

# The Line of March

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## For A Future That Works!



**For a New Direction for the Economy!  
Our Future Lies in the Fight for the  
Alternative! For an Anti-War Government!**

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## FOR A NEW FUTURE!

# Our Future Lies in the Fight for the Alternative!

The challenge as the working class movement goes into motion for a future that works is how the working class can effectively shoulder its responsibility for the fate of society.

The working class and people are faced with the Cameron/Clegg dictatorship, which is intent on forcing on society a so-called austerity programme which openly favours the rich and attacks all that the working people hold dear.

It goes without saying that they must strengthen their organisation, and consolidate their unity in order to resist not only the attacks on their livelihoods, pensions and living standards but also the wrecking of society itself in the name of “balancing the budget” and “austerity”.

In these circumstances, it is the working class which is the social force which has the responsibility to come forward to elaborate and fight for a change of direction in the economy and for society as a whole.

It is in this context the working class movement is taking steps to analyse what is needed in order to turn things around, combining this with action. It will then be in a position to further sum up the next stage of its battle for the future of society. It is already strengthening the organisations of the workers – the trade unions, the groups of writers and disseminators, the trades councils, shop stewards committees, and other organisations – and is determined to build on the decisions of its delegates at the TUC, and to further co-ordinate its actions and its resistance. This is the power the working class movement has at this time, and step by step it must utilise this power of unity, organisation and numbers. It is a power of opposing the wrecking of society and the attacks on the working class and people which are being made under the pretexts of being one nation and all in this together. And it is a power which must develop in the direction of becoming a power to deprive the rich, the financial oligarchy, of their own power to impose their interests on the whole of society.

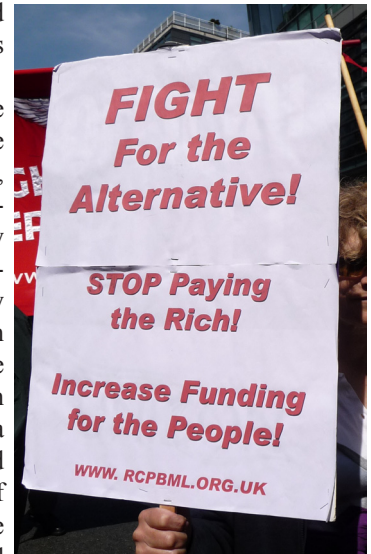
The stand of the working class movement is to oppose the rich and their government seeking to isolate everyone as individuals as if they were competing for the best opportunities for themselves, which has the aim of driving down wages, pensions and living conditions. The outlook of the working class is that a livelihood is a human right, that a decent pension is a right, that health, education and other social programmes are a right and

that society must be organised so as to guarantee those rights and ensure the public good.

While the present stage of history demands that the social economy is developed, what is blocking this development is private monopoly ownership and the domination of decision-making by the financial oligarchy, which is using its dictate to ensure that anarchy of production prevails to further enrich a tiny elite. This is summed up in the whole agenda of neo-liberal globalisation. The working class does not need this agenda, nor does it even need the owners of capital. The working class must reject this whole agenda using the weapons it presently has at its disposal of organisation, of unity, of one class, one programme, and set a new direction for society, a future which works.

The programme which unites the whole working class movement is the programme to **Stop Paying the Rich!** and **Increase Investments in Social Programmes!** This is a programme for the working class whose time is now. It is a programme which underlies the crux of the struggle at this time, the struggle between the old direction represented by paying the rich and imposing austerity on the poor, and the new direction represented by increasing the investments in social programmes and putting more into the economy than is taken out. This is the alternative, in the fight for which lies the future for a society which is organised for the benefit of its members, and guarantees all their rights without discrimination on any grounds.

Society faces the necessity for economic and political renewal. The working class movement must fight for itself to have that power to decide the direction of society and the economy. Workers can and must develop their own thinking as to how society is organised so that public right prevails over monopoly right, so that the working class can take its place as the leader of society, as the architect and builder of the new! This is the future!



**Stop Paying the Rich! Increase Investments in Social Programmes! Build the Workers' Opposition! Fight for a New Direction for the Economy! Our Future Lies in the Fight for the Alternative!**

# 2012 TUC Congress Addresses Serious Issues

The Congress has a lot of latent spirit, which is ignited when the conditions are created for the delegates to be inspired. That inspiration comes when a path is opened for them to see the possibilities for taking action for what is just, when they can see how the future might be transformed by a change in the direction of the economy and society. That was the overriding lesson of the Brighton Congress of 2012.

It had to address the depth of the anti-social offensive which is being carried out under the pretext of implementing an “austerity” programme. But it did so consistently from the point of view that there is an alternative. In fact, it could be said that the debates and the motions which were passed all centred around how to resist the anti-social offensive from the point of view of organising around the alternative. It was groping towards the conceptualisation of the need for the independent politics of the working class to be taken up in the working class movement.

If the theme of the Congress, “A Future that Works”, was not in fact addressed or elaborated consistently, nevertheless it provided the underlying theme that Congress could not help but return to. It could not help but provide an underlying unity, with an excitement and anticipation for the future and the class battles that lie ahead which centre around the future direction for society.

