

The Line of March

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**No to the criminalisation of the youth!
State repression must not pass!
Hold the government accountable!**

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10th Anniversary of 9/11:

Ten Years of the People's Struggles against War, State Terror and Reaction, and for a New Basis to Society

The attack on the Twin Towers was like a starting gun for Anglo-US imperialism, and the big powers that associated themselves with them, for a period of war, state terror and the darkest reaction against the people's forces, against the sovereignty of nations and peoples, and against the rights of all. Tony Blair it was that within an hour of the planes flying into the World Trade Centre, and before their final collapse, had announced before the delegates of the Trade Union Congress and to all the world that this was to be a war against "mass terrorism". He notoriously would later declare, after 7/7/2005, that "the rules of the game have changed", and refined his targets to be Islamic extremism and revolutionary communism.

The flood gates opened by 9/11, almost before the new millennium was under way, to the trampling of any norms of international conduct have remained open, as Blair's successors have espoused the doctrine of regime change, soft power combined with hard power,

This is not what society should be like – this is not how international affairs should be conducted, to put it mildly!

Not only have the people refused to give up their resistance to the "war on terror" and the crimes against humanity perpetrated over these past ten years. These ten years have been a decade of the struggle against war, state terror and reaction. The youth have grown up demanding control of their own future so that they can put a stop to such crimes, especially by building a society which has a different basis, human-centred and anti-war. The anti-war movement has built itself against all attempt to divide it and throw it off course.

Despite this steadfastness of the anti-war movement, basing itself on the necessity to bring into being an anti-war government, the tenth anniversary of 9/11 sees Prime Minister David Cameron sending British armed forces to achieve regime change in a sovereign country, Libya. Gone is all serious pretence of a "responsibility to protect". Instead the rhetoric which came into being with 9/11, and especially with the invasion of Iraq – of a "ruthless dictator" "slaughtering his people", and of a "pariah



state" – is being pressed into service to the full. Thus is disinformation being used in the service of promoting "British values" and the protection of "our security".

It could be said that the opposition of the people's forces to war and aggression have, however, caused Cameron to also paint naked intervention in the colours of a "revolution" of the Libyan people, of the Libyan people taking their country back. This is such effrontery. Could one even begin to imagine this Old Etonian expressing sympathy for a revolution of the British people who with "bravery and resilience" have fought to take control of their own state of Britain?

But the point is that this super-high level of disinformation is being used to actually deny the people their sovereignty. This is true not only of Libya, but wherever the Anglo-US imperialists wish to impose their interests. Cameron is staking the high moral ground, but it is the moral ground of a Hitler who launches aggression under the signboard of a responsibility to protect. Does this sound like a responsibility to protect? "Our aircraft have made over 2,400 sorties across Libya, carrying out one fifth of all NATO airstrikes, against some 900 targets in Gaddafi's war machine. Our warships have supported this effort, helping to enforce

the UN arms embargo and bringing aid to those in need. At its peak, some 2,300 British servicemen and women were deployed on Operation Ellamy, with 36 aircraft including 16 Tornados, six Typhoons, five attack helicopters, tankers and specialist surveillance aircraft and helicopters. These were supported over the course of the operation by eight warships and a hunter-killer submarine.” And still Cameron vows to “finish the job”, and reports indicate that attacks on what the disinformation machine calls the “Gaddafi loyalists” – i.e. the Libyan people who will not accept the violence and anarchy of the NATO-controlled “rebels” – are being stepped up.

Having destroyed the stability of the Libyan state, Cameron turns to its reconstruction. “Libya is a country of 6.5 million people. It is one of the richest in Africa. Its proven oil reserves are the ninth largest in the world. Libya is fully capable of paying for its own reconstruction. Of course there is a role for foreign advice, help and support, but I do not think we want to see an army of foreign consultants driving around in 4x4s, giving the impression that this is something being done to the Libyans, rather than something that is being done by them.” Of course not.

David Cameron is of course a champion of British democracy and of neo-colonial justice. Libya must jettison and completely bury its own system of democracy (“years of repression”) and adopt a “political transition” to a new constitution. Gaddafi is wanted by the International Criminal Court – as though the ICC were some supra-national body not put into place by the “international community” of the Anglo-Americans and their partners.

The point on this anniversary of 9/11 is that once more the jaded values of the British state, which after 9/11 Tony Blair and others were emphasising were the “universal values” which everyone must follow on pain of being designated a “rogue” or “failed or failing” state and become the target for forcible regime change. The greater the injustice of this doctrine, the greater has been the need for disinformation to attempt to hoodwink the people’s movement. Furthermore, the colonialist agenda of the big powers is being extended. The Middle East and West Asia were Bush and Blair’s targets, strategically crucial to stabilise their European base, push eastwards into Asia, confront Russia and China, and poise ready to extend southwards into Africa, tearing up the African nations’ sovereignty and also confronting China and others on the African continent. The “Arab spring” is Cameron’s pretext. There is no respect for the sovereignty of peoples and nations to determine their own affairs free from outside interference.

This path spells great dangers not only for the people of Libya, of Africa as a whole and the peoples of the Middle East and Asia. It is extremely dangerous for the peoples of Britain and the whole world. The dangers of a major world conflagration are growing. The experience of Iraq and Afghanistan has demonstrated that come what may the imperialists cannot make history as they wish. The cost in hundreds of thousands of lives and trillions of pounds is and has been colossal. The stability of the



whole of the Eurozone is being threatened by the neo-liberal agenda which is linked to war and aggression abroad, with commentators even predicting war within Europe as the crisis further unfolds.

