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TUC CONGRESS 2012:

THE NEED FOR A NEW DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE

The Working Class Must Set Out its Own Vision for the Future of Society

Contents

TUC CONGRESS 2012:

A Future That Works

The theme of this year's TUC Congress, "A Future That Works", is of major importance for the fate not only of the workers' movement but of society itself.

To pose the question as one of "austerity" versus "the alternative" gets to the crux of the struggle between the old and the new at this time.

The Coalition government is attempting to impose an austerity programme on society. What is the alternative that the working class puts forward to chart a way out of the crisis?

This alternative has be a new direction for the economy and for society. The alternative is not pragmatic or empirical, but is based on the summation of the experience of the communist and workers' movement. It is a new vision for how society is organised.

The crucial struggles of organising resistance, of defending the rights of all, of building the national economy and upholding proletarian internationalism and the rights of all working people take place in this context.

TRADE UNION CONGRESS 2012:

The Working Class Must Set Out its Own Vision for the Future of Society

The 144th annual Trades Union Congress takes place this year from September 9-12 in Brighton. The Congress comes at a time that the organised workers' movement is stepping up its resistance in many sectors and making preparations against the Coalition government's relentless austerity programme.

Austerity Programme Blocking the Progress of Society

The austerity programme is aimed at cutting the living standards of the vast majority of people in favour of servicing the massive profits of the big multinational corporations and the international financial institutions. No stone is being left unturned in the government's ruthless pursuit of paying the rich out of cuts in jobs, public services and other sectors, of forcing privatisation in health care, and overseeing financial usury on a massive scale.

On August 23, the Bank of England's own report admitted that the £375 billion of "Quantitative Easing" given to banks and corporations by the Bank in exchange for "assets" – that is, government debt – over the last two years has, not unsurprisingly, largely ended up in the hands of the richest 5% whilst the rest of the population is suffering cut backs and drop in incomes. Thus, out of the Bank's own mouth, QE is exposed as one more pay-the-rich scheme under the fraudulent guise of assisting the economy. As regards utilities, Ofgem, the energy regulator, said that the profit margins of energy companies were due to rise by almost 14 per cent in September which will further impoverish working people.

As the recession and economic crisis continues, commentators have made much of, and even expressed surprise at, the fact that the unemployment rate was 8.0 per cent of the economically active population, down 46,000 in this quarter. There were 2.56

million unemployed people. But this "downturn" belies the injustice that millions are without a livelihood in a modern society where a productive economy cannot sustain those who live and work in it. It also covers over the fact that long-term youth unemployment is still rising fast, with almost double that amongst national minorities. Part-time work for all workers has reached 8.07 million and the number of people who are working part-time only because they cannot find a full-time job also hit a new high of 1.42m. Adding insult to injury, young people, practically a whole generation, are being deprived of their right to a livelihood. Benefits are being cut, introducing a "conditionality framework" and concentrating on the combating of alleged fraud, instead of meeting the needs of those thrown out of work and guaranteeing payments of benefits and the right to a livelihood,. This has been underlined through the opposition to the notorious workfare schemes under which the unemployed and disabled are being dragooned as forced unpaid labour on pain of losing all benefits. Those affected even face a battle to claim the expenses of travelling to the site of their compulsory unpaid work, or lose all their benefits for six months if they fail to comply.

All such aspects of the Coalition's agenda represent the rejection by the government of a responsibility for the public good, whether it be provision of health care, or welfare benefits, public services and pensions. Instead, the government is putting the state totally at the disposal of the rich and is enforcing the dictate of the monopolies, as well as handing over control of public services such as health care to private interests directly.

This is also at the centre of the agenda of the European Union of the monopolies, in which the Coalition government is an enthusiastic partner while attempting to maintain its own independent role. This agenda is increasingly taking the form of continent-wide executive power of monopoly interests in enforcing austerity on whole countries like Ireland, Spain and Greece, wrecking these nation states, their economies and their societies.

Working Class Vision for the Future of Society

Working people in many sectors are resisting and are actively working out how this deep crisis of capitalism can be resolved in their favour. The organised workers' movement is making preparations to continue the fight for the alternative and to launch massive demonstrations on October 20 in London and Glasgow and "march for a future that works".

The issue in the movement is not only resisting this austerity programme of the Coalition government but also fighting for the alternative and looking towards the future – in other words, the burning question is: what kind of society does the working class envision? With the theme of the TUC Congress being *A Future That Works*, following on from marching for the alternative last year, it is of crucial importance that the working class takes the opportunity to come to the fore and set out its

vision for the future of society. This is not some *utopian* vision of socialism but a vision for a new society that begins from the concrete conditions of the working class, takes up for solution the issue of making its voice and its character effective, and on this basis charts a path to the future with its own thinking, agenda, outlook and independent politics. This is the space for change which has opened up.

The conditions are such that now everyone can see that the block to society and to all social progress is that society is more and more openly geared to paying rich at the expense of the rest of society. What these conditions are pointing towards is the necessity to uphold the dignity of labour and to enforce the claim that the working class and people have on the whole economy, opposing the interests of the monopolies in favour of programmes that serve the interests and rights of all in society.

In order to realise its vision, the working class cannot accept the role of spectator that the Westminster government is trying to impose on it. It must grasp the full significance of fighting for a future that works, consolidate and strengthen its own organisations on a modern basis, and develop its own independent political outlook. That entails building the trade union movement itself on the modern basis of involving and mobilising the class, the strengthening of the organisations of the workers through their conscious participation, fighting for security against all the austerity measures which only recognise monopoly right and not the rights of workers and their collectives, nor of the local communities, or the national economy.

