

Last year \$1 trillion was spent on armaments worldwide dwarfing the paltry sums spent on aid. Capitalism is capable of spending billions on developing weaponry that is used to bomb the poor of Afghanistan and Iraq into the rubble, but it cannot solve poverty, hunger or disease. It is a system incapable of fully harnessing the science and technology it has brought into being. It is incapable of providing for the needs of humanity or of protecting our fragile planet.

By contrast, a socialist society would be able to harness the enormous potential of human talent and technique in order to build a society and economy which could meet the needs of all. By bringing the vast companies that dominate our planet into democratic public ownership it would be possible to begin to build a society (based on a democratic world plan of production and development) that would genuinely meet the needs of the billions not the billionaires. It is estimated that Africa alone, for example, could feed the world if it was farmed by modern methods. It is the profit motive that leaves its people struggling in dire poverty.

How could socialism be achieved?

Many reading this leaflet will agree that democratic socialism is a good idea but will ask, how can it be implemented? After all, a socialist society would threaten the interests of the multinational companies. As a result, both they and the governments that represent them will do all they can to prevent socialist ideas gaining mass support.

Nonetheless, the working class, in a principled alliance with the urban poor and small farmers, have the power to change society. The world's poor and oppressed have enormous potential power if we unite together and rise from our knees. More and more people are fighting back – from the Nigerian workers who over the last five years have taken part in seven general strikes and mass protests against fuel price hikes, to the Pakistani workers fighting privatisation, to the French and Dutch workers who defied their governments to vote 'no' to continued privatisation and cuts in the recent referendum on the European constitution.

While all of the oppressed can play a vital role in the struggle to change society, the working class, because of its potential collective power and its role in production, has the key role to play. Over the last two years in a series of countries, including Nigeria, Bolivia and Italy, general strikes have brought society to a halt. This shows the potential for the working class to change society, if armed with a clear socialist programme.

At the moment, the majority of struggles are not aiming to change society, but are defensive – attempting to prevent privatisation, wages cuts or job losses. In the CWI we take part in and

fully support these movements, which can succeed in pushing back the neo-liberal onslaught. For example, here in Scotland a determined strike of the nursery nurses was able to win concessions. However, at all stages, the CWI links the fight to defend and improve living conditions with the need for a fundamental socialist change in society – as the only means to permanently improve the lives of the mass of people.

Over the last decade, big business has done all it can to discredit socialism. It has used the collapse of the regimes that existed in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as a whip with which to beat any alternative to capitalism in general and the ideas of socialism in particular. In reality, while these regimes were based on a form of planned economy, they were not genuine socialism but brutal dictatorships. Nonetheless, the restoration of capitalism in what was the Soviet Union has led to a catastrophic drop in living standards, with an average fall in male life expectancy of a decade.

Despite the avalanche of anti-socialist propaganda, the reality of life under capitalism is leading a new generation to begin to move in a socialist direction. It is significant, for example, that the indigenous masses of Bolivia have risen up to demand the nationalisation of their gas industry. Worldwide, the anti-war movement has radicalised a generation, and led many thousands to search out socialist ideas for the first time.

Capitalism today means increasing poverty across the globe, but especially for the masses of the neo-colonial world. We need to make capitalism history, and to make socialism our future!

Global Warming

The Bush regime, funded and backed to the hilt by the US oil industry, has removed what little substance there was in the G8 document on global warming. The document no longer calls for the G8 to act. In fact, it no longer says that global warming 'is a serious threat to human health and eco-systems'. All references to human activity causing global warming are gone. It does not even say that global warming has started.

The White House is blatant in its unwillingness to even admit the existence of global warming. Other leaders, including Blair, recognise its existence and are willing to agree targets. When it comes to action, however, they are no better than Bush. While European countries signed the Kyoto agreement, they are not decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, they increased by 1.1% over the last year. Britain was amongst the worst countries in Europe, with a 1.3% increase.

The G8 are incapable of halting global warming. The very future of the planet is in danger but they do nothing. The capitalist system in whose interests they act is based on the unplanned, blind drive for profit. To develop alternative forms of energy – such as wind, wave, geothermal or solar power – requires cooperation and planning. It means putting the needs of humanity and the planet before profit. Capitalism is incapable of this. As a result, some capitalist leaders are burying their heads in the sand while others turn to the already tried, tested and proven lethal 'alternative' of nuclear power. The struggle to save the planet is part and parcel of the struggle to make capitalism history.



we demand:

- Cancel all debt without conditions. No more hand outs to the speculators and parasitic money lenders.
- No more cuts in public services, pensions and social benefits.
- No to privatisation. Re-nationalise the public utilities that have been privatised.
- A living minimum wage for all.
- Free education at all levels and a free health service.
- Confiscate the assets of companies which blackmail workers and jeopardise the future of the community, or which have a record of environmental pollution.
- Take into public ownership the commanding heights of the economy under workers' democratic control and management.
- For a socialist plan of production. For a socialist society and economy run to meet the needs of all whilst protecting our environment.

struggle for **socialism** – join the CWI!