The crisis together with the aggression and interference in Africa and elsewhere is not unlinked with the alleged “failure of multiculturalism” in Britain, with the criminalisation of the youth. It is even reported that Tony Blair has resurrected his 7/7 thesis of the link between “Islamic extremism” and “revolutionary communism” that according to this war criminal meant that the rules of the game had changed. In other words, on this 10th anniversary, the factors for war and for fascist ideology are of very serious proportions.

The conclusion must be that the anti-war movement, the opposition to war, state terror, fascism and state-imposed ideology together with its concomitant disinformation, must pay attention to these developments and consciously base itself on the need for a new basis to society.

This new basis is not some extreme outlook from the margins of society, but is the agenda of the vast majority of peace-loving people who wish to see justice prevail and build a society fit for humanity. The reactionary agenda of the Westminster Coalition and all its apologists must not prevail. The task of the anti-war movement in these circumstances is to further build its unity on a conscious and principled basis. The sovereignty of peoples must be respected, all acts of state violence and intervention must be uncompromisingly opposed, there can be no troops sent onto foreign soil and all such British troops must be brought home. They are being used for a colonialist agenda as cannon-fodder. It is quite outrageous that in the 21st century pretexts are being found to wage such wars. This is what the past ten years have taught the people’s movement. Yet Cold War rhetoric is being let loose afresh, NATO is being used to impose the will of the Anglo-US imperialists and their allies.

The anti-war movement is an iceberg, and the two million demonstrators of 2003 have not changed their views or gone away, and have been joined by the youth who have matured since 9/11. Let us make sure that this iceberg finally sinks the ship of war, fascism and aggression.

ALBA countries oppose Libyan rebels' UN seat

Members of The Bolivian Alternative for the People's Our America, known as ALBA, totally oppose giving Libya's UN seat to the NTC. ALBA countries include: Nicaragua, Cuba, Ecuador, Bolivia, Dominica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Antigua and Barbuda. Hugo Chavez predicts that a hot debate over Libya will occur in the UN General Assembly.

Countries belonging to a Latin America trade group oppose giving Libya's U.N. member seat to the NATO-led rebels who fight the Jamahiriya government, the Venezuelan ambassador said in a Wednesday letter to the new General Assembly president.

Ambassador Jorge Valero wrote to General Assembly President Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser that foreign ministers of the countries in the ALBA group agree that Libya's United Nations seat should not be occupied by "an illegitimate transitory authority imposed by foreign intervention."

Rather, they say, the seat should not be filled until "a legitimate government is established" that "reflects the free and sovereign will of the Libyan people." Diplomats who have close ties with the NATO-rebels' National Transitional Council, have continued to staff the country's U.N. mission offices.

The General Assembly's new credentials committee agreed by consensus on Wednesday to recommend that the rebels' council get Libya's seat, said a U.S. official, whose country sits on the committee. He spoke on condition of anonymity because the



meeting was closed. It is unclear what this committee is, nor could it have legitimacy, as the vast majority of the world still recognizes the legal Jamahiriya government.

The letter of opposition by regional group increases the likelihood that a formal vote call on the matter will be needed, rather than a simple consensus, when the General Assembly acts on the request in the coming days.

The NATO-rebels' council has been recently recognized by governments which are under the control of international bankers, but more than 80% of the world still recognizes the legal Jamahiriya democratic government.

The government headed by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has remained steadfast in its longtime support of Libyan leader Gadhafi and the Jamahiriya.

The foreign ministers of the other ALBA countries — Nicaragua, Cuba, Ecuador, Bolivia, Dominica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Antigua and Barbuda — traveled to Caracas last week to discuss the situation in Libya.

Chavez said Wednesday that he foresees lively discussions in this month's U.N. General Assembly over Libya. Chavez, a friend and strong defender of Gadhafi, said the assembly would be hotly debating "the Libyan issue, the war, the genocide in Libya."

(Source: Mathaba, September 17, 2011)

National Day of Democratic People's Republic of Korea: 63rd Anniversary of Founding of DPRK

September 9 marked the 63rd anniversary of the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. *The Line of March* extends its warmest revolutionary greetings to Korean leader Kim Jong Il, the Workers' Party of Korea and to the Korean people, expressing full confidence in their socialist nation-building project in service of the people's well-being.

The existence of the DPRK today, as an increasingly industri-

alised and thriving country, is seemingly against all odds when the US imperialists and others continually demonstrate their unbridled criminality in conspiring to destroy it.

Following the victory over the Japanese imperialists, the DPRK came into being as the realisation of the people's aim to never again be a subject people and to create a society which affirmed the needs and rights of human beings. The conviction in the necessity of such a nation-building project was only strengthened by the brutality of the Anglo-US imperialists and their allies in the Korean War.

Time and time again, the DPRK, under the leadership of Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il and the Workers' Party of Korea, demonstrated that it will not conciliate with aims that are alien to the people's aspirations. It is this adherence to principle under all conditions and circumstances that is the source of the DPRK's strength, something the imperialists will never comprehend. Its principled stands are a bulwark against imperialist war preparations and the guarantee for the peaceful reunification of the Korean nation.

Warm greetings to all Koreans both in their homeland and abroad! Hail the founding of the DPRK! Strengthen the friendship between the working class and peoples of Korea and Britain!

The Youth Are Being Denied a Future: They Must Not Be Criminalised!

The unrest of the youth which exploded on the streets of London and other cities is a response to the anti-social offensive of this and previous governments, and in particular to the state offensive against the youth. The trigger was a loss of life: the shooting of the unarmed 29-year-old Mark Duggan by the police in Tottenham. This much even David Cameron has been required to admit. The government's response to the anger of the youth and their refusal to accept the authority of the rich takes no account of its context and the social conditions of the youth and that of whole communities. It is making the whole issue one of law and order, and is acting to brand the youth as common criminals, absolve itself of any responsibility and put in place further repressive measures both against the youth and against society as a whole.

