

FIGHT RACISM!
FIGHT IMPERIALISM!



Africa, poverty, the G8 and imperialism

The Labour government's sudden 'passion' for Africa and for eliminating the continent's chronic poverty is clearly phoney. It has failed to eradicate poverty in Britain, the fourth richest country in the world, where poverty levels have doubled since 1979, and has contributed to the doubling of child poverty and malnutrition in Iraq. British imperialism has a 'Marshall Plan for Africa'. This began with a series of initiatives in 1998 and culminated in the Commission for Africa report on 11 March and the G8 summit's communiqué at Gleneagles, Scotland in July 2005. This is the humanitarian façade, there for the benefit of liberal fools. Behind the façade is a new imperialist scramble to recolonise the enormously wealthy continent.

Africa is rich

Contrary to corporate media misinformation, Africa is not poor but actually extremely rich in the strategic raw materials on which the world's industries depend, in particular those in the G8 industrialised nations. 90% of world reserves cobalt and 98% of chrome are found in Africa. They are crucial to the manufacture of cars, buildings, engines, electronics and arms. South Africa has the world's largest known deposits of chromium (73% of the world reserves), platinum group metals (PGMs, 88%), manganese (80%), and vanadium (33%). Over 30% of uranium, 90% of PGMs (platinum, palladium, rhodium, ruthenium and iridium) and 40% of gold reserves belong to African people, but are controlled by US, French and British multinationals who are steadily plundering the continent. Gold, chrome, cobalt, oil, timber, cassiterite, rubber, diamonds and coltan, used in laptops and mobile phones, are being systematically stolen from Africa's richest country, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by 85 G8 companies, including 18 British firms. All diamond and gold mines in Botswana and South Africa are owned by De Beers and Anglo-American. The apartheid supporting Oppenheimer dynasty controls both companies, and De Beers controls 80% of the world's diamond supply. British multinationals Unilever and Shell control 70% of mineral mines in DRC and 50% of crude oil production in Nigeria respectively. Seven French multinationals control electricity, water, transport, communications (Orange) and banking (Cr é dit Lyonnais) in C ô te d'Ivoire. Africa's main strategic resources are oil and natural gas. Excluding Sudan, Africa has 10% of proven world reserves. As the continued colonisation of the Middle East proves trickier than expected, alternative sources of raw materials have to be secured, by force if necessary. The

racist G8's real aims are unlimited access to key African markets, energy and other strategic resources, and the military securing of communication channels to allow the unimpeded transport of raw materials to their countries. This includes stationing thousands of rapid-deployment and semi-permanent troops and mercenaries throughout Africa, such as those used in the recent attempted coup in Equatorial Guinea. Training and arming of these killers is to be intensified: the G8 have announced an extra 75,000 African 'peacekeeping' forces, in addition to the secretly established military training programmes already in place, such as the Africa Contingency Operations Training Assistance, officially set up to provide 'peacekeeping and humanitarian aid', and run by the US army's European command in Stuttgart, using special forces and CIA terrorists, or the International Military Education and Training programme, specifically for training officers. None of these 'peacekeepers' have been able to prevent the barely documented deaths of well over 10 m people, through the official and secret wars ravaging Africa, including 3.8 m in DRC and 2 m in Sudan. That is not their role. Protecting Shell's oil installations in Nigeria and tin and gold mines in DRC, and the safe passage of their loot is the real priority. In Liberia, the cosmetic UN mission UNMIL, has been deliberately kept away from areas along the border with C ô te d'Ivoire, where illegal diamond mining and timber logging have been going on unchecked.

British imperialism out of Africa!

British Gas plc has bought up 60m tonnes of liquefied natural gas, 17 years' total output, from Equatorial Guinea (EG). This is worth \$15bn, but the EG government will only receive 5% of the production-sharing deal and 10% royalties from the original processing plant contract. In any case, most of the royalties remain in London and Washington bank accounts or 'fiscal black holes' in Cyprus, Luxembourg and Jersey in slush funds set up for President Obiang Nguema and various officials, whose 'bonuses' totalled to up to \$5m. Whilst the children of the EG elite are educated in London, funded by oil companies, the rest of the people suffer malaria, dysentery, starvation and poverty; the majority lack safe drinking water. British Gas has refused to publish how much it actually paid the EG government. Another British firm, AngloGold Ashanti, part of AngloAmerican, has been giving 'financial aid and logistical support' to regional warlords responsible for rape, torture and massacres in DRC in order to gain access to gold mines. These are then looted via Uganda and Rwanda and the gold shipped to Europe. AngloGold said it had a 'moral right' to operate in DRC, and 'will enhance the pursuit of peace and democracy'. In Darfur, the bodies of the dead were barely cold before British oil firm White Nile and French corporation Total began circulating like vultures, disputing ownership of Sudan's massive oil fields. While the British media has kept silent about the 40,000 rapes of girls, massacres and holocaust in DRC, there has been a cacophony over Sudan and Darfur in particular, with missionary NGOs calling essentially for an

