

# The Line of March



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**There Is An Alternative! Build the Workers' Opposition!  
No to Monopoly Dictate! No to the Wrecking of the Social  
Economy! Stop Paying the Rich! Increase Investments in Social  
Programmes! Fight for a Pro-Social, Anti-War Government!**

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# 127th Durham Miners Gala and Big Meeting: Build the Workers' Opposition! Fight for the Alternative!

- Statement of the Northern Region of RCPB(ML) -

**T**his year's Durham Miners Gala and Big Meeting comes at a time when the working class movement is once again stepping up the class struggle in Britain to defend all of the rights of the people, which are coming under attack from the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government. One of the important roles that the Gala will play at this time is that the working class and people of the North East are coming together in their thousands to meet and discuss how to further build the workers' opposition and elaborate their fight for an alternative direction for society.

The building of the opposition and the fight for the alternative took an important step forward when, on March 26, thousands travelled to London from the North East, where more than 500,000 marched for the alternative. Then on June 30, three quarters of a million teachers and public service workers went on strike all over the country for the alternative against the plans of the government to rob the pensions of the public sector workers. In taking this stand, the public sector workers are defending the dignity of labour and the interests of the whole of society. Public sector workers, irrespective of political outlook, are acting as a collective, discussing the issues, supporting one another and developing their social consciousness. Their struggle not only defends their own interests but also the general interests of society.

The government, with a cabinet itself made up of millionaires, is bending over backwards to accommodate the dictate of the big banks and monopolies over the economy at the expense of the interests and well-being of the people and continuing to extend their criminal wars in Afghanistan and now to Libya on which it spends vast sums. Alongside the US, France, Israel and other NATO countries, Britain is acting as the centre of backwardness in the world, riding roughshod over the demands of the people and the vast majority of countries for a peaceful resolution of conflicts, whilst at the same time, the government is attacking its own people at home and playing the racist card over immigration to try and divide and weaken the people's opposition.

When many workers look to the Labour Party, they see that it is in crisis, unable to redefine itself in the new situation, having been, and continuing to be, part of the same anti-social and pro-



Durham Miners' Gala, July 12 2008

war consensus at Westminster over many years and unable to present itself as a credible alternative. What is new is that the consciousness that is emerging in the working class movement is that it is the workers that must constitute themselves as the opposition. What is key is that this movement is built and strengthened so that working class can constitute itself the nation and vest sovereignty in the people. The youth and students are also playing a very important and decisive role in their struggle that education is a right and to turn this situation around so that it favours the working class and all the oppressed sections of society.

What must be the next step? What is on workers' minds is how their struggle for the alternative can be effective. This demands the conscious participation of each and all in the workers' movement. The times demand that the workers build their opposition and become organised as an effective independent political force in their own right. It is this question that demands serious discussion here at the Gala and in the future. Such a mass working class movement points to the crucial requirement for the workers to give rise to their own worker-politicians, who oppose the monopoly dictate and become champions of a human-centred society. Such a movement can give rise to a genuine mass party in the future which has the aim of democratic renewal of the

political system, politicising and enabling the people to raise their level of participation in the political life of the country and ending the domination of the big-party cartel at Westminster. Its demands will need to centre around: an economy that guarantees the right to a livelihood; safeguarding the NHS as a publicly-provided National Health Service with an end to privatisation; an end to the barbaric wars and the bringing of the troops home from foreign soil and withdrawal from NATO; education provided as a right and not a privilege; respect for the natural environment in the interests of human existence; not-for-profit banking, credit and insurance under direct public control; public ownership of industries fundamental to the social economy; a peaceful social environment in which the national economy is developed not to serve maximum profit of the rich who take more out of the economy than they put in, but to serve the claims of the people on society. Such a programme can be summed up as: Stop Paying the Rich! Increase Investments in Social Programmes!

At the 127th Durham Miners Gala, the Northern Region of

the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) calls on the working class and people to continue to build an organised workers' opposition to end the dictate of the big banks and monopolies over the economy and of the big parties over Westminster. The workers in all sectors, and of all nationalities and political views, must unite and oppose the attempts of the class enemy to divide them by setting one section against another. They must not hand the initiative to any other force, but must constitute themselves as a united opposition in the workplaces, colleges and communities, discussing among themselves to decide everything. Let us meet next year having secured new successes in the fight to build the Workers' Opposition as a powerful force to change society!

***There Is An Alternative! Build the Workers' Opposition!***

***No to Monopoly Dictate!***

***No to the Wrecking of the Social Economy!***

***Stop Paying the Rich! Increase Investments in Social Programmes!***

***Fight for a Pro-Social, Anti-War Government!***

## Nation-wide Strikes over Pensions

On Thursday, June 30, four major unions, the National Union of Teachers (NUT), the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), the University and College Union (UCU), and the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), united in strike action over government proposed cuts to pensions. There were strikes all over the country for the alternative against the plans of the ConDem government to cut the pension benefits of the public sector workers and use increased contributions to pay the financial oligarchy gangsters that are wrecking the economy to safeguard their position.

The government is proposing to increase the retirement age, and the monthly contributions of public sector workers, whilst at the same time reducing the amount of pension that workers receive at the end of their working life. But the government has also targeted the private sector, especially private school teachers, with a proposal to de-link the pensions of private school teachers altogether from the state teacher pension scheme. This would severely impact on the well-being of private school teachers. They would be forced to enter into private pension arrangement, and, as it stands, many smaller schools refuse to pay into the existing pension schemes. This proposal, if implemented, would dramatically increase the amount that private school teachers pay into their pension funds making them materially worse off now and possibly leaving them impoverished in their old age.

When these proposals were first mooted, the NUT and the ATL balloted all their members across Britain and these unions voted in favour by majorities, respectively, of 92% and 83%. In the case of ATL, this was all the more astonishing because they are known as a "non-strike" union and this is the first time they have ever called for a strike.

There was a tremendous response to the strike call. Three

quarters of a million teachers and public service workers went on strike. Many schools closed throughout Britain. Many remained open but refused to teach actual lessons, preferring instead to provide a pastoral care for children that came to school.