Already over 1,600 arrests are reported to have been made. If this is the number of arrests, how many then were involved in the riots? Does this not itself give the lie to Cameron's narrative about the issue being one of theft, pure and simple? It could also be asked about these figures whether perhaps the police are using the situation to further harass the youth, and take retaliation for the challenge to their authority. Either way, the courts themselves are reported to be in chaos, with many trivial cases being sent to the Crown Courts where sentences of over six months may be imposed. The mass of the youth are being victimised and scapegoated.

The chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales has described the unrest and rioting among the youth as a seismic event. Seismic events have their causes and their contexts. Those in authority cannot stem the movement of the tectonic plates, but they ignore them at their peril, and if they continue to ignore science, build on earthquake zones, refuse to take precautions and blame the victims for their own fate, then they are the ones guilty of criminal irresponsibility. Riots are not unknown. The community uprisings of the early 1980s were again a response to the anti-social offensive, privatisation and destruction of the social welfare state of the Thatcher era. Those years also saw an increased offensive against the youth, especially the African-Caribbean youth. It is not coincidence that the present flashpoints have been among the same communities as the so-called "austerity measures", cuts and stepped up harassment have stoked up anger amongst the youth. Nor that the deaths of Cynthia Jarrett in Tottenham and Cherry Groce in Brixton as a result of police actions in 1985 were the sparks for the outpourings of anger at that time. Riots after the uprisings in the suburbs of Paris have hardly ceased, though largely unreported. Again, the spark for the massive riots of 2005 was loss of life, as two young people were electrocuted fleeing from the police.

The killing of Mark Duggan in Tottenham proved to be the last straw in a line of shootings at the hands of the police and at least 333 deaths in police custody since 1998, over which there has not been a single police conviction. In Haringey, the borough which includes Tottenham, the unemployment rate is 8.8%, dou-



ble the national average. Youth unemployment in London as a whole stands at 23%. In March, Haringey Council approved cuts of £84 million from a total budget of £273 million, and there was a savage 75% cut to the Youth Service budget, including the closing of the youth centres, and the brutal reduction in other services for children and young people. Alongside the closure of Connexions services and youth services have gone the closure of vital street level advice and legal services. This is anti-social vandalism of the first order. Nationally, the gap between rich and poor has been dramatically increasing, the top richest 10% being 100 times better off than the poorest according to some figures, which actually appear to play down the gap.

In Britain, the workers, women, youth and students have not been simply amusing themselves with demonstrations, occupations, strikes and demands for the alternative over the past year. The working class and people have been saying no to the anti-social offensive and showing concern and responsibility for the fate of society. The youth in particular on the demonstrations upholding the right to education have been subjected to police "kettling" and charges of mounted police. For Cameron to moan about the "broken society" and take no responsibility for its wrecking is the height of arrogance, and to blame the youth for lack of respect is to deliberately turn truth on its head.

It is certainly no solution to the problems for the rich to act with self-righteous indignation, and for the politicians who represent them to deliberate over the use of water cannon, crowd control, curfews, plastic bullets and even armoured vehicles and the army as per the north of Ireland during the "troubles". Not only will these measures not solve the problems of Cameron's "broken society". To suggest so is to further prepare the conditions for a fascism where to show rebellion against a government which acts on behalf of the rich is to be branded anti-social and a criminal.

In his statement delivered to Parliament on Thursday, David



Cameron has shown that the state is preparing the ground for further repression and for the police to act with impunity. This must be seen not only in the light of acting to stop the rebellion of the youth, but also to prepare the conditions for taking action against future struggles of the workers and youth. The government would also like these draconian powers in place for use during the 2012 Olympic Games.

Having created the conditions for these riots among the youth, generally through the anti-social offensive against all sections of the people as well as targeting the youth for attack, and having specifically engineered them through the actions of the police in various ways, the Coalition united with the parliamentary opposition, is bringing in “strong government” as the way to deal with them. Of course, far from resolving any of the issues and offering a way forward for the youth, such “strong government” will further block them, increase their anger and frustrate their demands.

The propaganda of the rich and powerful has gone into overdrive in ramming down the people’s throats its version of events. The government and the monopoly-controlled media are to be vigorously condemned, not only for their lack of compassion and wilful denial of what is happening before their eyes, but for whipping up hysteria against the youth. The state-inspired petition to remove benefit payments for those convicted of their part in the riots is just one example. This is a vicious move by the ruling elite to take society back to the Middle Ages where everyone must fend for themselves and to be a vagrant or steal a loaf of bread was a hanging offence.

It must be emphasised that not only are the youth being denied a future, but they are also being blocked from even envisaging a future in which they can participate. The state itself promotes violence and anarchy which it then blames the youth for taking up. It is doing so under high-flown phrases such as “respect for society” and “the responsibility to protect”, which it is floating internationally. For what this means one has only to look at Libya. The British government is participating in the criminal bombing of a sovereign country as a “solution” to a so-called lack of le-

gitimacy by the government in power. This bombing is causing death and destruction, as the NATO forces continue to kill hundreds of Libyan people, including children, and wantonly destroy public and private buildings alike with their attacks on the capital, Tripoli, and other towns and cities.

The daily experience of the youth that are now being targeted as “criminals” is one of police harassment, of stop and search, of repression at the slightest pretext. When the youth step out of line, they increasingly come up against a conscious policy of “shock and awe” on the part of the police. Such a policy of the state is then packaged in various television programmes to reinforce the point, and drive the youth to actions and lifestyles which serve to harm their own interests.

