

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

World Social Forum 2008 – Another World Is Possible!

On January 22, press conferences announced details of the 2008 decentralised World Social Forum (WSF) Global

Day of Mobilisation and Action. At least 18 press conferences were held in Atlanta, USA; Zurich, Switzerland; Chennai, India; Mumbai, India; Erbil,

Iraq; Rome, Italy; Brussels, Belgium; Sao Paulo, Brazil; Rio De Janeiro, Brazil; Natal, Brazil; Belem, Brazil; Mexico City, Mexico; Havana, Cuba;

Ramallah, Palestine; Manila, Philippines; Seoul, Korea; Beirut, Lebanon; Barcelona, Spain. The press conferences

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SALUTE THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE



After 60 years of annexation and oppression, the Palestinian people heroically persist in constantly resisting the occupation of their country and waging struggle against their oppressors. Part of the struggle of the last seven months has been to

resist an illegal blockade imposed upon Gaza by the Israeli aggressors.

The Mediterranean coastal enclave of the Gaza Strip is home to more than 1.5 million people subject to Israeli military occupation since June 1967. It has come to be

described as “the world’s largest open air prison”. It has been subject to a massive financial embargo and other sanctions designed to “put the Palestinians on a diet”, that is, starve them into submission, as the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert infamously boasted.

In the siege of Gaza, Israel blocked fuel oil supplies to the Gaza Strip leaving hundreds of thousands of homes without power. Hospitals were forced to rely on diesel gener-

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Youth slave labour:

Oppose Monopolies’ Plan to Take Control of Education

GORDON BROWN PLANS TO GIVE THE GO AHEAD FOR BIG MONOPOLIES such as McDonalds to take part in A-

level-style qualifications. The corporations McDonalds, FlyBe and Network Rail have been given “awarding body status” to level 3 by the curriculum authority, equivalent to A-Level or advanced diploma. What is the aim of these proposals?

Brown’s vision of education is closely linked to the upholding of “British values” in which everyone should be a good citizen and negate their own interests in favour of subordinating to the monopolies. In general, as the political representatives of the ruling class, the government is attempting to tie education ever

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World Social Forum 2008 – Another World Is Possible!

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highlighted actions happening in each country as well as stories from the front lines of people's struggles. The WSF Global Day of Mobilisation and Action took place on January 26 at which time millions of women and men, organisations, networks, movements, trade unions from all parts of the world acted together all around the globe to show that another world is possible.

All over the world, people will march, speak, celebrate, and dialogue in villages, rural zones, and urban centres, a WSF 2008 press release says. The mobilisation on January 26 was been set to coincide with the World Economic Forum held in Davos, Switzerland to confront the major gathering of neo-liberal elites.

"In these same days the 'old' world, represented by the World Economic Forum complete with its economists, experts, and ideologies that produce violence, exploitation, exclusion, poverty, hunger and ecological disaster and deprive people of human rights, will meet in Davos as usual. In contrast, the people's movement of movements will raise their collective voices and take action all around the globe for the World Social Forum 2008," the press release says. It continues:

"The World Social Forum is an open space where social

movements, networks, NGOs and other civil society organisations come together to raise issues, debate ideas democratically, formulate proposals, share experiences, and network for effective action. These movements are opposed to neo-liberalism and a world dominated by capital and all forms of imperialism. Since the first worldwide encounter in 2001, the World Social Forum has become a permanent global process seeking and building alternatives to neo-liberal policies.

"World Social Forums have taken place at the end of January at different sites throughout the world each year for the past seven years, and their spirit will continue to be reflected in the activities planned at those same sites and worldwide in 2008. [...]"

"Millions of people, workers, organisations, networks, and movements around the world are struggling, against neo-liberalism, war, colonialism, racism, and patriarchy with rich and varied proposals of real-life alternatives. They represent all ages, peoples, cultures, and beliefs united by the strong conviction that ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE!"

The website of the WSF 2008, <http://wsf2008.net>, is online. It will be the main communication tool for organising actions as well as the main source of information about the WSF 2008.

