

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

Threats to Iran – Oppose the Disinformation and Warmongering!

It is nearly five years on from the threat to the Iraqi people which was the build-up to the invasion of Iraq, when the British, American and much of the world's people faced an

onslaught of propaganda, falsehoods, and faced all out warmongering from the British and American governments. Now the imperialists are attempting to repeat that history,

a “history as such” imposed on the people, with a campaign of complete disinformation about the sovereign nation of Iran. However, due largely to a massive anti-war movement

which has developed the people's consciousness, the aim of Anglo-American revenge seeking is not well hidden. But the importance of opposing the

Continued on page 6

THE WIDENING GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR



The very rich have grown richer at double the pace of those on middle incomes under New Labour, according to research from the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). The report also shows that their wealth may

have accelerated further in recent years on the back of a rising stock market.

Using the most detailed analysis of tax return records to date, the IFS showed that, in every 1,000 adults, the income of the

very richest person rose on average by 4 per cent above inflation every year between 1996-97 and 2004-05. That compared with growth of about 2 per cent for those on middle incomes. To join the ranks of the top 0.1 per cent of

earners, a high-flyer needs to earn a little more than £350,000 in today's prices, according to the IFS's analysis of anonymous tax

Continued on page 5

Britain and Kenya

The Legacy of Colonialism Must Be Ended and Reparation Made

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ISSUED SEVERAL STATEMENTS IN RECENT WEEKS, as it attempts to interfere in the political crisis which has followed disputed presidential elections in Kenya. Both the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, and the Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, have made the government's views known, the latter also issuing a joint statement with the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice.

The main characteristic of these statements is that they are based on the premise that the big powers still have the right to interfere in the internal political affairs

Continued on page 8

[inside]

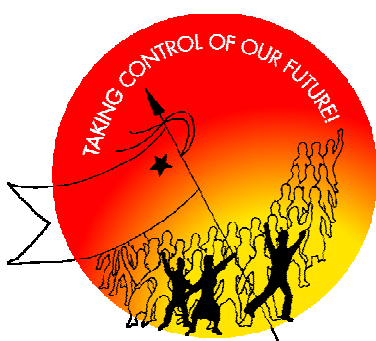
WWYG: Reject the policy of fear of New Labour 2

What the objective conditions are pointing towards 3-5

Threats on Iran 6

Fidel Castro's message 7

Published by RCPB(ML)
170 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 2LA
Registered as a newspaper
Printed by Millennium Press



YOUTH+STUDENT

page of the
**Workers'
Weekly
Youth Group**

Oppose the Criminalisation of the Youth: Reject the Policy of Fear of Jacqui Smith and New Labour

Highlighted in an *Independent* article, the Home Secretary Jacqui Smith exposes her fear of the youth and proposes that seriously authoritative measures be taken in order to combat "out of control" youth on the streets. Amongst the already oppressive measures including ASBOs and citizenship lessons in schools, now the government is proposing that metal detectors be installed in schools in cities such as London, Birmingham and Liverpool. These criminalising proposals come after a torrent of sensationalised propaganda on what amounts to a supposed "inherent criminality" of the youth.

The metal detector plan is part of an "action plan" on violent crime, revealed next month. It is disturbingly following the lead of the US where high school pupils are routinely scanned for weapons in many cities. The plans are to build on the schemes being carried out by the London transport police to install metal detectors in busy railway stations. This is making the various problems experienced by youth into a law and order question, policing them even in what should in a decent society be their sanctuary: schools where they go to learn.

The problems amongst the youth where elements turn to crime cannot be separated from the problems of society and are in fact a damning indictment on soci-

ety as it stands under the current system. The whole anti-social offensive has taken its toll on social programmes for the youth, which highlights that in fact with no cultural programme and a "mainstream" media that promotes violence, the youth are being marginalised from what should be full involvement in society. The scene that New Labour paints is a scene of an army of violent criminals who do not think or understand and who must be dealt with as "extreme" or "radical". The New Labour government has shown nothing but contempt for the youth of Britain, with Brown describing "out of control gangs of teenagers on the streets", while in recent statements Jacqui Smith remarks that she would not walk without police escort on the streets. But an "epidemic" of violent crime amongst the youth is not the real picture. So what do the youth actually stand for?

What they do not stand for are the "British values" that are imposed upon them through controlling mechanisms such as citizenship lessons. In fact in the recent years in complete opposition to these "British values" of neo liberal globalisation, imperialist war and privatisation, the youth have stood at the forefront of movement against these "values" and have expressed their alternative that another world is possible, based on their own values and

principles.