The march in London began at Lincoln's Inn Field. Everyone congregated there at 11am and the actual march began at 11.40am. All the unions were fully represented and the start point for the march was thronging with people. There was a tremendous atmosphere, almost carnival like, with music being played through loud speakers and bands playing.

The front of the march took just under two hours to reach the rally point, Westminster Central Hall, London. Once there, people were ushered inside the hall and it quickly filled up with people, downstairs and then up, in the three separate galleries.

All the general secretaries of all the four unions involved in Thursday's day of action were there and addressed the rally. The various speakers talked about the injustice of the government proposals. One speaker made the point that for many teachers, the very idea of going on strike was the most difficult thing because, by their very nature, teachers do what they do because they believe in their vocation, and it goes against the grain to go on strike and not teach or look after the children who would normally be in their care. So it was all the more significant that so many people chose to take a stand on Thursday.

And three younger teachers spoke at the rally. One woman said that she was only 23 years old. She said that, under the proposals, she would be expected to work until she was 68, that her pension contributions would dramatically increase, that she would actually receive 25% less pension when she retires than people retiring now can expect, and that to add insult to injury, she had just spent the last five years gaining a degree and the qualifications necessary to become a teacher, a profession she





has chosen because she cares passionately about the development of children, and she is still and will be for some time paying off the student loan debt incurred in order to gain these qualifications. She said that these conditions are making her think seriously about whether she has made the right choices in terms of her career, and that many younger would-be teachers are choosing not to go into teaching at all.

Many speakers made the point that there has been no justification on the part of the government to explain the necessity for these cuts to pensions. They have merely asserted that it is necessary. Many made the point that the government has seemed more than ready to bail out the banks, paying bankers and financiers huge sums in bonuses and rewards, and yet they are treating teachers and public sector workers so appallingly and without regard. With so many teachers struggling to pay off mortgages, and with the younger teachers coming through already saddled with large debt incurred through doing the study and attaining the qualifications necessary to become a teacher, the government's call on teachers to "tighten their belts", especially when the government is throwing money at the banks and to the war effort in Afghanistan and Iraq and Libya, is just offensive!

The atmosphere in Westminster Central Hall was very buoyant and militant. Several of the speakers, including Mary Bousted of ATL, were given standing ovations and the mood was one of determination to force the government to withdraw these backward and potentially crippling proposals.

About 20 minutes into the rally the chair of the meeting announced that the people at the back of the march had only just left Lincoln's Inn Field. A great cheer went up! The chair announced that the police had estimated that there were 20,000 people

on the march. But if people were still leaving the start point of the march two hours after the front of the march had reached and gone into the Hall for the rally, there must have been at least 40,000 people, if not more involved in the London march!

In the end, the march and rally was a great success! It showed, and the various speakers at the rally affirmed, that the show of strength and the determination of all those who took part in the day's events was a mark of how deeply everyone feels about this issue. No one wanted to be there really. They all felt it keenly that they could not be with their students and pupils that day. But everyone on that march and rally said that they were there because they cared, and that the only responsible thing they could do was to demonstrate against the government's proposed cuts to pensions.

At the end of the meeting, it was affirmed that if the government refuses to listen, then all present at the rally are determined to fight on. The unity of all the four unions was also affirmed. Both NUT and ATL general secretaries said that the issue was not whether teachers worked in the private or public sector, but that all teachers were working hard for the betterment and education of the children Britain, and that it was not only unfair but a disgraceful thing for a modern nation, the fifth richest in the world, to be talking of reducing the nation's teachers to a life of poverty in their old age. They asserted that all workers deserved to be treated with dignity in their old age.

In Newcastle, there was one of the largest marches and rallies that has been seen in the "toon". Several thousand took part. There were also rallies in Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Carlisle, as well as other towns and cities such as Bristol. A number of unions in the public sector, such as Unison in the NHS,

were not on strike as their members are yet to be balloted, but many people went to support the picket lines. The rally in Newcastle, for example, emphasised the fight for the alternative and the dignity of labour. Other actions took place, such as at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead where over 70 health workers from every department took part in the lunchtime protest.

This strike and the actions of many other workers on June 30 demonstrate the unity and determination of working people right across the country, despite the attempts of the government and the monopoly-controlled media to emphasise so-called divisions in the trade union movement and denigrate the workers. The fight is on for an alternative direction for the economy so that it serves the interests of the working class and the interests of the whole of society.



## The Labour Party's Quest to Redefine Itself

Labour leader Ed Miliband recently gave a speech at the Royal Festival Hall entitled “The Promise of Britain”, followed by another on the subject of “responsibility” at the Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre, London. Together with so-called leaks and revelations over brother David and Ed Balls, Labour has suddenly found itself back in the headlines after a quiet year in Opposition.

Over the past year, Labour has been trying to present a renewed sense of purpose, to redefine what Labour is for. The experience of the Blair and Brown New Labour years has thoroughly discredited the party, as it turned its back on old-Labour social democracy and exposed itself as the champion of big business, the anti-social offensive and war. With the issue of working class representation again coming to the fore, the question coming from even some traditional sections of support is: what is the point in Labour?

Labour has been struggling to rediscover its sense of direction, and Ed Miliband has been attempting to revive a role for the party by defining a new line of division in politics. In place of left vs right, the new divide is over values: echoing Blair’s “forces of progress” vs “conservatism”, Miliband wants Labour to become “the natural home for progressives”, to quote a speech he made on “Social Democracy” a year ago to the Engineering Employers’ Federation.

The party is also struggling to define who it represents. This is particularly pertinent for Labour, which derives much of its financial backing from the big unions. It is no longer a party of its members, unlike the mass Labour party of a century ago.

Miliband dreams of refounding Labour as a kind of mass party all over again, this time on the basis of values. In his speech to Labour’s National Policy Forum last autumn, he called for people to “join us on this journey. Join us on this journey which makes us once again the people’s party.”