A Treaty to Strengthen and Modernise the Reactionary Union of the Monopolies

The parliamentary debate on the European Union (Amendment) Bill, the Bill to ratify the controversial Lisbon Treaty of the EU, the so-called "Reform Treaty" signed by EU leaders of government last December, commenced last week. To come into operation the treaty now has to be ratified by all EU member states, a process which will take at least a year.

The government has already been accused of limiting the amount of time available for parliamentary scrutiny of the Treaty and of trying to force through ratification. The government is proposing ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, a new EU constitution in everything but name, even though it gave a manifesto pledge to call a referendum over any new EU constitution. The actual nature of the Lisbon Treaty was confirmed by the House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs. Last week the Committee reported, "We conclude that there is no material difference between the provisions on foreign affairs in the Constitutional Treaty which the Government made subject to approval in a referendum and those in the Lisbon Treaty on which a referendum is being denied."

The government's position as summarised by David Miliband, the Foreign Secretary, is that "Britain's membership and full engagement with the EU is good

for Britain and good for Europe; and we believe this Treaty is good for Britain and good for Europe". The Conservative Party and some Labour MPs, on the other hand, are demanding a referendum on the treaty, while the Liberal Democrats are calling for a referendum to decide EU membership. In recent days it has also been announced that there may be private legal challenges to force a referendum, even if Parliament votes against one, either through demands for a judicial review, or on other legal grounds based on the claim that the government has broken its manifesto pledges.

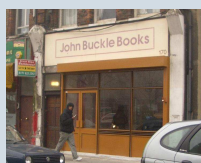
Strengthening monopolies' dictate

The EU remains a reactionary alliance of the big European monopolies and their representatives, a means to attempt to coordinate the dictate of the monopolies throughout Europe and internationally.

The main aim of the Lisbon Treaty is to strengthen and modernise the enlarged EU, in the conditions of the 21st century and to enable it to more effectively intervene in global affairs. The new Treaty also favours Britain and the other big powers, through reforming decision-making and voting procedures but it is particularly concerned with strengthening the ability of the EU to act outside its borders. As David Miliband expressed it, "The Government

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Demonstration against World Economic Forum, St Gallens, Switzerland

believes that security and prosperity within the EU demands more purposeful action beyond Europe's borders." The new Treaty will facilitate such action by the EU. It will do so not least by strengthening the military capacity of the EU to act independently of NATO and by establishing a new minister for foreign affairs, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, backed up by a new foreign ministry, the so-called External Action Service, which will work in conjunction with the diplomats of member states. Amongst other things it is to be noted that the Lisbon Treaty commits member states to "undertake progressively to improve their military capabilities".

To turn things around

Although a great fuss is being made about the differing views of the main parties in regard to the treaty, the fact remains that all are zealous supporters of the EU and Britain's continued membership. It is Britain's continued membership of the EU and its very existence that must be opposed, not simply on the basis that it is an attack on Britain's sovereignty, but rather as a further manifestation of the dictate of the big monopolies in the conditions of neo-liberal globalisation. It is this dictate that continues to pose a grave threat not only to the people of Britain but globally too, as the rivalry and contention between all the big powers and their blocs intensifies. At the same time, the current parliamentary debate and scrutiny, and the proposed legal challenges, highlight the fact that such mechanisms offer no opportunities for the broad masses of the people to make their voice heard and hold politicians to account, nor are they a mechanism for the

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Oppose Monopolies' Plan to Take Control of Education

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more closely with the needs of the monopolies. The monopolies call the tune, and Brown kowtows to them. The programme to invite the monopolies to participate directly in setting the direction for "education" reflects the dictate of the needs of neo-liberal globalisation. It is geared to the programme for Britain to compete in the global market in a bid to outdo China and India, and steal a march on European rivals. His emphasis on skills is deceptive. The niche the Prime Minister is carving out for Britain is particularly to compete in the high-skill, high-tech sphere. There is also Britain's place as a leader in the financial markets of the world. For the vast majority, Brown's programme is actually to de-skill the workforce. It is literally to attempt to reduce the youth to anti-conscious wage slaves. It is a role the youth do not accept and are organising against. In return, the government accuses these youth of behaviour problems or attitude issues, criminalises them and makes them the target of law and order clampdowns. The "McQualifications" proposed by Brown dovetail into this picture. They highlight his attitude as the present champion of the monopoly class to provide the monopolies with cheap labour to exploit, presenting youth with only this as the option in life. Much the same methods are also used to recruit for the armed forces.