Unite poster for the march "a future that works"

The working class needs to participate in decision-making so that the agenda of the working class can be implemented. The participation of worker politicians in decision-making is necessary to set the stamp of the working class on the nation, standing against the dictate of the big parties in the service of monopoly interests.

Furthermore, the working class needs that kind of party of the class which is also built on the basis of participating in arriving at decisions in order to implement them, and which can facilitate the realisation of the alternative agenda and vision of the working class for the future and realise this in society. This is not a party that seeks power for itself as an electoral machine, as the old parties do, but a party that is organised in the class and for the class and represents all the advanced thinking, political culture, values and political skill of the working class as a class. It is a party that leads the political interventions of the working class to oppose systematically the power of big monopolies and big government and to empower worker politicians and the whole polity to run society.

This is the vision of the working class, with its own character, and its ability to determine its own destiny and to settle scores with the governments of the rich, and to put forward its own vision and method of democracy, which constitutes itself the nation, vests sovereignty in the people and inscribes on its banner the defence of the rights of all by virtue of being human.

The Line of March is confident that the TUC Congress and its delegates can contribute to turning things around if they remain true to this historic vision of the working class and fight for its independent politics against the politics of austerity and monopoly right. The future lies with the working class, the vast majority of society, not with the rich and their system. Let us together occupy the space for change!

The Workers' Movement and the Necessity for an Anti-War Government

The government's actions and statements in regard to Syria, not to mention the well publicised bullying of the government of Ecuador, show that it is continuing to flout even the most basic norms of international relations established after the Second World War. It operates on the basis that might makes right, with an arrogant contempt for those it does not consider its equals. It openly interferes in the internal affairs of sovereign nations, is a barrier to progress abroad as well as at home, and a major contributor to global militarism and instability, as its intervention in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya have demonstrated.

The current British government is a close ally of US imperialism, a contender with the other big powers for geo-political advantage in Africa, Asia and elsewhere. In this context, it has demonstrated that it is ready to intervene militarily and by other means to effect and maintain regime change. It remains one of the main props of many of the most reactionary regimes in the world, and an enthusiastic agent of the major arms manufacturers, big monopolies and big banks. It is prepared to sanction assassination, to carry out criminal acts in concert with its allies, to ignore international law and the UN Charter, to intervene wherever the interests of capital dictate and to create misery and instability throughout the world in the name of "humanitarianism" or "the right to protect", or on the basis of allegedly upholding certain values, which it now describes as "enlightened self-interest".

In these circumstances, it is the duty and responsibility of the organised workers' movement to discuss how to stay the bloody hands of this government and how the working class can break with and settle scores with the chauvinism and imperialism of the ruling elite. There is the need to consider how to further develop the movement against the warmongering and interventionist policies of successive British governments that has been much in evidence in recent years. Millions have opposed military intervention in Iraq, demanded that British troops are withdrawn from Afghanistan and elsewhere and that Britain withdraw from NATO, which in Libya and elsewhere has clearly shown itself to be a warmongering alliance of the big powers, a weapon in the hands of US imperialism and its allies to be used for the most reactionary aims. The anti-war movement has not yet succeeded in terminating the British government's interference and intervention throughout the world, but history shows that such a movement with the workers playing a leading role is the only force that is able to do so.

The workers' movement and the working class of England, Scotland and Wales must take up this responsibility not only in their own interests, since the economic crisis and austerity measures faced at home are also reflected in the warmongering and interventionist actions of British governments abroad, but also on the basis of proletarian internationalism, fighting as one with the workers and oppressed people of all countries. The struggles of the British working class are an integral part of the struggle of all workers to liberate humanity from the imperialist system of states and the agenda of neo-liberal globalisation. The working class of Britain must take a conscious stand as a contingent of an international working class engaged in one struggle. It is a struggle to put paid to the capital-centred world, to settle scores with the rich and their system and usher in a new society in which the needs of working people will take centre stage and in which the workers themselves will be the decision-makers.

The workers' movement must take up the issue of how the rich and their governments intervene to the detriment of the working people of other countries and how conditions can be created to establish an anti-war government in Britain which is guided by a principled stand against all pretexts which seek to deprive the peoples of their sovereign decision-making power. This would be a government in which the interests of the working people would take first place. It would be a government constituted by the working class and people that bases itself on the principle of respect for other states and non-interference in their internal affairs, which withdraws from the warmongering NATO alliance and removes all British troops from foreign soil.

Fight for an Anti-War Government! For the Unity of the Working Class and Oppressed People of All Countries! Yes to Sovereignty -- No to Aggression!

WHOSE NHS? OUR NHS!

The Need to Oppose the Government Forcing the Issue of NHS Privatisation

No to Private Monopoly Interests! Yes to the Right to Health Care!

The Health and Social Care Act 2012, which in March was rail-roaded through Parliament in the face of unprecedented opposition from all sections of the people, has been the catalyst for the government to force the issue of privatisation of the NHS.

For instance, NHS Surrey has signed a contract with Richard Branson's Virgin Care to manage community services in south west and north west Surrey in a contract worth £500 million and running to 2017, which also included some county-wide services such as prison healthcare and sexual health services. The services that Surrey's million-plus population access through their GPs, including community nursing, therapies, end of life care and sexual health screening, will now be provided by a private company. In a further announcement, Virgin Care has also been named as preferred bidder in a £130 million contract to run health and social care services for children in Devon. The deal will see Virgin take over about 1,100 staff employed by NHS Devon and Devon county council, which currently oversees about 2,400 children with disabilities, children's mental health services and school nurses and health visitors. In the face of the opposition from the people of Devon, the company tried to boast about its track record because, in 2010, Branson had bought 75% of Assura Medical with a £4m loan. The company, which was rebranded as Virgin Care this year, has expanded and now runs 120 NHS services mainly in the south, most notably GP practices. An investigation last year showed Virgin had links with 50% or more of the board members at three of the 52 first-wave GP commissioning groups that will purchase care on behalf of patients from next year.