The spirit to resist and organise which lay beneath the sur-



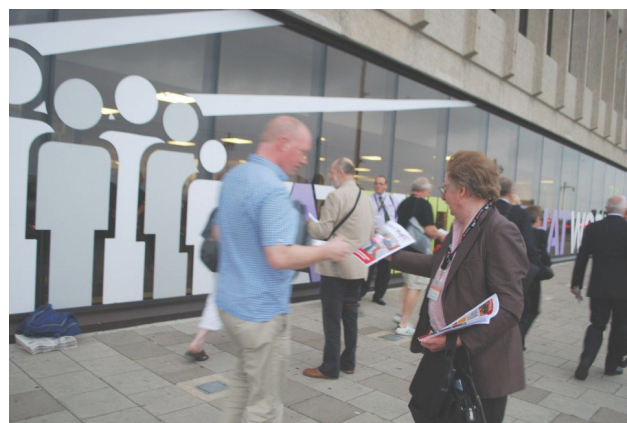
face of much of the Congress debates was brought to the fore when Motion 5 calling for the General Council to investigate the practicalities of a general strike was debated. This motion was moved and debated not in the spirit that the working class is at present lying prostrate before the attacks on not only the workers but society as a whole and especially its most vulnerable members. Rather it was from the point of view of what actions of the working class movement can be effective in turning around the anti-social offensive being carried out under the dictate of the



*The 2012 TUC Congress addressed serious issues on which workers must take a stand.*

Coalition government.

The motion was debated in the wake of the speech to Congress by Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls which tried to suggest that to take strike action would be to fall into the trap of being provoked by the Coalition. That Motion 5 was supported by the General Council and was passed with enthusiasm by Congress demonstrates that in fact the workers grasp the necessity to take a stand for the alternative, and to mobilise the whole of the working class behind this stand. In that sense, the carrying of the motion further opens the space to plant the alternative and to elaborate the independent politics of the working class.



*Distributing The Line of March at the TUC Congress*

See <http://www.rcpbml.org.uk/wwie-12/ww12-28-29.htm> for a film made by RCPB(ML) on the debates which took place on Tuesday, September 11. These were the debates on Motion 77 “Trade union rights and UK membership of the EU”, and Motion 5 “Resisting austerity measures”.

# The Need for a New Direction for the Economy

The government claims that the only way out of the crisis is through making more sacrifices; its call is for further “austerity”, privatisation and financial measures as a means of paying the rich.

“Britain is at a historically important crossroads,” said Brendan Barber in his final speech as TUC General Secretary at the 2012 TUC. “The choice we face is clear. In one direction are decline, depression and despair. In the other are recovery, regeneration and renewal.”

Over half a million people demonstrated for the alternative on March 26 last year, a demonstration of the new, the social and human spirit of the working class, expressing the consciousness that there is an alternative, and that it is the working class and its allies who represent and provide the essence to this alternative. This alternative is a different way of running society and a new direction for the economy.

The dead-end nature of the present capital-centred direction has been amply exposed by the current crisis.

The unemployment rate of 8% continues to fluctuate around its highest level since 1995, while a massive 19% of under-24s are now jobless. Yet commentators have been drawing attention to the so far lower than expected unemployment brought about by the current crisis. This is the flipside of the coin to the phenomenon of “jobless growth”, which emerged as a feature of the economy in the early 1990s. Just as in that case, underemployment has risen sharply over the past four years. According to the TUC, drawing from Office of National Statistics data, the number of people “trapped in jobs that don’t have enough hours to provide the income they need to get by” stands at 11%, or 3.3 million, up from 2.3 million in early 2008.

Further, according to the Business Sale Report, in the month of August alone there were some 892 companies in liquidation with fixed assets totalling over £5.4 billion.

The tired refrain of “all in it together” rings hollow when confronted with the facts on the ever-widening gap between the rich and poor, where the top 1% of the British population own 21% of the wealth, while the bottom 50% own just 7%. These figures compare with 18% and 8% respectively in 1991.

More than one in five lives in relative poverty, defined as 60% median income, after housing costs are taken into consideration. Perhaps the most damning indictment is the level of child poverty – 3.6 million after accounting for housing costs.

Personal insolvencies, bankruptcies, individual voluntary arrangements and debt relief orders totalled nearly 55,000 in the second quarter of this year. Outstanding personal debt stood at £1.4 trillion at the end of July, up 0.3% from a year earlier. This is comparable with the entire GDP of the country. Over the next five years, personal debt is predicted by the Office of Budget Responsibility to reach over £2 trillion.



2012 TUC Congress discusses motions on the economy Photo: Workers' Weekly

The living and working conditions of the working population are also under attack through reduced pay and increased working time.

Total pre-tax earnings fell by 7.1% in real terms in 2010-11. The result has been the largest one-year decrease in average household income in thirty years over that time. Meanwhile, the hours worked by full-time workers has been increasing, currently 42.7 hours per week, up 3% on five years ago.

Restricting workers' wages, while at the same time, trying to squeeze more out of the working class through more intense working conditions and longer hours is the most direct method by which private owners of capital enlarge their claim on the added value produced by the workers at the point of production.

Not only are the claims of active workers under attack, the claims of retired workers are also being restricted via their pensions.

The average annual return on British pension funds has decreased by 0.1% every year between 2001 and 2010, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Most of that period was before the current crisis. The effect of quantitative easing since the onset of the crisis has been to greatly accelerate the wiping out of the value final-salary pension schemes. This loss in value comes to £270bn in total so far according to the National Association of Pension Funds. Furthermore, a worker retiring with a £26,000 pension will receive £1,320 per year, which is £440 less than what that person would have received on retiring four years ago.

At the same time, the government has been directly and systematically wrecking pensions in the public sector. The largest manifestation of the opposition to this attack on pensions so far was on November 30 last year, when up to 2.5 million public sector workers took part in the largest mass industrial action since the 1926 General Strike. This was followed by a major

strike over the issue on May 10 this year.