This move is leading to widescale opposition, including from the teachers' unions. It should not be overlooked that the proposals are also aimed to undermine the unity of the workers through trying to inculcate young workers in accepting to have their rights as workers and as human beings ignored. They are aimed to coerce the youth into accepting that the only way to get on in life is to compete remorselessly with fellow workers, to identify their personal interests only with the success of their employers and to jettison senti-

ments of humanity and social consciousness. It is both an anti-union agenda, and one aimed at driving down wages and conditions. Unions such as the University and College Union, and The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers have condemned this move and are outraged that education will be at the mercy of corporations whose interests are to make profit. Chris Keates, general secretary of NASUWT, said: "It is a huge mistake to allow McDonald's, with its poor track record of employment practice and anti-trade union attitude, to pioneer private sector provision of training."

Concept of the youth

What is the response of the youth to the fact that the monopolies want to take over "education"? The youth are discussing this issue and are outraged. One young woman aged 19 says of this type of "education", "It is disgusting that a business or company has control over education. The syllabus should be decided by staff and students who understand what their true education needs are. Not by these businesses who will control the syllabus so that they can teach children how good burgers are!" She goes on to say, "This happened at a school in Gateshead which had loads of money pumped into it by Reg Vardy and had a lot more government funding because they wanted to make an example of it. Because Reg Vardy wanted the school to be religious it was, and the rules on uniform were stupidly strict and the kids were under huge pressure. This shows that this kind of brain washing of this so-called education, pressuring the students to be exceptional whilst telling them all about their 'moral codes', cannot be sustained or does not nurture the young person in the slightest. It teaches young people that to succeed in life they must become as rich and 'successful' as their school sponsor."

So what is the youth's concept of education? The youth understand that education is a right, not something to be granted at the whim of big corporation. But what

is this education and how must it be guaranteed? "History as such" teaches us that "education" is the attainment of knowledge so that we may "succeed" in "making it". It teaches us that we are indebted to the society for this "education" and that we should go on and grab a career and that despite low wages and bad conditions we are lucky, and this is the way to "success". In an act of finding out, the youth see that actually education is something completely different from this, that education should be arming the youth to take up social responsibility for the future of society. The partnership of big business and the government is geared against an enlightened workforce, and stands in the way of progress for the youth and the working class.

Stand of the youth

This action by the government on behalf of the monopolies is part of their whole attempt to convince the youth and working people that there can be no alternative to the system dictated by monopolies like McDonalds. Young people, because of poverty or tuition fees, are forced to work in low paid jobs becoming wage slaves, and without unions are at the beck and call of these giant corporations. These multinational companies do not have the enlightenment of working people on their agenda. Instead they will attempt to forge a workforce that is answerable to them.

But in the face of this youth must take a stand. Youth have a right to a decent livelihood and also a right to education to the highest standard. The youth must seek answers through engaging in discussion. This conscious participation is the only way forward to gaining the understanding needed to end the exploitation of young people and the working class as a whole. Through discussion on the way forward, the youth can open up paths to progress, by putting forward a programme and taking actions that constitute them as decision makers. The future of the youth must not be dictated by these monopolies, the youth must have their own future in their own hands, by taking control of it.

Friendship and Solidarity with the Korean People!

Meeting on the DPRK and its Advances

The Friends of Korea are holding a public meeting on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), on the occasion of the anniversary of the birth of its leader Comrade Kim Jong Il. The programme includes a film show, a speech on the significance of the DPRK, and ample opportunity for contributions and discussion. Guest of honour will be Jong In Song, Counsellor at the DPRK Embassy in London. The meeting will conclude with a cultural programme and food.