These measures which are being forced through are based on the legislation put in place by the previous New Labour government to turn the Primary Care Trusts from NHS bodies that provided NHS community care into "world class commissioners" of health care buying NHS services from "any qualified provider". This "purchaser/provider split" has increasingly been vigorously pursued since that time. Prior to the emergence of Virgin Care, a "social enterprise" made up of NHS staff had run the community services as a sort of half way house to full privatisation. In a response to an accusation that the Tory Health Act was to blame, a spokesperson for Virgin Care was prompted to say that the "privatisation" was not a consequence of the Coalition's Act but of the previous Labour government's separation of the NHS's £10bn of community services from the bodies that commissioned care. The Virgin spokesperson failed to point out that it is with the present government's Health and Social Care Act that the impatience of these global monopolies to accelerate the take over of the NHS is leading to open privatisation and wrecking of health care in Britain, and that Virgin is one of its prime movers.

The Health Minister is also using the Health and Social Care Act 2012 that changes his "responsibility to provide" to a responsibility only to "promote" a comprehensive service, in order to force through privatisation. This was highlighted when in June the *Health Service Journal* (HSJ) revealed that Andrew Lansley had used his powers to set up NHS Property Services, a brand new property company which will very soon have seized assets of £5,200,000,000. PropCo, as it is otherwise known, is now listed at Companies House as a stand-alone company. PropCo will take all surplus NHS land throughout England and pool it into one stand-alone company, namely itself. The government says that PropCo will receive no funding from the Department of Health and is expected to generate its own income by selling land, i.e. NHS land. Its property portfolio is due to expand quite rapidly in the coming years as it confiscates NHS land especially from PCTs that fail to convert to Foundation Trusts. Already 591 hectares of NHS land is up for sale to private developers, and this is expected to increase sharply. All Primary Care Trusts which are due to be abolished in 2013 are now legally required to hand over their surplus land to PropCo. The company will employ 2,500 staff and 22 of its employers will have income of £100,000 or above. The government has not ruled out selling PropCo to private investors. As it stands this would be the largest sell off of NHS land in the history of the state. Going forward, it is set to be the largest one off private sector takeover of the NHS since its formation.

The working class and people must become fully conscious of the need to develop their resistance and organisation against the implementation of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. In the day to day battles and fight to build for an alternative future, what is being revealed is that in the neo-liberalisation of health care, the trajectory has been inexorably going the way of full privatisation. But now it is being done so openly. The Minister for Health is empowered by Labour's previous legislation to force the private takeover of Trusts, for example, and now by its own Act to simply seize NHS property for the private sector with impunity. This is the contemporary development, and this systematic attempt to deny the right of the people to health care is what must be opposed.

BUILDING THE WORKERS' OPPOSITION:

128th Durham Miners Gala and Big Meeting

The Strength of Character of the Working Class and Turning This into a Powerful Force to Change Society!

The 128th Durham Miners Gala took place on Saturday, July 14. The Durham Miners Association estimated the number of working people taking part as 100,000. On a bright sunny morning, once again there were unforgettable and incredible scenes as the contingents of working people, of brass bands, pipe music and bright beautiful banners turned Durham into a huge manifestation of the strength of character of the working class in the fight for the alternative against the Coalition government. At the heart of this and reflected in the banners and faces of all those present was the determination to build the resistance and opposition to paying the rich, privatising public services, wrecking the economy at home, and to continuing the war in Afghanistan and the present threats of war against Syria and Iran. This was evident when the RCPB(ML) contingent marched with its banner among the contingents of workers and distributed many copies of *The Line of March*. The banner and the paper attracted much attention from workers and from youth who saw their own experience being reflected in this stand of the Party with the demands put forward in the fight for that alternative to build the Workers' Opposition, to end the dictate of the monopolies, to change the direction of the pay-the-rich system and for an anti-war government.

David Hopper, General Secretary of the Durham Miners Association chaired the Big Meeting. He paid tribute to DMA President David Guy, who is in hospital, by saying that his struggle against serious illness over the past four and a half years has been an inspiration, and he sent the thoughts of all those at the Gala to Dave and his family. Two speakers representing the Spanish miners who have been on strike for 50 days got a huge welcome. David Hopper announced that the NUM and the Durham Miners Association had contributed £10,000 to their fighting fund. Other speakers were: Tom Watson MP; Shami Chakrabarti, Director of Liberty; Paul Kenny, GMB General Secretary; John Hendy QC; Mark Serwotka, PCS General Secretary; and Ed Miliband. leader of the Labour Party. So powerful is the mounting resistance of the workers, reflected sharply in the Big Meeting with the thousands gathered in front of the speakers, that every speaker had to address themselves to the alternative to the agenda of the Coalition government. There were calls from David Hopper and the trade union leaders to mobilise for the mass TUC demonstration on October 20 in London.

Usworth Lodge - Workers of All Countries Unite!
You Have Nothing to Lose But Your Chains!
You Have World to Win!