The working class and people cannot accept that state repression be justified by the recent events. Neither can they accept that the youth be ghettoised and criminalised in this way. The working class and people must frustrate the plans of the ruling elite to divert them from resolving the problems of society and creating the alternative, and cannot allow the state to make the “criminality” of the youth the issue and the problem in society. Neither is it acceptable for the government to blame the “break-down of the family” and other such accusations which make the people responsible for their own problems. This is an attempt to stigmatise the communities, to impose the values of the ruling elite on them, and to let the government off the hook as being responsible for the people’s welfare. To describe the actions of the youth as those of “mindless thugs” and the like is to deny that those in authority are denying them a future, and that the government itself is responsible for the disintegration of the rule of law both nationally and internationally.

What the workers and the youth see is the rich further enriching themselves from the public treasury, taking what they want without compunction. As the financiers and monopoly capitalists take their bonuses, their bailouts, their golden handshakes, and flaunt their luxurious lifestyles ostentatiously, the working class and people are outraged that this is “legal” while the rioting and

looting of the youth is “illegal” and “criminal”. The people have also been treated to the spectacle of many of their so-called representatives in Parliament, helping themselves to falsely claimed “expenses”. Even the way Parliament conducts itself is abhorrent and uncivilised under the veneer of being the most democratic institution. At least the youth uphold honour and respect. It must also be pointed out that this present unrest has come at a time when the scandals of phone hacking and gangsterism in the highest places were coming to a head, when the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police had had to resign, when the connections between government and the monopoly media were becoming ever more exposed. Now all this has been swept under the carpet, and anyone involved in petty looting has been painted as the most heinous criminal and threat to society.

Furthermore, as to the pious words about wrecking communities, the hypocrisy of the government knows no bounds. This and previous capitalist governments have presided over the comprehensive destruction of the manufacturing base of society. The example of Bombardier in Derby and the united action of the whole community in condemning the government’s irresponsibility and lack of concern is a recent case in point. And then the government has the gall to accuse the youth who are at the sharp end of this wrecking of society as themselves being the wreck-

ers.

A society based on the people’s welfare would involve the youth in taking responsibility for their future. It would recognise the fact that the youth are born to society and naturally gravitate to working together to solve its problems. It would recognise that the youth, along with other sections of the people, have their claims on society. But the Cameron government recognises none of these things and its own responsibilities, but would drive the youth to extinction rather than sanction their claims.

The culture of vengeance, reprisals and vigilantes being promoted by the state must be resolutely rejected. It is true that working people cherish their community, but this must not be transformed by the state into channels which do not serve their interests. It is against the state and its successive governments with its cartel parties and its marginalisation of the people from political life that the anger must be directed. Far from the people rallying round Cameron’s “Big Society”, this very same “Big Society” must be seen as the government’s refusal to solve the underlying socio-economic problems of society, the increased transfer of social wealth to the rich and powerful, and its determination to block the progress of society.

No to the criminalisation of the youth!

State repression must not pass!

Hold the government accountable!

TUC Congress:

Building the Resistance and Fighting for the Alternative

The context of the 143rd annual TUC Trades Union Congress which took place in London from September 12-14, is that the working class is facing a great challenge posed by the anti-social and anti-worker offensive of the rich, and the crisis of the economic and social system whereby production is socialised but ownership is concentrated in private monopoly hands.

The direction that the economy is headed in is only exacerbating this crisis. That the time is ripe for an alternative is becoming common ground not only in the trade union movement, but throughout society.

In the face of this, the burning question facing the working class movement, and which was concentrated in the agenda of the 2011 TUC Congress, is how to reverse this direction of the economy and how to make the working class movement effective in fighting for the alternative.

At the core of this fight to make the workers’ movement effective is that the workers themselves and their communities, the actual producers of the wealth, must affirm that their interests represent the way forward. Long ago the monopoly capitalist system has shown that it is incapable of uninterrupted extended reproduction of the economy. Recent years have underlined that following the interests of the rich not only do not eliminate

crises, the so-called boom-and-bust cycles of the economy, but that financial crises continue to burst out with greater ferocity and the underlying economic crisis is never solved.

The government does incessant propaganda to try and eliminate class consciousness, to try and prove that there is no such thing as the interests of the working class, of “labour”. Their arsenal includes that “we are all in this together”, and that we should all feel part of the “Big Society”. The working class movement has been rejecting such disinformation. The trade union movement is itself affirming not only the need for the alternative, but that this fight of the workers is not a fight for a special interest group but is a fight for the public good.

At the heart of this fight is the need for an alternative direction to the economy. An alternative direction means not just to tick the various boxes and ask working people to take action. As the half-a-million strong demonstration on March 26 showed, it is that the workers’ movement is in motion to both build its resistance and to fight for the alternative. The alternative direction is a direction where the workers are at the centre of decision-making, not lined up pro or con behind or against someone else’s agenda.

The 2011 TUC Congress had a very serious agenda where the need for an alternative direction could not be avoided. The del-

egates were not going to listen uncomplainingly while being told that they need to consider the interests of making the monopolies competitive in the global market. They were not going to be soothed by advice to tighten their belts because we are all in it together. The defence of the rights and interests of the workers was at the focus of their agenda, a defence which is crucial for the whole of society.

The issue is not that the working class movement wants to make the country ungovernable. It is that it wants itself to be the government. This was the spirit which the workers wanted to see coming out of the Trade Union Congress.