Pensions form part of the issue of social programmes in general, which from the health service to education and welfare, are all under constant assault under the signboard of “austerity”.

The economy is currently directed to the needs of capital in the form of the claims of fiercely competing private interests. These needs of capital are ever more exposed as standing at odds with the needs of society as a whole.

The alternative means a change in the direction of the economy, centred on the needs of society as a whole. This is not just about defending what was previously won, but about bringing something new into being, in place of the old, defunct system. This starts with the human-centred perspective of the working class, who must begin, in the midst of their ongoing struggles and growing resistance, by examining what is the nature of value and who has claims on the social product. These are the claims of workers according to their work and work-time on what they produce; government claims on social product to finance social programmes; and claims of owners of capital to profit according to their private ownership and control.

On the basis of this perspective, a Workers’ Opposition can organise to deprive the owners of capital – the monopolies, the financial oligarchy – of a portion of their claim on the social product, the total added value produced by the working class. This would increase the amount available to be claimed by the working class and government to be used for pay and pensions to guarantee living standards and for social programmes. Fur-

ther, it points towards the working class having first claim on the economy and the use to which the wealth it produces is put.

An alternative financial system is required that serves the kind of economy desired by the working class and vast majority of the population. The existing private, for-profit banking system, which uses the pooled savings of the public for private gain, must give way to a new not-for-profit system under public control, which uses these assets in the public interest.

Workers should discuss a new direction for the economy where the charging of interest is no longer permitted. Workers should also call for a moratorium on national debt repayments and abolish any further use of public securities, either locally or nationally, for private gain.

The direction of handing over the entire assets of the country to the monopolies, directly through privatisation and indirectly through public-private partnerships, private finance initiatives, and other arrangements being brought about should be reversed. The need is for the infrastructure and planned investment that will serve the socialised economy.

This requires an effective workers’ political movement that is able to renew democracy in favour of the working class and people, providing itself with the decision-making power required to change the direction of the economy.

[Sources: AccountancyAge, BBC News, Business Sale Report, Credit Action, The Guardian, HM Revenue and Customs, Institute for Fiscal Studies, National Association of Pension Funds, New Policy Institute, Office of National Statistics, Pension Protection Fund, The Telegraph, Trades Union Congress]

## For a Future without War

October 7 marked the 11th anniversary of the Anglo-US invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. On this anniversary, to ensure the end of the continuing carnage and to oppose the new threats of the NATO powers to intervene in Syria and attack Iran, RCPB(ML) calls for the immediate withdrawal of all the remaining British troops from Afghanistan, and for Britain to get out of the warmongering NATO alliance forthwith.

The anti-war forces have stood on principle to oppose any conciliation with the warmongers’ pretexts and justifications for imperialist war, aggression and intervention. Neither have the people of Afghanistan submitted to the brutal onslaught of the past 11 years at the hands of the occupying forces which has caused such untold death and destruction.

The ruling circles in this country have continued to attempt to draw a line under Britain’s colonial and imperialist past and claim that they are for justice and even for “revolution”. The Coalition claims that it is for the end of tyrannical regimes, while attempting to throw dust in the eyes of the anti-war forces and working class movement to blind them to the heinous crimes of their own ruling elite.

The British government’s interference in the current conflict in Syria, its support for violent regime change, assassination and subversion, have demonstrated that it retains its reactionary role as a major interventionist power in the world. The carnage of human beings using highly sophisticated weapons against a barely armed resistance and civilians in Afghanistan, one of the poorest countries of the world, beggars belief.

The Coalition government boasts about the role it has taken in the UN Security Council and the EU, where it has been the most zealous advocate of sanctions and a hostile stand to the Assad regime. Similarly, it has openly and brazenly supported the armed opposition to the Syrian government, even though such support breaches the norms of international law and the UN Charter. Together with its allies, principally the US and the other major NATO powers, as well as the most reactionary states in western Asia, it has played a leading role in the so-called Friends of Syria organisation, and instigated civil war and armed rebellion against another member of the UN.

The boast of the British government is that it is the most zealous supporter of what it refers to as the “Arab Spring”, the popular movement that swept through parts of North Africa and

beyond in 2011. The British government seized on this movement as a “great opportunity” to strengthen its own position in the region, to extend NATO’s influence and to eliminate regimes that were not to its liking, first in Libya and now Syria. In so doing, Britain and its allies also sought to weaken the influence of Iran, strengthen the position of Zionist Israel and further extend NATO’s position in central Asia, where it is in contention with Russia and China.

It was Blair and his governments that developed the notions of “humanitarian intervention”, and “failed states” and “the doctrine of international community”, to provide justifications for military and other external intervention. The aim was to subvert the UN Charter, especially Article 2 that upholds the rights of states to political independence and territorial sovereignty and the principle of non-intervention unless there is a specific threat to international peace, and to strengthen the feudal notion of Britain and the other big powers that might is right. In a similar fashion the “right to protect” civilian populations has been invoked and elaborated as a justification for military intervention in Libya and the basis for interference elsewhere, including in Syria.

Under the Labour government of Blair, Britain emerged not only as the major ally of US imperialism throughout the world but the major theoretician of the so-called “war on terror” and policy of global intervention. The present government has proceeded along the same reactionary course but has distinguished itself by appearing even more bellicose first in instigating rebellion and regime change by military means in Libya and now attempting to implement the Libyan model in Syria. At the same time, it continues to issue threats against Iran.