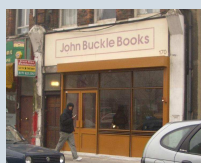
It is criminal in itself that school children who have waged struggle against the Anglo-American Iraq and Afghanistan wars of aggression by organising strikes and actions across the country, are now faced with an attack on their civil liberties in the form of oppressive metal detectors which will create another way to watch and define every young person's move.

So when the youth are marginalised with nowhere to go and take to the streets, they are "violent criminal gangs". And even more indicative of what the government fears from the youth is that when the youth actually engage with the world and express opposition to the government, authorities, etc., there is the criminalisation of dissent.

The youth have stood firm in their resistance of oppressive measures. Fighting to rid schools and campuses of army recruitment teams is just one such struggle they have succeeded in. The youth must continue this resistance on the grounds of opposing this attack on their civil liberties. The youth must seek to understand by an act of finding out what are the questions of the youth, how do these questions pose themselves, and consciously participate in the solving of these problems that face the society to make it our society, where the youth take control of their own future.

John Buckle Centre

Centre for communism and communist and progressive literature
from Britain and around the world



Please contact us by phone or
email before visiting.

E-mail: jbbooks@btconnect.com

170 WANDSWORTH ROAD, LONDON SW8 2LA
Tel: 020 7627 0599 or 0845 644 1979 (Local Rate)

Workers' Weekly

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

Website: www.rcpbml.org.uk

January 26, 2008 Volume 38, Number 2

Subscription rates within Britain (including p&p): 4 issues - £2.95, 6 months - £18.95, Yearly - £33.95.
For any subscription applications from abroad or for bulk subscriptions, please contact *Workers' Weekly* directly.
Cheques should be made payable to 'RCPB(ML)' and sent to 170 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 2LA.

THE NECESSITY FOR CHANGE

What the Objective Conditions are Pointing Towards

It is common knowledge that today in Britain social programmes are under-funded and are under threat through break-up or privatisation. The objective conditions are pointing towards the necessity for change.

Income

The most commonly used threshold of low income is a household income that is 60% or less of the average (median) household income in that year. In 2005/06, almost 13 million people in the UK were living in households below this low-income threshold. This is around a fifth (22%) of the population. This 13

million figure is an increase of $\frac{3}{4}$ million compared with the previous year, 2004/05. The number of people in work in the latest quarter of 2007 was 29.3 million. This shows the extent of the problem as a proportion of the working class and the rate is increasing. The number of people on low incomes is much greater than in the early 1980s. The UK has a higher proportion of its population in relative low income than most other EU countries. The proportion of people living in relative low income in the UK is twice that of the Netherlands, and one-and-a-half times that of both France and Germany.

In 2007, around 5 million employees aged 22 to retirement were paid less than £7 per hour. Two-thirds were women and one-third were men.

In terms of proportions, 28% of female employees and 14% of male employees – were paid less than £7 per hour. Similar differences between men and women exist if a slightly higher or lower low pay threshold is used; so, for example, 22% of the female employees and 10% of the male employees were paid less than £6.50 per hour. It shows that “equality” is a sham. Half of those who paid less than £7 an hour in 2007 were full-time employees and half were part-time employees. Very low pay shows that exploitation is across the board. Among the low paid full-timers, there were as many low paid men as low paid women. By contrast, among the low paid part-timers, women predominate. So, the immediate reason why there are so many more low paid women than low paid men is that there are so many more low paid part-time female workers than there are low-paid part-time male workers.

At all ages, at least a third of part-time employees were paid less than £7 per hour in 2007. Except for the 18-21 age group, the proportion of full-time employees paid less than £7 per hour is much lower than this. The extent to which low-paid part-time work is common at every age can be seen in the observation that that there are almost as many low-paid part-time employees aged over 50 as there are under 30.

Combining part- and full-timers, low paid work is not something that is concentrated among particular age groups but is; instead, that affects a significant proportion of workers at every age. Thus, around one fifth of low paid workers are aged 18 to 21, a further fifth are aged under 30, almost a fifth are in their 30s, a fifth are in their 40s and the remaining fifth are aged 50 or above. Again, this trend shows the depth of the problem across the board.

In total, almost half of all part-

time workers were paid less than £7 per hour in 2007. In two areas of occupation – so-called “elementary” (routine), and sales and customer service – four-fifths were paid less than £7 per hour. In many areas of occupation, more than a third of full-time women were paid less than £7 per hour in 2007. In all occupations, the proportion of men paid less than £7 per hour was lower than that for women. So, gender pay inequalities are not just because women work in more lowly occupations. However, in two occupations – elementary, and sales and customer service – a substantial proportion of full-time men (around two-fifths) were paid less £7 per hour in 2007.