127th Durham Miners' Gala and Big Meeting: The Strength of Character of the Working Class

The 127th Durham Miners' Gala on Saturday July 9 was very well attended by thousands of working people with estimates this year of 100,000 to 130,000 in attendance. There were 80 banners ahead of their contingents and 40 bands. Once again, there were incredible scenes starting from early in the morning as these contingents of the working class movement marching behind the miners lodge and trade union banners made their way through Durham on to the racecourse for the Big Meeting. These included the new Follonsby banner with Lenin at the centre. It was a day that was bright with sunshine one minute and stormy with torrential rain the next. The gathering storms did not dampen the spirits of the crowds or the growing consciousness of the mass movement that started in London in March this year where over 500,000 marched for the alternative and which continued with the June 30 strike of three quarters of a million teachers and public service workers.

In this respect Gala was a snapshot of the working class movement as a whole. The Gala manifested that the fight for the alternative is continuing in response to a government that is saying there is no alternative to their increased destruction of jobs, robbing of pensions, eroding of terms and conditions. Whilst they pay the rich, privatise public services and wreck the economy at home, and continue their wars of aggression abroad against Afghanistan and Libya.

That snapshot of where they were in the fight for the alternative came from the Durham miners' leaders and some of the platform speakers at the Big Meeting. Especially from Dave Prentis of Unison and Len McCluskey of Unite, who took up



Bands and Banner Parade through Durham City to the Racecourse

the call to build the resistance which was about trade union values that were more than just narrowly fighting the cuts, or having illusions that Ed Miliband and the Labour Party were presenting any alternative. Rather they declared that there is an alternative direction for society that the millions of public sector workers are fighting for alongside all of the working people of Britain.

At the Gala too workers expressed support for the fighting calls of RCPB(ML) to build the Workers' Opposition and make it effective, to fight for the alternative programme of stop paying the rich and for an anti-war government. This was evident when the Party contingent marched with its banner among the contingents of workers. The banner drew massive attention from the workers who saw their own experience being reflected in it with the demands it put forward pointing out the line of march to a differently organised society. This was also true of the stall and on the field where activists distributed statements of the Party and sold the Party's monthly paper *The Line of March*. The issues the Party raised are crucial for workers to achieve a turning point in their struggle to build this opposition. What must be the next step? The call identified that what is on workers' minds is how their struggle for the alternative can be effective and outlined the programme Stop Paying the Rich and Increase investments in Social Programmes! The Party called for the conscious participation of each and all in the workers' movement to build their opposition and become organised as an effective independent political force in their own right and to build the Workers' Opposition as a powerful force to change society!

Workers' Opposition Defends the Right to Pensions

With the generalised strikes and actions that were held on June 30, pensions have arisen as a key issue being taken up by the workers' movement in its opposition to the anti-social offensive.

A solid front was presented by the three big parties of the establishment against the striking public sector workers, while the monopoly-controlled media went into a frenzy to spread disinformation and sow divisions between workers in the public and private sectors.

Far from being an issue affecting only the public sector, the recent attacks on pensions are part of a general trend that has been developing over many years. This is the neo-liberal trend of reversing the gains made in recognising and providing for the right to a livelihood in old age, of successive governments abrogating their social responsibility to uphold the rights of all.

Furthermore, this is the trend of increasingly making pensions an individual matter, as a kind of personal insurance policy or savings plan. In this way, pensions are being turned into yet another social programme that is being re-organised with the aim of paying the rich monopolies.

At this time that the workers are going into action to defend pensions, the attempt is being made to wreck any serious discussion on the pension system. The working class is blamed for the crisis, which includes disinformation that public sector pensions are "gold-plated" and the attempt to split the public from the private sector workers over this. It is argued that people are living longer, which is alleged to be unsustainable; this includes the attempt to split the younger from the older generation on this basis. The essence of this anti-worker propaganda is that labour is a cost in general, and retired workers in particular are a legacy cost to society.

In the modern socialised economy, the social product of

human labour, which far from being a cost is the source of all added value, is there for claiming what is required to provide a dignified standard of living for all citizens from birth to death. There is no contradiction between the work of the younger generation and the claims of the active and retired workers. The previous work by the older generation forms part of the essential material for today's production. Senior citizens, retired from active labour, continue to contribute immeasurably to society for the rest of their lives.

Rather than represent society in making this claim on the social product, the government is shunning its responsibility. It is said that workers must pay into personal plans. Those in the public sector are supposed to have had it good and now must pay like the rest. Personal plans or insurance are no solution. Instead, by attacking one section, all workers are made to shoulder the burden of the crisis. These pension funds are highly lucrative for the financial oligarchy, and as experience has shown are not in any way secure, but are open to collapse in value on the one hand and direct theft on the other.

A social need such as the right of retired workers to a dignified livelihood cannot be left to individuals, families or small businesses in a modern society. Pensions should be a universal social programme run by the state and funded by the socialised economy. Pensions are a right, based in the reality that all are born to society and remain members of society until they pass away. It is in the interests of individuals and the general interests of society as a whole that pensions are defended and developed further, so that the national state pension becomes the main source of income in retirement, capable of meeting the material and cultural needs of all citizens. This is the alternative to what should be an anathema to a modern society: the growing pressure to work until we drop.

Hands off our pensions

(14/09/11) Dave Prentis announces union-wide ballot over attack on pensions, 'Hands off our pensions!'

"Today, as general secretary of UNISON, I give formal notice to 9,000 employers that we are balloting for action," declared Dave Prentis when he opened the TUC debate on pensions this morning.

"And in moving to industrial action, I commit UNISON to work with our sister unions the GMB and UNITE." He described government plans for public service pensions as "an unprecedented attack on ordinary working people – an audacious and devious means to pay for the greed of others." The nature of the attack was clear he said: "They ... want to take away our pensions: the pensions our members worked for, the pensions our members saved for every week of their working

lives – not for a life of luxury, but for some basic security in retirement.