With a “mission” of “standing up for the hopes and aspirations of people”, Labour is trying to rebrand itself as a movement-based mass party. As he said in a speech to the Fabian Society in May of last year, “The Labour Party needs not just to be an electoral force, but movement for change in every part of the country.”

Of course, an electoral force is exactly what Labour has been for decades. Miliband recognises what Labour as a mass party once was – a party whose roots were in the extra-parliamentary mass movement. But by sleight of hand, he redefines movements themselves as simply representative of values. “How do we become a movement again? First of all you have to have high ideal. You have to show how you’re going to change the country.”

He sums it up as follows: “We will learn from our mistakes, we will be once again a party that is rooted in your values, rooted in your life and a party that can build the kind of country you want to see in Britain. And my message to our party is this: let’s move on from the politics of Blairites and Brownites and unite around a new set of ideas.

“... all the great political movements of history have been built from the bottom up ... That is the sort of politics I believe in. That is how we become not just a party, but a movement and a cause.”

As to the actual content of these high ideals, Miliband has referred explicitly in his speeches to the end of the old Social Contract: “Until the 1960s and 70s, there was a settlement that gave working people a sense of security through pensions, wages and work. That cannot be reproduced.”

The old arrangements are truly at an end – he has officially set the seal on that. The Labour Party is no longer that party. On the other hand, in the same speech he also claims that he is “a great defender of the Welfare State. It is what a civilised society depends upon ... We need to refound the Welfare State.”



Miliband attempts to cover over the contradiction through a redefinition of what is meant by Social Democracy and the Welfare State, and trying to find a new relationship, as he calls it, between “the state and the individual”: “We need to refound the welfare state: not just on need, but also on ... responsibility and contribution. And we need to give everyone more of a stake in the system.”

Behind the gossip, the intrigues surrounding the Milibands and Ed Balls is a background of crisis over what kind of party the Labour Party actually is. This question also faces the movement to build the Workers’ Opposition: what kind of party favours the interests of the working class and broad masses of the people; what should be the characteristics of a mass workers’ party, a party which has the aim of aim of democratic renewal, politicising and enabling the people to raise their level of participation in the political life of the country? What kind of party does the



working class require to constitute itself the nation and vest sovereignty in the people? It is this question that demands serious discussion by the working class, and which the Labour Party is profoundly unable to answer.

## An Anti-War Government Must Be Established

Last month the Prime Minister and the leader of the Labour Party reaffirmed their commitment to the wars in Libya and Afghanistan. The only difference between them appeared to be the question of whether the government was devoting sufficient financial and other resources in the pursuit of these aggressive wars.

In regard to Libya, the Prime Minister was confident that the war, which has now been waged for over three months, could be pursued for “as long as it takes” and that it would be brought to what he referred to as a “satisfactory conclusion”. He added that his only concern was whether the government could deploy even more destructive weaponry, including the unmanned “drones”, which it is reported are being supplied in a £1 billion deal by the Israeli arms manufacturer Elbit. The use of drones by Zionist Israel in occupied Palestine and by the US in Pakistan and elsewhere for assassination and other war crimes has been widely condemned and often results in the loss of many innocent lives. It speaks volumes that the Prime Minister of Britain is anxious to deploy such barbaric weapons in Libya, where the British government and its allies claim that they are protecting the lives of civilians, but where it is clear to all that they want to install a regime more favourable to their interests.

This strong commitment for a continuation of war crimes and crimes against peace comes in a week when there has been increasing evidence of NATO attacks against the homes of civilians, causing many deaths, in addition to the previous attacks on schools, universities and the infrastructure of Libya, which the people of that country have worked so hard over many years to construct. The barbaric and illegal nature of NATO’s war on Libya has led to growing international condemnation and this week also led to calls for an immediate ceasefire by the Italian government and by Amr Moussa, the outgoing head of the Arab

League. Moussa’s position reflects growing opposition to NATO’s war on Libya throughout the North Africa and the Middle East. Recent weeks have also seen strong opposition to the war expressed by the African Union and by the president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma.

Both the Arab League and South Africa originally backed UN Security Council Resolution 1973, which provided the justification for the invasion of Libya. Last week Zuma informed the South African parliament, “We strongly believe that the resolution is being abused for regime change, political assassinations and foreign military occupation.” For its part, the African Union has recently reiterated calls for an immediate ceasefire, the need for the Libyan people to decide the political future of their country, and the implementation of the AU “road map” for Libya. The AU expressed its strong concern about what it referred to as “the dangerous precedent being set by one-sided interpretations” of UN Security Council Resolutions on Libya, and “about the consequences that may result for international legality”. It also condemned attempts to sideline the AU as the main body to resolve conflicts in Africa, pointing out that its role was even recognised in UNSC Resolution 1973. The stand of the AU was also in opposition to the instructions issued to it by US Secretary of State Clinton who arrogantly demanded should back NATO and the so-called National Transitional Council in Libya and take measure to isolate and force from office the government of Muammar Gaddafi.

It has become clearer that on the question of Libya as on many other international conflicts the world is divided into two. On one side are the handful of warmongering powers – Britain, the US and their allies – who assert that might is right and that by intervention, aggression and war they can issue threats and demands and order the world according to their narrow interests.

On the other side stand the overwhelming majority who are opposed to this barbaric method of conducting relations between countries, as well as political affairs within countries. The UN, that was itself established to prevent aggression and maintain international peace, is now being dominated by the warmongers and aggressors who claim that they are the greatest defenders of peace and democracy.

The illegal war in Libya must be condemned and immediately brought to an end and the war criminals made to answer for their crimes. The people of Libya and all countries must be allowed to decide their political future without outside interference. The democratic and peace-loving people of Britain must take matters into their own hands and take all necessary measures to establish an anti-war government.

# An Essential Alliance for the Defence of Neo-Liberalism, Global Intervention and War

**T**he US president, Barack Obama, made an official state visit to Britain last month ahead of the G8 summit in Normandy, France, which was expected to focus on measures through which the big powers can continue their domination of North Africa, and especially Egypt and Tunisia, following the revolutionary events that occurred in North Africa earlier this year.