Educational effect on low pay and employment

Labour Force Survey data suggests that around one in four 19-year-olds still lack NVQ2 or its academic equivalent (e.g. five or more good GCSEs) and one in twelve have no qualifications at all.

If people have not reached NVQ2 or equivalent by age 19, they are unlikely to have gone on to do so in the next few years. Taking those born in 1985 as an example: the Department for Children, Schools and Families administrative data suggests that 34% of them lacked at least an NVQ2 or equivalent at age 19, while 29% of them still did so at age 21.

The proportion of 19- to 24-year-olds without a basic qualification is similar throughout the UK, with the exception of Scotland (where it is lower).

The proportion of young adults in the UK without basic qualifications is similar to the European Union average. The lower a person's qualifications, the more likely they are to be unemployed and the more likely they are to be in low paid work.

Effects of disability

Around 5 million people are in receipt of an out-of-work benefit. Of these, almost 3 million are sick

Continued on page 4

THE NECESSITY FOR CHANGE

What the Objective Conditions are Pointing Towards

Continued from page 3

or disabled, a million are unemployed and three quarters of a million are lone parents. Less people are allowed to claim at all. We have seen the government's actions to deplete the numbers claiming incapacity and disability allowances and the plan to eradicate incapacity benefit.

Unemployment

There is much disinformation on unemployment and its true figure. The figures are manipulated and do not indicate the amount of people who do not sign on. The unemployment rate was 5.3 per cent. The number of unemployed people reached 1.65 million. (Source ONS)

Around one in ten "economically active" 19- to 24-year-olds is unemployed. This is around 400,000 people. The unemployment rate for 19- to 24-year-olds fell by a third in the five years to 2001, from 14% to 9½%. It then stabilised until 2004, but then rose to 11½% in 2006. The unemployment rate for 19- to 24-year-olds is now three times the rate for older workers. By contrast, a decade ago, it was "just" twice the rate for older workers.

The unemployment rate is somewhat higher for young men than for young women: 12% compared with 9%. This contrasts with the situation for those aged 25 to retirement, where the unemployment rates for men and

women are similar. At 15%, unemployment rates for 19- to 24-year-olds in London are almost double the rates in the rest of the South of England.

One in seven adults aged 25 to retirement from national minorities is not working but wants to.

The British economy has become more parasitical with the export of capital and the depletion of the manufacturing base. The economy has shifted towards service industry, finance and finally military.

The number of jobs in manufacturing, construction and other production industries has been falling. Over the last decade, the number of jobs in manufacturing, construction and other production industries has fallen from by a million, from 7.1 to 6.1 million. A third of full-time male jobs are in manufacturing, construction and other production industries, compared to one in ten full-time female jobs and one in twenty part-time jobs.

All parts of Britain, apart from London, have lost substantial numbers of jobs in manufacturing, construction and other production industries since 1997.

Birth weight

The effects of poor working conditions on families can be seen in birth weights, a measure of increased impoverishment on the population. Malnutrition, disease and living conditions, and lack of fresh air and green access are all

factors reminiscent of the Victorian existence.

Over the last decade, there has been an increase in the proportion of babies in England and Wales who are of low birth weight. Babies from manual backgrounds are more likely to have a low birth weight than those from non-manual backgrounds: 8½% compared to 6½%. Babies of lone parents are more likely to be of low birth weight than babies of couples are: 10% compared to 7%.

All of these differences have persisted for at least the last decade. The proportion of babies who are of low birth weight is similar in all regions. 1.5 million households in England were classified as being in fuel poverty in 2005, somewhat higher than in 2004 (1.2 million) this shows that the problem is endemic and affects the whole country.

Fuel Poverty

Despite the fact that fuel poverty is increasing, the privatised utility companies have decided to increase fuel bills. Apart from winter dangers of hypothermia, many people have to switch off heating and are creating a serious health problem and risk to life.

Fuel poverty is most common among those who live in private rented accommodation: 9% of households in private rented accommodation compared to 6% in other tenures.

Despite their much lower average incomes, those in social rented accommodation are no more likely to be in fuel poverty than owner-occupiers are.

Most households in fuel poverty have low incomes (80% of those in fuel poverty are in the poorest fifth of households). In broad terms, households are only at a high risk of fuel poverty if they have both low incomes and very energy inefficient homes.

Within England, fuel poverty is most prevalent in the North East.