"And, to add insult to injury, they are intent on imposing a tax on all public service workers who save for their pensions: a staggering 50% increase in their contributions. "But, congress, not a single penny to go into the schemes. All of it – every single penny – to be syphoned off by the Treasury to pay for the deficit created by the failure of the banking system." After eight months looking for agreement, of always being willing to talk about realistic modernisation to pensions schemes, said Mr Prentis: "We've been patient, we've co-operated. "But there comes a time when we say: 'enough is enough' – because if we don't, they'll be back for more ... and more and more ..."

He warned that the union will ballot across its membership in

“a ballot unprecedented in scale, which will cover over a million workers in health, local government, school, FE, higher education, police, the voluntary sector and the environment and the private sector.

“It’s a decision we don’t take lightly,” added Mr Prentis. “And the stakes are high – higher than ever before. “But Congress, of one thing I’m certain: now is the time to make our stand.

“And it will be hard. We’ll be vilified, attacked, set against each other – public versus private, divide and rule, the oldest trick in the book.

“But if we’re serious, we must stay strong, united, all of us shoulder to shoulder.

“No gesture politics, no hollow rhetoric – our members look to us all to lead, to work together, to run the public and political campaigns needed to win their case.”

The UNISON general secretary added that unions are still prepared to negotiate “any time, any place, anywhere”, but attempts to impose change by dictat would be met with industrial action. Congress agreed a plan for a united and co-ordinated campaign to defend pension schemes and fight for fair pensions for all, in both the public and private sectors, in a debate that saw union after union, representing workers from all across the economy, line up to condemn the government’s attacks.

And union after union in the public sector announced plans to



ballot members for industrial action, insisting they were prepared to seek agreement through negotiation to safeguard pensions, but the government was not.

“Congress, this is no time for despair,” concluded Mr Prentis, “no time to look back.

“Let us go forward, confident in our cause, with a clear message from this congress: ‘we are determined, we are united – fighting for what is right, fighting for our members: Hands off our pensions!’.”

After an unprecedented standing ovation, congress backed the motion unanimously.

UCU commits to November day of action to defend pensions

UCU on September 14, 2011, said it will be joining other unions in a day of action to defend pensions on 30 November. The union, which was one of four that took strike action in June, has also arranged a joint lobby with six other teaching unions for 26 October.

UCU general secretary, Sally Hunt, said: ‘UCU members made it quite clear that they were prepared to strike to defend their pensions when they took action earlier this year. We have a lobby planned for 26 October during half-term and now a day of action at the end of November.

‘We remain committed to a negotiated settlement, but if the government doesn’t reconsider its approach then we will look at further action.’



Report from the NHS torchlight demonstration

Hundreds of health campaigners descended on parliament on September 7, 2011, as the government rushed through the Health Bill's third reading with a majority of 65.

A torchlight demonstration, organised by Keep Our NHS Public, Health Worker Network, Unite and Right to Work, marched from St Thomas's Hospital to join the TUC vigil at Parliament (which the TUC brought forward from its original 9.30pm starting time).

Peter Hain addressed the crowd along with Andrew George, one of the four Lib Dem MPs who voted against the Bill. Just a few months ago public pressure forced the Lib Dems to make a stand and the government to halt the Bill. But since Cameron and Clegg agreed their smokescreen deal, they have both done as much as possible to push the Bill through before the party conferences.

The Royal College of GPs, the BMA and the Royal College of Nursing amongst others wrote letter to the *Times* opposing the health bill. But David Cameron didn't just ignore them – he pretended they support him! And all this at the same time as Lord Howe is at a conference telling private companies what an opportunity the Bill is for them.

Speakers at the protest, including Rachel Maskell from Unite and Wendy Savage from Keep Our NHS Public, gave a clear message that we were not there to mourn the passing of the Bill but to step up the fight to defend the NHS as the Bill passes into the Lords; at the demonstrations at the Lib Dem and Tory con-



ferences; and making plans now to make the government plans inoperable should the Bill be passed.

Contact londonkeeponnhspublic@gmail.com for details of health campaigners' transport to demonstrations at Lib Dem and Tory party conferences.

(Source: Right to Work)

John Buckle

General Secretary of RCPB(ML) 1979-1983

A number of comrades and friends joined together on July 27 to commemorate the birth of John Buckle on that day in 1949.

Comrade John was the embodiment of that red spine that consistently has run through the life of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) and its forerunner organisations stretching back to the days of the 1960s and forward to today. That steadfast vigorous revolutionary spirit is what characterised the life of Comrade John from his student days to the day of his tragically early death in an air crash on November 27, 1983, at the age of 34. It is what continues to inspire and imbue the Party and its militants to this day also, and to assist them in finding their bearings in all the constantly changing conditions and circumstances.

John Buckle came to prominence as a communist and anti-fascist leader in the 1970s when the forerunner organisations of

RCPB(ML) had played a prominent role in the defeat by active mass action of the ruling elite's attempt to develop a mainstream fascist party to attack the workers' and progressive movement. He came forward to lead the reorganisation of these forerunner organisations with the founding of RCPB(ML) in March 1979.

As RCPB(ML)'s General Secretary, he led the work of the Party in this crucial period until his death in 1983. Comrade John Buckle was a bright star in the firmament of Marxist-Leninist leaders, and the Party salutes his memory and his unquenchable communist spirit.



Preparations for an “Orderly” Greek Default

Less than two months after Eurozone leaders agreed the latest €109bn “bail-out” package to Greece, speculation is again afloat over a possible default on the country’s national debt. Indeed, commentary has largely shifted from possibility to inevitability, the debate now being over what form this default will take.