Whereas the Labour governments spoke of their aim to “make Britain great again” and the promotion of so-called “universal values”, the current Coalition states that it is guided by

“enlightened national interest” but continues to defend the values of the financial oligarchy and neo-liberal globalisation and to brazenly support all those who adhere to such values. The government still wishes Britain to “punch above its weight” in international affairs and boasts that although the country is only the sixth largest economy it has the fourth largest military budget in the world. It aims to take advantage of global economic and political instability to assert itself particularly in Asia but also in other parts of the world. For this end, it is rapidly modernising the armed forces and playing a leading role in encouraging an expansion in NATO’s interventionist role in the world. However, its stated aim is to intervene by other means wherever possible, including the use of “special forces” rather than by outright military might. The Coalition government seems determined to continue to play a reactionary interventionist role in the world, closely allied to US imperialism, and the other big powers of NATO and the EU.

For the working class, “A Future that Works” must also be a future without war. To bring this about, the working class and people must fight for an anti-war government in Britain.

This means that the working class and people must stand shoulder to shoulder with the working class and people of all lands as a single whole against imperialist domination. Through their own efforts, they must establish an anti-war government, rejecting with hatred and contempt the unbridled chauvinism that comes from an outdated and reactionary social system which is lauded in such obscene terms by those who hold political power or who refuse to settle scores with Britain’s imperialist past and present. When the working class and people are able to take such a stand, they will be well on the way to establishing a future without war, based on the internationalism of the working class and the unity and friendship of all the peoples of the world.

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## ***FIGHTING FOR THE FUTURE OF THE NHS:***

# **The Fight to Safeguard the Future of NHS Intensifies as TUC Meets for Future that Works**

**I**n the week that followed the TUC Congress, on Sunday, September 16, 2,500 people marched along the seafront in Brighton to prevent core services being cut at their local hospital in a move to down grade it. Entitled *Shaping Our Future*,

this plan is to centralise stroke care, unplanned general surgery and unplanned orthopaedic services in either Hastings or Eastbourne when all these services at present are provided at both General Hospitals in Hastings and Eastbourne.

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In the same week, on Saturday, September 15, in west London thousands of people brought Ealing to a standstill against plans to close the Accident and Emergency, maternity and intensive care departments at four hospitals across west London. Accident and Emergency departments at Charing Cross, Ealing, Hammersmith and Central Middlesex Hospitals have all been marked for closure under proposals outlined in *Shaping A Healthier Future* NHS north-west London warned that they will have more than £300 million in debt by 2015 if the changes do not go ahead.

In fact, there are plans across the whole of England for closures, cutbacks and rationalisation of services. For example, in Tyne and Wear, the South of Tyne Trusts, at the Queen Elizabeth, Sunderland Royal and South Tyneside, have issued a “discussion document” *Accelerating the “bigger picture” – the way forward* where District General hospitals will no longer provide core services at each hospital. Instead, these will be spread across almost the whole county in the three district general hospitals.

It can be seen that the battle is on for the future direction of the NHS. All of the changes being implemented are driven by a year-by-year enforced 4% “cost savings” and refusal by government to budget hospitals to meet their needs. This is coupled with the huge investment in mechanisms, such as the commissioner provider split, to fragment and drive health services more and more into the control of the private health monopolies. By wrecking those services that have been provided by each district general hospital the authorities hope to accelerate

the degeneration of the NHS as a public service to impose their business model. This is the consequence of the market driven policy of successive governments which is being accelerated by the present Coalition government. Its result is that core health services will no longer be available in each district of the country. Instead, people will have to travel large distances for routine treatment, operations and for emergency services, intensive and specialist care.

It was in this context of the fight for the alternative and a future that works that TUC Congress 2012 debated the NHS. Among other things, the Congress called on the trade union movement to fight for credible alternative policies “to keep the NHS safe for future generations and to keep alive the vision of a publicly funded, publicly provided national health service on the principles of co-operation and not competition”. The TUC Motion 55 called on the working class movement to build on its resistance by “continuing and intensifying the *All Together for the NHS* campaign against the Health and Social Care Act and its impact”.

The whole direction of the running of the NHS must be changed. The government must be held responsible for the chronic deliberate underfunding of the NHS and its consequences. The future of the NHS must be fought for by affirming that health care is a right, and that the people have a right to decide on the future of the NHS. The government has absolutely no mandate for its wrecking of the health service. Fight to safeguard the future of the NHS!

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## The Battle Is On for the Future Direction of the NHS

Over the recent period, there have been marches, demonstrations and campaigns against the cut-backs to health services at district general hospitals in Brighton, North West London, Trafford and Hull, and elsewhere. This shows that the battle is on for the future direction of the NHS.

In Trafford, which borders Manchester, local people are fighting a campaign against the closure of the accident and emergency unit. In Hull, 500 health workers and local people marched through the city centre to oppose the savage cuts to Hull and East Yorkshire Hospital Trust which faces £99 million cuts to its budget by 2017 and £24 million this year. The plans include cutting 300 acute beds and closing the specialist neurology ward at Hull Royal Infirmary. The quarterly report published by the Kings Fund which surveys the financial directors of Hospital Trusts and PCT Commissioners revealed that 40% of them expected patient care to worsen over the next few years because of the so-called “efficiency savings” of a 5% cut in the budgets of all NHS organisations year on year. This before

the government target to cut £20 billion from the NHS budget by 2015. In addition, the report recorded that since March 2010 there has been a reduction of 29,223 full-time posts in the NHS with preliminary figures of 5,500 fewer nurses in the same period.