Overcrowding

Overall 4½% of people and 2% of households live in overcrowded conditions, both similar proportions to a decade ago. The propor-

tion of people living in overcrowded conditions has been rising since 1998, from 3½% to 5%. Overcrowding is four times as prevalent in social rented housing as in owner occupation: 12% of people compared with 3%.

London and Scotland have a much higher proportion of overcrowded households than any other region: from the 2001 Census, 17% of households in London and 12% in Scotland have an occupancy rating of -1 or less compared to around 6% in other regions.

Of the 1.5 million adults living in overcrowded conditions, a third (500,000 adults) neither own nor rent the property they are living in and are in effect therefore living in someone else's home (usually their parents'). Almost half of these are aged 25 or over.

Mortgage arrears

With the "sub-prime" mortgage crisis in America and the Northern Rock crisis, the problem of a policy of lower mortgage agreements to first time buyers has also been highlighted. There are no council houses being built since the sell off of council property in the 1980s and this has remained the case. The government's affordable housing programme is farcical.

Around 14,000 mortgage holders were in serious arrears in 2006, slightly higher than two years earlier. Court orders for re-possession have trebled since 2003 and, at 47,000 in 2006, are now back to the levels of the early 1990s.

Mortgage owners are a far more diverse group than they once were. 14% of working-age heads of households with a mortgage are now in an economically vulnerable position – in part-time work, unemployed or economically inactive. This compares with 5% twenty-five years ago.

Non-take-up of housing benefit has increased sharply since 1997, among both pensioners and those of working-age. For pensioners, the government's mid-point estimate is that 14% of eligible households did not claim the benefit in 2005/06 compared to 9% in

THE NECESSITY FOR CHANGE

1997/98. For working-age households, the government's mid-point estimate is that 15% of eligible households did not claim the benefit in 2005/06 compared to 4% in 1997/98. This reflects the inability to claim because of restriction.

A sixth of all households in rented accommodation are living in income poverty but are not in receipt of housing benefit (and thus have to pay full rent).

There was a major deterioration in the administration of housing benefit in 1999/00 and 2000/01. The proportion of new claims not dealt with within 14 days (from the receipt of all the required information) had already risen from 18% in 1995/96 to 23% in 1998/99, but it then shot up to 37% in the following two years.

This deterioration in performance followed the introduction of the "verification framework" designed to reduce levels of "fraudulent claims".

Homelessness

110,000 households in England were officially recognised as newly homeless by their local authorities in 2006. Homelessness rose again from 2000 to 2003. Although most prevalent in London, homelessness is to be found throughout the country.

By far the biggest reason for becoming homeless is loss of accommodation provided by relatives or friends (two-fifths of those deemed "in priority need"), with a further fifth each being due to relationship breakdown or loss of tenancy. Mortgage and rent arrears account for one in twenty.

A fifth of those accepted as homeless and in priority need by English local authorities are from national minorities. This means that national minority households are more than twice as likely to become homeless.

Many of those who are effectively homeless live in concealed households – households that neither own nor rent the property that they are living in. The number of homeless households in temporary accommodation can be seen as a measure of the capacity of local authorities to meet the needs of

those homeless households whom they have a duty to accommodate. In the first quarter of 2007, there were around 100,000 homeless households in temporary accommodation in Britain. This is double the numbers of a decade ago.

A quarter of households leaving temporary accommodation in 2006 had stayed there for a year or more, while one in seven had been there for two years or more. It is a moot point whether stays of such a long duration can properly be described as "temporary", or indeed whether "temporary accommodation" is appropriate for such long stays.

All of the factors, which motivate people for change, low income, poor education, unemployment, concern for disability, birth weight, fuel poverty, overcrowding, mortgage arrears, homelessness and other factors not mentioned above such as medical treatment and care for the elderly are increasing. They show the reality of life today in Britain. They show the failure of the capitalist system to provide a humane existence for all members of society. Under this system, the motive of maximising capitalist profit and individual enrichment is in command, not the well-being of society and its members. However, the factors also show the need for organising society in the image of the working class based on modern definitions. Internationally also, a pro-worker, pro-social society will also eschew the use of war, conflict and domination and will act to the benefit of all nations and peoples.

This is what the objective conditions are pointing towards, a revolutionary transformation of society and the negation of all the retrogression and blocking the path to progress that this old society represents. In this transformation, it is the working class who must become the leaders of society. Under these circumstances the working class has to become conscious of its mission to capture political power and save the day for the people.