**Saturday, February 16, 2008,
3.00 pm**

Saklatvala Hall, Dominion Road, Southall UB2 5AA

All welcome!

Organised by Friends of Korea.

A Treaty to Strengthen and Modernise the Reactionary Union of the Monopolies

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majority to be the decision-makers.

Britain's continued EU membership and the parliamentary debate over the new treaty highlights the fact that the people of Britain are continually denied the right to decide, not only in regard to the EU but over every aspect of life in Britain. What must be demanded and fought for is a political system that recognises that all individuals have fundamental inherent rights by virtue of being human. One of the most important of these rights is to fully participate in the decision-making process, to make decisions regarding the future of the individual, the various collectives of the people and society itself.

Workers' Weekly calls on the working class and people to seriously discuss the issue of the European Union and Britain's membership from the perspective

of how to turn things around, to work for Britain's withdrawal from this bloc that serves the monopolies and poses a threat to the peace and security of the people, especially as it contends with other big-power blocs for domination and control of markets, resources and territory. Rejecting the model of a "social Europe" is an important stand to take, but the reasons for this also point to rejecting such a model as a guideline for democracy by, of and for the working class and people in Britain also. In this respect, this model as one suitable for the monopolies is a profound issue to grasp. The contradictions within the EU are a problem for the big powers of old Europe, and this presents an important opportunity for the working class and people to consider the issue from the standpoint of seriously organising to become the decision-makers within Britain.

Salute the Palestinian Resistance

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ators. Bakeries and petrol stations closed. The Palestinians, many of whom are refugees having been driven out of other parts of Palestine when Israel was created in 1948, were left without food and supplies. This is a genocidal policy which is part of the whole fascist policy towards the Palestinians.

Last week, Israel tightened the blockade, sealing off Gaza, supposedly because of Palestinian attacks by the military wing of Hamas. Yet, on December 23, 2007, Israel rejected Hamas call for ceasefire negotiations. Since then, Israeli air and ground attacks have killed dozens of Palestinians and wounded hundreds more in Gaza, most of them civilians. In 2007, 373 Palestinians were killed in Gaza and the West Bank, compared to just 13 Israeli deaths.

A victory of the resistance

Hamas wanted Egypt to open its borders so that food, medicine and fuel could be brought in. This was denied. On January 23 a wall dividing Egypt from the Gaza strip was blown up by Palestinian militants who left 15 openings in the wall and then Palestinian bulldozers demolished it and thousands of Palestinians, some 350,000 according to reports, made their way through. Abdullah al-Najar who runs a taxi company in the northern town of Jabalya reflected, "I don't know who did it. But this is an agreement between two peoples, not between governments."

This was a victory for the Palestinians who continue to fight back, and state their ownership of their country, that they themselves



have the power to resist this blockade, stop the occupation of their country and take control over their own affairs once the obstacles to their doing so are overcome. The Israeli Zionists have been unable to liquidate the Palestinian people's resistance to Israeli occupation within the Gaza Strip. This heroic struggle proves that the Zionist project will never succeed. Support from other peoples for their right to be and for their struggle against the elimination of their existence as a people, such as that shown by the Egyptian people, is also highly important.

Long live the resistance!

The apartheid that the Palestinians are being subjected to is supported by the big powers, particularly US and Europe. Britain supplies arms to Israel and aims to maintain the status quo that keeps the Palestinians at the receiving end of the most aggressive occupation. The working class and people of Britain have a responsibility to hold their government to account and demand an end to the support of Israel, and an end to Anglo-US war crimes and interference throughout the Middle East. *Workers' Weekly* calls on the working class and all justice-loving people to raise their voices every stronger in support of the just cause of the Palestinian people and their resistance struggle. The working class must fight for an anti-war government that condemns such actions as the Israeli occupation of Palestine, and holds the sovereignty of nations as inviolable.

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