Obama's visit was the occasion for a strengthening of the Anglo-American alliance with agreements concluded between the two governments on six areas in which they would collaborate even more closely, including further global intervention, especially in Africa. It was also marked by a series of statements, including his speech to Parliament, which were carefully scripted to express the unity of thought and action that characterises what is now referred to as an "essential" as well as "special" relationship between the two countries. During the President's visit, Obama and David Cameron made every effort to stress that what unites the two governments are their shared values and a commitment to the global defence and imposition of these values, if necessary by military might.

Obama's speech to Parliament presented the essence of these Eurocentric but so-called "universal values", which are nothing more than those of neo-liberalism – "free enterprise", so-called "market-based principles" and multi-party representative democracy. It is this that Obama characterises as "freedom and democracy" and of which Anglo-American imperialism prides itself of being the greatest defender. According to Obama, it is these values and their defence that have characterised the modern history of the world and it is the political and economic system that exists in Britain and the US for which the whole world yearns and strives. Despite all the evidence concerning the moribund and crisis-ridden nature of global capitalism, which impoverishes the vast majority of people in the world and threatens to destroy the planet itself, Obama envisages a new era of stability and prosperity for all, which must be secured and defended by further global intervention. According to Obama, Britain, the US and their allies made the modern world and must continue to provide "leadership" for it. As Obama stated without any sense of irony, "our alliance will remain indispensable to the goal of a century that is more peaceful, more prosperous and more just."

It is these "universal values" that are being defended and this leadership that is being exercised by the invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, by expanding the remit of NATO, by threatening Iran and the DPR of Korea and by the invasion and bombardment of Libya. According to Obama, the leadership of the Anglo-American alliance had also been demonstrated by its "commitment to our citizens" in such areas as health, pensions and other social programmes. Only in Parliament can such fantastic claims be made at a time of such devastating cuts not only in Britain and the US but throughout most of the world. In short, his speech suggested that that which has produced two world wars, global poverty, insecurity and instability was a cause for celebration and should be defended and expanded. It is a view that flies in the face of reality and has no basis in fact or in history.

It is on this false premise that the Anglo-American alliance continues to argue that it is the greatest friend and supporter of the uprisings in North Africa and elsewhere, which were waged precisely in opposition to the economic and political consequences of neo-liberalism and the neo-colonial relationship that was imposed by Britain, the US, France and the other big powers. Obama reiterated the view that the big powers must continue to intervene, especially in Egypt and Tunisia, by financial and other means in order to exercise their leadership and maintain these countries within their grip under the guise of providing them with support.

What is evident from the speech of Obama, and also from the statements of the British government, is that the Anglo-American alliance is trying to assert its continuing domination in a rapidly changing world, in which new powers are coming to the fore and the world's peoples are struggling to take centre stage and demanding societies that are based on meeting the needs of the majority. The attempt of Obama and the Anglo-American alliance to pose as the leaders of the world and to continue to impose their Eurocentric values on the world is a programme for maintaining the status quo, further global intervention and war must be totally rejected and condemned. These circumstances demand that the people step forward to discuss, organise and establish the alternative.



# An Addiction to War and Contempt for Democracy

**A**s part of the narrative defining US President Barack Obama, his European tour began with a visit to emphasise the Irish side of his roots, shortly after the Queen of England had also visited the Republic to express “reconciliation”.

In Britain, the US President was in turn treated like royalty. This is doubly ironic given that the royal prerogative rests, as the head of the executive which wields it, with David Cameron whose roots are themselves with royalty, being a descendant of William IV, the monarch who preceded Queen Victoria. Clegg has also Russian aristocratic blood in his veins.

This is a narrative which increasingly gives the lie to the “social mobility”, which is supposedly a feature not only of the “Big Society” but of representative democracy itself.

The point, however, is that it is Barack Obama who has the power of the old war-lord kings, and this was an emphatic reason for him to be treated with obsequious respect by the British state. The settling of issues through force, aggression and assassination are the open programme of US imperialism, and the British government is eager to be seen as the right-hand man of this kind of international politics.

It turns out that this kind of “eternal war” is the change that both Barack Obama and David Cameron believe in. War without end and aggression and assassination without shame – this is what is being overtly carried out to achieve the ends of Anglo-US imperialism. It is an addiction to war and the use of force, and is a habit acquired for the most “humanitarian” of reasons. The big lies are spoken with soft voices and get bigger with every repetition, and the more the people are supposed to believe them.

Barack Obama is happy to say that Britain is essential, because Britain is the front-runner in formulating the “justifications” and calling for stepped up intervention. This has been the

role since the days of Tony Blair, and Cameron has been happy to step into his shoes in this respect. Can this be why Blair and Brown sat next to Cameron in the front row to listen to the US President address Parliament, while the leader of Her Majesty’s Opposition, Ed Miliband, was relegated to not even the second, but the third row?

David Cameron for his part is ecstatic to be able to say that Britain is an essential partner in the relationship. It is an essential component of the programme of “Making Britain Great Again”. Cameron has scores to settle with the leader of the Libyan revolution on behalf of British imperialism. To have a US President who, if not born in Kenya has a Kenyan father, endorsing and providing fire-power for the dismemberment of a North African state provides some thin veneer of legitimacy to this enterprise.

Together, with their European allies, Britain and the US wish to mould the “Arab spring” to their purpose, where they have not already instigated unrest, violence and anarchy for their own aims. Together they give the impression of re-writing the rules and norms of international and domestic politics, a contempt for democracy and the democratic process under the veil of the “responsibility to protect”.

There can be no conciliation with this kind of imperialist politics. It is the duty of the British working class and people to settle scores with a government and a parliament that practises it. A Workers’ Opposition taking the lead in fighting against it and fighting for an Anti-War Government is in the course of taking root. This fight has the overwhelming sympathy of all progressive forces. In this year of the 75th anniversary of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War instigated by international reaction, the sentiment of all those against war and fascism is once more to declare: No Pasarán!