(sources: *The New Policy Institute 2007 survey*; *ONS*)

The Widening Gap between Rich and Poor

Continued from page 1

return data. Rarely has there been such a concentration of wealth among so few people. The IFS itself says that "income inequality is currently at its highest levels since the late 1940s". The report studied income alone, which understates the gap between the rich and the rest, as the assets of the rich contribute to widening the gap between rich and poor.

This inequality affects every aspect of life. The notion that the government is working to bring about a "level playing field" is given the lie by the reality of the society and the experience of the working class and people regarding their own conditions of life. In fact, the economic system itself is ensuring that the claim of the rich on the entire social product is taking priority and is escalating, especially through straightforward parasitism domestically and internationally. This means to live through taking the lifeblood out of the social economy, and is reaching such proportions that all the illnesses of severe and widespread destitution, unemployment, crises and chronic insecurity threaten the economic well-being.

This is because the economic system and socialised economy is run in every aspect to further the enrichment of a few. And this few hold the supreme power, backed by an absolutist parliamentary system. This in itself gives the guideline to the way forward, to the way out of these wildly recurring crises that the government claims are nothing



but blips in a "sound" economy, blips that the government is allegedly powerless to do anything about. It is to deprive these few of their supreme power. How to achieve this, is the burning issue – how to create the conditions to prepare for this decisive act of a working class conscious of itself as a class and organising that it should constitute itself as the dominant power. The way forward is for the workers to participate in building an opposition to every manifestation of the injustices of this rule of the elite, it is for the workers to become political, which means fighting for their own interests and for a self-reliant non-parasitic economy under their own control and direction. This is summed up in their political programme, of increasing investments in social programmes, and demanding an end to all "reforms" aimed at paying the rich. Otherwise the rich will go on getting richer and the social economy will be destroyed.

It is imperative that the workers develop the outlook of taking hold of what belongs to them, and that in a situation where the monopolies use the power of the state to enforce their interests at the expense of the public well-being and to swell the ranks of the oppressed, the workers themselves organise for political power. The rich, the few, have usurped power by force. The working class, at the head of all the oppressed, have to ensure that this grossest of all injustices, which is also wreaking havoc and war on the nations and peoples of the world, must be ended.

Threats to Iran – Oppose the Disinformation and Warmongering!

Continued from page 1

disinformation and supporting the anti-war movement, a movement that must join with all sections and fight for an anti-war government, is imperative to the struggle of humankind to prevent war and build a peaceful future. What are the US imperialists with their British cohorts up to?

The massively promoted “incident” in the Strait of Hormuz, off Iran, revealed the same Goebbels technique of deceiving the people through the media and trying to form a basis by which a pre-emptive strike can be launched on Iran. Information has come to light that the US in fact doctored the video tape that reportedly shows a threat to a US ship by an Iranian speedboat.

A video released by Iran shows a different situation altogether. The Iranian commander is heard to say, “Coalition warship 73, this is Iranian navy patrol boat.” He then requests the “side numbers” of the US warships. A voice with a US accent replies, “This is coalition warship 73. I am operating in international waters.” This is in direct contradiction with the US version, which paints a scene of a dramatic threat by Iran that could have culminated in a “battle at sea”.

This video tape was used to further justify Iran as the enemy in the Middle East with Bush reiterating his warmongering tactic that Iran is “a threat to world peace”. But after evidence to suggest that the video tape shown by American media could well have fake audio, like the evidence of a veteran US naval officer who said his “first thought” was that “the message ‘might not have come from the Iranian craft’; Pentagon officials

Statement of a British Iranian Woman

Workers' Weekly asked a British Iranian woman who visited Iran in early January during the much publicised Strait of Hormuz “incident” to give her views on Iran and its people and the defence of Iran’s sovereignty. Here is her reply.

The Iranian people have fought for their freedom and, yes, they still do have many problems. But let us not forget that it was indeed the British who stirred up propaganda well before the revolution as soon as the former Iranian president decided he was going to nationalise Iran’s oil (BP). The intentions of the West have been crystal clear from the start. The poverty in Iran was horrendous before the revolution when the US backed the shah in all his brutal regimes. The Iran people have seen the outcome in Iraq and have no trust in the West and their motive of the pursuit of profit. And so, as we see, the media in Britain continue to find more ways to stir up propaganda. If they run out of “terrorist

stories”, I’m sure they will use the suppression of women to have us thinking how brutal Iran is.

Yes, it is true that women are still fighting for their rights, but they are succeeding. There are more women in university than men, laws are being adapted after the increase in women Iranian lawyers, and like most of us young women they are getting on working and studying day to day. After attending an event in Shiraz, Iran, which celebrates the role of Iranian women I was happy to see there were more men there than woman. Most women will tell you that Iran does have problems, but they do not live in the stone ages. I find it very offensive that people have this perception, but when the only information you get on Iran is a victim of propaganda it

does not surprise me.