All of this shows that the future direction of the NHS cannot be in implementing year-by-year enforced “cost savings” and a refusal to budget hospitals to meet their needs. The future direction of the NHS also cannot revolve around the “productivity” and “efficiency” of the provision of health care in this false market the government has created where financial directors and boards have to “balance their books”, or be declared bankrupt and be taken over by the government’s “Monitor” and have cuts forced on them. The commissioner/provider split, far from creating stability and growth of good health services, has created budget mechanisms that have no coherence, that are designed to create the maximum amount of fragmentation and disruption to health services. Also, the funding of NHS Trust providers using

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the mechanism of “payment by results” and reduced payments for certain readmissions has created fluctuating budgets in real time, making it almost impossible to forward plan health care services. At the same time, material and human resources are wasted on replacing services over and over again using short-term contracts, by endlessly transferring staff and reorganising services, redeploying and making staff redundant. This is driving a rapid reduced redistribution of services where many core and specialist services and skills are disappearing from local general hospitals which will reduce access to a bare minimum for the majority of people. This all to open up the opportunities for private health insurance and private health care at the

expense of the right of all to health care.

This whole direction for the way the NHS is being run must be changed. The government is championing the discredited interests of the financial oligarchy who stand to gain huge profits from the wrecking of the NHS and are already doing so. They must be held responsible for forcing through these programmes of privatisation and for the chronic deliberate underfunding of the NHS and its consequences.

The battle is on for the future of the NHS, and the working class and people must further develop their resistance and organisation to affirm that health care is a right and to decide the future of the NHS.

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## APPOINTMENT OF NEW HEALTH MINISTER:

# An Attempt to Divert the Resistance against Health and Social Care Act 2012

The reshuffle by David Cameron of his Coalition Cabinet saw the replacement of Andrew Lansley as health secretary by Jeremy Hunt. Whilst Lansley was said to be demoted to leader of the Commons, it was reported that Downing Street itself billed the reshuffle, the only major recasting of government planned ahead of the 2015 election, “as an attempt to promote ministers capable of delivering on policies already announced”. The same report said, “Hunt is rated by Cameron for his ability to focus on a clear political message. His first task will be to resell and amend Lansley’s legacy, aided by Grant Shapps, the smooth-talking new Conservative chairman.” These reports also questioned the new health secretary’s image in getting the Coalition government’s message across when Hunt had played such a key role in Murdoch and News Corporation’s attempted take over of BSkyB, and speculated that maybe News Corporation would be running the NHS in the future.

The *Health Service Journal* commented, “Policy direction will be increasingly influenced by key advisors at Number 10 – just as it was during the Blair years.” The publication emphasised that “it would be disingenuous to suggest that Mr Hunt will simply be a PR man”. It suggests: “His immediate check list includes, but is not limited to, deciding: if regional pay will work in the NHS; what he should do with South London Healthcare, the NHS’s first ‘bankrupt’ trust, and whether other struggling organisations should suffer the same fate; and if the Hinchingsbrooke franchise model should be pursued at George Eliot or elsewhere.” It also points to the publication of the Francis inquiry into care failings at Mid-Staffordshire Foundation Trust which is likely to be published in November. “As Sir David has acknowledged, the inquiry’s findings could clash with key elements of the reforms.” Foretell-

ing that Jeremy Hunt will step back from the responsibility of the mayhem that the government’s health policy will cause, they remark, “Mr Hunt has the challenge of being true to Mr Lansley’s word that the health secretary will remain above rows over hospital reconfigurations and the ‘rationing’ decisions of clinical commission groups.”

Lansley’s legacy can hardly be “amended” as it is one of throwing a grenade into the NHS with the Health Social Care Act, 2012 in order to force through privatisation on the back of the previous government’s measures that facilitated this neo-liberal direction in the provision of health care. Having taken away the responsibility of the government and the secretary of health to provide a comprehensive health service and only “promote” this service, it shows very much that Cameron’s appointment is in indeed aimed at “reselling” what the people in Britain have demonstrated their wholesale opposition to over the last two years. The new health secretary can focus all he likes on a “clear political message” that Downing Street is calling for with this change but the working class and all sections of the people in Britain are opposed to the implementation of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and will not accept the imposition of private monopoly interests and will always uphold the right to health care.

This was shown in the hundreds of thousands that marched for the alternative last year and in the whole vigorous opposition to the passing of the Act over the last two years. The resistance and opposition continues every day in the struggles of health workers, against privatisation, against the attacks on their pay, pensions and conditions and in the build up for the mass demonstration in London on October 20 “For a Future that Works”.

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## FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHTS OF ALL

# Justice for the London Met Students

The UK Border Agency (UKBA) has revoked London Metropolitan University's status of Highly Trusted Sponsor of international students, effectively ending its license to teach such students. The UKBA has alleged that students cannot speak English and are working instead of studying. Some 2,600 students were initially faced with the prospect of deportation after sixty days' notice if they could not find a course at another university.

After the intervention of the National Union of Students (NUS) in the legal process, representing the students' interests, the High Court granted permission for the university to apply for a full judicial review over the UKBA's decision.

As a result, the threatened students will be allowed to continue to study until whichever is the sooner of the end of the current academic year (finishing next summer) or the completion of their courses.

Eddie Rowley, Unison steward, was quoted as saying, "If there are problems with individual students, visas and so forth, then those problems should be tackled. The UKBA should work in partnership with the London Met to sort out these. But banning all international students – those with excellent English, those who have no visa problems – is a complete overreaction." It is clear that there is to be no such partnership, and that there are other motives at work.