## In Memoriam Brian Haw: 1949-2011

### Reflections

**B**rian Haw heard the US government official say that the death of half a million Iraqi children as a result of Anglo-American policy in the 1990s was “worth it”. With Tony Blair continuing that policy into his second term in government, Brian set up his protest outside Parliament in June 2001.

His protest display began with three placards. World-famous artists and visiting tourists alike contributed to it. It spread along one side of Parliament Square.

After September 11, 2001, George Bush declared “war on terror”: on Afghanistan and then on Iraq. Brian became a symbol of opposition to it.

Winter did not see him off. People dived in to help, as they would from then on. Come the spring, the authorities charged him with being a “nuisance”. Prominent

people came forward to say that he wasn’t the “nuisance” - government policy was. The authorities sensed defeat and went to the High Court to have him removed for “illegal advertising” and “obstruction” instead. The court refused.

The foreign media noticed him. In the early years the British media ignored him.



With a smile he railed against the “vicious” policeman who “forced” a cup of tea and a bun on him at 6 each morning. With real rage he denounced the police who used a “car-bomb threat” to arrest him under the Terrorism Act and to seize and smash up his display. But his supporters rebuilt it.

The authorities said he was “deranged”. But it was a government minister in parliament who dementedly invented a conspiracy whereby “they have all got their act together and are skilfully working in concert to subvert the law” in Parliament Square.

The authorities set about crafting a law specifically aimed at removing Brian from the square. But the government’s shady manoeuvring over it resulted in Brian’s being the only person not subject to it.

Brian stood for Parliament as a “Peace and Justice” candidate in the 2005 general election from his registered address in Parliament Square.

The authorities finally got the law “sorted out” and came with 78 police at 2:30am with the aim of removing Brian’s display by sunrise. But seven hours later the eviction was still going on for

all the world to see. And eight months after that the whole of it had been carefully recreated as a prize-winning public display a few minutes down the road.

By then Brian had soundly beaten Tony Blair to win the “Political Personality of the Year” award.

Brian’s single-minded resolution and determination drove him to Parliament Square and kept him there. But the justice of his cause and the unfolding disaster of the war drive was decisive in attracting the support needed for everything from taking care of his daily needs to winning a whole string of court cases.

Early on he had been subject to a media blackout. His death was headline news.

**J.B.**



## Conference Marking 30th Anniversary of the 1981 Hunger Strike

A fitting and poignant event to mark what was “one of the most heroic chapters in human history” took place on Saturday, June 18, in London. More than 300 people packed into the London Irish Centre heard these words, spoken by Fidel Castro at the time of the 1981 Hunger Strike, open the event.

The event was organised to mark the 30th Anniversary and to put the Hunger Strike, carried out in defence of the right for political prisoner status, in its wider political context. The Hunger Strike was not only a turning point in Irish history, and in the struggle for Irish freedom, it was one of the most important and courageous struggles to have taken place anywhere in history, anywhere in the world.

The opening speaker, Brendan “Bik” McFarlane, as the Officer Commanding (OC) of the IRA prisoners in the H-blocks of Long Kesh during the Hunger Strike, gave an inspiring and a unique and detailed insight into what happened within the jail. Setting the tone for the day, Bik outlined the stakes involved, and how there was a clear political understanding of what was necessary. It was clear that the British government’s “criminalisation” policy was central to their whole strategy overall; by criminalising the prisoners the whole struggle became criminalised and so the stakes for both the British government and Irish republicans were immense. Ultimately the British government were defeated, but this took the lives of ten men in the course of the struggle. He also spoke of the importance of the families, the quiet dignity and strength, in the face of immense pressure. During his detailed and extraordinary account of what took place, the audience sat in rapt silence, struck by the magnitude and heroism of those involved, and with a feeling that this was indeed a unique and privileged occasion to hear so directly

about such a key moment in history. Bik justly received a standing ovation.

Sinn Féin MEP Bairbre de Brun spoke about the development of the solidarity movement outside the prison, from her own involvement in the anti-H Block/Armagh Committee. She outlined how a huge coalition developed, based on the stand of supporting those who wanted the inhuman condition of the prisoners to end. She related how this mass movement was possible to develop in a way not seen before. She pointed to the huge upturn in protest activity on the streets, and how it was met with violence from the British state, such as the use of 16,500 plastic bullets in just one month.

Former Labour MP Kevin McNamara analysed how the Hunger Strike impacted within the British state, and how there were some voices, like his own, who refused to go along with the British imperialist agenda. His comments also revealed how leading politicians – including in the south of Ireland – were clearly affected by the mass mobilisations.

Writer and journalist, and current lecturer at City University, Roy Greenslade, spoke about the lies told in large sections of the British media about the Hunger Strike at the time. He also pointed that such disinformation still prevails today. He urged people to challenge this aspect, and writing on the eve of the conference in *The Guardian*, his detailed account proved invaluable.

US-based academic and writer Professor Christine Kinealy, a former activist of the H-block committees in Trinity College, Dublin, where she completed a PhD on the introduction of the Poor Law to Ireland, gave a factual analysis of the events leading up to and after 1981. She also pointed out how the subsequent rise of Sinn Féin and the peace process underlined how the mag-



nitude of the Hunger Strikes was greater than anyone could have envisaged at the time.

Contributions from the floor included one from a former Irish republican prisoner in England. He spoke of how the news of the Hunger Strike had a massive impact in English prisons. It should not be forgotten that Michael Gaughan and Frank Stagg had already given their lives in hunger strikes in 1974 and 1976 respectively for the same ideals as the 1981 hunger strikers. All those young men fought against British imperialism. Not only was this what united those heroes but that spirit of unity against British imperialism lives on, and that legacy could be said too to be what unites those from all political backgrounds in this Hunger Strike commemoration. We all stand for an Ireland free and an Ireland united. Amongst the contributions from the platform, this also set the tone for the Conference.

How 1981 shook the world, and the international impact of the Hunger Strike, formed the theme of the second panel discussion, chaired by Jeremy Corbyn.