Iranian people, like most people, are fighting for better living conditions. Most will tell you they find it very hypocritical when Bush refers to them as “axis of evil” and only highlights the problems in their country as he has many social problems like gun crime that cause problems for the American people. As much as we in Britain may be shocked with what the media tells us, the Iranian people are equally as shocked that for such a “liberated country” as the US, democracy does not fully exist. Nobel peace prize winner Shirin Ebadi had to fight a court case in the US just to get her book published.

The Iranian people like all people are fighting for their rights and building their country and do not need the “help” of America.

had to admit that the message may have come from another source. In other words, the warmongering tactics of the Bush administration are so apparent to the vast majority of people that they the US state are left with no choice but to face the exposure to their lies.

It seems that one of the main aims of Bush on his tour of the Middle East was to use the “policy of fear” to convince Middle Eastern countries that Iran is the enemy. Being received by some of the richest oil men, Bush was trying to form alliances with countries such as Saudi Arabia to unite against Iran. Meanwhile his policy towards Israel is to be behind it 100% in its continued armed offensive against the Palestinians. Of Israel, Bush stated that the government would have its “security” while saying nothing about the long endured hardship and struggle of the Palestinian people.

Israel being the ally and agent of the Anglo-American imperialist agenda is itself the threat to Middle

East peace, having a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons. But it is Iran which is being attacked as the warmongering nation who must comply with the Non-Proliferation Treaty. What is all this nonsense about Iran’s nuclear arms programme? Even according to the US National Intelligence Estimate, Iran has not had a nuclear arms programme since 2003. Iran has its uranium enrichment programme which is to be used for peaceful purposes, which has been confirmed by the IAEA who have been working with Iran.

Anglo-US imperialism is creating an ever-increasing threat to world peace. It is the Bush-Brown alliance that perpetuates a foreign policy geared towards attacking any nation that stands in the way of the unilateral demands of the US and its hegemony. Opposed to this are Iran and other threatened nations and most importantly the majority of the world’s people. It is the force of this opposition to the war plans of the imperialists that has already

seen troops being pulled out of Basra and it is this force who will bring an end to these wars. If any further plans of an attack on Iran occur, the British people know their responsibility to hold Brown to account.

The British people including workers, women, youth, national minorities, veteran soldiers and all sections of the people are already in preparation for a national demonstration to take place on March 15, 2008, five years on from the start of the Iraq war. What needs to be acknowledged by the many opposed to the war in Iraq and Afghanistan and the threat to Iran is that Brown will not change course on this front and it is the people who must put forward their agenda of fighting to bring into being a democratic anti-war government that vests sovereignty in the people. This is the most important question, that it must be the people who decide what the future of British foreign policy is, a policy that holds the sovereignty of nations as inviolable.

Cuban President Fidel Castro's Message to Cuban National Assembly

Dear comrade Alarcón:

Please read the following message, addressed to the National Assembly, when you open the morning session.

A heartfelt embrace,

Fidel Castro Ruz

December 27, 2007

8:40 pm

Comrades of the National Assembly:

You have no easy task on your hands. On January 1st, 1959, surrounded by the accumulated and deepening grievances that our society inherited from its neo-colonial past under U.S. domination, many of us dreamed of creating a fully independent nation where justice prevailed. In the arduous and uneven struggle, there came the moment when we were left completely alone.

Nearly 50 years since the triumph of the Revolution, we can justifiably feel proud of ourselves, as we have held our ground, for almost half a century, in the struggle against the most powerful empire ever to exist in history. In the Proclamation I signed on July 31, 2006, none of you saw any signs of nepotism or an attempt to usurp parliamentary powers. That year, at once difficult and promising for the Revolution, the unity of the people, the Party and State were essential to continue moving forward and to face the declared threat of a military action by the United States.

This past December 24, during his visit to the various districts of the municipality which honored me with the nomination of candidate to parliament, Raúl noted that all of the numerous candidates proposed by the people of a district famous for its combativeness, but with a low educational level, had completed their higher education. This, as he said on Cuban television, made a profound impression in him.

Party, State and Government cadres and grassroots organisations face new problems in their work with an intelligent, watchful and educated people who detest bureaucratic hurdles and inconsiderate justifications. Deep down, every citizen wages an individual battle against humanity's innate tendency to stick to its survival instincts, a natural law which governs all life.