In deep contrast, the national media, who had refused to report on the Durham Miners Gala over decades, made the issue the return of the leader of the Labour Party, Ed Miliband, to speak at the Big Meeting after a gap in which the Labour Party leaders have boycotted attending for 23 years. Ed Miliband, having failed to attend last year, wrote twice to the Durham Miners Association this year to accept his invitation. If the kernel of the significance of the Gala for the workers lies in the necessity of the working class to strengthen their organisation so as to bring the force of their numbers and their independent programme into play, then for Miliband it is that the "popularity of the Gala has grown in recent years" so that "it is literally the biggest trade union gathering in Europe". These are two funda-

National Women Against Pit Closures

mentally different messages, one on making the resistance of the Workers' Opposition effective and charting a course to resolve the crisis in favour of the workers, the other to curry favour with the workers so as to convince them not to take up their own agenda.

In fact, one of the main characteristics of this year's Gala was that every force that considers itself serious had to be there to at least address the agenda of the working class movement to build the workers' opposition and fight for the alternative. This shows that the working class movement is making its voice heard through its struggles and its collective actions and its mass demonstrations and political activities and must give serious consideration to organisation.

Spanish Miners Addressing the Big Meeting

The workers are focusing in on the government's arrogance that it can get away with anything. The Durham Miner Gala reflects this strength of character of the working class which is continuing to resist, and that this must be turned into building its opposition in order to bring about a bright future for all in society. It also reflects that RCPB(ML) has continued to work hard to map out the line of march to building socialism in Britain by calling and working for this future. A future that works is one that stands in stark contrast to irrelevance and irrationality of an archaic political system that dictates austerity measures on behalf of the monopolies and financial oligarchy. It is a future that stands for democratic renewal and the conscious participation of each and all in the workers' movement to build the opposition, become organised as an effective independent political force in their own right, and become a powerful force to change society!

Jaguar Workers at Castle Bromwich Vote on Proposal Plan

Jaguar workers on July 18 voted in favour of the management blueprint for the future of the Castle Bromwich factory. The result was 1,467 in favour with 582 against. A previous ballot had rejected the new proposal plan, which includes some compulsory Saturday working. (Reported in *The Line of March* of July 2012.)

In their discussions on the "proposal", which in reality was a thinly disguised piece of blackmail, the workers have upheld their dignity, and the spirit remains to do all they can to uphold their rights and interests.

In fact, the struggle in defence of the workers' rights has now entered a new phase. The workers realise that they will have to strengthen their organisation through conscious participation, and further develop their political outlook. This is necessary, since not only is there not a "level playing field" as regards the workers and the owners of capital who hire their labour power, but such owners of capital do not even recognise the rules of the game any more. They are the criminals who demand the workers submit to whatever proposal is put forward. What right have the owners of capital, backed by the media, to say that the future of the plant is in jeopardy if workers do not agree to compulsory Saturday working and other working practices!

Who knows what gun was held to the head of the shop stewards during the negotiations. Not to negotiate in good faith is an abuse of power by the Tata monopoly, but that is the reality the workers have been faced with.

Although workers have voted for the deal, they cannot accept the issue as the company and others have posed it, that this is the key to the future and that the workers have come out fighting, expressing confidence in the plant. The Tata monopoly is not acting in the interests of society. Workers are not fooled by this and rejected the accusations that they were the ones jeopardising the economy, jobs and the local community

It must be emphasised that the problems of the economy demand real solutions, a new direction, not the imposition of neoliberalism and dictating to the workers, who create the added value to the product, and who are the source of the capitalists' profits.

There is an alternative, and workers have been marching for it. They demonstrated on March 26, 2011, for the alternative, and they will march again in October for a future that works. But they must clearly grasp that the alternative is of their own making, and that a new direction for the economy is required.

No to Monopoly Dictate! For the Rights of the Workers and the Public Good!

LIBOR SCANDAL:

The Need is to Break the Stranglehold of the Financial Oligarchy

The past few months have seen the breaking of two major scandals surrounding interest rates, the most widely publicised being the Libor scandal resulting in the resignations of a number of senior managers of Barclays. Currently lower down the news headlines is a further scandal over the mis-selling of interest rate swaps. These two scandals underline the need to break the stranglehold of the financial oligarchy and for an alternative to its system of international usury.

Loosely speaking, Libor is the interest rate at which major global banks supposedly lend to each other. These banks, such as JP Morgan Chase, HSBC, The Royal Bank of Scotland Group and others, have high credit ratings (AA or more) and are considered very unlikely to default on their debts, at least until the onset of the present crisis. Since its introduction in the mid 1980s, Libor has come to play a central role in financial markets and lending at all levels of the economy. For example, due to the high ratings of the banks involved, Libor is considered an estimate of the "risk-free" rate of interest, and is used as such in the pricing of derivatives*. Due to its importance, manipulation of Libor to make big scores and other purposes exacerbates the disequilibrium in these markets. Though such activity is presented as particular in nature, due to a number of individual banks, in actuality it is part of the general criminal activity of the whole financial oligarchy.

An initiative of the British Bankers' Association** (BBA) in collaboration with other parties such as the Bank of England, Libor was officially introduced in 1986. This was an era in which the markets were undergoing transformation and trading in derivatives was beginning to take off in a big way. It coincided with the Thatcher-Regan period of liberalisation and the unleashing of the anti-social offensive. Banks in this period had begun trading in interest rate derivates such as forward rate agreements, and sought uniformity in pricing these instruments, which were relatively new at the time.

Libor now forms a cornerstone of contemporary financial arrangements. According to the New York Times, over $350tn in derivatives and other products are priced according to Libor, while the BBC reports that Libor is used to set a total range of financial transactions worth in the region of $800tn, twelve times world GDP. In particular, £6.4tn in loans are indexed to Libor. As well as interbank lending, this includes mortgages and credit card lending. Along with the similar Euribor, Libor is the main standard for short term interest rates around the world.