Reports circulating of German preparations for a Greek exit from the Euro were followed by comments from Chancellor Angela Merkel that “everything must be done to keep the Eurozone together politically. Because we would soon have a domino effect.”

History has shown time and again how such domino theories are promoted, in the name of anti-communism during the Cold War, or stopping the spread of “failed states” during the current so-called war on terror, to justify military, economic and political aggression and intervention.

The present example is no exception. This time the stated threat is market chaos and financial meltdown, while the target is to take away the initiative from the people on the receiving end of cuts and other austerity measures who are striving for an alternative, demanding a different direction for the economy.

Membership of the EU and joining the Eurozone was a means of economically making the countries such as Greece, Ireland and others, entirely dependent on the big European powers, with the promise of leaving their position of being small, tribute-paying countries, and to buy into a privileged position as part of an imperial club. This was a fraud that replaced one form of dependency by another.

Now reality has bitten these countries hard and the international financial oligarchy is demanding they pay direct tribute through the mechanisms of the EU and the IMF, whose rescue deals amount to full-scale economic invasion by the big powers and financial monopolies.

The question for Greece is increasingly not whether it will default (indeed, it has been argued that it already has in essence)

but how, on whose terms? The monopolies declare fresh-start bankruptcies continually, yet this option is being denied Greece. Will it declare a moratorium on debt payments in favour of rebuilding the Greek nation anew – or will it default on the terms of the big powers and finance capital, selling off its assets, even its land, tying itself even more tightly to and being completely annexed by the EU?

This is the significance of the calls for an “orderly default”.

“The top priority is to avoid an uncontrolled insolvency,” Angela Merkel said to the German RBB radio station, “because that would not just affect Greece, and the danger that it hits everyone – or at least several countries – is very big.”

German Vice Chancellor and Economy Minister Philipp Roesler had earlier stated that Greece would need to make an “orderly default” on its debt.

Sovereignty has always been a life and death issue for countries such as Greece, born out of struggles for national independence. The sell-out of this sovereignty by traitorous leaders is causing fierce resistance and political crisis in these countries as well as the impoverishment of growing sections of the population.

Imagine Greece, which fought for its independence against the Ottoman Empire, and for liberation from Nazi occupation, to now come under the demand from foreign quarters to sell off its assets including some of its islands!

The people of Britain should not be misled by the scaremongering, which has the aim of dividing the British from the Greek people, and stand together with the Greek people in their demand that no means no. The issue is not whether the Greek default is controlled, but under whose control is it? If it occurs under the control of the big powers, it will be a victory for the rich who will make big scores out of the chaos they will create in that country. If it occurs under the control of the Greek people, it will be a block to the dictate of these powers and a victory for the movement for the alternative to cuts, privatisation and annexation.



UN Palmer Report Declares Israel's Gaza Blockade "Legal"

On September 2, the UN published its delayed report on the raid of the Gaza Freedom Flotilla by Israel in May of last year. This flotilla aimed to bring aid into Gaza by breaking the Israeli blockade, which is widely regarded as illegal in international law. The sheer violence of this raid resulted in such broad condemnation that it subsequently forced Israel onto the defensive. Contrary to this, the present UN report has gone as far as to assert that the naval blockade is "legal", reducing the position of the UN on the raid on the flotilla to level of a criticism that it was "excessive and unreasonable".

This conclusion flies in the face of general opinion, including that expressed by officials and bodies of the UN itself on a number of occasions. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay has stressed the "almost unanimous international view that the continued blockade of Gaza is both inhumane and illegal". In January 2008, the UN Human Rights Council released a statement calling for Israel to lift its siege on Gaza. Earlier, UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes described the blockade as "collective punishment". In December 2008, UN Special Rapporteur Richard Falk described the blockade as a crime against humanity, resulting in his expulsion from the region by Israel.

In March that year, Amnesty International, CARE International UK, Oxfam and other aid organisations also charac-

terised the embargo as collective punishment against the Palestinian people. More recently, European commissioner Louis Michel described the blockade of Gaza as a "form of collective punishment against Palestinian civilians, which is a violation of international humanitarian law".

Yet the UN report, written by a four-member panel presided over by Geoffrey Palmer, former prime minister of New Zealand, declares that "the naval blockade was imposed as a legitimate security measure in order to prevent weapons from entering Gaza by sea and its implementation complied with the requirements of international law".

This is characteristic of the pragmatism that now characterises all of the definitions on which international law and norms are based. The old definitions of human rights and security have been negated turned into their opposites through interpretations that serve whatever works for the imperial powers that dominate the UN and the "international community". With these distorted notions, panels such as the Palmer committee take it upon themselves to justify collective punishment or claim the use of deadly weapons against unarmed people is merely "excessive" or "disproportionate". This inhuman pragmatism can only be opposed by the people themselves providing modern definitions in their fight to defend of the rights of all.

13 years of unjust imprisonment. Breaking down the wall of silence

Granma International
Havana. September 13, 2011
Leandro Maceo Leyva

THE people of Cuba, represented by their political and mass organizations, accompanied families and friends of the Five in condemning the 13 years of their unjust incarceration in U.S. jails at a political-cultural event in the capital on September 12.

Organized by the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5 and the José Martí Cultural Society, the gala invited increased solidarity to achieve the immediate liberation of Gerardo, Antonio, Ramón, René and Fernando.

Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada, member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party and President of the National Assembly, recalled that throughout all these years the Five have been subjected to cruel and inhumane treatment.