We are all born marked by that instinct, which science defines as primary. Coming face to face with this instinct is rewarding because it leads us to a dialectical process and to a constant and altruistic struggle, bringing us closer to Martí and making us true communists.

What the international press has emphasized most in its reports on Cuba in recent days is the statement I made on the 17th of this month, in a letter to the director of Cuban television's Round Table program, where I said that I am not clinging to power. I could add that for some time I did, due to my youth and lack of awareness, when, without any guidance, I started to leave my political ignorance behind and became a utopian socialist. It was a stage in my life when I believed I knew what had to be done and wanted to be in a position to do it! What made me change? Life did, delving more deeply into Martí's ideas and those of the classics of socialism. The more deeply I became involved in the struggle, the stronger was my identification with those aims and, well before the revolutionary victory I was already convinced that it was my duty to fight for these aims or to die in combat.

We also face great risks that threaten the human species as a whole. This has become more and more evident to me since I predicted, for the first time in Rio de Janeiro, —over 15 years ago, in June 1992— that a species was threatened with extinction as a result of the destruction of its natural habitat.

Today, the number of people who understand the real danger of this grows every day.

A recent book by Joseph Stiglitz, former Vice-President of the World Bank and President Clinton's chief economic adviser until 2002, Nobel Prize laureate and bestselling author in the United States, offers up-to-date and irrefutable facts on the subject. He criticizes the United States, a country which did not sign the Kyoto Protocol, for being the largest producer of carbon dioxide in the world, with annual emissions of 6 billion tons of this gas which disturbs the atmosphere without which life is impossible. In addition to this, the United States is the largest producer of other greenhouse gases.

Few people are aware of these facts. The same economic system which forced this unsustainable wastefulness on us impedes the distribution of Stiglitz' book. Only a few thousand copies of an excellent edition have been published, enough to guarantee a margin of profit. This responds to a market demand, which the publishing house cannot ignore if it is to survive.

Today, we know that life on Earth has been protected by the ozone layer, located in the atmosphere's outer ring, at an altitude between 15 to 50 kilometers, in the region known as the stratosphere, which acts as the planet's shield against the type of solar radiation which can prove harmful. There are greenhouse gases whose warming potential is higher than that of carbon dioxide and which widen the hole in the ozone layer above Antarctica, which loses as much as 70 percent of its volume every spring. The effects of this phenomenon, which is gradually taking place, are humanity's responsibility.

To have a clear sense of this phenomenon, suffice it to say that the world produces an average of 4.37

metric tons of carbon dioxide per capita. In the case of the United States, the average is 20.14, nearly 5 times as much. In Africa, it is 1.17, while in Asia and Oceania it is 2.87.

The ozone layer, in brief, protects us from ultraviolet and heat radiation which affects the immune system, sight, skin and life of human beings. Under extreme conditions, the destruction of that layer by human beings would affect all forms of life on the planet.

Other problems, foreign to our nation and many others under similar conditions, also threaten us. A victorious counterrevolution would spell a disaster for us, worse than Indonesia's tragedy. Sukarno, overthrown in 1967, was a nationalist leader who, loyal to Indonesia, headed the guerrillas who fought the Japanese.

General Suharto, who overthrew him, had been trained by Japanese occupation forces. At the conclusion of World War II, Holland, a U.S. ally, re-established control over that distant, extensive and populated territory. Suharto maneuvered. He hoisted the banners of U.S. imperialism. He committed an atrocious act of genocide. Today we know that, under instructions from the CIA, he not only killed hundreds of thousands but also imprisoned a million communists and deprived them and their relatives of all properties or rights; his family amassed a fortune of 40 billion dollars — which, at today's exchange rate, would be equivalent to hundreds of billions — by handing over the country's natural resources, the sweat of Indonesians, to foreign investors. The West paid up. Texan-born Lyndon B. Johnson, Kennedy's successor, was then the President of the United States.

The news on the events in

Continued on page 8



Cuban President Fidel Castro's Message to Cuban National Assembly

Continued from page 7

Pakistan we received today also attest to the dangers that threaten our species: internal conflict in a country that possesses nuclear weapons. This is a consequence of the adventurous policies of and the wars aimed at securing the world's natural resources unleashed by the United States.

Pakistan, involved in a conflict it did not unleash, faced the threat of being taken back to the Stone Age.

The extraordinary circumstances faced by Pakistan had an immediate effect on oil prices and stock exchange shares. No country or region in the world can disassociate itself from the consequences. We must be prepared for anything.

There hasn't been a day in my life in which I haven't learned something.

Martí taught us that "all of the world's glory fits in a kernel of corn." Many times have I said and repeated this phrase, which carries in eleven words a veritable school of ethics.