Libor is calculated by the BBA. Each day, a panel of large banks operating in London submit their answer to the question "At what rate could you borrow funds, were you to do so by asking for and then accepting inter-bank offers in a reasonable market size just prior to 11 am?" The four highest rates and the four lowest responses are ignored and an average is taken of the remaining rates. This average, reported at 11:30 am, is the Libor rate.

It is clear that this methodology is inherently subjective and open to collusion and manipulation from the outset. Indeed, the entire form and content of Libor – the history out of which it arose, its method of estimation and the role it plays in the financial system – reflects the domination of the world economy by a powerful financial oligarchy, represented in this case by a handful of big financial monopolies, who effectively decide this key quantity between themselves. The fact that an interest rate takes on such importance is itself indicative of a parasitic financial system based on usury.

As Bank of England Governor Mervyn King back in 2008, Libor "is in many ways the rate at which banks do not lend to each other, ... it is not a rate at which anyone is actually borrowing."

Earlier that year, a Wall Street Journal study implied that the financial monopolies may have reported lower rates for the calculation of Libor during the credit crunch, to both give the impression that individual banks and the banking system as a whole were in better shape than they in fact were at that time. The rate each bank reports is effectively a statement on how creditworthy it appears to its competitors.

This study was followed up by a report last year in the same newspaper that the actions of the Bank of America, Citigroup and UBS were being looked at by regulators.

In February of this year, the US Department of Justice revealed that it was conducting a criminal investigation into how Libor was being manipulated for big scores. For example, it has been exposed how traders were given prior knowledge of daily Libor quotations by banks in order to give them a trading advantage resulting in profits running into the millions.

On June 27, 2012, Barclays Bank was fined a total of nearly £300m by various authorities for Libor and Euribor manipulation, in a scandal which resulted in the resignations of chairman Marcus Agius, chief executive officer Bob Diamond and chief operating officer Jerry del Missier.

As the evidence has mounted, it has become clear that this is not the act of any single institution. According to reports, each of the 16 banking giants involved in the setting of Libor are under investigation over the issue or have had lawsuits filed against them. The sheer size of the funds controlled by these banks illustrates the scale of the activity. It has been exposed how banks have colluded with each other, as well acting individually, over a period of time stretching back years.

In a related issue, it has been revealed how interest rate swaps were fraudulently sold by financial monopolies as insurance against rising interest rates, when lending to particularly small businesses and local authorities, with devastating effects. The driving down of interest rates by central banks such as the Bank of England on the one hand, and the artificial suppression of Libor rates on the other, left those supposedly "protected" with huge sums to pay annually to these monopolies.

The Libor and interest rate swap scandals are an exposure of the parasitic nature of the financial oligarchy as a whole and its banking system based on usury. From the criminal behaviour of various individuals and organisations, to the institution of Libor itself and all of the arrangements of the markets, all are features of the financial oligarchy acting with impunity.

Corrupt practices, extraction of tribute via interest on loans and market speculation are all ways that the financial oligarchs drain wealth from the socialised economy. These huge private claims and practices block the development of the socialised economy by, on the one hand, taking away what should be available for investing in social programmes, and on the other, leading to an enormous accumulation of wealth, privilege, influence and power over all aspects of the economy, society and the state.

These practices have no place in a modern economy, and their corruption is a sign of decay, reflecting their outdated character. The government's current Financial Services Bill, to be supplemented by the recommendations of the forthcoming Wheatley Review in the wake of the Libor scandal, will propose additional regulation of these practices. Such reforms are aimed at keeping the defunct system going, strengthening the financial oligarchy and diverting the working class from developing its opposition. The Workers' Opposition is aimed at actually restricting monopoly right, challenging the banks' power to plunder and manipulate the economy for private profit; it takes the lead in fighting for the alternative.

Criminal activity such as the present Libor scandal originate in the banks' use of the massive pooled social funds they control for private profit, both legally and illegally. The working class must fight for an alternative, public and not-for-profit system of financial services that puts more back into the economy than is taken out by pooling social funds for investment in social programmes, not for paying the rich. Workers should discuss a new direction for the economy where the charging of interest is no longer permitted and the dependency on interest rates is eliminated.

** Derivatives (known by names such as futures, forwards, options and swaps) are contracts that specify conditions under which payments or purchases of underlying assets are to be made and are the means by which financial institutions and traders mitigate or transfer their risks, speculate and attempt to find so-called arbitrage opportunities (riskless trading occurrences, which are only profitable for big players, particularly hedge funds). These ever-more-exotic trading instruments have played a key role in all crises since the 1980s, most notoriously the present.*

*** The BBA is the world's largest financial association, representing more than 250 institutions based in 50 countries and operating in almost every country.*

THE OLYMPIC GAMES OF THE FINANCIAL OLIGARCHY:

Obscene Hysteria Generated over the Olympic Games

Much hysteria was generated over the issue of "security" prior to and during the Olympic Games.

The Games became a pretext for the militarisation of society, and was run as a training exercise for the military, besides being organised to serve the interests of the financial oligarchy, not the people.

Militarisation

Using some vague and undefined threat of a "terrorist attack" on the "attractive target" of the Games, in the words of the head of MI5, surface to air missiles were placed on the roofs of blocks of flats and elsewhere near Olympic venues. One of the most notable was the placement of Starstreak missiles on the tower of what was the Bryant and May match factory in Bow, now flats, which is the site of the famous match-girls strike of 1888, a landmark in British working class history. As many pointed out, the move lacked all sense of logic, and the conclusion has to be drawn that it has been a calculated exercise of the militarisation of society. Another was the Fred Wigg Tower at Leytonstone, East London, after the local council signed a secret deal with the Ministry of Defence earlier this year. On nearby Wanstead Flats, which has the legal status of common land, there was also erected an eight-acre camp for the police, surrounded by an 11-ft fence. It was also reported that the Metropolitan Police had been stockpiling rubber bullets.