Legendary leader of the struggle to defeat apartheid, Ronnie Kasrils, gave an inspiring and incisive account of how the South African movement learned from the Irish struggle and vice versa. Quoting James Connolly on "Cause of Ireland is the cause of Labour and the cause of Labour is the cause of Ireland", he argued that the national and social struggles were indivisible. He spoke of the worldwide struggle against imperialism.

Former French MEP Francis Wurtz, who chartered a plane to travel to Belfast to attend Bobby Sands' funeral, related the impact across Europe, which along with the wider international impact, helped overcome the idea that the prisoners were isolated.

Writer and activist on Palestine and the Middle East, Kevin O'venden, related how the whole of the Arab world was inspired by the Hunger Strike and the influence that it had. He said that leading figures today spoke about how inspirational the Hunger Strikes were.

In the final panel of speakers, Sinn Féin's chief whip in the Assembly, and former political prisoner and friend of Bobby Sands, Jennifer McCann spoke of the role of women in what was a dual struggle, and how strongly interconnected the men and women involved were at the time. She also remarked that, like herself, Bobby was elected by the people, as the MP for Fer-

managh & South Tyrone, and yet the British government still allowed him to die. Bobby's election to Westminster, she said, and that of two of his comrades to the Irish parliament, marked a sea change in how Irish republicans looked at elections, and their potential, and could be seen as a catalyst for Sinn Féin's electoral intervention the following year, 1982, and since. She also brought the discussions up to the present day, outlining the development of Sinn Féin's political strategy and pointing to the growing strength and dynamic towards Irish unity – economic, social and political.

The final speaker was Tony Benn, who spoke of how it was necessary to see the Irish struggle for self-determination not simply as a small isolated fight, but as part of a huge and general struggle against colonialism worldwide. He said this was not the case of a small band fighting a bigger monster, but a world-wide anti-colonial struggle. He pointed to the rise of Sinn Féin, the advancement of the cause of Irish unity and of his own conviction that Irish reunification would happen.

Stephen Bell in the chair said that the best way to honour the Hunger Strikers was to contribute to this same struggle today. The initiative to open up the debate on Irish unity, to put this on the agenda, would continue he said, and urged all people to take part.

To sum up, it can be said that the conference brought out that ordinary individuals can have an extraordinary impact when they rise to the occasion. Bobby Sands and all the hunger strikes were young working class Irishmen, not known as outstanding leaders, but they made history. They were far from being "extremists". They represented the aspirations of the Irish people as a whole, and in taking a stand for what is just and in refusing to conciliate with the dictate of the British state, they made history. Their sacrifices echoed round the world with a never-to-be forgotten impact. As Bobby Sands wrote, "Our revenge will be the laughter of our children." *Tiocfaidh ár lá – Our day will come!*

(sources: *The Line of March* correspondent; Jayne Fisher for the Bobby Sands Trust)

A video of the speeches is available on youtube, including Bik McFarlane's inspiring keynote speech:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/sinnfeinlondon>

# Hail the Korean People's Struggle for Peaceful and Independent Reunification

- Joint Statement, June 15, 2011 -

June 15 marks the 11th anniversary of the historic North-South Joint Declaration signed between Chairman Kim Jong Il of the National Defence Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and President Kim Dae Jung of the Republic of Korea in the year 2000. On this occasion, our parties and organisations reaffirm their support for the principles laid out in this historic document. It is a document that belongs not

only to the Korean people, but also to all peace-loving people of the world. The peaceful and independent reunification of Korea is the desire of all the progressive forces worldwide, in opposition to the crimes of Anglo-US imperialism which wishes to maintain the status quo of division and tension on the Korean peninsula.

The June 15 North-South Joint Declaration was an historic

landmark in the struggle of the Korean people to reunify their homeland forcibly divided by the US imperialists following World War Two. The Declaration opened up a new era for independence, peace, reconciliation and reunification on the Korean peninsula until the US-sponsored anti-national, anti-communist and retrogressive Lee Myung Bak regime in the south began to sabotage its spirit and principles.

The anniversary of the Joint Declaration this year is marked at a time when the intrigues of the US and the south Korean puppet regime are becoming increasingly dangerous as they work together to isolate and criminalise the DPRK and the movement for national reunification. This includes jailing reunification activists in the south under the fascist National Security Law, and carrying out one provocation after another such as the joint US-south Korean military exercises aimed at invading the DPRK and bringing the Korean peninsula ever closer to a cataclysmic nuclear war.

It is a fact that the US cannot forgive the DPRK for being the first country following the Second World War to defeat it on the battlefield, setting an example for all nations and people who aspire for independence and self-determination. Its revenge seeking against the DPRK continues unabated to this day.

In the face of these intrigues and betrayals by the US and the Lee Myung Bak regime, the DPRK has steadfastly upheld the principles laid out in the June 15 Joint Declaration. The DPRK has carried forward the struggle under the banner of "By the Nation Itself". That is, the Korean people themselves must settle the issue of Korean reunification, peacefully and without outside interference. By upholding these principles, the DPRK has provided the Korean people with the political leadership that has enabled them to find their bearings in spite of the threats and grave dangers posed by US imperialism and the traitorous Lee regime.

Kim Jong Il and  
Kim Dae Jung



We would also like to take this opportunity to hail the 47th anniversary on June 19 of the start of the work of General Secretary Comrade Kim Jong Il at the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea. The WPK is imbued with the concern for the whole of society, serving to unite the people around the cause of independence and socialism, in contrast to the bestiality and brutality of imperialism which stands for war and reaction. Those who take up responsibility for revolutionary leadership are greatly to be cherished, and it is a great testament to quality of leadership of Comrade Kim Jong Il that he has taken up this responsibility within the Central Committee of the WPK for these past 47 years.

Our parties and organisations once again reaffirm our steadfast opposition to all warmongering against the DPRK and the Korean people. We pledge our support for the Korean people's movement for reunification, independence and peace, and to the leadership of Comrade Kim Jong Il and his Songun (army-first) politics, and that of the WPK, which is proudly and successfully carrying forward the historic cause of the June 15 Declaration.

**Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist)**

**European Regional Society for the Study of the Juche Idea**

**Juche Idea Study Group of England**

**UK Korean Friendship Association**

**New Communist Party of Britain**

**Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)**

**Socialist Labour Party**

## 10th Anniversary of Injustice Against the Cuban Five

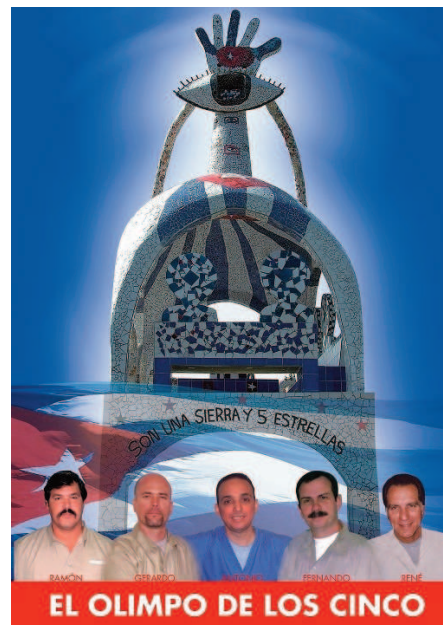
June 8, marked the 10th anniversary of the political and judicial outrage committed against the Cuban Five, when a Miami jury convicted them, after a politically-motivated persecution by the United States government. The Five were arrested in Miami on September 12, 1998 and held in solitary confinement for 17 months, before the trial began in November 2000.

Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González were locked up and isolated, in the midst of a media hysteria, in Miami, the U.S. city notorious for harbouring anti-Cuba terrorists, who operate with impunity granted to them by the U.S. government. And to stack the deck further, many journalists were on the government pay-

roll.

There is now evidence, thanks to the efforts of the U.S. national Committee in Support of the Cuban Five, that Miami journalists who covered the Five's trial with extreme bias were secretly receiving U.S. government pay through the propaganda stations Radio and TV Martí. This is a vital part of the appeals for the Cuban Five.

"Pantheon of  
the Five"





# 70th Anniversary of the Soviet Union's Staunch Resistance to the Hitlerite Nazis' Perfidious Invasion

**F**ollowing World War I, the US ruling class pursued a policy of using the contradictions among the European imperialist powers to further its own empire building and to profit from and weaken its European rivals, especially Britain and France. With the rise to power of the German Nazi Party in 1933, the US saw in Nazi Germany a weapon to terrorise and dominate Europe and finally destroy the socialist Soviet Union. To this end, powerful monopolies in the US such as Ford invested millions in Germany to strengthen its military for the planned invasions and war. Meanwhile, as the Nazis ruthlessly eliminated all opposition within Germany and militarised all aspects of life, Britain and France pursued a policy of conciliation and capitulation to fascism, and, similar to the US, prodded Germany to prepare to march eastward.

All the efforts of the Soviet Union to oppose Germany by signing a mutual assistance pact with Britain and France failed. Instead, Britain and France meekly accepted the German Wehrmacht's invasion and annexation of Austria in March 1938, paving the way for the signing of the infamous Munich Agreement six months later on September 29, 1938. This gave Germany free rein to occupy a major industrialised region of Czechoslovakia, greatly strengthening its militarisation and preparations for war, including taking over the giant Skoda armaments complex. Britain and France's Munich conciliation with fascism sealed the immediate fate of the peoples of Europe by giving Hitler the green light to invade other countries without a united opposition. The Soviet Union was left on its own to prepare itself as best it could for the inevitable Nazi attack.

As expected, 22 months later on June 22, 1941, in Operation Barbarossa, Hitler's military invaded the Soviet Union along a

**Soviet snipers during the Battle of Stalingrad (RIA Novosti)**



**April 30, 1945: The Soviet Victory Banner being raised over the German Reichstag in Berlin by Red Army soldiers, shortly before the surrender of German forces in the city and the decisive victory over the fascists on May 9, 1945 (RIA Novosti)**

1,800 mile front with over 4.5 million troops, 600,000 vehicles and tanks, 750,000 horses and thousands of aircraft. The Wehrmacht crossed the Soviet border powered by Ford and General Motors engines and equipped with tools produced by American capital. This barbaric invasion to crush the nation-building project of the Soviet working class and peasantry, annex their territory, seize their means of production and raw material and turn the people into slaves of the German monopolies was the largest military offensive in history. But the Red Army and the people of the Soviet Union were organising and repelled the Wehrmacht's strongest blow and the Hitlerites did not achieve their hoped-for immediate victory. Operation Barbarossa's failure led to Hitler's demands for further operations inside the USSR, all of which also eventually failed.

In the end, the resistance of the Soviet peoples led by Stalin and the Communist Party broke the back of the Nazi aggressors. The turning point of the war was the historic Soviet victory at Stalingrad February 2, 1943, that concluded with the encirclement and surrender of a German army of 300,000 troops. This rout of the Nazi Wehrmacht, followed by a decisive victory at Kursk, began a powerful counter-offensive that drove the German Hitlerites steadily backward until their final and unconditional surrender in Berlin on May 9, 1945. Some 50 million people died and another 35 million were seriously wounded during the Anti-Fascist War, with the peoples of the Soviet Union bearing the brunt of both the fighting and of the casualties and winning the everlasting acclaim of the freedom-loving peoples of the world.

*(Dougal MacDonald, The Marxist-Leninist Daily)*

# 75th Anniversary of the Spanish Civil War

July 17 marks the 75th anniversary of the commencement of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, which was precipitated by a fascist military coup against the elected government of Spain. The civil war in Spain became a major international conflict, a key battle in the struggle against fascism and a global war. From the start the fascist generals led by Franco had the full support of the major fascist powers Germany, Italy and Portugal, and benefited from the supposed neutrality but tacit support of the governments of Britain and France. The government of the Spanish Republic, on the other hand, was supported by the Soviet Union and internationally by all the democratic and anti-fascist forces. The most notable feature of this support was the creation of the International Brigades of volunteers, established and led by the Communist International, who went to Spain to support the Republican government and fight in the front lines against fascism.