Cuba's Five Heroes, imprisoned by the empire, are to be held up as examples for the new generations.

Fortunately, exemplary conducts will continue to flourish with the consciousness of our peoples as long as our species exists.

I am certain that many young Cubans, in their struggle against the Giant in the Seven-League Boots, would do as they did. Money can buy everything save the soul of a people who has never gone down on its knees.

I read the brief and concise report which Raúl wrote and sent me. We must not waste a minute as we continue to move forward. I will raise my hand, next to you, to show my support.

*Fidel Castro Ruz,
December 27, 2007. 8:35 pm*

The Legacy of Colonialism Must Be Ended and Reparation Made

Continued from page 1

of other countries, to dictate what kind of political system they should have and what particular course of action another country's political leaders should adopt, just as in the days of formal colonial rule. In the case of Kenya, the British and US governments have openly criticised the political institutions and the "Presidential system" in operation in that country, and demanded that rival presidential candidates enter into some kind of "power-sharing agreement". As the Foreign Secretary put it, "The Presidential system is designed to concentrate power when Kenya's immediate and medium term future requires the sharing of power." He also made it clear that what is at stake is not the empowerment of the people of Kenya but rather what is referred to as the "democratic process", i.e. the Eurocentric model of representative democracy must be seen to work in Kenya, in order that it may become further entrenched throughout Africa. The disputed election and its aftermath in Kenya have provided the justification for further interference in that country's internal affairs. As Miliband argues, "The political divisions in Kenya mean an international presence is vital."

Conditions for empowerment

The people of Kenya, like those of many other countries, have on many occasions demonstrated their opposition to the fact that the existing political system, which is itself a legacy from the country's colonial past, does not create the conditions for their empowerment. Therefore, the current crisis cannot just be presented as a question of the relative power of the executive and the legislature, as many commentators and the Britain and US governments are suggesting. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary are no more concerned about the sovereignty of the people of Kenya than they are about the empowerment of the people of Britain. They are defenders of the dictate of the monopolies and resolutely opposed to peoples'

empowerment and sovereignty. It is clear, for example, that the British government shows no concern for those who fought against British colonialism in Kenya and for the national and social liberation of the people of that country.

Just legal action

This year several of the survivors of that heroic struggle against British colonial rule in Kenya, sometimes known as the Mau Mau, are due to begin a legal action against the British army and colonial authorities. They will claim that the British imprisoned, tortured and illegally killed thousands of Kenyans during the national liberation struggle during the 1950s, to prevent the people of Kenya exercising their right to self-determination. It is estimated that the British colonial authorities killed some 100,000 Kenyans during this period. The veteran freedom fighters are launching a test case which will demand compensation for human rights abuses from the Foreign Office. The claim is backed by the Kenyan Human Rights Commission. British lawyers acting for the veterans stress that the British government of the day breached the European convention of human rights that then existed and argue that the case has to be brought to court not least because there must be "acknowledgement by the British government that what it did was wrong".

However, the government, despite all its alleged humanitarian concern for the people of Kenya and their democratic rights, is contesting the case on the spurious grounds that



the atrocities were carried out a long time ago and that after formal independence the responsibility for atrocities carried out by the British government now lies with the government of Kenya.

Gordon Brown is on record as saying that Britain should stop apologising for colonialism, even though such an apology has never been made. Indeed, it is this system of exploitation and its legacy that has created such dire economic and political circumstances in Kenya and many other countries. The declared aim of the government of "making Britain great again" involves the perpetuation of the colonial domination of Africa in new forms

Oppose continuing interference

The government's alleged humanitarian concern over the recent events in Kenya is completely hypocritical and fraudulent. Its aim is to further consolidate systems of governance that facilitate neo-liberal globalisation and subjugation in modern conditions and to prevent the people of Kenya and other countries from empowering themselves and taking command of their own lands and resources. It is the responsibility of the working class and democratic people in Britain to oppose the continuing interference of the government in the affairs of other countries, to put an end to the neo-colonial chains that still enslave Britain's former colonies, to settle scores with the old colonial mentality and conscience and to demand reparation for all the crimes and entire legacy of British colonialism.

Workers' Daily Internet Edition

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

Web site: www.rcpbml.org.uk

e-mail: office@rcpbml.org.uk

WDIE sent by e-mail daily (Text e-mail): 1 issue free, 6 months £5, Yearly £10
Address: 170 Wandsworth Road, London, SW8 2LA

Phone: 0845 644 1979 (Local rate from outside London)
or 020 7627 0599