All this aroused the anger not only of the local communities but a wider sense of outrage. Despite a campaign being fought through the courts to prevent the police base being built, Parliament temporarily suspended the 136-year-old act which prohibits building on the common land. Residents of the tower block took their opposition to the High Court, who ruled in favour of the MoD, and they found themselves being harassed by the sol-

diers on "security" grounds, as they entered and left the building.

There were six locations in and around London where missiles were placed. Rapier missiles sites were at Blackheath Common, Oxleas Wood, Eltham, William Girling Reservoir, Enfield, and Barn Hill, Netherstone Farm, near Epping Forest, in addition to the Starstreak missiles in Bow and Leytonstone. The opposition was summed up by a South London resident: "They have not answered any questions, they have just said we're doing it – it's a sad day for democracy."

All sections of the armed forces were involved in this militarisation, including the Special Services. The navy's biggest warship HMS Ocean was moored on the Thames, and the air force was ready to scramble Eurofighter jets to combat any "terrorist" threat from "rogue" aircraft, with many other aircraft in varying roles. Fighter jets were stationed at RAF Northolt, in west London, for the first time since the Second World War. RAF and Navy sniper teams were on standby. Puma helicopters were based in Ilford, east London. Naval vessels were stationed along the south coast. Restrictions were put in place on the airspace over London and over much of South-East England, enforced by the military. An MoD spokesman told the press, "The government has reserved the right to extend the airspace restrictions, and the deployment of military assets, including ground-based air defence."

In what was described as a "significant" step, US security agents have been stationed at Heathrow and other airports from one week before the Olympics to one week after the end of the Paralympics, a period of almost two months. Can this just be considered a one-off, or is there some more long-term aim?

On top of this, the G4S scandal broke, that late in the day it has been discovered that this private security firm has recruited and trained only 4,200 of the 10,400 staff that were promised to the government. What is also part of the story is that last December, LOCOG, the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games, suddenly decided that the number of security staff required would not be 2,000 but 10,400. G4S employs over 657,000 worldwide. It is the company which has a number of public sector contracts, including running prisons, and in whose custody an asylum seeker recently died during deportation. The 17,000 army soldiers the government drafted in, with a further 2,000 held in reserve "on notice to move", compares with the number of 9,500 British occupying troops in Afghanistan.

There is a connection with the Jubilee workfare scandal, when unemployed were bussed in to act as stewards and treated like serfs. Not only is G4S part of the Department of Work and Pensions "Work Programme", but CPUK, the company which did the bussing, is subcontracted to G4S to provide fire safety stewards for the Games, and had justified its Jubilee behaviour by saying that the experience would be good preparation for the Olympics. It was to recruit students and the unemployed that G4S had been awarded the £284 million contract.

Added to all the above, it was suggested that police were expecting that riots would take place in August as they did in 2011. This promotion of police scaremongering both added to the hysteria and also prepares the ground for further police repression.

All in all, it can be seen how a hysteria was created in order to give effect to restructuring the state and openly give the state forces free rein against the people.

It emphasises how the occasion of the Olympics was made the occasion for the overt use of the military in public life.

Missiles on Blackheath

Paying the Rich

As part of the hysteria, it was also announced that 300 "brand police" – uniformed Olympic officers – were to check up that only the brands of the Olympic financial oligarchy who are its corporate sponsors are associated with the Games. These sponsors included McDonald's, Coca-Cola, BP and Adidas. It was not the Olympic financial oligarchy, but the small businesses who could fall foul of these edicts who were said to be engaging in "ambush marketing". This emphasises the stranglehold of the monopolies on the economy as well as on society's cultural life. These "partners" of London 2012 together funded £1.4bn of the Games' £11.4bn budget, but naturally expect a massive return on their investments, not to mention the tax breaks such sponsorship brings with it.

The IOC itself is dominated by the international financial oligarchy, and the Games were organised in a totally capital-centred way. Everything is done to serve and protect the interests of monopoly capital. Whether it is on the construction projects, on infrastructure, on security or the armed forces, the people are being made to pay for the Olympic Games. While billions are going to the monopolies, musicians and others for example, were asked to contribute without being paid. The people of London in particular and the people as a whole are being saddled with the extra burden of state spending, not to mention the cost of attending the Games and the massive disruption to normal life being caused. This is coming at a time when the government is cutting investment in essential social programmes and further privatising them, is dragooning the youth through workfare programmes and slashing benefits under the fraud of having to reduce the deficit.

For a Human-Centred Alternative

Although they were promoted as a great people's spectacle, every aspect of the Olympic Games in its present form was organised to serve the monopolies and as an exercise against the people. Whether it be on the massive cost as a festival for the monopolies, or through the militarisation of society or with the hysteria and suspicion being fostered on the issue of security, the burden of the Olympic Games falls on the people and has them politically and culturally marginalised.

The stated ideals of the Olympics of sport in the service of the harmonious development amongst people, promoting a peaceful society and human dignity were completely swamped in the context of an exercise against the people's well-being and strengthening the power of the state against them. The working class and people demand a human-centred alternative.

The Fantasy of the Olympic Opening Ceremony

What was the significance of the Olympic Opening Ceremony? It was undoubtedly spectacular, and belied some predictions that it would be an embarrassment. But it was still a spectacle, meant to create a certain impression, rather than people participating together with an aim.