Eddie Rowley went on to say that the authorities had "spent the last five or six months making overtures to the private sector in their bid to privatise the university. They want to outsource the whole support services and what they call shared services and they've been setting up a partnership with the London School of Business and Finance..."

Max Watson, Chair, Unison London Met branch, emphasised: "In the last six months we've had a campaign. The slogan has been 'Education, Not Privatisation!' In the last two months, we've told management, if they continue with their privatisation agenda, we will trigger an industrial action ballot for strike action to defeat their plans for privatisation. Our new slogan today is 'Education, not Deportation!' This is our number one priority."

NUS president Liam Burns said, "As this is the first time that the government has revoked the sponsor status of a public institution, we are in uncharted territory, and this case will set important precedents for the future treatment of both domestic and international students."

The damage to the university remains, and many students still face deportation at a later date. The injunction represents



only a temporary reprieve until the outcome of the Judicial Review itself – which is expected to take at least several months to be heard. Meanwhile, the university's license to recruit international students is still suspended, and its current international students are still in limbo, particularly if they have more than this academic year to complete, and courses and jobs are still threatened. The fight remains for the very survival of London Met as a public university. The essence of the precedent being sought by the government and authorities is that they can simply impose such autocratic, executive decisions.

People have been expressing their anger at the sheer unreasonableness of the brazenly arbitrary decision, which is a kind of "collective punishment" against the university. Hundreds of students and staff protested outside of the Home Office on September 5 to demand "Hands off London Met!" and "Education Not Deportation!" A London-wide march for justice took place on September 28 under the banner, "Amnesty Now – Save London Met – No to Privatisation". The initiative was supported by London Region UCU, and University of London Union (ULU).

If the aim of this collective punishment is to break the resistance and weaken the opposition to the privatisation agenda, making an example of the students and staff of the university, this should be of serious concern to all.

This arbitrary act is an attack on the students directly affected and an attack on the rights of all. The treatment of these students is a matter of humanity, not of their "legitimacy" or "economic contribution"; the inhumanity of the sweeping threat of deportation and throwing into such uncertainty about the future of these young people is an affront to their rights as human beings. The arbitrariness of the decision is itself an attack on all.

## FIGHTING FOR AN ANTI-WAR GOVERNMENT

# Britain Must End its Intensified Warmongering Activities against Iran

Last month, the navies of the US, Britain, France and over twenty other countries, known as the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) began to converge on the Strait of Hormuz in order to carry out the largest-ever military manoeuvres in the Persian Gulf, the International Mine Countermeasures Exercise (ICMEX 12). As reported in *The Telegraph* of September 15, under the headline *Armada of international naval power massing in the Gulf as Israel prepares an Iran strike*, “Cruisers, aircraft carriers and minesweepers from 25 nations are converging on the strategically important Strait of Hormuz in an unprecedented show of force as Israel and Iran move towards the brink of war.” This military provocation lasting nearly two weeks is the latest in a series of warmongering acts directed at the Islamic Republic of Iran and carried out under the leadership of Anglo-American imperialism.

According to news agencies, the sabre-rattling in the Gulf is in preparation for war in the region. There is increasing speculation about the likelihood of a military attack on Iran by Zionist Israel sanctioned by the US and its closest allies. Iran has been the subject of sanctions and other hostile measures by the US, Britain and their allies because of its advanced nuclear programme, which the government of Iran claims is only intended for peaceful purposes and which is permitted for all signatories of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Last month the majority on the governing board of the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA), under the influence of Britain and the US, passed a resolution on September 13 expressing “serious concern” about Iran’s nuclear capability and urging that country to comply with US Security Council resolutions tabled mainly by the governments of the US and Britain. It is noteworthy that Cuba voted against the IAEA resolution, while Egypt, Tunisia and Ecuador abstained. For its part, Iran stated it was ready to comply with the resolution but would not compromise its national security.

The British government also continues to play a leading role in the economic sanctions and other attacks against Iran that are tantamount to a war against its civilian population and are designed to prevent the importation of medicine and other necessities. Foreign Secretary William Hague also announced last month that EU countries were planning to unleash yet more economic and other sanctions against Iran. Hague was critical of Iran’s involvement in attempts to resolve the crisis in Syria, as part of a quartet of neighbouring countries alongside Egypt,



Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

The government of Zionist Israel has amassed a nuclear arsenal with the support of the governments Britain, France and the US and is openly issuing threats against Iran. There is now open speculation in the media that Israel might launch a pre-emptive strike against Iran either shortly before or shortly after the presidential election in the US. In response to such an attack, it is claimed that the government of Iran might take measures to close the Strait of Hormuz to international shipping, thus cutting off oil and other vital supplies. It is in order to prepare for such an eventuality and to heap further pressure on Iran that the CMF carried out its recent manoeuvres in the Persian Gulf. In response, the Iranian government has announced that it will carry out its own military manoeuvres this month.

Although the Coalition government is claiming that it is acting to restrain Israel, the latter is once again being used as a cat’s paw in the region and is an integral part of the warmongering stance of Britain, the US and others intent on regime change in Iran, just as in Syria. Anglo-American imperialism is not content to allow the gains of the Iranian revolution to be further developed and wishes to secure a geo-political advantage in central Asia both in its own interests and to the detriment of Russia and China.

The sabre-rattling and brinkmanship of the British government and its allies are creating an extremely dangerous situation in Asia with their warmongering and the fostering of violence and instability that could have unforeseen circumstances. Therefore the workers’ movement and all democratic people in Britain must step up the struggle to stay the hand of the warmongers, remove the threat of new war, and establish an anti-war-government.