In 1935, the democratic forces in Spain, including the Socialist Party, the Republican parties, the two largest trade union centres, the Basque Nationalists, and with the Communist Party playing a leading role, had established a united political bloc against fascism, the Popular Front, which stood on a joint platform in the parliamentary elections in February 1936. The Popular Front, representing the vast majority of the people of Spain, triumphed in the elections and duly formed a government. However, this government failed to take the necessary measures to remove fascist elements from the army, police and state apparatus, which created the conditions for the July coup, and then failed to take decisive measures to crush it.

Had the Spanish people been left to resolve their own problems it is quite possible that the fascist coup would have been defeated. However, the Republic was severely handicapped first by the refusal of the French government to supply it with arms as provided by an agreement between the two countries and then by the fact that the fascist powers sent troops, armaments and planes to aid Franco's forces. Thereafter an international agreement, brokered by Britain and France, on non-intervention and prohibiting the supply of arms to either side was agreed but ignored by the fascist powers. As a result, in October 1936 the government of the Soviet Union announced that in the circumstances it would not be bound by this agreement, and it became the main supplier of weapons and other support to the Republican government.

The International Brigades were first established in September 1936 under the direction of the Communist International but open to all anti-fascists. It is estimated that some 60,000 volunteers participated in the Brigades from over fifty countries and all continents, including over 2,000 volunteers from Britain. Recruitment increased considerably after the publication in October 1936 of a telegram from Joseph Stalin to José Diaz, the leader of

the Communist Party of Spain, declaring that the conflict in Spain was a struggle not just of the Spanish people but of all "progressive humanity".

The International Brigades played a heroic role in the struggle against fascism and in defence of the rights of the people Spain and many gave their lives in the struggle against fascism. They embodied the spirit of the times that inspired all democratic people to take a stand and unite in action in opposition to fascism.

The government and people of Spain, aided by the Soviet Union, the International Brigades and the anti-fascist forces, had to overcome overwhelming odds in order to defeat fascism. The Republican government took measures to unite all democratic forces and to curtail the rights of the big landowners, bankers and other exploiters in the interests of the majority and in order to advance the struggle against fascism. The Communists also played a crucial role, building the unity of the people, co-operating closely with other parties and opposing those forces that attempted to break the unity of the people's front against fascism with provocative and premature demands for revolution. It is not for nothing that in the recent list of the British volunteers released by MI5, showing that the British state took a great and antagonistic interest in the volunteers who went to fight in Spain, those who were known to be communists are singled out. In Spain, the anti-fascist forces were ultimately unable to prevail but the struggle that was waged created the conditions for the eventual victory over fascism led by the Soviet Union during the Second World War.

It is a testament to the indomitable spirit of the International Brigaders, the fact that they were prepared to give their lives to defeat fascism and in defence of the liberation of humanity, that the International Brigade Memorial Trust (IBMT) continues to honour their memory in Britain, and that there are similar organisations in other countries from which volunteers came, as well as in Spain itself. As many speakers emphasised at the annual commemoration at the monument in Jubilee Gardens on the South Bank held by the IBMT this year on July 2, the requirement for this spirit is not confined to history but "No Pasarán!" resounds as a clarion call to the progressive forces to take a stand against the trampling of the rights and freedoms of the working class and people in the present circumstances.

Today, as the times again cry out for the unity of the people in defence of their rights and against fascism and war, it is fitting that we commemorate and learn from the experience of the heroic struggle waged during the Spanish Civil War.





# Concert Marking the 75th Anniversary of the Spanish Civil War

## THE SONG OF SONGS

### Music, Film and Poetry

Bridewell Hall

St Bride Foundation, Bride Lane, Fleet Street,  
London EC4Y 8EQ

**Saturday, July 16, 2011**  
**7.00 pm**

*E'en as the sweetest note is born of pain,  
So shall the song of songs be born in Spain.*

- T. E. Nicholas

#### Music:

Michael Chant: The Song of Songs I, II, III

Robert Coleridge: Lines from Spain

Hugh Shrapnel: Tomorrow's Seed

John White: Piano Sonata No.174 ("Totentanz")

#### Films by Stuart Monro:

In the Dawn; The Planet Tilts

Caroline Barnes (violin) Miguel Calvo (cello), Michael Chant (piano), Tom Chant (saxophone), Robert Coleridge (piano), Philip Edwards (clarinet), Alys Hower (flute), Lesley Larkum (viola), Catherine Pluygers (oboe)

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*Celebrating that stand against war and fascism of the heroes of the Republic and of the International Brigades, and which is required today:*

**No Conciliation, No Pasarán!**



**Concert Marking the 75th Anniversary of the Spanish Civil War**

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**Music, Film and Poetry**

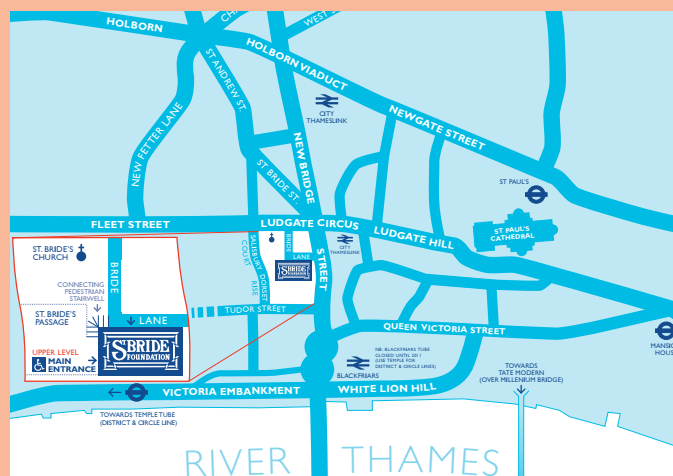
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