invasion. They got their wish and 10,000 UN troops are now in place in southern Sudan's oil fields, while Darfur's people still wait for the £ 2.4bn 'aid' promised last year, starving in disease-ridden camps, where rape and abuse continue. In Angola, where \$4.22bn went 'missing' between 1997-2002 and ten members of the ruling elite have more than \$100m each, 70% live in abject poverty, with life expectancy at 36.6 years and infant mortality at 191 for every 1,000 live births, after 27 years of brutal civil war and over 500,000 deaths. G8 banks including British parasites Standard Chartered, Barclays and Royal Bank of Scotland have loaned state oil company Sonangol, \$2.35bn at an interest rate 2.5% above the base London bank rate. This will guarantee control of all future oil production as Angola, Africa's second largest oil producer, repays the debt. London International Bank, French radio software firm ATDI and the MoD, set up secretive deals to monopolise Liberia's telecommunications and its alluvial diamond production, worth \$800m annually. £ 2bn looted from Nigeria by late President Abacha still resides in British banks that refuse to hand it back. And despite urging corrupt African leaders to 'commit to transparent governance', not one G8 country has itself ratified the UN Convention against Corruption.

Africa's problems and its roots

Africa's problems are well documented: 17.9 million people in the horn of Africa, and 16.4 million in southern Africa face starvation due to food shortages; 11 million die each year, 30,000 a day, due to hunger, preventable diseases and extreme poverty, including 4.8 million children under five. 25 million are infected with HIV or Aids, with 8,500 dying each day from related illnesses (the real figure is much higher as vile African governments downplay the pandemic). About half of the children, 43 million, are out of school. 300 million sub-Saharan Africans live on less than 65p a day. These problems began with slavery, the worst of which was grotesque European transatlantic slavery, which removed tens of millions to the Americas in chains. European racists then scrambled to colonise Africa: 10 million were killed as a result of Belgian colonialism in the Congo (now DRC) alone. The criminal plunder continues to this day despite 'independence'. The major imperialist powers Britain, France and the US put in place structures to make sure that 'independence' continued to mean dependence.

Will the G8 eradicate poverty?

Former US President Richard Nixon once said 'the main purpose of aid is not to help other nations but to help ourselves' and in 1958, the British Foreign Office said '[aid is] a weapon in the armoury of foreign policy.' A recent ActionAid report revealed that most G8 aid (61%) is creamed off by western 'consultants' as technical assistance; about 30% of British aid is fake, double-counted money, spent on business class flights, administrative costs or inflated salaries; about 90% in the case of France and the US. US and Japanese aid is tied to purchase of their goods. For every 40

cents of phantom 'aid' Africa gets, it pays out \$2 to the rich G8. Unsurprisingly, most African countries are poorer now than they were in 1950, despite some \$450bn [£260bn] in aid, and their debt (now over \$300bn) is unpayable. The plans of Labour Chancellor Gordon Brown, George Bush and Bill Gates's Global Fund for Aids, TB and Malaria, exclude provision of cheaper generic drugs made in India, due to monopoly patent laws, hence guaranteeing lucrative contracts and markets for US and British pharmaceutical firms. The G8 has promised to provide \$48bn, a \$25bn annual increase in aid by 2010, however only \$8.5bn [£4.9bn] of the promised \$25bn-odd [£14bn] extra aid is really new money. They have spent over \$500bn 'liberating' Iraq, and the global arms trade of which the G8 are in the top ten arms suppliers, reached \$1 trillion in 2004. Africa gets more aid, real aid (£110 billion a year) from remittances from the African Diaspora. G8 aid is tied to privatisation, deregulation, and opening up of African markets. This neoliberalism has been discredited and rejected in Latin America as backward, but is championed by the G8, because as Brown admits '[without this] we are unlikely to maintain the growth rates we have enjoyed over the past 20 years.' 100% debt relief is only to be given to 18 'eligible' countries, 14 African, who have completed a long-term program of World Bank/IMF-imposed economic reforms, known as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. The debt proposal provides debt stock cancellation of \$55bn. It may include nine more African countries in the next two years, if they too complete the HIPC program and agree to privatise state assets and deepen imperialist control of their resources.

Make poverty history (MPH) and 'Live8'

Asking the G8 to eradicate poverty is like asking the Nazis to eradicate anti-Semitism. However, this is the strategy of the MPH campaign, led primarily by the Labour Party, NGOs and celebrities. The NGOs play a similar role to that of the Christian missionaries in Africa who legitimised slavery and colonialism. They perform a task for imperialism, presenting its human, benevolent face to the African ingrates, while hiding the reality of barbaric neo-colonialism. They also benefit directly, with 61% of all aid expenditure going on providing them with a living. As for the celebrities, the MPH and Live8 events were hugely successful; loads of white MPH T-shirts were sold, as were loads of fashionable white arm-bands, made in Chinese sweatshops with child slave labour and emblazoned with Tommy Hilfiger logos (The Scotsman , 30 May 2005). Sales of artists who played Live8 shot up 1,000%; LiveAid CDs have been re-released and that great friend to Africa, Bob Geldof, who omitted to include any African artists in the Hyde Park concert, has another book on Africa on sale.