## ALEIDA GUEVARA SPEAKS:

# Remembering Ché Tour

Aleida Guevara is the eldest daughter of revolutionary leader Ernesto “Ché” Guevara and Aleida March. She undertook a speaking tour of Britain from September 9-19 to mark the 14th anniversary of the unjust imprisonment of the Cuban Five which fell on September 12. The tour was held under the auspices of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign. Aleida Guevara is a paediatrician, a doctor of medicine, and has also worked as a physician in Angola, Ecuador and Nicaragua. She speaks in passionate defence of Cuba and its right to self-determination, and is author of the book “Chávez, Venezuela and the New Latin America”. She was accompanied on the speaking tour by Luis Marron, former Political Counsellor at the Cuban Embassy in London, who the friends of Cuba in this country remember very warmly, and who acted as interpreter.

On September 18, a Candelit Vigil to demand the release of the Cuban Five was held at the US Embassy, at which Dr Guevara was the special guest and at which she spoke. See article Free the Cuban Five.

At the meetings on her tour, Dr Guevara signed copies of the newly-published book “Remembering Ché”, written by her mother, inscribing them with inspiring personal messages. She spoke in Brighton when the TUC Congress was taking place, then went on to Nottingham, Newcastle, Edinburgh and Glasgow, before addressing a public meeting in the House of Commons the day before the vigil for the Cuban Five. She rounded off her tour in Oxford, before going to Ireland to speak. The tour was supported by: Ken Gill Memorial Trust and London Region Unison.



*Aleida Guevara and Luis Marron speaking at Civic Centre, Newcastle Photo: Workers' Weekly*

At the House of Commons meeting, chaired by Baroness Angela Smith, over 150 people crammed into the committee room to hear Aleida speak about her father, the ongoing blockade of Cuba and the Cuban Five's continuing struggle for justice.

Baroness Smith, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Cuba and Vice-Chair of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, thanked Aleida for her attendance and called on the solidarity movement in Britain to increase its efforts in support of the Cuban Five and in opposition to the blockade.

Two MPs spoke alongside Aleida as they welcomed her to parliament. Michael Connarty praised the Cuban people and their commitment to social justice in the face of imperialist intervention. He has tabled Early Day Motion 497 which calls for visitation rights to be granted to Adriana Perez and Olga Salanueva to see their husbands, Gerardo Hernandez and Rene Gonzalez. He urged constituents to write to their MPs asking them to sign EDM 497 but also said, “write to the Prime Minister, write to William Hague, write to Obama, write to the European Commission on Human Rights, write to anyone supposedly interested in human rights. Never give up. Keep fighting, and I will fight with you!”

Cathy Jamieson MP spoke about how she had helped to re-establish the APPG on Cuba. She emphasised that there is a “committed group of politicians in the Commons and the Lords who will continue to raise concerns around the blockade and the Miami Five”.



# Free the Cuban Five – Fourteen Years Too Many

September 12 marked the 14th anniversary of the unjust imprisonment of the Cuban Five, Fernando González Llort, René González Sehwerert, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez, Gerardo Hernández Nordelo and Ramón Labañino Salazar, Cuban patriots imprisoned for reporting to US authorities terrorist activities against Cuba carried out from US soil.

The Cuban Five were sentenced to lengthy prison terms in September 1998 for their work to expose the notorious anti-Cuban terrorist groups based in Miami which are instigated and funded covertly or overtly by the US government. Since their arrest, the US government, despite its claims of being opposed to terrorism, has done nothing to end terrorism against Cuba launched from US soil. Instead, it has done everything in its power to submit the five Cuban patriots to vindictive treatment, beginning with 17 months of solitary confinement before the start of their trial in Miami in November 2000.

That trial has been denounced internationally, including by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in May 2005. On March 4, 2009, then President of the UN General Assembly Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann called for the release of the Five during the session of the UN Human Rights Council.

***Oppose US State-Sponsored Terrorism against Cuba! Hands Off Cuba! Free the Five!***



The United States persists in denying the Five their freedom, according to their politics of revenge against the Cuban people who defend its sovereignty and independence. The families of the Cuban Five are similarly victimised because they are denied visas to enter the United States to visit their loved ones in prison.

## INTERNATIONAL:

# Victory for Chávez in Defence of the Bolivarian Revolution

On October 7, Venezuelans once again went to the polls to elect their president. Hugo Chávez won an outstanding victory against Henrique Capriles, the candidate of the right-wing neo-liberal Coalition for Democratic Unity (MUD).

The National Electoral Council announced on October 7 that with most of the ballots counted, the president had secured 54.42% of the votes, while his rival Capriles was behind with 44.9%. This gives Chávez another six-year mandate until 2019.

As the result was announced, his supporters burst into cheers and songs of “Viva Le Patria” and shouted slogans in praise of Chávez.

Underlining the intense interest in the campaign, the turnout among the 19 million registered voters was a record 80.4%. The result signals the deepening of the Bolivarian revolution, despite all the attempts of the neo-liberals to sabotage it, including an attempted coup.

This election had presented Venezuelans with two alternative visions for the country. Would the social progress of the past decade, based on growing and sharing the wealth, continue? Or would there be a return of the types of neo-liberal policies that failed Venezuela and Latin America and which are today causing so much harm in Europe?

The election of Hugo Chávez in 1998 marked the end of a forty-year period known pejoratively in Venezuela as *puntofijismo*. This describes the pact signed by the two major parties – AD and COPEI – to keep other parties and the voice of millions of people side-lined in order to share the spoils of Venezuela's oil wealth amongst a small minority.