The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) is an international socialist organisation fighting for the interests of working class people and youth across the globe. It has affiliated parties and organisations in nearly 40 countries on all continents. Some of our important sections in the neo-colonial world include Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Capitalism is a world system. To be successful, the struggle against capitalism requires ideas, a political programme and an organisation that is able to unite workers and oppressed peoples around the globe. The CWI is fighting for the building of a mass workers' international, armed with a programme capable of leading the struggle to change society.

Wherever we have members, we play an active part in the struggles of workers and youth. We play an important role in the trade union movement, not only in Western Europe but also, for example, in Pakistan. The Pakistani section of the CWI was part of the leadership of the recent heroic struggle against the privatisation of the Pakistani telecoms industry.

At the CWI rally (see right) Joe Higgins, Socialist Party TD (member of the Irish parliament) will be speaking. Joe was recently imprisoned for a month for his role in a struggle against unfair taxation. Joe and the Socialist Party in Ireland

are involved in a wide range of struggles. For example, they were, in cooperation with the Democratic Socialist Movement (the CWI in Nigeria), able to win the case of a Nigerian school student who had been forcibly deported from Ireland. They also took up the issue of over 300 Turkish immigrant workers in Ireland – the Gama workers – who were owed wages. An enormous low-pay racket, carried out by multinationals profiteering from state contracts, was uncovered by the Socialist Party. As a result of the campaign, not only did the workers win thousands of euros in back-pay, a cesspool of similar scandals was revealed.

In the CWI, our publicly elected representatives, within the trade unions and in parliaments, take only the average wage of a skilled worker to ensure that they live in the same conditions as those that elected them, unlike the privileged political elite. The CWI's ideas are based on the best of the traditions of the workers' movement.

Socialist ideas emerged from the development of working class struggles in the 19th century when early trade unions and workers political organisations were being formed. This process was international and not confined to Western Europe alone. As capitalism tightened its grip globally, workers started to formulate alternative ideas to do away with the exploitation and to

use their power as a collective force central to the production process. Pioneers of the workers' movement, like Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, gave socialism a scientific character and armed the working class with a powerful programme. The CWI believes that the central ideas of Marx and Engels, which were later developed by Lenin and Trotsky, still apply today and have to form the core of a socialist programme. The CWI is also committed to ensuring the fullest internal democracy and discussion whilst preserving unity in action. Of course, our socialist programme is developed fully in response to and in dialogue with the class struggle today. One of the key tasks facing the working class is the creation of political parties that act in its interests. It is widely recognised by working people that parties, such as New Labour in Britain and the SPD in Germany, no longer in any sense represent their interests – but are brutal neo-liberal parties. The CWI fights for new mass parties on a socialist programme. Here in Scotland, our section, International Socialists, works as a platform within the Scottish Socialist Party. We campaign to build new workers' parties and for them to adopt a socialist programme. At the same time, the CWI is working to win members to our own parties and groups and to win support for the ideas, programme and method of revolutionary socialism.

The CWI at the anti-G8 protests: International Rally for Socialism

Saturday 2 July

Cafe Royal Bistro Bar - 6pm
15 West Register Street (behind Burger King at east end of Princes Street). Speakers include Joe Higgins Socialist Party TD (MP) in Ireland, Peter Taaffe, General Secretary of the Socialist Party in England and Wales and international speakers from Scotland and around Europe

Sunday 3 July

Come along to find out more about the Committee for a Workers' International and the International Socialists
2pm Quakers Meeting House, Victoria Terrace
Victoria Terrace is a pathway running onto George IV bridge and lies between Victoria St and the corner with High Street

At the G8 alternatives forum: Make capitalism history – the case for socialism.

Adam House G, 4.45pm – 6.30pm
Organised by the Committee for a Workers' International, ISR and LFI
Speakers include Joe Higgins, Socialist Party MP in Ireland
The CWI will be organising contingents on all the anti-G8 protests. To march with us ring the numbers below.

Gleneagles march Wednesday 6 July
(organised by G8 Alternatives)
Assemble: Gleneagles station 12 noon.

I would like to:

- Join/find out more about International Socialists (Scotland)
- Join/find out more about the Socialist Party (England and Wales)
- Join/find out more about the CWI in

Name

Address

Telephone

Email

Return to PO Box 3688, London, E11 1YE

March with us! Join us!

Join the international socialists
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