The question really poses itself in the form: what image of Britain is being promoted through this extravaganza. The history that was presented was all the "good" things about Britain. It could be asked whether this was perhaps like the image of Britain that Tony Blair presented in his electoral coup of 1997, of a Britain that could "only get better". Blair's claim was that the Labour Party values of 2000 were the same values that were held by the Labour Representation Committee of a century before, but adapted to present-day circumstances. These illusions that Blair sought to create about the direction of society under New Labour were quickly shown to be just that – illusions. The underlying ugly chauvinism of a "Great Britain", with the project of "making Britain great again", with its aggression and war, its "Third Way" neo-liberal agenda, was soon exposed.

In a similar fashion, the Olympic opening spectacle, though setting out to create the impression of an unstoppable progress, was at odds with the present reality of increasing poverty, student strikes and marches, health worker strikes and protests, riots, and anti-war protests. It was also at odds with the reality of the Games themselves as they unfolded: the "ticketless" archery, the empty seats reserved for the corporate sponsors, the cultural aggression which accompanied the preparations, the hysteria and militarisation.

While the presentation of the industrial revolution was very dramatic, it was the "theatricality", not the content which was made the issue. The impression was that "all is well in the State of Great Britain". We love our queen, we love James Bond, we love our pop music, we adore our NHS and Mary Poppins. The spectacle's version of a "people's history" and what Britain has given the world was shot through with this kind of chauvinism and the emasculation of the people's struggles, the contradictions in society which move it forward.

In being apparently human-centred, but sanitising the reality, Danny Boyle could be said to have given a social-democratic account of the history and gains of Britain, the role of the working class, the significance of the health service. In that sense, it was intended to create a nostalgia for a Britain with a certain "greatness", concern for the youth and for people's well-being, and to lead people into the Games themselves, where it is meant to be forgotten that 17,000 soldiers are mobilised, the international financial oligarchy behind the big sponsors are the real winners who dominate the Games, and Britain's aggression abroad is conveniently wiped out of the popular consciousness. It is a harking back which cannot bring into being anything genuinely new.

The Games have seen staggering sums expended to pay the rich in a time of "austerity". The fraud that this is in the people's benefit, while the Coalition is slashing social programmes like the health service because of the alleged need to "balance the budget" is striking. Volunteerism is promoted because "we are all in this together". The unemployed are being treating like serfs on the same grounds, while the multi-national corporations make a killing.

Stop the War Coalition's Chris Nineham pointed out, for example, "Danny Boyle's opening ceremony was worlds away from how the Olympics are actually being organised. The Olympics has already broken records: the most arrests on the opening day, the highest ticket prices, the highest expenditure on security and the greatest degree of corporate control. And all this holds a mirror up to our government; brazenly elitist, obsessed with profit and the military."

Blair put forward a vision for a "New Britain", but his "Third Way", while ostensibly setting out to renew social democracy, was a synonym for a neoliberal path of war, aggression, privatisation and a de-recognition of the rights of the working people. Now the Coalition government is openly intensifying this path of neoliberalism and neoliberal globalisation. To say simply, therefore, that the Opening Ceremony does not accord with Britain's contemporary realities is true, but not its real essence. Its point is to attempt to reconcile the working class and people with this neo-liberal version of "things can only get better".

It is a fraud because the Games exist to make big money for a few, and in that sense reflect the way the whole of society and its life is dominated by the dictate of this oligarchy. The opening ceremony paints some other picture, and creates an illusion. The same state which is funding the big scores to the financial oligarchy through the Games is also the one which destroying and wrecking the society and going against the public good, not promoting it.

What is of course not said and is completely obscured is the necessity to organise the working class now through the building of a Workers' Opposition, to see through this fraud and fantasy, and build a human-centred alternative with the working class at the head. The fight that rights be recognised and guaranteed, the fight for a human-centred alternative, has not gone away, but is firmly on the agenda. The working class and people must continue to take it up.

FOR AN ANTI-WAR GOVERNMENT:

Hands Off Syria – No to Britain's Intervention!

A (non-binding) draft resolution on Syria was debated at the UN General Assembly on Friday, August 3. The resolution was submitted by Saudi Arabia. This was a clear attempt to get around the Security Council, in which China and Russia have used their veto to block resolutions tabled by the US, Britain and France. References to regime change or to the binding imposition of sanctions had to be dropped because of widespread opposition to their inclusion, particularly from Latin American countries, as well as from Russia and China. This shows the trouble the imperialists have in pushing through their agenda. The revised draft resolution still demanded that the Syrian army stop its shelling and helicopter attacks and withdraw to its barracks. In this form it was passed by a vote of 133 in favour to 12 against, with 31 abstentions.

The resolution expressed "its concern about a raft of gross human rights violations being carried out by Syrian Government forces including systematic attacks against civilians, and the increasing use of heavy weapons, armour and the air force against populated areas". The resolution contained a section entitled "Political Transition", which clearly stated that a new government, along with a new constitution and political process, must be established in Syria. It gave full support to efforts by the League of Arab States to organise "more cohesion" amongst the opposition in Syria. This is a clear attempt to justify imposing on the people of Syria a new political system that is more favourable to the US and Britain and their allies, in complete violation of the principles upon which the United Nations was founded.