Against this backdrop, Hugo Chávez – coming from outside the established and corrupt two main parties – was swept to office in 1998 with 57% of the vote and with a mission to transform the country.

In this election, President Chávez called on Venezuelans to not permit a return to the situation of the 1980s, underscoring that a vote for his continued leadership of the Bolivarian revolution “is a vote for the youth, the future, security, stability and development”.

The achievements Venezuela have made have shown the fundamental importance of increasing investments in social programmes. In an official report made by Venezuela to the UN Human Rights Council on October 7, 2011, it was highlighted that Venezuela has spent around US\$400 billion on a vast range of such investments since the Chávez government came to office.

It is also worth noting that even during the financial crisis, which had a very negative impact on the Venezuela economy, spending on social services was maintained as the government sought to protect the living standards of the majority. The gov-



ernment now believes that spending on social programmes should not only be maintained but increased to help stimulate economic growth and jobs.

The inclusion of the people in the political and cultural life of the country has also been notable. One of the most famous examples is that of Venezuela's widespread system of community youth orchestras, *El Sistema*, which has been internationally recognised as one of the best music programmes in the world. Sir Simon Rattle has said, “There is no more important work being done in music than what is being done in Venezuela.”

The Line of March hails the victory of Hugo Chávez, which represents the alternative prevailing over the neo-liberal agenda, and a victory for the programme of defending the gains of the Bolivarian socialist revolution.

## Outstanding Achievements of the DPRK

In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea today, the people fully benefit from universal free medical care, guaranteed under the Socialist Constitution and the Public Health Law. The system of taxation was abolished 38 years ago, with the national economy on a firm footing being the source of the state income.

Of note recently has been the care of the rising generation. This is not only evident in the guaranteed right to education, but the organisation of children into the Korean Children's Union representing the hope and future of the DPRK. In the DPRK there is universal 11-year compulsory education. There are also a huge number of large and small colleges.

The government of the DPRK is a genuine people's government with local organ's of power, as well as the Supreme People's Assembly.

The Korean people receive such social benefits as free housing, and to constantly improve the people's living standards is the central aim of the organisation of the economy. As an example, spectacular new tower blocks of flats have been erected in the past year in Changjon Street in Pyongyang, changing this area of the capital beyond recognition, including public service



*Kim Jong Un speaking to the gathering of the Korean Children's Union amenities and parks, in addition to modern dwellings.*

“Celebrating the Outstanding Achievements of the DPRK” was the title of a friendship and solidarity meeting held on Saturday, October 13. It was organised at the John Buckle Centre by the Friends of Korea (FoK), and marked the 67th anniversary of the Workers' Party of Korea, which fell on October 10. The

FoK has the aim of combating the disinformation peddled by those who wish the DPRK ill, and accuse it of all the crimes that imperialism is itself responsible for. To this end it seeks to unite all friends of Korea in Britain in taking a stand in favour of the DPRK, and to encourage all to investigate the truth about the DPRK, its achievements and social system, and to defend the right of the DPRK to its independence and sovereignty and the right of its people to chart their own destiny.

The Secretary of the FoK welcomed all the participants to the meeting, especially the guest from the Embassy of the DPRK in London. In conclusion, it was pointed out the importance of the DPRK's finding a place in the hearts of working people in Britain, in the spirit of friendship and proletarian internationalism.



## OBITUARY:

# Mining communities pay respects to former president of Durham Miners' Association, David Guy

*David Guy, who was President of the Durham Miners' Association, died after a long illness on July 25, aged 66. Mining communities of the north east assembled as a tribute at his funeral on August 2, which was reported widely across the region in local newspapers. Line of March is reprinting extracts of the August 3 tribute from the Northern Echo.*

**T**he lodge banner of Dawdon Colliery, in County Durham, where David Guy worked, was displayed as about 600 people gathered to say farewell to the former president of Durham Miners' Association (DMA).

Family, friends, former miners, trade unionists and politicians from the region attended St Mary Magdalene Church, Seaham, for a service that started with *Gresford, The Miners' Hymn*, and was led by Father Thomas Burke. Fr Burke said: "David was a great man and did a lot of great work. He was loved by his family and a lot of the people gathered here today. We remember his life and the life of the miners."

The father-of-two and grandfather-of-nine was an outspoken critic of Margaret Thatcher's pit closure programme and particularly active as a union official during the Miners' Strike of 1984-85. As association president for 27 years, Mr Guy helped many miners win thousands of pounds in compensation from the Government for industrial diseases, such as pneumoconiosis and vibration white finger.

He also helped save the Durham Miners' Gala from extinction and built it into the country's biggest trade union event. Several MPs from the region, as well as Bob Crow, general secretary of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers, and a regular speaker at the Gala attended the service to recognise David Guy's contribution to the labour movement.

Dave Hopper, a close friend and the DMA's general secretary, said: "1984 was a bad period and we came out of that scarred for



life, but he was committed to the sacked miners and he never let them down. He was a man who fought for his friends, his community and for the people he loved."

My Guy's body was carried from the church to music from *Concierto de Aranjuez*, which featured in the mining film *Brassed Off*, and was placed in the waiting hearse, before he was taken to Byron Walk Cemetery for burial.

Rodney Bickerstaff, former general secretary of Unison, who gave a eulogy in the church, said: "I have never been on a platform with David when he did not get a thunderous applause, so I ask you for one last time to put your hands together for a great socialist, a great trade unionist and our friend, David Guy."



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