In that context, he condemned the "total silence imposed by the media dictatorship to extinguish the solidarity which they

deserve and to conceal the truth. Hence the need to break down this wall of silence, the most important thing today," he stated.

"The case of the Five is irrefutable evidence of Washington's complicity with terrorists," he affirmed, adding that the current U.S. administration will have to confront the dilemma of continuing or not the immoral cynicism of its predecessors.

Alarcón noted that René González is due for release on October 7 after having served his unjust prison term to the last minute.

Phil Horowitz, René's lawyer, explained in a telephone conference from Washington that he has asked a Miami federal judge to allow his client to return to Cuba as soon as he is released to serve the three-year probation which was part of his sentence on the island, EFE noted.

However, the prosecution is opposing the application, using the argument that René has not shown any remorse concerning the crimes for which he was sentenced, and is asking that he spend that three-year term in Florida where, as his attorney commented, he has no family.

The lawyers of Gerardo Hernández and Ramón Labañino

also took part in the telephone conference – organized by the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five – and condemned the injustices committed during the trials of their clients.

“Being deprived of his family for 13 years is a very long time,” stated William M. Morris, Labañino’s lawyer.

Also on September 12, protesters outside U.S. embassies in Spain and other countries called for the liberation of the Five.

In Venezuela, family members of the Cuban national heroes placed flowers in Caracas’ Plaza Bolívar and demanded the re-

lease of the Cuban patriots in an event attended by President of the National Assembly and Rogelio Polanco, the Cuban ambassador in Venezuela.

During a general debate in Geneva with Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Cuban representative, Rodolfo Reyes, made use of the occasion to demand the release of the Five.

Youth in all parts of Cuba are taking part in various activities for the Five through October 6.

Celebrating the Anti-Fascist Resistance of the Spanish Civil War:

The Song of Songs

*E’en as the sweetest note is born of pain,
So shall the song of songs be born in Spain.*
T. E. Nicholas

July 17 marked the 75th anniversary of the commencement of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. To mark the occasion and to celebrate the heroes of the Republic and of the International Brigades, a concert of music, film and poetry was held at the historic Bridewell Hall in central London on Saturday, July 16.

The music was specially written for the occasion by the four composers Michael Chant, Robert Coleridge, Hugh Shrapnel and John White, while two new films had been authored by Stuart Monro. Marlene Sidaway, President of the International Brigade Memorial Trust, read poems by Dave Marshall, who was one of the first Englishmen to go to Spain to fight to defeat fascism and assist in creating a new society. Some of these poems formed the narrative to the film “The Planet Tilts”, a tribute to the International Brigaders. A banner “No Pasarán!” was displayed at the front of the hall, while a painting inspired by the struggle stood at the back.

The greatest culture arises out of ordinary people immersing themselves in the struggle for the progress of society, never conciliating with those forces who want to block and crush this progress, rising to the occasion and so making history by performing extraordinary deeds. This was the essence of the introduction to the concert by Michael Chant, welcoming all the participants. This is the meaning of “The Song of Songs”, the theme of the poem “In Remembrance of a Son of Wales (Who Fell in Spain)” by T. E. Nicholas, “Niclas y Glais”. In this way, the content of the music and the videos paid tribute today to the spirit of those who took a stand against war and fascism, not only from 1936-1939 but also in the defeat of Nazi fascism in the Second World War, by creating something new and vital and pointing to the future, the dawn of a new humanity.

The short film “In the Dawn” set the scene, combining images of the fallen of the International Brigades with the hills around the Ebro river, set to the song “De Madrugada” sung by Cornelius Cardew accompanied by People’s Liberation Music. The melody of this music arises again in triumph at the end of the concert out of the theme of “Ay Carmela”, the song of the Fifteenth (the International) Brigade, played by the musicians of the De Madrugada Ensemble at the conclusion of the work “The Song of Songs” by Michael Chant, ending the concert on this uplifting note and symbolising what has been given birth to out of the intensity of the struggle in Spain. “Ay Carmela” was sung prior to this final piece in a powerful arrangement for voice and strings by Hugh Shrapnel.

Piano works by John White and Robert Coleridge were included in the concert. That by John White reflected the systematic destruction of Guernica, followed by a quiet, sustained, reflection on the devastation. Guernica, in the Basque country, was bombed during the course of the war by warplanes of the German Luftwaffe, one of the first acts of aggression on a defenceless civilian population. The work by Robert Coleridge, performed by the composer, was deeply influenced by the content of poems by John Cornford. Poet and committed communist Cornford died on or around his 21st birthday while fighting with political idealism and revolutionary spirit in Spain.

The concert included two substantial works for the De Madrugada Ensemble by Michael Chant and Hugh Shrapnel. The vivid composition “Tomorrow’s Seed” by Hugh Shrapnel expresses in music the lines of the poem by Langston Hughes: “The mighty roots of liberty/Push upward in the dark/To burst in flame”. The piece includes a setting of the poem “Tomorrow’s Seed”, beautifully and hauntingly sung by Emily Underwood. The work by Michael Chant, “The Song of Songs”, took its inspiration from the poem by T. E. Nicholas, rendering it into music twice to begin and end the concert, moving from the images of war to the necessity and inevitability of the final victory of the anti-fascist forces.

The overwhelming sentiment of the audience and performers at the end of the concert was one of celebration, of touching on aspects of the human personality which they were not fully aware of possessing. To look in depth at the history and the ideals of the Spanish Civil War and give rise to new cultural works gave everyone a more profound grasp of the well-springs and legacy of this conflict, and was an inspiration to join in unity to prevent such tragedies happening in the future and to build a society consonant with the ideals of those who went to Spain to fight to defend the rights of the people and to defeat fascism once and for all.



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