Syria's Permanent Representative in the UN, Bashar al-Jaafari, speaking at the General Assembly, said that the draft resolution was hysterical and misleading, violating all principles of international legitimacy, and primarily the principle of respecting national sovereignty and non-interference in countries' internal affairs. He pointed out the irony that the countries adopting the resolution presented it under article 34 on the prevention of armed conflicts, while those very same countries have had a considerable part in the militarisation of the situation in Syria and pushing it away from the desired political solution by providing weapons to what he termed the "terrorist groups in Syria".

The British government had been quick to denounce the veto exercised by Russia and China for the third time in the UN Security Council (UNSC) that prevented the adoption of a resolution threatening sanctions against the Syrian government if it did not withdraw its troops from its own towns and cities and stop using heavy weapons against the armed opposition. William Hague, the Foreign Secretary, went so far as to say that the actions of Russia and China were "inexcusable and indefensible", that the Syrian people had been "betrayed", and that both countries would pay a serious price in the Middle East diplomatically and politically, for what he called "this unjustifiable veto". However, an amended UNSC resolution extending the mandate of the UN monitoring mission in Syria was unanimously adopted on July 20.

The government is fond of criticising those countries that veto its resolutions at the UNSC but remains silent when its allies exercise their power of veto, something that the US has done over sixty times on the issue of Palestine alone.

The British government and its closest allies have been at the forefront of attempts to introduce a new UN Security Council resolution which would pave the way for further sanctions against Syria and might also facilitate open external intervention under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The main feature of the government's approach is to support and encourage the armed opposition to the Assad regime while condemning the latter's attempts to contain it. The initial UNSC resolution also took this approach but voting on it had to be delayed because of the assassination of three leading members of the Syrian government, including the defence minister, in a planned bomb attack for which the NATO backed opposition claimed responsibility. It was noticeable that Hague, who had just returned from a visit to Jordan and Libya to whip up support for the government's position, said nothing to condemn what the government of Syria has referred to as a terrorist act.

It is now widely accepted that the conflict that the government of Britain and its allies have openly encouraged has intensified and engulfed the whole country in a civil war, with fighting now being reported in the capital Damascus. The conflict is even spilling over into neighbouring countries and threatens to destabilise the entire region. The actions of the British government have not been designed to pacify this conflict but to exacerbate it. Hague has on many occasions stated that the government of Assad is doomed and in his latest statements has again pledged renewed support and training for the armed opposition. Indeed Hague openly acknowledged that what he referred to as

"lethal support" would be provided to the opposition, not by Britain openly, but by its allies.

For his part, the Ambassador of Russia to the UN, Vitaly Churkin condemned the attempts of Britain and its allies to "whip up tensions in and around Syria at every opportunity". He was also scathing about the so-called "Friends of Syria" grouping, which he characterised as "a group of countries that are enemies of the Syrian government, and NATO's demand for "humanitarian intervention". Although Russia has its own interests to advance, Churkin pointed out that Britain and its allies, including Saudi Arabia and Qatar, have clear geo-political interests including the aim of curtailing Iran's influence in the region and that their actions have nothing to do with the interests of the Syrian people. Russia's position, he stated, was to try to bring about dialogue between the Syrian government and the opposition but so far it is the opposition, not the Syrian government, which has refused to negotiate.

The lies and disinformation produced by the government on Syria, Iran and other countries in the regions must be unequivocally condemned but what must also be condemned is the government's hypocritical and warmongering policy, its support of assassination and regime change at any cost to the people of Syria and other countries in the region.

The passage of the August 3 resolution shows that it is up to the peoples of the world to establish anti-war governments that in word and deed oppose the use of force in international affairs or interference in the internal affairs of other countries. This is very urgent indeed.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT:

CPC(ML) Honours the Memory of Hardial Bains and Other Party Comrades

from The Marxist-Leninist Daily

On August 19, First Secretary Sandra L Smith and the youth of the Communist Paty of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) led members and supporters in the annual Dawn Ceremony in Ottawa honouring the memory and contributions of Hardial Bains and all other Party members who have passed away. The Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) was also represented at the Ceremony.

Under a beautifully clear sky with touches of light just beginning to appear in the east, the Honour Guard of youth carrying Party flags came to attention beside the red granite memorial. Off to one side, the music of *The Dawn* filtered through the cool air as Party musicians began softly playing piano, saxophone and violin.

A representative of the Central Committee of CPC(ML) marched up to the memorial, quietly placed a bouquet of flowers and stood with raised fist in a communist salute of deepest respect and determination to fulfil the words of Comrade Bains to "March On!"

A red rose was laid on behalf of the youth on the base of the memorial with a vow that the Communist youth of Canada will proudly uphold the methods of work and outlook of Comrade Bains. The strains of *Our Founder, Our Leader* filled the gradually lightening sky as Party musicians and singers led all in singing the song dedicated to Comrade Bains.

Representatives of the US Marxist-Leninist Organisation and RCPB(ML) placed flowers on behalf of the International Communist Movement followed by Party members representing the organisations of CPC(ML) present at the ceremony.

The first direct rays of the sun burst through the distant trees as the assembled guests reflected on the enormous contribution

of Hardial Bains and all the Party members and supporters who have passed away. Engaging in animated conversation, those present gathered around the memorial discussing the comrades whose names are etched in the granite.

The dawn fully broke into brilliant sunshine reminding all of the dialectic in the affairs of humans with the new in constant battle with the old and the assured victory of the new when human beings organise and take action based on the *Necessity for Change!*

The experience and teachings of Comrade Bains and the work of CPC(ML) in the here and now to organise the working class to defend the rights of all and bring in the new are strains of light appearing in the dark night of imperialism. The brightness of the *Necessity for Change!* is gathering momentum, speed and power to deprive the ruling elite of the power to deprive the people of the power to bring into being the dawn of a new society.

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